

PARK PASSION

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN YOUR NATIONAL PARKS • JANUARY 2020



At Washington's National Park Fund we've coined the metaphor "our backyard rocks" as our way of acknowledging how fortunate we – residents of the state as well as visitors – are to have Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks in our backyards. Those who grew up here have known this their entire lives; they've passed that love onto their children and children's children. Those who visit are struck by the parks' immensity.

Our national parks belong to everyone. The vast majority of our nation see them as worthy of investing in. We remain hopeful that the federal government will pass the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 1225). It has strong bi-partisan support...what's not to love about that! Thank you, Congressman Kilmer, for your leadership, and thank YOU, readers, for your support.

LAURIE WARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



MOMENTS WERE SPACIOUS, MEMORIES ARE PRECIOUS

BY DEMI ALLEN (AND BRYSON ALLEN)

My son Bryson was killed in a climbing accident at the Mendenhall Towers in Juneau on June 28 at the age of 23. He died doing something he loved in ways I couldn't begin to understand. He had become a strong and capable young man with a deep and abiding commitment to exploring and preserving wilderness areas. In reflecting on Bryson's deep love for nature, especially the majesty and pull of mountains, I realized how important Olympic National Park was to that story.

*The Living, breathing rainforests wrap me in their wild motions. The alpine country of the Olympic Mountains calls me ever higher, as if by getting a few thousand more feet above the rest of the world I can escape the fears and struggles of my life at sea level. The Pacific rolls constantly against its shores, where the beautiful sand is dotted by campfires at night. It's a home, where I have all of the geography I could ever want.**

CONTINUED INSIDE

fun fact

North Cascades National Park and its immediate surroundings are home to three major dams – Gorge Dam, Diablo Dam and Ross Dam – that generate around 90 percent of the power used by Seattle residents. The Diablo Dam was the tallest dam in the world when it was constructed in 1921.



PARK PERSON OF INTEREST: DAN VAN DER ELST

Wilderness District Ranger

FOUNDATION FOCUS:

THOMAS O. BROWN FOUNDATION

A generous gift from the Thomas O. Brown Foundation enabled nearly 100 youth to participate in the Adventures in Your Big Backyard project in Olympic National Park over the summer. These future stewards learned tenets of environmentalism through a variety of activities and participated in fun pastimes such as hiking, canoeing or simply observing the natural wonders around them. A huge THANK YOU to Jim Salisbury and our friends at the Thomas O. Brown Foundation. Without them, the opportunity to connect these youth to their big backyard might have been missed.

BY MARTHA CRAIG

Dan van der Elst is a man who likes to be outdoors, get his hands dirty and make a lasting difference to the environment he loves. In his current role as a Wilderness District Ranger in Mount Rainier National Park, Dan leads wilderness district operations, which include administering the backcountry camping permit system, wilderness planning and management, and ensuring the safety of campers and hikers in Mount Rainier National Park. Dan appreciates the way WNPF donors support Washington's national parks. With so much of the Parks' federal funding going to operations and personnel costs, staffing ranger stations, etc., there's very little left over for the long list of improvements Dan would like to see. "Thanks to WNPF, my program was recently able to buy personal locator beacons for the staff. The beacons help us do more solo travel and get off the trail to explore with an extra margin of safety."

Read Dan's whole story on our blog: wnpf.org/to-the-parks-our-blog/

SPACIOUS MOMENTS, PRECIOUS MEMORIES

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

A flood of gifts came to the Fund in Bryson's memory, and the family chose to include him in the Parks Everlasting Society. A memorial restoration party will be held, in the Elwha Valley he loved, to remember Bryson and Olympic National Park. Read more on our blog: wnpf.org/to-the-parks-our-blog/

**From an essay written by Bryson on his relationship to Olympic National Park as a freshman at University of Montana.*



TRAILBLAZERS

ASH & MELISSA SPERZEL

BY KELLY SANDERBECK

I try to call new donors when I have the time, curious about what inspired them to start giving. About a year ago, I was particularly intrigued by some donors who were not only new, but had started donating a very generous monthly gift. AND they were from Kentucky. I just had to know the story...

It turns out that Ash and Melissa Sperzel fell in love with Olympic National Park – and started giving monthly to WNPf --after seeing just a picture of the Enchanted Valley. “We decided right then that we wanted to go there!” They had never even visited Washington State, but were so enamored by this lush, magical spot that they began training for a years-down-the-road backpacking trip to the park. Although this stunningly fit couple had never backpacked before, they were looking around for a new hobby to share that would (hopefully) see them through their entire life -- and decided on backpacking. Their dream recently came true this past October with a first, but certainly not last, visit to Olympic National Park and its wonders. Read more and see photos on our blog: wnpf.org/to-the-parks-our-blog

FISHERS, FISHERS, EVERYWHERE!

“Thanks to WNPf, the fisher project stays on the rails despite all of the challenges we’ve faced with the fires in Canada. More than 150 fishers have been released...Only 15 to go!”

–Jason Ransom,
PhD, Wildlife Biologist,
North Cascades National Park



VINCE WERNER

Once in a while someone great crosses your path. Eight years ago, that someone was Vince Werner. Vince contributed many hours to Washington’s National Park Fund as he developed videos for our Spring Dinner and Auction and beyond. For his tireless service and joyful spirit along the way, we extend our Flat Hat Salute to you, Vince!! Thank you!!

get in touch

Washington’s National Park Fund

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Photo: Lee Sheinbeim



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EVENTS

FOR A FULL LIST OF
EVENTS, VISIT [WPNF.ORG](http://wnpf.org)

SATURDAY, APRIL 25

SPRING DINNER AND AUCTION

Join us at the Seattle Design Center to mix and mingle with park staff and fellow park lovers at this very special annual event. Bid on outdoor clothing and gear, unique experiences and more to support science and research in our national parks!

Secure your seat – tickets available at wnpf.org or
(206) 623-2063

MONDAY, JANUARY 20

FEE-FREE DAY AT THE PARKS

The National Park Service will be waiving entrance fees to all National Park Services sites in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

PICNIC WITH THE PARKS!

Over the Top Society member “picnic” with park leadership. Are you a member yet? Call us! (206) 623-2063

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

COMMUNITY FIRESIDE CIRCLE IN BELLINGHAM - **SOLD OUT**

Join us at the Chrysalis Inn for an evening of great conversation with fellow park supporters, a presentation on the 50 Peaks Project by Scott Kranz and North Cascades leadership.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

EARTH DAY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Earth Day 2020 is focused on climate action with campaigns intended to activate a billion people worldwide. Visit earthday.org to learn how you can get involved in programs such as the Great Global Cleanup or Artists for the Earth.

APRIL 18 - 26

NATIONAL PARK WEEK 2019

Saturday, April 18th marks the beginning of National Park Week with free entrance to your favorite parks for the day!

THURSDAY, MAY 14

SAVE THE DATE: FIRESIDE CIRCLE AT PARADISE INN

Save the date and be on the lookout for additional information about this special opportunity to stay at Paradise Inn at Mount Rainier National Park before it opens for the season!

OUR MISSION is to raise private support to deepen the public's love for, understanding of, and experiences in Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks. **OUR VISION** is for our three parks to be strong and vibrant, youthful and everlasting.