



Park Passion

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS • FALL 2023

**SPECIAL
CAMPAIGN
EDITION**

MOVING DOWN THE TRAIL

After twelve wonderful years, I'm retiring. At the end of the year I will turn the reins over to a dynamic new leader who will carry this team into the exciting times ahead.

To everyone who helped to make this last decade such a success for Washington's national parks: thank you. It's because of YOU that we give more to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic year after year. And the parks' staff members? What a treat working with all of you has been! Behind it all was the board of directors and wonderful colleagues I got to partner with. Together, we made incredible things happen.

Now, I can't wait to see how this team carries on the incredible momentum of the Together for the Parks campaign in the years to come. See how far we've come -- and what's coming next -- in our special campaign update on page 3.

Thank you.

LAURIE WARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



Seeking Our Next CEO

Read Laurie's reflections on her tenure and find the position listing for our next leader at wnpf.org/CEO



Olympic National Park captured by WNPF Creative Partner Nate Brown as part of the Olympic Mountain Project.

Rachel's team celebrates as they arrive at Paradise following their climb. Climb photos taken by WNPF creative partner Scott Kranz.



"Getting Our People Onto the Mountain"

By Kristen Oliphant, WNPF Events and Partnerships Manager

Recognizing that the parks we support are situated on the ancestral lands of many Tribal Nations, WNPF was proud to partner with Rachel Heaton, member of the Muckleshoot Tribe and descendant of the Duwamish people, on a historic climb of Mount təqʷuʔmaʔ – the original Muckleshoot name for Mount Rainier.

One of our key priorities is giving access and opportunities to experience the parks to communities that are traditionally underrepresented in them. There are six tribes that border the mountain (each of whom has a different name for it), but the reality is members of these communities don't always feel they have access to experiences within the national park boundaries that allow them to connect with their ancestral lands in a meaningful way. For Rachel, a Culture Specialist for the Muckleshoot Tribe which borders the Sunrise area of the park,

Continued inside



Photos by NPS

Your Impact by the Numbers

White pine blister rust, a non-native fungal disease, is making whitebark pine trees more susceptible to damage from mountain pine beetles and climate change. The “Adopt a Whitebark Pine” project in Mount Rainier National Park and North Cascades National Park, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, is focused on restoring this important keystone species to healthy numbers.

- 2022:** When whitebark pine received *Endangered Species Act* protection
- 50%:** Amount of standing whitebark pine trees that are estimated to already be dead
- \$24k:** Funding provided to the parks since 2021 to support efforts to test cones and reverse the loss
- 130+:** Cones collected from ten trees across Mount Rainier and North Cascades National Parks

At Mount Rainier, several known resistant trees have already been identified and the park is using seeds from these trees to grow hundreds of rust-resistant seedlings. Funds from donations cover the costs of seed storage and propagation, care of seedlings, seedling inoculation with white pine blister rust, and data analysis and reporting.

“Identifying these elite seed-source trees is the first critical step in making sure that the whitebark woodlands and forests of the past are in the parks’ futures,” says Beth Fallon, Plant Ecologist at Mount Rainier National Park. “We wouldn’t have been able to screen those seeds without the support of donors to Washington’s National Park Fund.”

Learn more at wnpf.org/whitebark.



WNPF Creative Partner Photo by Taylor Newlun

Your Impact In the Parks

“We count on volunteer groups like yours to help us keep the park’s beaches clean and safe for visitors and wildlife. We really couldn’t do it without you.

—Heather Stephens, Olympic National Park Volunteer and Youth Coordinator

With 73 miles of coastline, keeping the beaches of Olympic National Park clean of trash is a nearly impossible task for park staff to manage on their own. Volunteer clean-ups make a big difference each summer.

WNPF staff, board members, and volunteers tackled Ruby Beach, where we discovered that even there, far from any urban center, human waste still accumulates. We scoured the high tide wrack line and collected items both surprising (waterlogged shoes and shotgun shells) and mundane. Mostly we found everyday plastics in every form imaginable: rope, bottles, bottle caps, and more.

Learn about the dangers of plastic pollution – and the role you can play in keeping the Olympic Coast trash-free – at wnpf.org/beach.

GETTING OUR PEOPLE ONTO THE MOUNTAIN

organizing a climb group made up exclusively of members of federally recognized tribes is a way to reclaim the mountain and ensure tribal voices – especially the voices of those for whom it is ancestrally their homeland – are represented on it. She shared:

"I started realizing my people weren't out here on the mountain. Our stories, our knowledge, our language, and our faces weren't visible out there. Yet when visitors are out there, they can see the plants that we use every day in our cultural teachings and that are important for our food sovereignty. There are millions of people out there not realizing the significance of these plants. It got me thinking, if we're not out there, what are these people being exposed to? What are they learning?"

There are a lot of stories and accounts of the history of the mountain that are not being told, says Rachel. And mountaineering itself, one of the ways people choose to experience a unique side of the mountain, doesn't necessarily offer the opportunity for people to reflect on the natural space they're inhabiting. "Mountaineering is very much about getting to the summit more so than reflecting on this space you're in and the spiritual impact of it." Rachel is on a mission to change that, and this all-native climb through Washington's National Park Fund is a first step.

Several groups were involved in making this climb happen: the experienced guides at International



Rachel partnered with local artist Emilio Gonzalez to develop a visual logo to represent the climb. "Ancestrally being from here, the mountain represents so much for our communities – it's a food source, it's a water source. Salmon is a staple food, and a lot of our tribes rely on the rivers that come from the mountains," says Rachel.

Mountain Guides (IMG), who lead the climb, and REI Co-op, who provided partial financial support and Co-op Brand gear and apparel to help outfit Rachel and the climb team.

"So, as far as we know, we are the first group of native people ancestrally from these lands to attempt Mount Tahoma (Rainier)," says Rachel. And though her team couldn't summit due to deteriorating conditions on the mountain, Rachel feels the journey was a success. "That's not what it's about. It's about having our faces and our stories out on the mountain. And it's about inspiring our youth and showing them that we are out here."



OUR FLAT HAT SALUTE

This one goes out to Oso Supply Co.! This Bellingham-based brand aims to share the joy that outdoor adventure brings to our lives through gear like chalk bags, hip packs, and more, donating 10% of profits on Washington-themed gear to support the parks.

Ahead of the holiday season, find these and other great gift options that benefit the parks at wnpf.org/shop.

An update on

Together FOR THE PARKS

Last year Washington's National Park Fund announced *Together for the Parks*, a \$20 million multi-year fundraising campaign for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic. We set an ambitious goal of supporting annual projects at the level these parks have come to expect and rely on, while asking our generous community of supporters to go above and beyond.

That additional support will help fund larger-scale, transformative projects and build healthy endowments, which will generate investment income to provide ongoing, reliable funding for key needs that are going unmet year over year in the parks' federal budget.

And we're excited to report that supporters like you have stepped up in a big way:

- **3,000+ supporters** have shown up for the parks with a gift or pledge so far – this is just the beginning!
- **\$7.8 million** has been raised for the parks to date, including this year's annual projects and higher-level needs like establishing housing in North Cascades, implementing sustainable transit in Olympic, and restoring Paradise in Mount Rainier. For example...
 - **1.2 miles** of the popular Skyline Trail in Paradise will be rehabilitated, and a new 1.2-mile trail will connect the Paradise Lower Picnic Area with the Jackson Visitor Center – thanks to campaign supporters.

The momentum is growing. Read on to learn more about one of the larger scale needs we're tackling. Ready to play a part? Turn to page 4 to learn about ways to get involved.

We're glad you're a part of this movement. Get ready – we're just getting started.



We're raising
\$20,000,000
for the parks!

"We feel a sense of timelessness when visiting our national parks. Together for the Parks will help to preserve nature for the benefit of all, for all time! "

– Mike & Sue Raney from Tacoma, WA

An Investment In Forever

This year marked the intersection of two noteworthy events: Washington's National Park Fund's launch of *Together for the Parks* and the sunsetting of the James M. Lea Foundation.

A key component of our campaign is raising \$4 million for the three parks' endowments to ensure that Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks remain our "forever" places. The James M. Lea Foundation, who shares this vision of

long-term stewardship with us, has stepped up to make its final – and most significant – contribution to Washington's National Park Fund to date: a \$300,000 grant to the campaign, dedicated to building the parks' endowments.

This transformational, pace-setting gift is already providing incredible momentum and helping us lay the groundwork as we reach out to other foundations and donors, seeking their partnership in protecting these wild places for generations to come. Thanks, James M. Lea Foundation!

Together
FOR THE PARKS

togetherfortheparks.org | fund@wnpf.org | [#ForTheParks](https://twitter.com/ForTheParks)

Housing Drought

An Ongoing Park Crisis

It takes a village to run a park, but what happens if that village can't house the people tasked with doing the work? That's what we're seeing right now in North Cascades National Park and many other parks across the country, including Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks.

What sets the North Cascades apart is the reason that so many of us love it: its remoteness. It grants us the ability to seek out true solitude and rejuvenation outdoors and away from crowds. But it also means quality housing for park employees is hard to find – and hard to afford.



"Housing is the single biggest barrier to being able to hire and retain people. We have a 20% lapse rate per year with people leaving, and in many cases we can't fill both seasonal and permanent positions. People accept the job and then they research the market, and they say, 'I can't afford to move there. I can't afford to live there.' And so, people turn down job opportunities."

– Don Striker, Superintendent of North Cascades National Park

Marblemount, 20 minutes from the park's North Cascades Visitor Center at Newhalem, is the only location where the park has housing for employees in the northern part of the park. There, you can find two historic houses – one two-bedroom, and one three-bedroom – plus three 50s-era homes and two apartments. Many of the unlucky seasonal staff who help keep park operations running smoothly in the busiest season of the year are left squeezing two or three to a bedroom or camping in the field.

The result? The park is struggling to hire and retain qualified staff. And with more extreme weather – and the droughts, floods, and wildfires and smoke it brings – it's more important than ever that the park is able to bring in skilled rangers, scientists, and park employees.

The park is at a crisis point. Through Together for the Parks, with your help, we're stepping up to address it.

We think of Washington's national parks as part of our backyard. We played there as kids, we hiked and climbed 'the Mountain,' and now we vacation there as adults. We can't imagine a life where our kids and grandkids aren't able to refresh, rejuvenate, and recreate in such majestic alpine settings.

These parks showcase what our state was like when the first people arrived. With the right stewardship, they can be everlasting – today, tomorrow, and forever.

– Don & Sue Gaines from University Place, WA

Your Opportunity to Step Up

Whether you can donate an hour's pay, or your situation provides you with the grace of giving thousands, every gift makes a difference as we tackle the parks' greatest challenges. We hope that you share the good feelings knowing that your support is having an impact on the parks,

the staff members who keep them running, and the park volunteers who give freely of their time.

Ready to join us and make a difference? Get in touch with Susan Nebel, Director of Philanthropy, at susan@wnpf.org – we'd love to share more about how you can get involved.

LEADING THE CHARGE

Our Campaign Steering Committee is driving our fundraising efforts forward for Washington's national parks. Thank you to co-chairs Randy King, Bruce Tecklenburg, and Denise Wulfekuhle,

and members Tom Dugan, Fred Hammerquist, Ken Hart, Cynthia Hartwig, Tony Hoskins, Karen Povey, and Marjorie Walters for your hard work! **#ForTheParks!**

Did you know?

WNPF donors funded a project at Mount Rainier that will allow the park to purchase and staff a High-Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) tool that measures distance, grade, and substrate to evaluate trails and facilities for individuals with a wide range of accessibility needs. The park is using this information to publish an accessibility guide. Learn more at wnpf.org/disability!

EVENTS

FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS, VISIT [WNPF.ORG/EVENTS](https://wnpf.org/events)

FRIDAY, SEPT. 15 – SUNDAY, OCT. 15

National Hispanic Heritage Month

Learn more: wnpf.org/NHHM

MONTH OF OCTOBER

Disability History Month

Find accessibility resources in the parks: wnpf.org/disability

MONDAY, OCT. 2

Happy Birthday to North Cascades National Park

The park was established on October 2, 1968. Learn more: wnpf.org/north-cascades-national-park

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11

Virtual Field Trip: Partnering Up for Mount Rainier Trails

We're joined by our partners at Washington Trails Association to learn about the trail crews that donors have supported in Mount Rainier. Watch the trip: wnpf.org/field-trips

OCT. FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS, & HALLOWEEN WEEKEND
Nightfall Orphanage Haunted House

Join us in West Seattle! Details & dates: wnpf.org/community

SATURDAY, OCT. 21 | DICK'S-A-THON

Dick's-A-Thon Memorial Run

A one-of-a-kind hamburger run in Seattle to benefit Search & Rescue operations in and around the national parks. Details: wnpf.org/community

MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Native American Heritage Month

Learn more: wnpf.org/NAHM

SATURDAY, NOV. 11

NPS Fee Free Day for Veterans Day

Get ready to get outdoors!
nps.gov/planyourvisit/fee-free-parks.htm

Get Spooked for the Parks

Mr. Black is back, presenting you with Nightfall Orphanage: a Charity Haunt Experience once again!

Held at a private residence in West Seattle, this spooky event encourages visitors to donate to local charities in lieu of an admission fee, and WNPF is one of the two charities to choose from. All are welcome, but note that Nightfall Orphanage may be too intense for some younger children.

Nightfall Orphanage is scheduled to be open October 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31st from 7:00-10:00pm. Dates and times are subject to change, though, so be sure to check the website for the latest at nightfallorphanage.com.



Washington's National Park Fund is the official philanthropic partner of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks