



Rebuilding Rainier

Vol. 2 No. 1 ■ June 12, 2007

Mount Rainier National Park

MOUNT RAINIER RECOVERY

Kevin Bacher, Mount Rainier National Park Volunteer Program Manager

Welcome to the second volume of *Rebuilding Rainier*, a publication of Mount Rainier National Park dedicated to sharing information about our ongoing recovery from the devastating floods of November, 2006.

Why “volume 2?” We’ve entered a new phase in our recovery efforts. For six months, most of the park was cut off from the public by damaged roads and winter snow. Park employees worked long hours, six and sometimes seven days a week, to repair roads and plan for the summer construction season. Literally thousands of people contacted us to offer their help as volunteers, but unfortunately we were not yet in a position to receive it.

Now that some of those roads have reopened and snow is melting from trails, volunteer projects are underway all over the park. This newsletter will keep you informed about what’s been happening, who’s helping to make it happen, and how you, too, can get involved.

We are assisted in our efforts both by an army of public volunteers and by several invaluable partners. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) has committed several staff members and a team of 14 Conservation Interns to organize volunteer projects and conduct major fundraising—the largest such effort in the Association’s 50-year history. It’s fair to say that most of Mount Rainier National Park’s expanded capacity to work with volunteers would not exist without their help.

The Northwest Storm Recovery Coalition coordinates the efforts of the National Park Service, SCA, Washington Trails Association, Washington’s National Park



A volunteer, under the watchful eye of SCA Vice President Jay Satz, uses a crosscut saw to clear a log from a rerouted section of the Wonderland Trail on National Trails Day

Fund, National Parks Conservation Association, and The Mountaineers, each of which has pledged resources toward fundraising, public information, and feet-on-the-ground volunteer assistance. Visit the websites listed on page two of this newsletter to learn more about the coalition and its members and, most importantly, how you, too, can become part of the Mount Rainier Recovery team!

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are still openings in several short-term volunteer projects coming up in the next month. Additional projects are in development and will be added soon. Check out the complete lists at www.theSCA.org/Mt_Rainier_Recovery and www.wta.org:

- June 14, 15, 16, and 17: Chenuis Falls footbridge replacement (WTA)
- June 22-24: Wayside Installation at Paradise and Sunrise (SCA)

- June 19, 20, 21, 23, and 24: Trail Repair (location TBD) (SCA)
- June 21, 22: White River Trail Repair (WTA)
- June 23: Meadow Rover Training at Paradise and Sunrise (SCA)
- June 23, 24: Huckleberry Creek Trail Maintenance (WTA)
- June 28, July 1: Mowich Lake Area Trail Maintenance (WTA)
- July 3, 4, and 5: Habitat Protection Family Projects (SCA)
- July 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7: Paradise Area Trail Patrol and Projects (SCA)
- July 3-7: Backcountry Trail Maintenance (a 5-day adventure with SCA)
- July 5, 6, and 8: Lower Eagle Peak Trail Maintenance (WTA)
- July 6, 13, and 20: Sunrise Snow Trail Marking (SCA)

Several long-term or recurring opportunities are listed at www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/vip-positions.htm:

- Access Database Manager
- Breeding Toad Habitat Surveys
- CPR and First Aid Trainer
- Cultural Landscape Maintenance
- Greenhouse Grounds Maintenance
- Greenhouse Weed Management
- Library Assistant
- Meadow Rover
- Park Soundscape Monitor
- Shift Report Database Architect
- Surveys of Vernal Pools and Seeps

Thanks for your help!

A BIG NATIONAL TRAILS DAY FOR WTA VOLUNTEERS

Lauren Braden, Washington Trails Association

To all of you who lifted grub hoes, snipped brush, or wielded pulaskis fixing our storm-damaged trails on National Trails Day June 2, a big “thank you!”

Washington Trails Association and many other groups celebrated National Trails Day on Saturday, June 2, and it was one of the busiest ever. More than 200 volunteers turned out for 12 WTA trail work parties throughout the Cascades and Olympics, donating nearly 2,000 hours repairing trails across the state.

Volunteers got dirty at Mount Rainier National Park, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, Olympic National Forest, and at Barclay Lake, Excelsior



Volunteers led by the Washington Trails Association helped rebuild part of the Glacier Basin Trail on National Trails Day

Ridge and Asahel Curtis in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Volunteers also helped the Forest Service survey trail damage and blowdowns near Mount Adams.

At the [Boundary Trail](#) at Mount Rainier, a full crew worked on restoring a trail that hasn't been maintained for nearly 30 years. The volunteers included a contingent from the Tacoma REI store and three very helpful and energetic young trail volunteers named Riley, Brian and Ethan. Thanks, guys! The weather was good, and the crew helped restore tread on this abandoned trail in the Mowich Lake area. By accomplishing this work, WTA crews made a new early-season trail available at Mount Rainier—something especially needed this year, when so many trails are damaged in the park. Great work, everyone!

Also at Mount Rainier, volunteers repaired damage near the White River entrance, on the Glacier Basin Trail. One group worked on re-creating a trail to the river, as the previous one was washed out by the November floods. The crew built a trail bed, set up rock approach ramps up to the two foot bridges, and removed stumps, big rocks, and rotten logs from the trail. Another group worked on the Glacier Basin Trail, doing some work to make this the temporary trail, as the Park Service is getting ready to re-route this popular climbing trail within the next three years.

Volunteer trail work is fun, rewarding, and no experience is required. Check our website for more information (www.wta.org) and our schedule of trail work parties at Mount Rainier to repair storm damage throughout the summer, or call WTA at (206) 625-1367. Help us give back to our trails!

RECOVERING A PARK AND BALANCING A DEBT

Christi and Gil Smith, Spokane

In 1968 we moved into the shadow of Mount Rainier when my husband was stationed at Ft. Lewis. With our two very young sons Sean and Mark in tow, we embarked on a love affair with the mountain and the National Park that



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Mount Rainier National Park
www.nps.gov/mora

Student Conservation Association
www.theSCA.org

Washington Trails Association
www.WTA.org

Washington's National Park Fund
www.WNPF.org

National Parks Conservation Association
www.NPCA.org

The Mountaineers
www.mountaineers.org

And, of course, YOU!

enfolds it. We have hiked extensively on the hundreds of miles of trails that meander through the towering forests, roaring rivers, and flower-laden meadows that open to vistas spanning the horizon for hundreds of miles.

This National Park has brought peace to our souls, comfort to our hearts, challenge to our bodies, and a deep and revered respect for its majesty and soaring beauty. Every experience on any trail brought immense gratitude and awe for the unimaginable feat of those dedicated park service employees and volunteers who labored mightily through the years to forge the extensive network of trails traversing the park.

When we saw the devastation that occurred as a result of the massive storms and flooding last fall we were heartsick. We knew that it was our turn to give back—to help rebuild and restore the obliterated trails. The invitation from the Northwest Regional Office of the National Parks Conservation Association to

participate on National Trails Day as a member of a volunteer crew was a perfect opportunity to share our gratitude.

The day dawned beautifully as we drove into the park with the snow-flanked mountain welcoming us. We gathered at Longmire to meet the other crew members, roughly 25 people, and were oriented by the staff and interns of the Student Conservation Association (SCA). That organization, with its 50-year history of trail work, has formed a two year partnership with the National Park Service to recruit and facilitate a massive volunteer effort to rebuild and reopen the trails at Mount Rainier. As we looked around at the volunteers gathered, we saw a diversity of ages, physical ability and size. But it quickly became apparent that the commonality was our shared love for this park and our desire to contribute to its recovery. With arms laden with tools, packs filled with water and lunches and spirits eager to get to work, we embarked on the Wonderland Trail for a day of physically demanding labor.

The work involved "scarifying the duff" (breaking up the top soil) on the old trail, transplanting small trees and bushes, and hauling in downed tree branches, rocks and logs in an effort to disguise the fact that it had ever been a trail. On the new trail site, there were tree stumps to pull. With pulaskis, axes, shovels, peaveys, crow bars and lots of hard work they were pulled out of the ground along with a few giant rocks (whew!). We were given the direction to design the new trail with a four-foot wide track and a lay that



SCA crew leaders work with a volunteer to build tent platforms in the Longmire Campground



Christi (left) and Gil Smith (right) pause for a photo on National Trails Day with their son, NPCA Northwest Region Director Sean Smith

would accommodate and encourage hikers to adhere to the trail. (Wow, now we're elevated to landscape architects.)

Our next step was to scarify the new trail with hoes and scatter the rich soil that we pulled off throughout the adjacent forest. The goal is to take the new trail down to the mineral-rich soil that will be the hard and permanent trail surface.

By the end of the workday we had made a valiant effort (with no personal injuries). We were tired but grateful for bodies that could perform so well and left the park vowing that we'd be back. What we had contributed that day was a small repayment on a huge debt accrued over 40 years of experience hiking in one of America's foremost crown jewels.

SCA MOVES INTO HISTORIC LONGMIRE CAMPGROUND

Ali Saperstein, Student Conservation Association

Long ago a hub of activity for park visitors, historic Longmire Campground is abuzz again. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) has established the site as base of operations for the Mount Rainier Recovery Corps, a team of 17 young adults and staff from all over the nation serving the park by supervising public volunteer work projects. Thank you to the many volunteers who helped us set up our new home and begin the process of restoring this historic area to its former glory!

SCA is a 50-year-old conservation organization committed to building the

next generation of conservation leaders by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. Although SCA has a long history in the park, we have significantly expanded our presence this year in response to the flood damage. In addition to the Mount Rainier Recovery Corps, our diverse force of young people in the park this summer includes:

- 3 Conservation Leadership Corps crews. These groups of Seattle-area urban high school students participate during the school year in five months of leadership development workshops, conservation education, and hands-on restoration projects in Seattle area green spaces. Their 2 weeks of service in the park is the culmination of their year of conservation leadership training.
- 18 Conservation Interns. These young adults come from all over the country to the park to complete a focused internship for 3 to 6 months. Their roles will range from wildlife biology field work to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data management to backcountry ranger posts.
- 2 Hurricane Katrina Recovery crews. These groups of 6 to 8 youth are contributing two months of multi-faceted flood recovery service, beginning in communities damaged by Hurricane Katrina and continuing in the wilderness of Mount Rainier.

To learn more about SCA programs at Mount Rainier and elsewhere, visit www.thesca.org.

OTHER WAYS TO OFFER YOUR SUPPORT!

Eleanor Kittelson, Washington's National Park Fund

Your financial contributions can also make a difference. Washington's National Park Fund has set up a special "Flood Damage Fund" to benefit recovery efforts at Mount Rainier National Park. Tell your family, friends and colleagues and visit www.wnpf.org for more information. Thanks!