



Paul Ogden-Muse
Education Specialist

I think what impresses people first about North Cascades and makes it so different is the vertical rise, from 300 feet to over 9,000 feet. You go up no matter what path you choose and the water goes the opposite way. So I think some the things that really make the North Cascades special are the mountains and the steepness of the mountains and the fact that there are very few places in the North Cascades where you can get away from the sound of water.

My name is Paula Ogden-Muse and I have worked at North Cascades since 1985 when I came as a Student Conservation Association volunteer in the Wilderness Office. I currently work as the education specialist for the park.

There are times when I am in the park that I feel emotionally connected, when I'm in the backcountry, when I'm in the wildest parts of the park. And especially when you can hear the natural sounds and see the night sky. And to either have people with me or other visitors enjoying the place. Or sometimes it's to not have other people around me. And to know that in this landscape perhaps not right at that moment, there are critters like wolves and there are wolverines and there are over 100 species of songbirds and that there are plants that are rare and found in the North Cascades.

But then at other times, I feel really connected to this place, when I meet other people and I hear their stories and they tell me how wonderful their North Cascades experience has been. And sometimes it's when you're with a family that has little kids who have just completed the Junior Ranger booklet and the kids are just so excited when you give them their badge that they've earned and you shake their hand, and you know that they have had an important experience and that in some small way, you were a part of that.

One of the things that concerns me most about the National Park Service and all these incredible places that the park service protects for people and critters is that they potentially could become irrelevant to people's lives.

I think that every person could do something to help national parks. To one, learn about them, two to visit them and bring somebody else and three to financially support them if they possibly can. But to help parks in some way to continue to be relevant in people's lives.

That's my greatest fear, is that people stop caring about parks.

That would be a very sad day.

One of the most important things people can do to protect North Cascades as well as any other and every other national park is to go visit it. And bring their kids and pass that connection on to them. And to support national parks in any way they can, but just by visiting and passing that information, passing that importance on to future generations.

Interview conducted and edited by Michael Liang, Visual Information Specialist.

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