

## DNR Proposes Exchange Along I-90

*1700 Acres Would Go to Plum Creek*

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources is considering a major land exchange with Plum Creek Timber Company and a company called Elk Haven. Known as the Ahtanum Exchange, it would involve lands in Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat and Skamania Counties.

ALPS is concerned about the Kittitas County lands, which involve eight DNR parcels along the I-90 corridor from Easton to the Roslyn interchange. They total 1716 acres. In return, Plum Creek would give DNR three parcels, totaling 1562 acres, just west of I-90 between Indian John Hill Rest Area and the Elk Heights interchange. These lands border the L. T. Murray State Wildlife Area. For more details, log on to <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/amp/transactions/trustransactions.html>.

The danger in the exchange is that Plum Creek would simply turn around and sell these lands to developers, just as it already has around Easton, Cle Elum and Roslyn. Subdivisions are now sprouting up there and private homes are being constructed at a rapid rate. This trade could let the sprawl continue and have a very negative impact on the upper



JIM CHAPMAN

*Lake Easton and I-90 taken from the Domerie Creek saddle. The land just beyond the power lines is DNR land that would go to Plum Creek as part of the Ahtanum Exchange.*

Yakima River, a critical wildlife and fish corridor.

ALPS expressed its concerns in a March 2004 letter to DNR and suggested alternate approaches such as requiring that these lands remain in forestry through conservation easements or habitat conservation plans. Other alternatives would be finding less sensitive lands to trade or transferring them to state agencies like the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Our letter, as well as letters from other groups, did have an impact. DNR tells us that some of its Kittitas

County parcels are being dropped and it is discussing possible restrictions with Plum Creek on the rest. The exchange is now in final negotiations and ALPS is waiting to see the final package. ■

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KEVIN GERAGHTY

*The "after" view into Hancock Creek.*

## South Fork Snoqualmie Trails Studied

A preliminary interagency study has identified a number of trail possibilities in the South Fork Snoqualmie valley south of Interstate 90. Virtually all of the land in the South Fork is now in public ownership. The valley is close to metropolitan areas and easily accessed via the I-90 freeway. The areas south of the freeway are not part of the North Cascade Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone, and thus not subject to the restrictions protecting bear security habitat which apply to the north. This means that there are few impediments to trail development other than finding enough money to build them. The study identified numerous places where trails might be built, including high viewpoints such as Mt. Kent, and secluded spots such as Scout Lake in the Hansen Creek drainage. A wide variety of new opportunities could be developed for various user groups, including hikers, horses and mountain bikes. Conservationists hope that these new options will reduce development pressure in areas to the north which are critical for wildlife habitat.

## \$5.7 million appropriated for Cugini timberlands

Prospects for protecting some of the last remaining old growth forests on the ridge between the lower Middle and North Forks of the Snoqualmie have improved thanks to a \$5.7 million appropriation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's fund to support Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). The Cugini forests include 160 acres in the North Fork Tolt, as well as 160 acres at Lake Blethen in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie and 400 acres in upper Hancock Creek above Hancock Lake in the North Fork Snoqualmie. These forests are the last remaining vestiges of old growth in these areas. Their proximity to Puget Sound means they are critical for marbled murrelets, which have been observed there. Negotiations with the owners are underway, and it is hoped that the lands could be acquired by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and preserved as old growth nesting roosting and foraging habitat as part of DNR's HCP.

## Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road Paving EIS expected in spring 2005

ALPS trustees recently toured the Middle Fork Snoqualmie road corridor with representatives of the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA.) An Environmental Impact Statement for the project to pave the road from the current end of pavement to the Taylor River area is expected to be issued in spring 2005. FHWA planners and engineers seem to be hearing and responding to public input supporting a narrow road width with a minimal cleared corridor, cutting as few trees as possible. ALPS and other groups will continue to push for a project which sticks to the current alignment and disturbs as little ground as possible.

### In Memory

*ALPS wishes to extend its condolences and appreciation to the friends and family of*

***Donald E. Le Blond***

*ALPS received a generous gift in memory of Donald earlier this year.*



# Wild Sky Bill Likely Dead This Congress

*Rick McGuire*

Supporters of the Wild Sky Wilderness have resigned themselves to the likely failure of Congress to pass the bill this session. As this issue of the *Alpine* goes to press, the House Resources Committee, chaired by Richard Pombo, R-Calif, failed to consider the bill, which means the full House is unlikely to take it up. The bill has twice passed the Senate.

Pombo has made it clear that he is no fan of Wilderness or even of public lands. He made a great show earlier this year of declaring that the wishes of members in whose districts proposed Wilderness areas were located would be given great weight, as well as that of the delegations of affected states. The proposed Wild Sky Wilderness lies entirely within the 2nd Congressional district of Washington, represented by Rick Larsen, a sponsor and strong proponent of the bill. Apparently, Pombo's deference to local Members extends only to opponents of Wilderness. The Wild Sky bill contains some areas which were previously logged, most of which now support mature 70 to 80 year old, naturally regenerated second growth forest. Pombo seized upon this to stop the bill, claiming that only totally pristine places could be designated under the "letter" of the Wilderness Act. This is patently absurd — Congress has designated many places as Wilderness which have contained old roads or mines, or previously logged areas, including a number of examples in Washington state within the Pasayten, Glacier Peak, The Brothers, Goat Rocks, and other areas. Some Wilderness areas

in eastern states were 100% logged in the past.

Hopes were briefly raised when George Nethercutt, (R-Spokane,) stepped into the picture. Nethercutt, running against Patty Murray for Senate, took an interest in Wild Sky, and was perfectly positioned to get the bill passed. Doing so would likely have given a great boost to his Senate campaign. But instead of pushing the full 106,000 acre version which had twice passed the Senate, Nethercutt instead surprised everyone by introducing a 93,000 acre version, deleting most of the lower elevation lands and salmon streams, instead classifying them as ill-defined "backcountry," to be managed under a plan developed by the Forest Service. This met with near-

universal rejection, and neither it nor Larsen's full version were taken up by the Resources Committee.

There still remains a distant and fading hope that the full House might pass the Larsen bill despite it not having gone through the Resources Committee. Chances of that happening are small, though, and supporters are resolved to keep trying in the next Congress. Murray and Larsen have indicated their intentions to re-introduce the bills next year. Both won high praise from Wilderness supporters and editorial boards for sticking to their original proposal and not accepting Nethercutt's version with the "good stuff" removed. Good things take time, and it looks like the Wild Sky will take some time. ■



WARREN PERKINS

*Enchantment Lakes, Washington.*

# Final Four Option Parcels Get Money from Congress

*Tieton River Money May be Withdrawn*

On November 10, Congress appropriated the \$3.4 million needed to buy the final four “Option Lands” left over from the 1999 I-90 Land Exchange. Salmon la Sac Creek and Little Salmon la Sac Creek are southeast of the Salmon la Sac Campground, Branch Creek lies along the northwest shore of Lake Cle Elum and Section 33 is across Lake Kachess from the Kachess Campground. Totaling 2,574 acres, they are the last of 21 such parcels to be purchased from Plum Creek Timber Company with money from the Land & Water Conservation Fund.

The Senate had appropriated the full asking price of \$3.4 million. On the other hand, the House appropriated nothing. In fact, it essentially refused to appropriate any money for new land acquisitions anywhere.

A conference committee consisting of members from the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees for Interior and Related Agencies resolved these differences in favor of the Senate version. Senator Patty Murray and Rep. Norm Dicks, the ranking minority member of the subcommittee, deserve the most credit. Rep. George Nethercutt was another member of the House subcommittee and also expressed his support for full funding.

## *Tieton Money In Doubt*

Last year, Congress appropriated \$1.075 million to purchase 1,280 acres along the Tieton River, part of 10,400 acres that The Nature Conservancy either owns or has options.

However, the Forest Service

refused to buy the land because it has mineral potential and mineral rights were not included.

There was hope that the government would reprogram this money to buy other land near the Alpine Lakes. However, Congress also rescinded \$11 million in previously appropriated, but unspent funds, and the Tieton money may have been part of that package.

Meanwhile, The Nature Conservancy intends to eventually transfer all its holdings to the state Department of Fish & Wildlife through the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program.

## *Sawmill Creek*

As reported in the last issue, The Cascades Conservation Partnership bought the northern-most of three targeted Plum Creek parcels along the east bank of Sawmill Creek in March.

The City of Tacoma became the owner, with the Cascade Land Conservancy holding a special easement that prevents any commercial logging.

The Conservancy now has options to buy the 150-acre middle parcel and the 260-acre south parcel.

## *HCP Grants for Yakima River*

The Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife is in the process of acquiring more lands along the Yakima River Wildlife Corridor with the Phase II grant of \$1,849,720 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Habitat Conservation Program.

The east half of Section 16 along Cabin Creek, owned by American

Forest Resources, is the prime candidate. The rest of the money will be used to buy multiple-ownership lands just south of Lake Easton.

In September, the Fish & Wildlife Service announced another \$1.76 million award for Phase III acquisitions, which will be in the same area. Plans are for the state Department of Natural Resources to provide a one-third local match by transferring trust lands in the west half of Section 16 to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The state legislature will need to appropriate the funds.

The Cascades Conservation Partnership applied for these grants and the Cascade Land Conservancy is helping with the transactions.

## *Old Cascade Tunnel*

In our last issue, we wrote about efforts to acquire for the Forest Service a mile-long and 200 foot-wide piece of property, totaling less than 25 acres, right in the middle of the three mile-long Old Cascade Tunnel at Stevens Pass. Volunteers for Outdoor Washington and The Mountaineers Foundation are helping in these efforts.

Tye Valley Tunnel Co., a family corporation whose surviving partner is Ella Riach, is willing to donate the property.

But the hang-up has been the mineral rights issue. The regional office of the Forest Service wants these rights included. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, which owns these rights, has a standard minimum price that is far above the

going rate for subsurface rights with no proven value. It would set a very bad precedent to pay that price.

Fortunately, VOW managed to persuade BNSF executives to offer the mineral rights for less than half that amount.

BNSF completed the paperwork on the deed in mid-November. The only major task remaining is a Forest Service inspection of the tunnel for hazardous materials. We hope this can be completed in time for The Mountaineers Foundation to accept the deeds from both BNSF and Tye Valley Tunnel Co., combine them into one deed and turn it over to the federal government by the end of 2004.

### *FY2006 Priorities*

Even though Congress hasn't even decided what to spend in FY2005, it's already time to think about FY2006, which begins next October 1.

The Partnership is recommending money be appropriated for land in four target areas:

- Pacific Crest Trail lands south of Snoqualmie Pass. Stampede Pass heads that list.
- Parcels along the Wallace River, northeast of Gold Bar, which could be part of the proposed Wild Sky Wilderness Area.

- The middle parcel along Sawmill Creek.

- Lands along the Carbon River just outside Mt. Rainier National Park.

- Little Naches Forks along the Kittitas-Yakima County Line.

Since it is winding down operations, however, The Partnership will not be lobbying for any money itself. It will write fact sheets that can be used by individual organizations in their lobbying efforts.

The Wallace River and Pacific Crest Trail lands should be of particular interest to ALPS. ■

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## Mass Mailing Nets New Members

This summer, ALPS did something it had never done before, but which major organizations do all the time.

We sent out a mass mailing to recruit new members. Some 9,500 letters were sent and 80 people have joined thus far. This was a real learning experience!

The Cascades Conservation Partnership started it all. In preparing to "go-out-of-business," The Partnership invited everyone who had given at least \$300 to join any of the eight partners (ALPS, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, Biodiversity Northwest, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Washington Trails Association, Seattle Audubon and Kittitas Audubon). As it turned out, all those who responded simply gave directly to The Partnership, which then divided the money equally among the partners.

In addition, each partner was

invited to directly contact those who'd given under \$300. Mailings would be scheduled two months apart. After discussing the benefits vs. costs, your trustees decided to go for it. We originally scheduled our mailing for March, but for many reasons, didn't get it out until late August.

Our packet included the standard introductory letter, brochure and return envelope. The letter was simple; we just modified one we had written the year before. We did have to write a new brochure, which took some time. Then things got complicated.

The major roadblock was the US Postal Service. Our non-profit mailing permit, which we'd obtained in 2000, had expired because we hadn't done enough mailings. So we had to start over with a new application that included many supporting documents. The hardest part was finding an accountant

during tax time to certify that we were a 501(c)4 organization. Fortunately, USPS gave us our old permit number. Many thanks go to Forrest Walls for doing the legwork on this.

Initially, the Trustees were going to handle all the mailing themselves – creating mailing labels, stuffing envelopes, etc. The mailing list we were given was in a spreadsheet format, which we planned to convert to a database in order to print the labels.

In a brief moment of sanity, Natalie Williams decided to consult with YES! The Mailroom, which mails the Alpine for ALPS from its homebase near Safeco Field. Its owner, Cleo Peifer, proved to be a godsend who guided us through this incredible maze. It's great to have some pros in your corner, and Cleo is a true pro.

So, welcome to our new members. We went through a lot to attract you, but you are definitely worth it! ■

*New Navigation  
Skills Learned in  
Non-Profit  
Labyrinth*

# A DUSEL of a Concept!

Editor's Note: Preliminary information on the proposed Deep (formerly "National") Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory (DUSEL), was published in *Alpine* 2003 Issue 2. Competitive proposals to the National Science Foundation are yet to be requested. The Icicle Creek-Mt. Cashmere proposal, in preparation, is anticipated to be one. This article addresses some of the specific challenges of this site, and alternative features of other proposed competitive sites. Further information is available from <http://int.phys.washington.edu/NUSEL>.

## *What is Involved in a "DUSEL"*

### INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN

(Occupying perhaps 3.6 million cu.ft., or 135,000 sq.ft. )

1. A large ultraclean workspace, perhaps 66 by 260 feet by 66 feet high
2. Ancillary lab space for electronics
3. Machine shops for apparatus construction
4. Electronic shops and control rooms
5. Accommodations for personnel
6. Safety equipment (fire, flood, sanitation, ventilation, etc.)
7. Access to the outside

### OUTSIDE THE MOUNTAIN

1. Access to a disposal site for the rock withdrawn from the access tunnels and workspaces, with two years of construction noise and traffic
2. Water and wastewater treatment and handling equipment
3. Power and cables for operation, lighting, communications, etc.
4. Vehicles for transport of building materials, tunneling ma-

chinery, personnel, etc.

5. Permits for roadway, bridge(s), waste rock disposal, water diversion and water disposal
6. Funding from various sources

## *BACKGROUND*

Academic scientists have utilized available technologies and facilities to investigate high energy phenomena inside and outside the earth for a century or so, starting with balloons and now spacecraft. Biologists, interested in early life forms, and physicists seeking the fundamentals of force and time, have sought out tunnels and mine shafts for the special laboratory conditions they need.

Most of these researchers have been funded by their own countries' budgetary allowances for their work and the U.S. is no exception. The National Science Foundation allocates congressionally appropriated funds for these purposes thru committees of peers, with NSF staff assistance. Upon recommendation of such a committee, usually a Request for Proposal(s) is issued and that, or another committee, rates the proposals received on such variables as "Principal Investigator(s)" reputation, management competence of the submitting responsible institution; and other considerations (perhaps political); the staff and the committee then reaches consensus, and a contract is issued to the university or consortium "winning" the award.

However, in the case of the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory (DUSEL) proposed for the Icicle Creek-Mt. Cashmere area of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and the surrounding

Special Management Unit, this procedure was not followed. This was mainly due to a sudden change of proposed location from the Black Hills of South Dakota.

There, the Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota, was sold even as the science parties involved were setting up the project's financial framework. The impatient new owner, a Canadian gold producer, decided that the cost of the electricity to keep the dewatering pumps operating was too high, and "pulled the plug." The South Dakota governor then pushed thru legislation to allow a \$100 million bond issue to acquire the rights to the site, which it would lease to the universities already involved there. This was on top of \$23.5 million South Dakota had already allocated to the project.

Upon receipt of several "unsolicited" proposals and offers from Virginia, Minnesota, California, Colorado, South Dakota, and Washington, the NSF returned all proposals and announced on Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup> that perhaps around early July 2004 they would issue an RFP and that those whose proposals passed initial screening would be funded to prepare formal proposals, with a final technical solicitation (probably including the formal management (\$\$) section), in FY2005.

## *WHERE ARE ALPS AND THE ICICLE INVOLVED ?*

To perform the measurements necessary to advance these basic sciences, a space with minimum cosmic ray background is paramount. Shielding can be provided by an umbrella of solid "competent" rock of one and one-half or two mile

depth and radius. Depth below surface governs high-energy background cosmic radiation, with every hundred feet offering an improvement.

Efficiency and convenience call for horizontal access to the detector room. Most existing mines such as Homestake have vertical "hoist" access. Three (or more) of the proposed sites including the Mt. Cashmere / Icicle would initially have horizontal access.

Requirements for this laboratory are listed in the "What's Involved" list above. All these conditions are met in the U/W Consortium's proposal, except for "Outside" items 5 and 6, the permit and funding areas. Legal questions of "Wilderness Science", County permits, State water withdrawal and fisheries permits, and waste disposal will all need examination by a NEPA process.

The proposal would locate the lab 7400 feet under Mt. Cashmere, clearly within the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Access (in order to obtain maximum cover) would be from Icicle Creek Road, by a branch road above Bridge Creek near the group campground. A considerable clearcut area (acres) would be required around the tunnel entrance. A new bridge would be required to handle the rock truck and concrete convoys during the tunneling period, as would a wider Icicle Creek roadway and roadside space for underground transmission and communication lines.

### *WHAT IS THE PROBABILITY OF SELECTION OF THIS SITE ?*

Competition is expected from a UC/Irvine consortium, presenting Mt. San Jacinto, near Palm Springs; this too would have horizontal access. It would be under the San Jacinto Wilderness, which is man-

aged by California Parks. The rock quality is said to be inferior to Mt. Cashmere. Sierra Club is vigorously opposed to the proposal. California has political muscle, and the local business community is looking for invigoration.

Homestake, the "original" site, has extensive community backing, financial and political. It has a long mining and scientific history and less (but perhaps adequate) cover, but it has vertical access. Availability would not have to wait for a long, and expensive, horizontal tunneling period and a wilderness EIS, but the convenience of horizontal access would be absent.

Henderson Mine in Empire, Colorado, owned by Phelps-Dodge, has only 5000 feet of cover, but could go to 7400 feet within one year at a cost of only \$20 million. Access is currently vertical, but horizontal access is available after the present mining activity ceases, originally thought to be a decade or two away. Permitting and legal expense (and delay) should be minimal. The owners now seem eager to move out. U/Colorado, Colorado School of Mines, and CU-Boulder would operate the lab. This is probably the least controversial site.

Soudan in Minnesota, and a Virginia site, near the Maryland-West Virginia borders, are remote possibilities.

The University of Washington team has done an excellent job of investigating sites that might meet the geophysical requirements, from Pikes Peak to the Sierras. Local sites investigated include Big Devil Peak (also under wilderness) and Ruby Mountain on the North Cascades Highway, Pyramid Mountain on Lake Chelan, and Cannon Mountain, Edward Peak, and Mount Cashmere in the Icicle. Accessibility and locations for a visitor center and a surface research campus are among non-technical decision elements. Local political and economic factors also carry weight in the overall selection.

Earlier ALPS comments and ALPINE and other publications have discussed local reaction to what we feel might, under some scenarios, become a serious threat to the integrity of the U.S. Wilderness system. With their consultants, the University has selected Cashmere Mountain and the Icicle Road access route for their proposal. It is unfortunate that they did not earlier involve the hundreds of State residents who have intimate knowledge of the Alpine Lakes environment and history, particularly of that area, and that they waited nearly a year before involving the environmental community. Perhaps, together, we could find a consensus solution. ■



KEVIN GERGATY

*A nice stand of Zerophyllum near Blethen Lake.*



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WARREN PERKINS

*The eastern approach to Little Annapurna.*



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