

The NOR'WESTER

News for friends of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association

Volume XXX, No. 2

Oct 2009



In this photo:

SKY students hiking into Canyon Ridge for 8 days, Mt Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest



www.pnt.org

The NOR'WESTER

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Latest News from the PNTA, by Jon Knechtel

In all aspects, it's been a phenomenal year for the PNTA! President Obama signed into law on March 30th, Public Law 111-11, which included designation of the Pacific Northwest Trail as a National Scenic Trail. Membership in the PNTA is on the rise, and general interest in the trail along with people interested in working on the trail is growing. More of those ambitious people that we know as thru-hikers are either hiking the trail, or making plans to hike it in the future. Articles have appeared in newspapers

across the US and Canada, and interviews have been heard on radio and TV. All-in-all it's been great PR for the trail!

Even though we received no Title II Grants this year, with the exception of the Okanogan National Forest, and many thanks to the Recreational Conservation Office (RCO), where we had three NRTP Grants, we had a very successful summer.

Over 25,000 hours of work was accomplished on the Pacific North-

west National Scenic Trail, special projects by the WADNR and Forest Service, and side trails benefiting the PNNST. For this I want to thank the following groups for their accomplishments: Montana Conservation Corps, Tobacco Valley High Country Horsemen, Ferry County Chapter BCHW, Okanogan Valley Chapter BCHW, Tonasket SKY Crew, Pasayten SKY Performance Crew, Cascade Job Corps, Skagit SKY Crew, Whatcom Chapter BCHW, Skagit Trail

Continued on next page

PNTA Represented at the National Scenic and Historic Trail Conference in Missoula, MT, by Joan Melcher

This past July Director of Trail Operations Jon Knechtel, new PNTA President Doug Shepherd, and Past PNTA Chairperson Joan Melcher attended the 12th Conference on National Scenic and Historic Trails which was held in

Missoula, Montana. The Conference, held every two years, was hosted by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, the Nez Perce Trail Foundation, and the Continental Divide Trail Alliance. This conference was the

largest yet with more than 200 participants, over 30 of them young people who will be our future trail and agency leaders. Most of the 30 national scenic and historic trails were represented.

Continued on next page

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Nor'wester Editor
Nate Melanson

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Latest News from the PNTA, continued from pg 1

Maintenance Organization, Jefferson Trails Coalition, Peninsula Chapter BCHW, the Gray Wolf Group, Quilcene Ranger Corps, and Olympic SKY Performance Crew. I'd also like to thank the two crews from the Washington Trails Association who spent time working on the PNNST this year; one crew taking on the daunting challenge of logging out the Boundary Trail (all with crosscuts) on the Methow Valley Ranger District, and the other continuing work our crews began

on the 603.3 trail at Mazama Park on the Mt. Baker Ranger District. Thanks also to all of our sponsors, such as the Spring Family Trust for Trails, REI, PSE, and the many other donors who contributed over the year. Without all of you these accomplishments would not have taken place!

The PNTA hopes that federal dollars will come our way in fiscal year 2010 for expansion of staff and resources. Getting Regional Staff up to full strength

will play a large role in the creation of volunteer trail maintenance groups and chapters along the entire length of the trail. Achieving goals such as increased membership, more volunteers, more corporate donors, and better representation from all areas through which the trail passes will help our agency partners, state and counties, and local communities. In the long run, the trail will be the major beneficiary, and that in itself is the mission of the PNTA.

PNTA Represented at the National Scenic and Historic Trail Conference in Missoula, MT, continued from pg 1

The conference gave people the opportunity to learn from one another and share challenges, concerns, and successes. Community service projects were done to leave the Travelers Rest State Park a little better. (The first full-day of the conference was held at this Montana State Park where Lewis and Clark had an encampment on both their westward and eastward journeys.) A mentorship program paired experienced trail community members and youth participants. There was a definite involvement of younger people in our scenic and historic trails. Informative workshops were held and most lunches and dinners had motivational speakers



At Travelers Rest State Park, left to right: Doug Shepherd, Jon Knechtel, Joan Melcher

Regional News

News from the Cascade West Region, by Joan Melcher, Jon Knechtel, and Nate Melanson

Volunteers, by Joan Melcher

So far in 2009 over 2700 hours of volunteer trail work have been done in the Cascade West Region. Work began last winter in Deception Pass State Park where downed trees were removed, tread repair was done, and downed cedar was split into shakes which were used to re-roof a picnic shelter built by the CCC.

Regular trail maintenance was then performed on Blanchard and Anderson Mountains.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail uses an old trail that connects the east side of Mount Baker with Baker Lake. This Swift Creek Trail was the first trail built by the Forest Service in this part of the country. Most of this trail is in wilderness so that means all work, including removing downed trees, must be done with hand tools—no chain saws allowed. Over 700 of the volunteer hours this year went into work on this trail. Volunteer work consisted of removing downed trees, brushing, lopping, and tread repair. Fifteen people, including four who camped and worked for 6 days, worked on the trail.

The last trail work parties of the year were held in the South Fork of the Nooksack area where volunteers removed downed trees, lopped, brushed, and did tread repair.



Volunteers enjoying lunch along the Bear Creek section of the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail on the north side of Blanchard Mountain



Volunteers removing downed trees from the Swift Creek Trail



Regional News

News from the Cascade West Region, *continued*

Job Corps Crew, by Jon Knechtel

Job Corps has been very involved this summer with a myriad of projects. The year started off with three weeks of work for the WADNR at Cyprus Island where the crew removed about 1000 feet of barbed wire fence and posts, dug ditches for the utilities, and removed a lot of brush, logs, and debris. This was all part of a restoration project at Secret Harbor. They then replaced some culverts on the British Army Trail on Blanchard Mountain.

Four weeks were spent on the Iron Goat Trail at Stevens Pass where they rebuilt a bridge that was destroyed last winter and installed new turnpike near Martin Creek. They then spent two weeks dismantling two damaged bridges on the Ice Caves/Big Four Trail at Verlot. They removed a damaged bridge from the CCC Trail at Snoqualmie Pass and removed and replaced the trailhead kiosk at the Pratt Lake Trail. They are currently working on installing gabions to shore up the Baker River Trail at Blum Creek. These projects all took place in the Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie N.F.



Job Corps students rebuilding a bridge on the Iron Goat Trail

One-half mile of new trail was constructed at Deception Pass on the northeast side of the pass. Included in this were numerous steps and turnpiking, as well as drainage structures. Two weeks were spent working on Brush Creek, on the Pacific Crest Trail,

which aptly deserves its name. Water bars and grade dips were repaired and cleaned, tread work was done, and about three and a half miles of brushing was done. This all took place on the Methow Valley Ranger District.

SKY & Volunteer Vacations, by Nate Melanson

Check off another successful SKY program in the Cascade West. 5 local students were given the opportunity to have a summer job most High School students dream about. They worked 4 8-day trips, living in the wilderness of Mt Baker/Snoqualmie and Deception Pass State Park.

Their first trip was to brush the Baker River trail, and Shannon Ridge trail. Then it was on to tread construction and repair on Bell Pass. The third trip was a backcountry hike into Mazama Park, where they built some rock retaining walls, and dealt with numerous water drainage issues. Many thanks to Rocky Devon, and the Whatcom Chapter of the

BCH for multiple pack in and outs. And lastly, the crew enjoyed the good life (running water and bathrooms) at Deception Pass State while brushing out trails.

As always, our Volunteer Vacations were a lot of fun, providing volunteers a chance to soak in some of the PNW, literally. Our first trip was back to Mazama Park, dealing with more water drainage issues. The second trip was to Hannegan Pass, where crews spent time constructing trail through various slides, and removing down timber. Thanks to all volunteers who participated!



SKY students pondering life on Bell Pass



Regional News

News from the Olympic Peninsula Region, by Daniel Collins

From High Country to Low Country, on the Olympic Peninsula, the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNNST) received attention. Here is a quick review of where the work occurred by PNTA staff this summer.

Volunteers with the American Hiking Society and the PNTA widened sections of the High Divide between the Hoh Lake Junction and 7 Lakes Basin Junction for improved stock friendliness in late August. They performed this feat amidst a super-abundance of ripe blue and huckleberries which caused frequent interruptions in the swing of the Pulaski.

The Jefferson SKY crew composed of both Port Townsend High School youth and Americorps volunteer assistance worked in the high country of the Buckhorn Wilderness in mid-July fixing tread failures on that section of the PNNST leading into Olympic National Park and Constance Pass. This crew also prepped a site for a future Washington Trails Association crew to re-use sound timbers from old puncheon to build the more earthen turnpike structures just below Boulder Shelter.

Plans had been afoot for improving the approach of the Gold Creek Crossing at the 2830 Road to Trail site between the PNTA, US Forest Service Hood Canal Ranger District, and the Backcountry Horsemen (BCH). In 2006, a culvert and fill soils were removed above and around Gold Creek here as part of a federal fish enhancement project to restore the site to a natural setting. With the recreational use of the PNNST and natures onslaught, the ensuing years have seen some interesting changes take place at Gold Creek, namely the buildup of a muddy sloping approach, some loss of the rock steps crossing of the river, and the collapse of some upstream alders in the river channel. To respond to the troubles, staff proposed changes including re-grading the slope and building structures to support hiker and equestrian loads. The Buckhorn Chapter of BCH provided the initial horsepower on the plans in July by grading the site and installing a sill log. Then in August our SKY crew teamed up with the Quilcene Ranger Corps to ditch the low spots, build cross drains and curb logs and finish with rock and railroad ballast for the site. Hikers can now add 2 miles to the popular hike of Mt Zion by starting with Gold Creek and a hike of Sleepy Hollow. Trail informa-

tion and signs will help to validate the open status of this piece of the PNNST.

During the hottest part of the summer, both Ranger Corps and SKY worked within the cool dark forest on Snow Creek giving it a good clearing after 2 years of absence. Snow Creek is the east approach to the Mt Zion trail and the PNTA was pleased to see printed USFS information on accessing this trail.

In other trail news, the SKY crew paid their respects to a former section of the PNT known as the Gray Wolf Trail by taking a badly eroded section of trail above the river crossing of the Gray Wolf and produced 125' of re-tread to stock standards along with the installation of water bars to reduce winter water flows.

Both SKY and Quilcene Ranger Corps crews had a penchant for building many sections of turnpike and waterbars this summer. During one visit of the crews at Snow Creek, the worksite had the look of a timber stake factory and the sheer quantity of stakes bundled with bailing wire offered proof that America's youth, though they may have challenges with WASL testing, and structured modern lifestyles still retain the skill of making excellent primitive stakes, some of which looked like small spears.

During the spring months, the PNTA participated with the Gray Wolves Trail Crew and helped clear many trails that classify as feeder trails to the PNNST in Olympic National Park, the Buckhorn, and Olympic Forest lands; several of these trips were up the Gray Wolf and Slab Camp trails. During these trips, special attention was made to widen trailways to stock standards wherever trail included this use activity. We are, as an organization, indebted to the many volunteers who follow their special calling to clear trail in cold weather after wind storms that lay trees down blocking the PNNST and other trails.



Building tread width in Sleepy Hollow

During the summer, the PNTA also worked with the Jefferson Trails Coalition on a slow but extended work party to add a measure of refinement to the Larry Scott Trail 6 miles south of Port Townsend by building a 30' long 5' high primitive cedar crib wall. The rationale for the project was more than refinement in fact, the hinge point of the trail (or outer edge) on one particular slope was exceedingly steep, composed of river sand, and prone to failure. To hold this slope together under the force of bikers' wheels and horses hooves, it was felt that a wall was necessary.

All in all, the Olympic trail crews accomplished an exceptional level of work this summer. Now, cooler fall-like weather ushers in more volunteer work parties.



Driving stakes, Upper Big Quil

Regional News

News from the Pasayten Region, by Trygve Culp

Field season is winding down in the Pasayten. Along with the shorter days, North Central Washington is seeing cooler days and colder nights. Even in the lower elevation valleys, the native vegetation is beginning to go dormant; up higher, the wild flowers are gone for the year and the aspen leaves have begun to turn a beautiful gold. It has snowed in the North Cascades and along the crest of the Kettle Range several times already. It is a good time to pause and reflect on all of the work we got done this summer. And, boy howdy, did we get a whole lot done...

The Oroville Chapter of the PNTA started the season off with a National Trails Day work party to log out and brush the Snowshoe Trail in the Loomis State Forest from Cold Springs west to the Snowshoe cabin. The Chapter had formally adopted this piece of the newly created Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail earlier in the spring. During the course of the work, Chapter members discovered a previously unreported population of rare plants currently listed on the State sensitive species list.

Following closely on the heels of National Trails Day in early June, the Regional SKY Education and Pasayten Performance crews began their training week at the Tonasket Alternative School. The crews received instruction in all aspects of trail maintenance and construction as well as the proper use and care of hand tools, first aid, field sanitation and personal hygiene, nutrition, survival and wilderness ethics. Additionally, the crew leaders and a crewmember from each crew were certified to operate chainsaws on National Forest and Washington Department of Natural Resources administered lands. This season, the Region partnered with Okanogan County Work Source to em-



SKY students enjoying lunch on the trail

ploy 6 SKY crewmembers and 7 Performance crewmembers. Both crews were employed for 8 weeks.

For two weeks following completion of their training, the SKY crew “cut their teeth” logging out, brushing, installing drainage structures and doing minor tread reconstruction on the Cabin Trail. The Cabin Trail, part of the Forest Service trail system that circumnavigates Bonaparte Mountain in the Okanogan Highlands, has been identified by the Tonasket Ranger District as a non-motorized segment of the new National Scenic Trail route. After completing work on the Cabin Trail, the SKY crew moved on to the Loomis State Forest west of the Okanogan River to begin reconstruction of the Goodenough Trail from its point of origin near the Snowshoe Cabin west to the Pasayten Wilderness boundary. The local State Forest Area Manager has identified the Goodenough Trail as the preferred route for the National Scenic Trail. Finally, the crew spent their last week partnered with the Okanogan Valley Chapter of Back Country Horsemen to complete a range allotment improvement project. They installed a new stock watering tank, built a short piece of drift fence and installed a new gate to control stock movement and constructed approximately ¼ mile of stock

driveway to access the new stock water development.

While the SKY crew was busy in the front country, the Performance crew spent its first month constructing 2 and ½ miles of new trail into Honeymoon Pass in the Tiffany Roadless Area between the Okanogan and Methow drainages. The Honeymoon Pass trail is the first new trail construction on the Tonasket Ranger District in over 30 years. After completing the Honeymoon Pass trail, the Performance crew moved into the Pasayten Wilderness for 2 weeks to do “heavy maintenance” and minor reconstruction of the first 1 and ½ miles of the Tungsten Creek Trail, a primary connector trail between the Chewuch River and the Boundary Trail in the eastern Pasayten. Finally, the Performance Crew finished up their season in the Lake Chelan - Sawtooth Wilderness constructing turnpikes in partnership with the Methow Valley Chapter of Back Country Horsemen on the War Creek Trail.

All in all it was a super summer for the volunteers and the SKY and Performance crews in the Pasayten Region. We got a tremendous amount of work done, we had a great time doing it and we finished the season with zero accidents or injuries.

Regional News

News from the Rocky Mountain Region, by Jon Knechtel

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to members of the Montana Conservation Corps for all the work done this summer on the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. Without groups like the MCC and volunteers it would be extremely difficult for the PNTA to accomplish the tasks needed in maintaining the PNNST.

Because of the number of hours of work done on the Trail, I'd especially like to recognize the following people (who have also been given membership into the PNTA);

- Cliff Kipp
- Julia Lettrich
- Kim Corette
- Lauren Jarrold
- Brant Giovannetti
- Katherine Gimino
- Zachary Alexander
- Ben Mason
- Kelby Weggeland
- Andre Condit
- Zane Perryman
- Nolan Van Eimeren
- Vincent Meuli
- Ashley Palmer
- Lexi Brunz
- Adam Holmquist



Montana Conservation Corps crew clearing Hay Creek Trail #3



Montana Conservation Corps crew brushing Hay Creek Trail #3



Regional PNTA Event and Trail Work Information

Note about Trail Maintenance on the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail:

No matter where you work, wear long pants, have work gloves, have plenty of fluids to drink, and bring a lunch. Each person working will have to sign a liability release form. Parents or guardians of those under 18 must sign for the minor.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION:

Contact PNTA Director of Trails, Jon Knechtel, cell (360) 391-0788; jknechtel@pnta.org

COLVILLE REGION:

Contact PNTA Director of Trails, Jon Knechtel, cell (360) 391-0788; jknechtel@pnta.org

PASAYTEN REGION:

Contact PNTA Regional Coordinator, Trygve Culp, (509) 486-2061; trygveculp@gmail.com

OLYMPIC REGION:

Contact PNTA Regional Coordinator Daniel Collins at (206) 550-9451; dcollins@pnta.org

CASCADE WEST REGION:

SKAGIT TMO:

For all of the following, meet at 8:15 am at the Cook Road Park-n-Ride, exit 232 from I-5, across from the 76 Gas Station. If you can only work until noon, please call ahead to see if the work site will be conducive to your leaving early. Sometimes we will be working behind locked gates or far up logging roads and it would not be convenient for people to leave early. Call (360) 424-0407 for information.

2009 Skagit Trail work schedule for May through October 2009:

May 2 and 6, June 6 (National Trails Day) and 20, July 11 and 25, August 1 and 15, Sept 5 and 19, Oct 3 and 17

Nor'wester Advertising Rates

Interested in advertising in the Nor'wester? Know of a someone who might? All ads will be included in our hardcopy Nor'wester, the email version, as well as on our website; www.pnta.org.

Ad Size	Cost per issue	Cost per year (3 issues)	Savings
Inside Front Cover	\$225.00	\$575.00	\$100.00
Inside Back Cover	\$210.00	\$550.00	\$80.00
Full Page	\$200.00	\$525.00	\$75.00
3/4 Page	\$150.00	\$385.00	\$65.00
1/2 Page	\$110.00	\$280.00	\$50.00
1/4 Page	\$60.00	\$140.00	\$40.00
Business Card	\$35.00	\$75.00	\$30.00

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PNTA Website: www.pnta.org, by Nate Melanson

There are some exciting things happening at the Pacific Northwest Trail Association website, pnta.org. Averaging 3,000 visits per month, our website continues to be the place for the most up to date information regarding the trail.

Some of the website features our visitors can enjoy:

- Selected trail maps
- Trail reports with current conditions
- Find out about events and volunteering with a local trail maintenance organization
- Shop at our online store
- Join the PNTA at our Membership page
- Enjoy photos from trail crews and volunteers
- Discuss any topic with other trail enthusiasts on the message board
- Read Regional Information from all over the trail
- Read about the history of the PNTA

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Pacific Northwest Trail Association. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links: THE TRAIL, THE PNTA, SKY, OPPORTUNITIES, COMMUNICATION, REGIONAL INFO, IMAGES, MERCHANDISE, CONTACT INFO, and SITE MAP. Below the navigation is a large banner with the text "Welcome to the Pacific Northwest Trail Association" and a description of the 1200-mile trail. To the left, there are sections for "JOIN THE PNTA TODAY!" and "CURRENT EVENTS". To the right, there are logos for sponsors including American Hiking Society, Ford, Columbia Sportswear Company, Skyline, Williams, and TESORO. At the bottom, there is a "Thank You!" message and a link to "Part PNTA Sponsors".

The PNTA Message Board

The PNTA Message Board is an exciting place to connect with other trail enthusiasts. Get your questions answered, help someone else answer theirs, or just enjoy reading discussions of trail related topics. thru hikers frequently use the boards to communicate with one another. Registration is not required, but recommended to take full advantage of the message board services.

To access the message board:

Go to pnta.org, click on "Communication", then click "Message Board".

So hang up your backpack, take a break from the woods, and come join us online.

Web: <http://www.pnta.org>

Email: pnta@pnta.org

Assumption of Risk

The fine print:

Some risks are inherent in any PNTA activity. Each Association member, guest, or non-member participant agrees to accept personal responsibility for his or her safety and the safety of minors accompanying such persons. The Association cannot ensure the safety of any participant or hiker or activity. In participating in Association activities, each such person agrees to hold harmless and free from blame the activity leaders and the Association, its officers, directors, and members, for any accident, injury, or illness that might be sustained from participating in hikes or other Association activities.

Celebrating the PNT, by John Molohon

Thirty years ago John Molohon and Pete Langstaff began a 100 day end-to-end hike of the PNT which only 4 others had completed. John's previously unpublished journal and photos are at: <http://sites.google.com/site/pntendoend1979/home>. A brief summary of the hike follows.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Confucius

After ten months and hundreds of hours of planning I am carrying 60 pounds over cliffs, rocks and downed trees, through thick brush, cold rain and hot sun; at times it seems my body is not up to the venture. Other times all effort disappears as my thoughts slip away from the aches and pains, from the constant chatter of the mind, and I get totally involved in my body as it works. My skin rejoices in a slight breeze, the scarf is cool and damp about my neck, the sun beats hot and each bit of shade is like a gift.

In 1979 the trail did not yet exist in many places. We walked the shoulders of highways, tramped through dusty gravel and dirt roads, hiked swiftly on firm wide trails, struggled anxiously down narrow, ancient, vanishing trails, wandered onto cow paths, and bush-bashed blindly through forest, rocks and brush. The challenge was at times intense; the beauty overwhelming.

In mountain wilderness we left civilization far



Fog in the Kettle Range

behind. In urban wilderness, civilization added a character unlike the isolation of the Pasayten, the dry ranges of Eastern Washington, the bleakness of Idaho pines, and the grandeur of Montana peaks. I found myself out of step with the urban sophistication of Puget Sound and the social expectations of living in populated areas.

3 1/2 million steps later, it ended.

Clearly there were two simultaneous hikes for me, one in the Pacific Northwest and another

in the self. Completing the PNT was a gratifying experience. All of my outdoor skills were challenged by the incredible variety of hiking conditions along the route: high barren rock ridges and low tides, desert, rain forests, alpine meadows, orchards, wild elk and domestic dogs.

My inner journey created my hike, making it a satisfying experience. Good hiking, good days as well as bad times, were created by me as I brought up those feelings. The real accomplishment for me was in pressing through, expanding my aliveness through barriers which often look like hunger, fatigue, sore feet and despondency. Hiking the PNT was a vehicle through which to experience having my body, mind and soul support my aliveness.

Hikers face conditions that are largely unknown to those who seldom leave the confines of their automobiles. They get cold, wet, tired, and hungry. They get warm from their work, dry from the sun, and well rested from short breaks. They become exhilarated and despondent. And to continue down the trail they must greet each emotion, attitude, and body sensation as they would an old friend. They make note of the occasion and pass on to the next bend in the trail. This is it, this is all there is.



Whidbey Island beach camp



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YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE PNTA!

If you're already a member, please share this with another trail enthusiast.

Your contribution will help support:

- Volunteer efforts
- Construction and maintenance projects
- Educational and informational programs
- Management and protection of the trail
- Advocating for policy issues related to the PNTA

Please consider a contribution to our Endowment Fund

Happy Trails!

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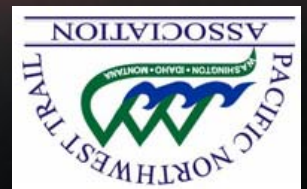
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