



North Olympic Group Newsletter

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<https://www.sierraclub.org/washington/north-olympic>

Oct - Dec 2020



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Meetings & Events

Oct 15 – EXCOM Mtg via Zoom*

Oct 16 – Ballots to be mailed out

Oct 26 – 20/20 Water Agreement discussions (see pg. 5)

Online & mail registrations must be received 8 days before election day.

Nov 3 – Election Day

Nov 11 – Veterans Day

Nov 19 – EXCOM Mtg via Zoom*

Nov 26 – Thanksgiving Day

Dec &&& – Happy Holidays

Dec 17 – EXCOM Mtg via Zoom*

* Details will be sent via mass email

COVID-19 Remains a Concern

The North Olympic Peninsula continues to experience cases of COVID-19 infection. Last summer our area saw a substantial uptick in the number of cases reported. The NOG Executive Committee and newsletter contributors are grateful that our rates of illness are still proportionate to our rural population. We hope that you have been able to cope with the health and economic uncertainty that the COVID-19 virus has brought to your lives. The best thing we can do to see us through this time is to continue observing the CDC guidelines: wear masks, social distance, and wash our hands frequently.

Two Baby Orcas Born in September

Good news for the Southern Resident whale pod! On September 25th NPR's KUOW reported an update to the happy news released in early September: A newborn calf had been confirmed by the Center for Whale Research. This calf, born to J41, will receive a designation after it has been found to be fit and healthy.

The mother of the September 5th baby was J35, also known as "Tahlequah" who captured the hearts of Americans when she carried her dead calf on her nose for 17 days in 2018. Her new baby, a male, has been designated as J57. His arrival in early September triggered what appeared to be a celebration among the members of the pod. Follow [this link](#) for more information.

The gestation period for Orcas is 18 months.

Support Sierra Club's 30 x 30 Campaign

America needs to protect public lands. From national parks to green space in cities, America's wild places are one of our best tools for fighting climate change. Public lands are crucial for sequestering carbon, protecting from extreme weather, and providing habitat for wildlife. But right now, just 12% of America's lands are protected from development. To bring things back into balance, we need to bring that number up **to 30% -- and we need to get it done by 2030**. View this short [video](#) on the 30 x 30 Launch to learn more. Then take your comments or concerns to your elected representatives by clicking [here](#).



An Orca calf swims with its mother

Group Executive Committee

We are presently governed by five volunteers, with help from our conservation committees and interested members. To contact Excom members, or for more information **email them at**

northolympicgroupsc@gmail.com

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month from 1-3 PM. At this time, meetings are held online. People can join via Zoom phone or video. All are welcome.



Officers:

Chair: Darlene Schanfald

Vice Chair: Norm Baker

Secretary: Genie Mixson

Treasurer: Genie Mixson

There is room at the table. If you are interested in joining the EXCOM, contact us via the email address above.

Executive Committee:

Norm Baker

Peter Guererro

Genie Mixson

Darlene Schanfald

Bob Sextro

Newsletter Editors

Genie Mixson, Darlene Schanfald
mixsonneg@gmail.com

Complaints, suggestions, and opinions are always welcome

Sierra Club Election Endorsements

It goes without saying that this is perhaps the most consequential election in recent American history. Ballots will be mailed out in mid-October and should be in your mailbox as early as October 16. If you don't receive your ballot by the 20th or a few days later, contact your county election official. Mail your ballots in early or drop them off at secure ballot drop off locations in each county.

Between now and then, consider donating to and working for environmental champions by going to the Sierra Club's Independent Action website:

<https://www.sierraclubindependentaction.org/2020-plan-to-win>

Here's the list of Sierra Club Endorsements:

President/VP:	Joe Biden/Kamala Harris
Governor:	Jay Inslee
Attorney General:	Bob Ferguson
Commissioner of Public Lands:	Hilary Franz
Lt. Governor:	Denny Heck
Congress, Dist. 6	Derek Kilmer
WA Senate, Dist. 24	Kevin Van De Wege
WA House, Dist. 24	Steve Tharinger
WA House, Dist. 24	Mike Chapman
Jefferson County Commissioner:	Lorna Smith

Let's restore to government the environmental values we hold dear. Let's elect environmental champions up and down the ballot who acknowledge the unfolding climate catastrophe and who will work to ensure we leave a restored earth for our children and grandchildren.



NOG's District 24 Recommendations:



Senator Kevin Van De Wege has supported a variety of important environmental issues including reducing toxics, eliminating nonnative Atlantic salmon fish farms from the waters of WA State, and ending the destructive practice of suction dredge mining. He has been a leader in trying to get dangerous flame-retardant chemicals permanently banned in our state. Kevin supports a carbon tax or emissions trading system to address climate change and has worked to advance the Governor's priorities in this regard. Kevin's opponent has ties to the timber industry and her views are, in our opinion, not protective of the environment. For more information on Senator Van De Wege see his website: <https://www.kevinvandewege.com/>



Representative Steve Tharinger has represented District 24 since 2010 and has been an environmental hero. Steve chairs the House Capital Budget Committee where he helped secure millions of dollars in funding for ecosystem improvements such as habitat acquisition and restoration; water quality; stormwater improvements; and parks and trails. He helped broker a settlement in the Hirst case that will lead to millions of dollars invested in water quality for fish, farms and families. He has seen that our district's rural health systems are well funded. He has been a consistent vote for clean energy and fuel standards as well as toxic pollution prevention and clean up. For more information on Representative Tharinger click here: <https://housedemocrats.wa.gov/tharinger/page/2/>

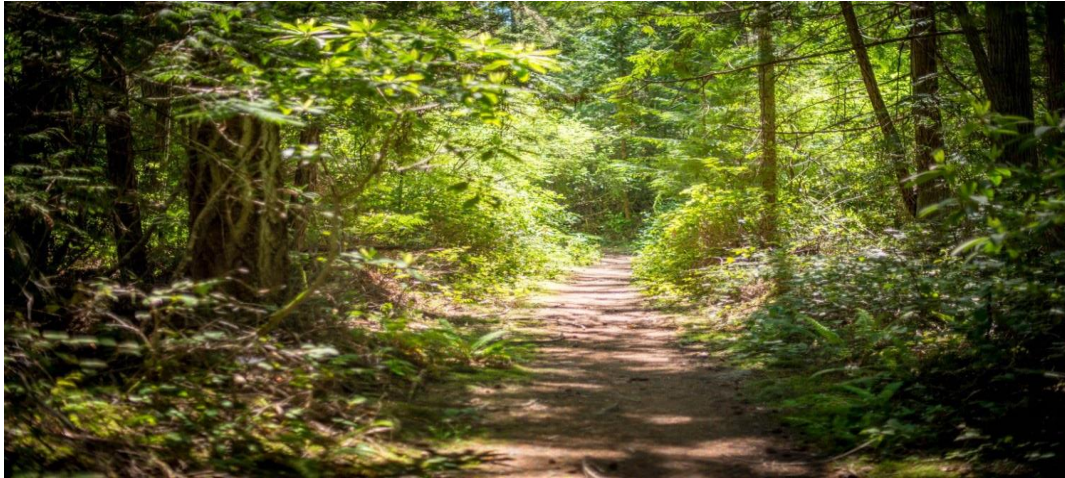


Representative Mike Chapman has been one of District 24's environmental champions. Mike serves on several committees, including Transportation and Budget. He helped secure funding in the House Operating Budget designed to bring together various stakeholders on salmon recovery. Along with Kevin, Mike was responsible for ending nonnative finfish aquaculture in WA State. He was the deciding vote to move the low carbon fuel standard out of the Transportation Committee. He was the prime sponsor of the Community Forest legislation and he supported the Governor's tougher greenhouse emissions standards. For more information on Representative Chapman visit his website: <http://www.votemikechapman.com/>

Jefferson County Commissioner



Lorna Smith has been an environmental activist since the late 1970s. In her role as a planning commissioner, she has always put environmental considerations first and has opposed ill-conceived projects that negatively impacted communities and the environment. She worked with prominent conservationists to establish a National Wildlife Refuge on Protection Island. She is a strong supporter of the County's Comprehensive Plan and adopting a stronger Shoreline Management Program. She opposes plans to transport Canadian tar sands oil through our waters; a plan that will increase tanker traffic ten-fold and greatly increase the risk of oil spills. Her lifetime of experience in government, NGO's, and community groups has aided her in building coalitions. We believe this background lends itself particularly well to this uniquely challenging period as we face the twin tasks of addressing disruptions caused by both the pandemic and climate change. For more information about Lorna Smith, visit her website: <https://lornaforcommissioner.com/> She has made climate change one of her top priorities.



Miller Peninsula State Park

By Darlene Schanfald

In 1985, Clallam County citizens recommended an area of 1444 acres on the Miller Peninsula be set aside for open space. The site is bounded by Discovery Bay and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Citizens lobbied WA State Parks (Parks) to adopt that acreage as a state park. In 1988, the WA State Legislature directed Parks to purchase the acreage from the WA State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) along with two miles of beach. Parks and DNR inked the agreement.

At the same time, unbeknownst to a few, DNR and Parks were making an agreement to release some of that acreage to Mitsubishi for a Planned Recreational Community which grew to well over one-thousand acres that included nearly half the dedicated parkland. Parks believed that in exchange Mitsubishi would build the road to the Park and the utilities and some picnic infrastructure, and some acreage in exchange (although later Mitsubishi's partners felt Parks should pay for the acreage).

The local non-profit organization Protect the Peninsula's Future and an *ad hoc* organization, Save Our State Park (SOSP) lead an intense legal battle and Initiative drive to keep the dedicated parkland. The organizations prevailed and the developers withdrew. Parks then worked with the citizens to increase the acreage of the park. It is now 2800 acres and Parks is in negotiations to purchase a 21.5-acre parcel that would provide more beach access.

The Legislature has never funded development for the park. Over the years, forest, plant and animal experts have identified many of the Park's native plants, old growth and animal habitat. It has also been used as a study site for nature. Now, Parks has listed this site as the one it will invest in developing.

Miller Peninsula State Park is a contiguous forest, rare in size. It contains sizeable wetlands, rare native plants, unique plant-tree clusters, and stands of naturally regenerative old growth that have federal protection. It is unique for its Douglas fir tree forest, as well as for its Pacific madrona cluster, critical bird-use areas, and WA State's native wild rhododendrons.

Given our increasing CO2 levels, it is wise to retain the continuity of this forested land. Also, with the Peninsula's increasing growth and drought, long-term water availability will require serious consideration.



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Thus, Parks must fully assess the parkland's natural resources before development strategies are proposed.

Between October 6 and October 31, State Parks is accepting comments on a development strategy. Details are available at this site: bit.ly/MillerPenPlan

Comments can be made various ways:

On-line: <https://parks.state.wa.us/FormCenter/Planning-6/Public-Comment-65>

Email: Nikki Fields, Planning Lead, WA State Parks and Recreation Commission,
Nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov

Mail: Nikki Fields, Planning Lead, WA State Parks and Recreation Commission,
P.O. Box 42650, Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Jefferson County News

Mill Water Agreement Being Renegotiated

In Jefferson County, the paper mill uses 10 million gallons per day of water; everybody else uses just 1 million! With the unfolding climate catastrophe, Olympic glaciers are melting away, winter snow-packs melt earlier, and drought years are more frequent, so water will become only scarcer. Port Townsend is beginning the process of renegotiating the long-term water agreement with the mill. **Get involved to make your voice heard.** Port Townsend's *Local 20/20 Climate Action* group will be hosting a discussion on October 26th at 2PM. Go to their [website](#) for further information or to the *Port Townsend Engage* website:

<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/water-supply-mill-agreement>

Port Townsend's Shoreline Master Program Review

The City of Port Townsend is undertaking a "periodic review" of its Shoreline Master Program (SMP), as required by the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA). Policies and regulations in the SMP aim to manage development to ensure appropriate shoreline uses, environmental protection and public access. For example, a proposal to establish a new restaurant on the shoreline may be required to provide public access to the beach. By state law, each SMP must be reviewed and revised, if needed, on an eight-year schedule established by the Legislature to stay current and consistent with changes and new information. Go to *Port Townsend's Engage* website for further information:

<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/shoreline-master-program>

Tarboo Ridge Update

The Tarboo Ridge Coalition (TRC) gave a quick update.

In July, Fort Discovery advertised “fully auto extravaganzas” for weekend recreational shooting offering the use of M16 and M60 weapons. It is not known how serious the advertisement was, but the events did not take place. The Washington State Patrol and the Jefferson County Sheriff’s office both took the issue seriously and visited Fort Discovery to confirm that the July 4th event was not occurring

Fort Discovery’s challenge to Jefferson County’s 2018 Commercial Gun Range Ordinance, on 2nd Amendment grounds, was rejected by the State Court of Appeals. The 2018 ordinance was superseded by the County’s 2020 ordinance restricting new gun ranges to indoor facilities.

A Bad Year for Fires

By Genie Mixson

From the 2019 wildfires that ravaged Australia, to the current fires in the western US, Siberia and the Arctic – there is no doubt that wildfires have become more of an issue than ever this year. Some say the earth is on fire. The fires we are used to seeing in the US are generally identifiable by flames raging high above the trees and brush in our forests. Those in Brazil and Indonesia are mostly set by farmers to clear the land. This year I read about “Zombie” fires. These burn peat in the Arctic and Siberia. They called them zombies because during the winter, they burn at low temperatures under the ice then rise again in the spring melt.

There is so much to be said about the devastation of uncontrolled burning. For the most part, the daily news reports the losses in terms that humans see first: The scorched trees and destroyed homes. One must dig deeper to read about the loss of habitat and death to other creatures. A couple of weeks ago I read an excellent article that ties the current trend to climate change. The New York Times discussed the world hot spots in their Sept 16, 2020 article titled [“It’ Not Just the West, these Places are Also on Fire”](#)

Where there is Fire, there is Smoke

By Genie Mixson

The only good thing that wildfires have brought to this period of COVID avoidance is that many people are willingly wearing face masks outside. In fact, at the time of this writing, I was hoping very much to be referring to the 2020 wildfires in the past tense.

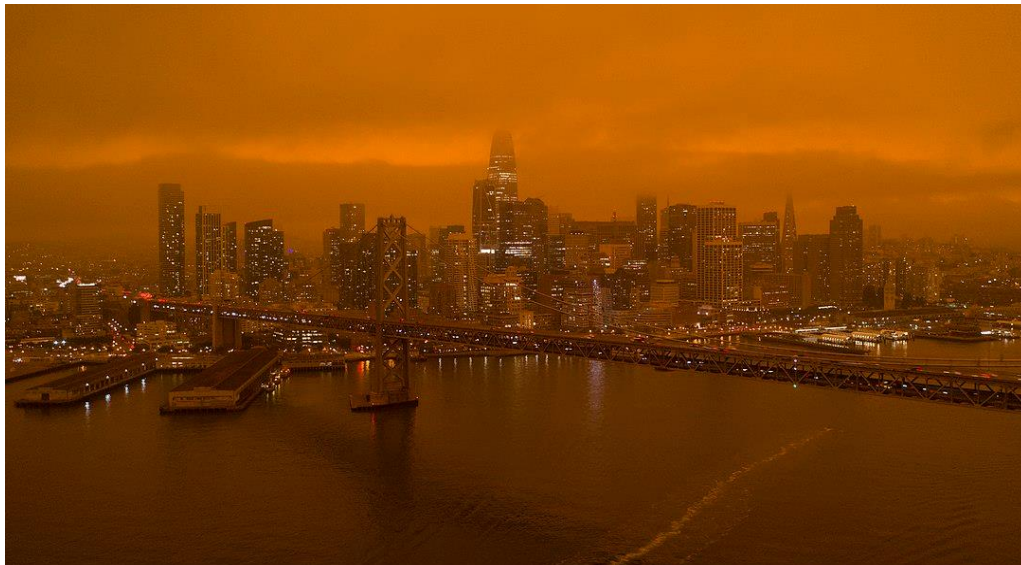
Two weeks ago, I asked a friend of mine if he was okay, noting that a wildfire was still raging near his home in Napa, CA. He replied:

“Yes, it’s been quite miserable here lately and I sleep with one eye open...the (Glass) fire is slowly creeping this way with only 10% containment...about 8-1/2 miles away now but the smoke is the problem...you have to stay put inside...I think you are getting some smoke from our fires. I am beginning to smell smoke inside near the windows now...I wonder how long it will take to air the house out. Hopefully, we get some early rains to clear the smoke and fires.

I think a lot of people have a mild case of depression setting in. It's important to realize this and take some action. I make sure I get plenty of healthy meals and vitamins. I make more phone calls now and send more emails/texts ... I love to ride my bike when the weather is nice...Its important to get more exercise and see the sun once in a while.

The photos below are best seen in color. The amber tinge in the San Francisco photo is not from a tinted lens. The haze over Seattle is not fog, but smoke from fires burning hundreds of miles to the south.

San Francisco on Sept 9th, 2020



By Christopher Michel - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cmichel67/50323746023/>

Seattle on Sep 11th 2020



Port Angeles Harbor Hazardous Waste Cleanups

By Darlene Schanfald



After the Rayonier pulp mill closed in 1997, a coalition of western environmental organizations and citizens petitioned the US EPA to ensure that the nearly 70-year Rayonier, Inc. Port Angeles Pulp Mill was cleaned of its contaminants.

EPA Region 10 (Seattle) determined the site – the mill property’s, surface and ground waters and sediments – ranked for Superfund. Local politics kicked in quickly, and in 2007 oversight of the cleanup was transferred to the WA State Department of Ecology (Ecology). Ecology promised it could beat EPA’s predicted cleanup schedule by two years. That 2007 cleanup schedule has long passed with little accomplished.

In 2019, Ecology returned to the local community to tell us what they were requiring of Rayonier. The company had to meet a very low cleanup bar: basically cover up. Cover up the toxic sediment with clean sand; cover up the toxic on-land soils with dirt. The community howled “Cover Up! We want a Cleanup!” The pushback went up the Ecology channels and the staff sent a message to the community that they heard our disagreement and would meet with us in Port Angeles in June 2020.

Given COVID-19 constraints, that meeting was cancelled. The community awaits another meeting time.

In 2007, Ecology determined the rest of the Harbor should be cleaned, at least the southern portion. The Harbor ranked second in concern to other state sites under WA State’s Legislative Puget Sound Cleanup Act passed in 2006.

In January, Ecology met with the community to review its scoring procedure for cleanup of the western Harbor. This cleanup involved the City of Port Angeles, Port of Port Angeles, Nippon, Georgia-Pacific and Merrill & Ring, all contributors to polluting that area. Ecology has not released a draft cleanup decision, but in mid-September, it responded to the comments it received after its January presentation. Those comments and the agency’s Responsive Summary, along with other information about the cleanup can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Proposed Clallam County Mining Code Changes

NOG co-signed a letter last month to Clallam County with Protect the Peninsula's Future on proposed changes to the County mining codes for sand, gravel and basalt. Due to the Department of Natural Resources lawsuit against the County for insufficient mining codes, the County was forced to upgrade them.

Of particular concern is *overlay zoning*. County staff has recommended a new zone: Mining Resource Land Overlay District (MRLOD). A surface mine located upon land having the MRLOD designation may operate without first obtaining a conditional use permit. This will affect property owners within 600 feet of an MRLOD who then must abide by the overlay rules and not complain of noise or other; former land protections and rights to comment are lost.

Staff devised a scoring system based on the quantity and the quality of the minerals to be mined, but basically those in earlier permitted (not necessarily operating) sites could automatically be designated an MRLOD.

Other potential mineral sites that score lower than would an MRLOD will be considered a Mining Resource Land (MRL). Operators of these mines would apply for a County conditional use permit and would be subject to public hearings.

The Clallam County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing from September 29 – October 13 on the staff's recommendations. We encourage property owners in Clallam County (not the cities) to learn if their properties would be affected. They should check with their Commissioner and with the Department of Community Development for further information.

More PFAS Contamination Found

We keep hearing about PFAS. What are they and why should we care?

PFAS is an acronym for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. They are a common chemical ingredient in industry since the 1950s. They are resistant to water and lipids, thus incorporated into the use of waterproof fabrics, cookware, carpets, food packaging and fire-fighting foam. PFAS have been found by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be dangerous at certain levels* in the bloodstream, raising risks for cancer and ill effects on the body's immune and endocrine system and in human development. Thus far, in our area, these chemicals have been found in the drinking water wells in and around Naval Sites on Whidbey Island, and more recently at Naval Base Kitsap - [Bangor](#). At this time, the Navy is providing bottled water for drinking and cooking to the most seriously affected residents.

The Washington Department of Ecology has released an interim [PFAS Chemical Action Plan](#).

* The EPA offered non-enforceable guidelines at HA of 70 ng/L, while seven states set levels ranging from 13 to 1000 ng/L. Many conservationists recommend levels between 1 and 7 ng/L.

NOG Webmaster is Moving- on



Our North Olympic Group (NOG) is losing one of our most valuable volunteers. Mary Porter-Solberg moved permanently to Arizona over two years ago, but has continued supporting NOG out of an admirable sense of loyalty. She knew that the EXCOM had no one to replace her. However, Mary wants to get on with her life in her new surroundings.

NOG needs someone with better than average computing skills to volunteer time in managing our website and other digital communications. We send out a quarterly newsletter, and supplemental email “blasts”.

If you are interested in becoming part of the NOG communications team, please contact the EXCOM via email:

northolympicgroupsc@gmail.com

Support Environmental Candidates

Support Environment Candidates
by donating to the Sierra Club
Federal and State PACs.



Fall in the Elwha Valley

The election is around the corner and electing a pro-environment Congress and President is key to undoing the last four years of destructive policies. We need to get back on track addressing climate change and to rejoin the global community in protecting our environment for future generations. Contributions to both the national Sierra Club Political Action Committee (PAC) and the Washington State PAC will ensure that we have elected officials at all levels of government who share our values.

Go here to contribute to the Sierra Club's [National PAC](#):

Go here to contribute to the Sierra Club's [Washington State PAC](#):