



On Our Way to a Coal Free Washington!

By Seth Ballhorn and Jace Bylenga, Coal Free Washington Organizers

We have made great strides in the campaign to make Washington a coal free state. While the last remaining coal plant located in Washington is slated for retirement, Washington utilities still own a large coal plant in Montana, the Colstrip Coal Fired Power Plant.

Colstrip is the Northwest's largest source of carbon pollution and one of the dirtiest power plants west of the Mississippi. It emits two times more nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide--known to cause respiratory illnesses--than the next nine-largest air pollution sources in Montana combined. Colstrip's public health hazards also seep into the water: More than 800 acres of toxic coal ash waste ponds have created an ever-spreading poisonous plume in the groundwater.

Washington officials, municipalities and resi-



Colstrip Mine. Photo: Christopher Boyer from Kestrel Aerial

dents are expressing an unprecedented level of desire to transition from coal-fired electricity to clean energy solutions for Washington State. Sierra Club supports this move and is asking the Utilities and Transportation Commission to support the will of the people. Public concern has focused primarily on the Colstrip Generation Facility in Colstrip, Montana. Puget Sound Energy (PSE), Avista Utilities and Pacific Power own Colstrip along with three other utilities.

10,000 Petitions Delivered to Puget Sound Energy

In early October, PSE customers, Coal Free PSE activists, and coalition partners delivered over 10,000 petitions to PSE in Olympia. Accompanying the petitions was a report card, in which PSE was given an "Incomplete" for not coming up with a plan to retire their coal plant.

Continued on page 5

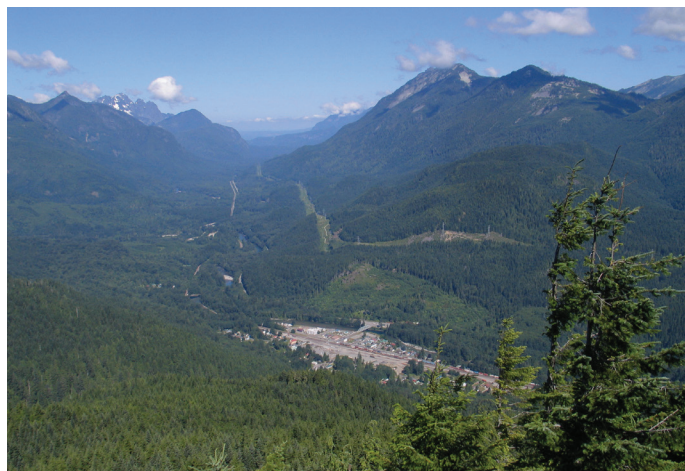
Cascade Checkerboard Project: Promoting Habitat, Wildlands and Recreation

By Charlie Raines, Checkerboard Project Director

The Sierra Club's Cascade Checkerboard Project works to maintain and restore wildlife habitat, and quiet recreation in the Central Cascades. In the past year, there have made considerable progress despite some disappointments and further delays on critical conservation planning.

Conserving Lands in the Kittitas Valley

A major component of the project is the acquisition of checkerboard lands, once



Skykomish Valley from Maloney Rock. Photo: Charlie Raines

owned by the Northern Pacific Railroad. Reduced appropriations from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund have hampered our progress but we have had some recent successes.

Over 47,000 acres of private timberlands in the upper Kittitas valley was recently acquired by The Nature Conservancy. This removes the threat of development spreading up the valley that would have, impacted the rivers and forests. The Nature Conservancy is reach-

Continued on page 7

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Welcome to our New Chapter Conservation Program Manager Megan Jenny



Megan Jenny. Photo: Beth Kemler

Our chapter is pleased to announce that Megan Jenny has joined us as the Conservation Program Manager. Megan has already attended numerous meetings and has been out to meet members across the state.

Megan brings more than five years of professional experience with campaign directing and organizing on a wide range of environmental and climate issues. In her new role at the Sierra Club, she will direct and implement the Chapter's priority climate-related campaigns, working to make Washington coal free and protecting our communities from dangerous oil trains and terminals.

Prior to joining the Sierra Club, Megan was the Maryland Field Coordinator for Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN), where she directed the field program statewide for both community and student organizing on topics such as fracking and clean energy solutions. Megan began her professional career as an organizer with Toxics Action Center, where she worked side-by-side with communities to stop or prevent pollution threats in their neighborhoods.

When she isn't fighting for a stable and livable climate, you can usually find Megan curled up with a good book, practicing yoga, or planning her next hiking or travel adventure. She graduated from Dickinson College with a B.A in English. Despite being born and raised on the East coast, she believes she's always been a West coaster at heart and made the move to Washington to live amongst the mountains.

Welcome Megan!

You can contact Megan at (206) 378-0114 x301 or megan.jenny@sierraclub.org.

IN THIS ISSUE

Coal Free Washington	1	S. King County Group	4
Cascade Checkerboard	1	Chapter Leadership	6
Megan Jenny	2	Meetings	7
Olympic Peninsula Outings	3	Naval Warfare Training	8

Olympic Peninsula Outings Focus on Wilderness Additions

By Peter Guerrero, North Olympic Group Outings Chair

A successful season of outings on the Olympic Peninsula concluded with a wonderful fall foliage hike along the scenic and historic Elwha River in early November.

Monthly outings led by members of the North Olympics Group included one that was chosen for its accessibility so that everyone could enjoy the natural beauty of our area regardless of their physical limitations. Outings were selected to showcase proposed additions to the Olympic wilderness, such as areas along the Grey Wolf River and Lena Lake.

In all, 40 people joined in Olympics outings this summer from the heights of Hurricane Ridge to the lush river valleys of the Peninsula.

In response to suggestions from participants, the outings leaders will be designating a uniform date and time for all events. Beginning with the first weekend of April, outings will be scheduled for the first weekend of each month until November. Leaders also continue to look for ways to lessen our carbon footprint and hope to have at least one outing next year where van transportation will be provided to the trailheads, which will also facilitate more extensive exploration of the Olympics' many wonderful wilderness trails.



Elwha River. Photo: Peter Guerrero

To learn more about trips, check out the Meet Up site: meetup.com/North-Olympic-Group/ which has now topped 200 members, allowing for communication with a large community of outdoor enthusiasts.

Invest in Washington's Environment!

Your financial support is essential to delivering the great work you read about here in the Cascade Crest. Please donate online at **sierraclub.org/washington**

or

by mailing a check today to

Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club

180 Nickerson Street, Suite 202, Seattle, WA 98109

Thank you!

South King County Group Restores Habitat and Fights Coal

By Elliot Heifetz, South King County Group

The South King County Group has a long-term commitment to restoring habitat along Soos Creek. This past spring members of the South King County Group completed two service events at Soos Creek Park to address rebounding invasive flora at their past planting sites. They also helped with a large King County volunteer event in early September in support of our Soos Creek Park work.

The Group received a \$5000 grant from the Rose Foundation to support purchase of plants and hog fuel. Two service outings in October and November included plantings and restoration using these new materials.

Working with County Staff

A collaborative process with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks has been ongoing for a number of years. At an annual October meeting Group members, representatives of other nonprofit organization and county staff discussed park issues including continued work to acquire lands from willing sellers to expand and provide buffers, the BPA right of way, and habitat restoration work. The goal was to share information between all active entities and to plan work going forward.

Coal Free PSE Efforts

Another area of focus for the South King County group is the Coal Free Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Campaign directed at Puget Sound Energy and their continued dependence on coal as a component of their energy delivery to Washington. Group members tabled at a variety of events this past summer. At one event in Kent, the volunteer booth was located right next to the train station. As a result, members witnessed numerous coal and oil trains passing through during the weekend. These coal trains are about 100 cars long! Volunteers mentioned that they were surprised to see and hear how many of these train cars there are running through the region.



Barred owl that monitored our planting activities at Soos Creek on November 8th South King County Group. Photo: Dan Streiffert

Volunteers have found that the most challenging part of gathering signatures is getting people's attention. They are considering several creative ideas to gain more success in soliciting the attention of event participants.

Petitions Delivered to PSE

Group members participated in the October 8th delivery of Coal Free PSE Campaign petitions to PSE in Olympia. Volunteers gathered at the State capital and then marched to PSE headquarters. This event enjoyed considerable publicity.

To learn more about the controversy surrounding coal trains, please see an op-ed piece written by group members regarding coal trains that was published in the Kent and Auburn Reporters earlier this summer at <http://www.sierraclub.org/washington/south-king-county>.

Seattle Group Executive Committee Seeks New Members

The Seattle Group Executive Committee is accepting nominations for new members, to be elected to a two-year term via email ballot of chapter members in January. If you are interested in standing for election, please email Jesse Piedfort, Seattle Group Chair, by January 1, 2015, at jesse.piedfort@gmail.com. For more details on voting, stay tuned to the Seattle Group webpage at sierraclub.org/washington/seattle-group.

Coal Free Washington

Continued from page 1

These petitions show PSE the broad public support for moving beyond dirty and dangerous coal. This sends a message to their leaders and their corporate investors, sinking our money into a dirty, outdated coal plant is bad business and we're not going to allow it to happen.

Coal Free Avista Campaign Launched

This fall the Northwest Sierra Club launched a Coal Free Avista Campaign in addition to the ongoing Coal Free PSE campaign. Many people in eastern Washington are finding out about Avista's use of coal, and are surprised at what they are learning. Hundreds have signed a petition to the Utilities and Transportation Commission asking for a coal free Avista, and on September 24th, many concerned citizens came together at Gonzaga University's School of Law for a community workshop. Attendees learned about the true cost of coal and abundant clean energy solutions to our coal problem. Avista gets about 20% of its electricity from coal power, primarily from Montana's Colstrip plant

Developments Since 2013

Here is a summary of recent actions:

On April 2, 2013, Governor Inslee created the Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup by signing E2SSB 5802. The workgroup found coal-fired electricity to be Washington's second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and recommended that the state.

- In August 2013, more than 3,000 individuals, businesses, colleges and universities, religious institutions, conservation groups and public officials submitted comments calling on the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to account for the full economic, environmental and public health costs of coal-fired generation.
- On February 6, 2014, the UTC issued its findings on Puget Sound Energy's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). Commissioners were "unable to conclude that the utility's continued reliance on older coal-fired power plants in Colstrip, Montana, is justified."
- On April 29, 2014, Governor Jay Inslee issued an executive order that included a call for the Legislative Affairs and Policy Office to work with utilities and reduce the electricity sector's greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating Washington's coal-fired power.
- Also in fall 2014, the city councils of Bellingham, Olympia, Bainbridge Island and Mercer Island



unanimously approved letters calling for the transition from Colstrip to clean energy.

- As of mid-November, King County Executive Dow Constantine, Council Chair Larry Phillips and nine King County mayors have signed on to a set of Joint County-City Climate Commitments which includes a goal to phase out coal-fired electricity by 2025.

Sierra Club Supports a Transition Plan Soon

Many individuals and institutions have joined with Sierra Club to support the UTC in calling for utilities to develop clear plans for transitioning from coal-fired electricity to clean energy. We hope the UTC will encourage PSE, Avista and Pacific Power to move this process forward as expeditiously as possible while ensuring that any plan capitalizes on this one-time opportunity to create thousands of good family-wage wind, solar and energy efficiency jobs for Washington.

In the coming months Sierra Club will work hard to ensure that the Puget Sound Energy and Avista come up with a plan to retire Colstrip and replace it with clean energy.

For more information about the campaign please visit coal-freePSE.org or coalfreeAvista.org.

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Washington State Chapter Website

www.cascade.sierraclub.org



Meetings

Water & Salmon Committee Meeting

Monday, January 18th, 7-9 pm. Monthly meeting in Chapter office. If this is your first meeting, please contact Elaine Packard at espackard@msn.com.

Water & Salmon Committee Meeting

Monday, February 16th, 7-9 pm. Monthly meeting in Chapter office. If this is your first meeting, please contact Elaine Packard at espackard@msn.com.

Cascade Checkerboard

Continued from page 1

ing out to conservation groups and the local community to prepare a management plan that will address recreation, watershed, and timber resources and uses.

With the assistance of the Trust for Public Land, the Forest Service acquired over 1,200 acres in the Manastash Ridge area in 2014, including 300 acres of old growth forest along the Little Naches River. We have been working with Forterra and WA Department of Fish and Wildlife on additional habitat acquisitions in the nearby Cabin Creek watershed.

Building Wildlife Bridges

Wildlife bridges are becoming a reality in the Cascades as part of the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project. Recently completed bridges over Gold Creek at the upper end of Keechelus Lake have reopened the floodplain, providing improved spawning habitat for bull trout and Kokanee salmon as well as a safe path for terrestrial animals. Near Keechelus Dam, Washington State Department of Transportation is designing the first wildlife overpass in Washington. It is set to begin construction in 2015.

Protecting National Forest Lands

The Forest Service is updating their 23-year-old management plan for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. This will determine the fate of a million acres of roadless land, and is the first time in two decades that the agency is considering wilderness as an option. While the Forest Service suggested only 120,000 acres for wilderness in their “proposed action” in 2011, we have proposed designation of 800,000 acres of stunning wild country. This includes areas like the upper Teanaway as additions to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, wild lands in the Entiat valley adjacent to Glacier Peak Wilderness, and wild roadless areas adjacent

to the Lake Chelan and Pasayten wilderness areas. We will need help from all our members and partners to convince the Forest Service to fashion their plan on that alternative. We are reaching out to citizens and businesses on the east side to explain the value of wild lands to their communities. After repeated delays, the Forest Service now says it will issue a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the plan in late 2015. One of the alternatives will be based on the Sierra Club proposal for protecting wilderness, wild rivers, old-growth forests, and trails free of motors.

Early in 2015, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest will also issue a draft Travel Management Plan, which will determine which trails are open to dirt bikes and jeeps. These are important opportunities for Club members to express opinions about wildlife, old-growth forests and non-motorized trails.

Great Northern Corridor - Skykomish Initiative

Forterra, Sierra Club, other conservation and recreation groups, the town of Skykomish and King County have embarked on the Skykomish Initiative. It envisions additional land conservation, outdoor recreation and rebuilding the historic town to revitalize the local economy. This will include the purchase of old-growth forests on Windy Ridge and forested shores of the Foss River. The plan envisions a new, easily accessible overlook on Maloney Rock with stunning vistas of the Skykomish valley. The Initiative is exploring ideas for bicycle and hiker trails connecting the town to that rocky promontory. Part of the vision is permanently protecting the roadless valley of Maloney Creek, adjacent to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, starting with acquiring a large parcel of timber company land straddling the creek just above town.



Sierra Club Opposes Navy's Proposal to Conduct Electronic Warfare Training Over the Olympic Peninsula

By Bob Sextro, North Olympic Group

The North Olympic Group has taken a stand opposing the US Navy's Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range proposal, specifically the Finding of "No Significant Impact" assessment. The US Forest Service concurred with the Navy's finding of "No Significant Impact" and may be issuing a special use permit for the activities and allowing access to Forest Service roads for use of mobile electromagnetic emitters.

The Navy's proposal entails a significant increase in the amount of fighter aircraft overflights on the Peninsula. The Sierra Club believes these flights will diminish the wilderness qualities of the adjoining Olympic National Park wilderness and adversely impact the economic revenue and benefits local communities derive from their proximity to these areas.

Specific concerns raised by Sierra Club include:

- Use of multiple mobile electromagnetic emitters for up to 260 days per year for 8 to 16 hours per day which would change "the manner of use or quality of land."
- Lack of clarity about how endangered mammals will

be protected from electromagnetic training and lack of mention about how other animals and birds will be protected.

- Proposed placement of mobile emitter sites within what is described as marbled murrelet critical habitat.
- Lack of assessment of cumulative impact of electromagnetic, noise, visual, and air quality stressors.
- Lack of description of "jamming" of detected electromagnetic signals and EA-18G Growlers flying in trios with two in jamming-mode and one in detection-mode.

Sierra Club believes that the Forest Service should not accept the finding of "No Significant Impact" and should decline the Navy a Special-Use Permit and access to the Forest Service roads for their mobile electromagnetic emitters until the Navy revises and augments the final Environmental Assessment, requests an updated Biological Opinion from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and prepares a full Environmental Impact Statement.

For more information, please contact Bob Sextro at robert.sextro@noblis.org.