



Drought 2015: Grave impacts lead to big questions

By John Osborn, MD, Columbia River Group

Although Washington State has experienced a fairly normal year in terms of rain, the past winter has been the warmest on record with scant snowfall leading to an extremely low snowpack. The resulting drought conditions could represent a fire drill for climate change, which is predicted to bring about long-term loss of snowpack.

Mountain snowpack is a natural reservoir supplying headwater streams during summer months. This year, snowpack in the Olympic, Cascade, Blue and Northern Rocky mountain ranges is down dramatically. The situation will have far-reaching effects throughout our region.

Instream flows for fish will be impacted

Fisheries face the greatest threat. Low snowpack, combined with groundwater pumping and surface water diversions, may drop flows in some rivers and streams to historic lows. This will limit the spawning and rearing habitat for fish, including our endangered salmon.

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Timothy hay is exported from the Yakima Basin to feed racehorses in Japan, United Arab Emirates, and elsewhere. Water to grow hay is from federal irrigation projects, paid for by taxpayers. Photo: John Osborn

Honoring Mark Lawler's decades of service

By Graham Taylor, Harry Romberg, and Bill Arthur

As the Washington State Chapter readies itself for a summer of hikes and other outdoor activities, we recently took a moment to honor Mark Lawler for his 30 years of service as the National Forest Committee Chair. Dozens of Mark's fellow conservationists gathered to recognize him, share stories about his impact, and wish him well as he prepares to relocate to northern Arizona.

The Sierra Club is known for our dedicated and multitalented volunteers—people who do everything from technical analytics to political organizing. It was in this spirit that Mark Lawler served our chapter, turning some of the most challenging opportunities into fruitful endeavors over the past three decades.

From forest planning to outdoor trail work,



Mark Lawler. Photo: Harry Romberg

Mark worked tirelessly to protect Washington State's ancient forests, wild rivers, and vulnerable wildlife. Mark organized Sierra Club activists, leading efforts to protect thousands of acres in wilderness areas, such as the Olympics, Alpine Lakes, and Wild Sky.

Mark's scientific training made him a relied-upon expert amidst battles over the ancient forest, spotted owls, and the old growth forest ecosystems. He recruited, trained, and organized volunteers to work phone banks, attend hearings, and hold briefings for congressional staff and reporters. He even led outings to get more people out to see the places that need saving. Mark did it all.

The celebration for Mark was a moving event. Fellow volunteers Harry Romberg

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The Crest

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Nominations Open for the Executive Committee

Election of the Washington Chapter governing body, the Executive Committee begins in November. Nominations are now open.

Executive Committee is made up of one representative from each of the ten local Washington State groups plus nine at-large members for a total of 19 members. Terms are for two years. The Executive Committee meets monthly and is responsible for financial oversight, fundraising, strategic planning, committee oversight, staff management, and other functions to ensure smooth operations of the chapter. The Conservation, Outings, Communications, and Political Committees all report directly to the Executive Committee. In addition, there are three board committees: Fundraising, Operations and Management, and Leadership and Development.

Local Groups have their own Executive Committees and their annual elections are also in the fall. The schedule for nominations, including nomination by petition and the election is available at: www.washington.SierraClub.org

New Designer Needed for The Crest!

The Crest newsletter, representing the Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club, is looking for a new volunteer graphic designer to start in August. This job is unpaid but provides a great opportunity for experience. We publish four issues per year and each issue requires approximately 10-12 hours of work. Tasks include:

- Lay out edited articles, photos and other graphics
- Check web site and meetups for upcoming meetings and outings
- Communicate with printer about deadlines
- Find additional public domain photos to supplement photos writers send
- Send draft of newsletter to editor for review and make final corrections
- Prepare final draft and review proof before it goes to print

Required skills: Photoshop and InDesign. Please submit a cover letter and résumé to Kellie Stickney, Communications Chair at kstickn1@hotmail.com by July 15, 2015.

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New dams in the Yakima Basin?

A legislature-commissioned study discredits plans

By The Yakima Task Force

In addition to dam projects proposed in the pristine Alpine Lakes Wilderness (*The Crest*, Spring 2015), Washington's renewed interest in building dams also threatens ancient habitats in the Yakima Basin.

The Washington State Department of Ecology's Office of the Columbia River (OCR) has issued the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan, which includes dam and reservoir projects at Bumping Lake in the central Cascades and Wymer in the Yakima River Canyon. Both projects would not only be environmentally destructive, but they also failed a recent benefit-cost analysis from the Water Research Center (WRC) at Washington State University.

Dam costs outweigh benefits

In 2013, the Washington legislature commissioned an independent assessment of the Yakima Plan through the highly respected WRC. The analysis, released in December 2014, found that "when implemented together as part of the

[Yakima Plan], the major water storage projects as a group do not pass a Benefit-Cost test."

Put simply, water benefits derived from these destructive dams fall well short of the required taxpayer cost. The proposed Bumping Lake dam would return only 18 cents on the dollar. The Wymer dam would return less than 10 cents on the dollar. To read the full report, visit swwr.wsu.edu/2014ybip.

These dams would destroy irreplaceable wildlife habitats (northern spotted owl and sage-grouse). Beyond that, they would also waste your tax dollars!

The proposed capital budget in Olympia, EHB 1115, contains funding for controversial Yakima Plan projects. Congress is also working on the FY16 Bureau of Reclamation budget, which would continue funding for the Yakima Plan.

For more information, contact Elaine Packard at espackard@msn.com. See page 6 for information about an upcoming hike to Bumping Lake.

Drought

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Junior rights holders may get significantly less water

Irrigated agriculture will also be impacted, especially in the Yakima basin. Washington State water rights holders fall into two different categories, seniors and juniors. The distinction is made between parties holding water rights for a single source — the right with the earliest date being the senior. Seniors are entitled to receive 100 percent of their usual water supply. Yakima juniors, in stark contrast, are projected to receive less than 50 percent of their water in 2015.

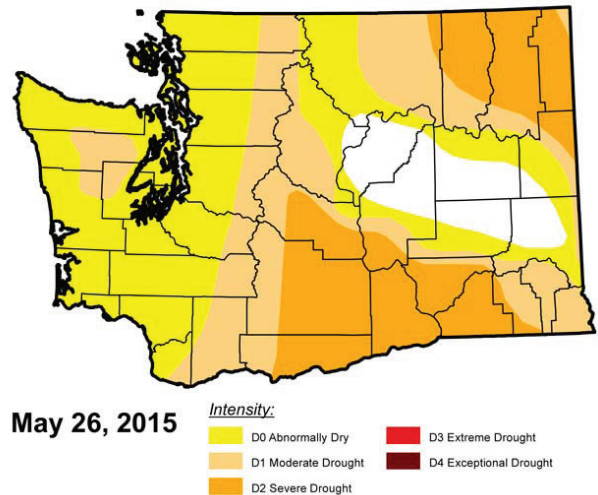
Knowing that their rights are curtailed in water-short years, juniors should plant annual crops that allow for field fallowing when water is unavailable. In the Yakima basin, however, many junior users have gambled, planting orchards and other perennial crops. The drought of 2015 may deal these risk-takers a losing hand.

What should public policy be?

Public policy questions abound in light of Governor Inslee's drought declarations, including:

- Should taxpayers underwrite the bad crop decisions made by junior water users?
- In the drought-prone Yakima area, should limits be placed on water-intensive crops?
- Should seniors be required to share their abundant water with juniors — rather than taxpayers spending \$5 billion on new insurance dams and other irrigation projects?
- As now required in California, should water conservation measures be mandatory for the Yakima Basin?

U.S. Drought Monitor: Washington



Drought Monitor. Graphic: U.S. Department of Agriculture

The summer of 2015 will be very bad for fish and for many junior water right holders. As we are seeing in California, drought in Washington may bring needed public attention to the state's management of water.

John Osborn has served on the Upper Columbia River Group Executive Committee since 1983, and coordinates the Columbia River Future Project for the Washington State Chapter. Contact John at john@waterplanet.ws.

Shady deals dim public view of clean energy splans for Snohomish County

By Andrea Matzke, Water and Salmon Committee

Many Snohomish County Public Utility District (SnoPUD) ratepayers are unsettled by news of the current investigation into legal and ethical violations committed by the utility's upper management. This controversy has thrown shade on what would otherwise be a very sunny time for clean energy enthusiasts.

Clean energy storage

Energy storage could be the answer to our electricity needs as we move away from coal and oil. This technology solves the problem inherent with renewable energies like solar and wind: intermittency. To be able to store the excess energy generated by solar panels for use at night or generated by wind turbines on breeze-free days helps us meet our power demands, while preserving natural resources that have historically been sacrificed for fuel.

These days, Energy Storage systems are available in assorted varieties: lithium ion, vanadium redox, aluminum air, solid state, flow, flywheel, thermal — the list is as long as the list of flavors at your favorite ice cream parlor. Great news for the advancement of clean energy! Isn't it?

The controversy

Recent reports allege that SnoPUD executives awarded upwards of \$16 million in no-bid contracts to an energy storage

technology start-up company, founded by former SnoPUD executive. Records indicate that the first of these contracts was negotiated while the recipient was still employed as an executive at SnoPUD.

You may recognize Snohomish County PUD for their widely opposed plan to construct a low power hydroelectric project on the South Fork Skykomish River, which is protected against hydropower development by a number of state and federal regulations. The Sierra Club has actively worked to protect the Skykomish River and its seven species of salmon, four of which are on the endangered species list.

Citizens outraged by the current controversy posted a huge number of online comments expressing their anger and distrust of the utility company. Unfortunately some of the negativity toward SnoPUD seems to be extended to the entire field of energy storage technologies.

A silver lining

The constant struggle to protect our natural resources from companies trying to boost their bottom line can certainly be demoralizing. But working with other Sierra Club members to preserve nature for the greater good today and for future generations is always heartening.

Volunteers needed for Beyond Oil and Beyond Coal Campaigns

The Sierra Club in Clark County seeks help and organizational support to educate the community about our Beyond Oil and Beyond Coal campaigns. Important public hearings are scheduled for this summer and fall.

We need all hands on deck to show that Washington should not be a hub for fossil fuel transport.

Please contact Laura at laura.stevens@sierraclub.org if you are willing to volunteer.



The Meat-free Monday movement

Mediating the toxic impacts of livestock production

By Darlene Schanfald, North Olympics Group

A 2010 United Nations (UN) report concluded that the production of animal products represents a significant contributor to pollution, water depletion, and climate change. Due to the earth's rapidly growing population, the report recommends a global shift toward a vegan diet.

In a 2010 article published in *The Guardian* summarizing the UN report, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, the former Chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, urges people to observe one meat-free day a week. This would help decrease carbon emissions and other pollution caused by animal agriculture. Personal dietary choices that minimize or eliminate meat and animal products would yield many benefits, including the reduction of greenhouse gases, water pollution and inhumane treatment of animals.



Garden-fresh vegetables. Photo: Peri Doslu

impacts of livestock production, including:

- The livestock sector generates enormous levels of greenhouse gases.
- About one-third of US fossil fuel production goes towards animal agriculture.
- Huge amounts of electricity are needed to bring livestock from the feedlot to table.
- Animal manure runoff pollutes water sources causing toxic algae, killing fish, and impacting human health.
- Factory-raised livestock are fed huge amounts of antibiotics, which can impair the health of those eating animal products.
- Feedlot dust particles carry toxic ammonia and hydrogen sulfide, which can penetrate the lungs of humans living nearby.
- The creation of new pastures for livestock

production is responsible for 70% of the deforestation in Latin America's Amazon region.

Change your diet

A plant-based diet is the simplest and most inexpensive way that people can combat global warming, reduce water pollution, and help save rainforests. Eliminating meat for one day a week can make a difference for the health of our planet. Join the Campaign!

For more information about this topic, please contact Darlene Schanfald at darlenes@olympus.net.

Growing environmental leaders: Environmental research internships for youth

By Peter Guerrero, North Olympic Group

The Sierra Club's North Olympic Group is offering two internships for Clallam and Jefferson County high school students to participate in NatureBridge's Summer Field Research Course in Olympic National Park. Interns would receive a stipend of \$250. These internships are offered in honor of Dorothea Hover-Kramer who was an accomplished psychotherapist, author, and a passionate supporter of social change and the environment.

NatureBridge's two-week immersive backcountry expedition gives participants the opportunity to conduct rigorous environmental science investigations in the pristine forests of the Olympic wilderness. Students work with NatureBridge educators and produce their own field-based research project. These explorations deepen their understanding of the Olympic Peninsula ecosystem and empower students to think

critically about the world around them.

"Teenagers emerge from the Summer Field Research Course transformed," said Jen Kidder, NatureBridge Education Director. "They've designed and carried out their own research projects, while tackling the adventure of a back-country expedition and go home . . . having had an incredibly enriching summer experience and developing skills that will serve them in high school, college, and beyond."

Applications should be submitted directly to NatureBridge where they will be reviewed to ensure that applicants meet program requirements and demonstrated financial need. To learn more and apply for NatureBridge's Summer Field Research course, visit: naturebridge.org/summerfieldresearch.

Meetings and Educational Outings

National Forest Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 1, 7 p.m., Chapter Office. Learn about and help save Washington's ancient forests, roadless areas, rare wildlife, and trails. Many volunteer opportunities available around the state, including protecting iconic places in local Wilderness campaigns, reconnecting wildlife habitat through the Cascade Checkerboard Project, and restoring trails.

Outing to North Sauk River

Sunday, July 12, 10 a.m. Learn about old-growth forest on a brush-free trail. Please bring a bag lunch, water, hiking shoes, and sunscreen. No dogs please. RSVP to Harry Romberg, 206-365-9302, hbromb@aol.com.

Hike to Sourdough Gap

Wednesday, July 22, 8:30 a.m. Learn about the Pacific Crest Trail. Beginning from Chinook Pass, the gentle trail leads to Sheep Lake at about 2 miles. From there the trail becomes steeper for the 1.5 miles to Sourdough Gap. We'll have lunch and turn around there. There should be plenty of wild flowers on the first part of the hike and the views as you climb above Sheep Lake are outstanding. To sign up email dorothyw@centurylink.net.

Hike Crystal Ridge

Friday, August 21, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Learn about Mount Rainier National Park and enjoy stunning views. Email dorothyw@centurylink.net to sign up.



Bumping Lake Hikers. Photo: Michael D. Ortman

Outing to Bumping Lake

Mark your calendar for September 26–27 for our Chapter's upcoming outing to Bumping Lake. You'll walk through the amazing ancient forests being threatened by the proposed dams. To learn more about this outing, contact John Osborn at john.osborn@washington.sierraclub.org or 509-939-1290.

Find your Sierra Club Meetup group for the most up-to-date list of outings at sierraclub.org/washington/club-outings.

Sea Kayaking Adventure

By Lehman Holder, Loo Wit Group

If you enjoy paddling a sea kayak, mark your calendar for Saturday, August 29, 2015. Then picture yourself gliding along the blue water under sunny skies and gazing at the magnificent Mount Rainier with a group of like-minded water lovers. Learn about the wildlife of the Hope Island area.

Loo Wit Group outing leaders Lehman Holder and Laura Skehan are leading this sea kayak outing to Hope Island State Marine Park. This is a one-day outing, with a stop for lunch on Hope Island and time to paddle the waters around the island.

This outing is limited to 10 boats — any combination of singles and doubles. You can bring your own boat (no "recreational" kayaks please), or rent a kayak at the put-in. You should be familiar with paddling a sea kayak and be comfortable on the water. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are required. There is a \$2 outings fee for Sierra Club members (\$4 for non-members).

Signup deadline is August 27. To sign up, email the outings leader, Lehman Holder at tripsguy@aol.com and you will receive a response with complete outings info — what to wear, what to bring, directions to the put-in location, rental fees, and more.

Mark Lawler

Continued from page 1

and Donald Parks presented Mark with a letter of recognition from Senator Patty Murray. The Alpine Lakes Working Group, represented by Tom Uniack, honored Mark with commemorative artwork celebrating the recent expansion of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. Perhaps most touching were the heartfelt tributes offered by other volunteers, who shared stories of how Mark introduced them to conservation and, as a result, influenced the lives of many more.

As we reflect on the stunning service from Mark, we hope to honor his legacy by continuing to give voice to our ancient forests and their many inhabitants. Our National Forest Committee will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of each month (except August), at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club Office in Seattle.

On behalf of all Sierra Club staff and the volunteers at the Washington State Chapter, we thank Mark for his many years of service. His inspiring attitude and unmatched poise will be greatly missed.

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Backyard wildlife photo contest

The South King County Group (SKCG) is holding a 2015 Backyard Wildlife Photo Contest. Submit your original photos of Northwest wildlife from King County and the Puget Sound region. The deadline for submissions is July 3, 2015. Entries can be emailed to megan.jenny@sierraclub.org.

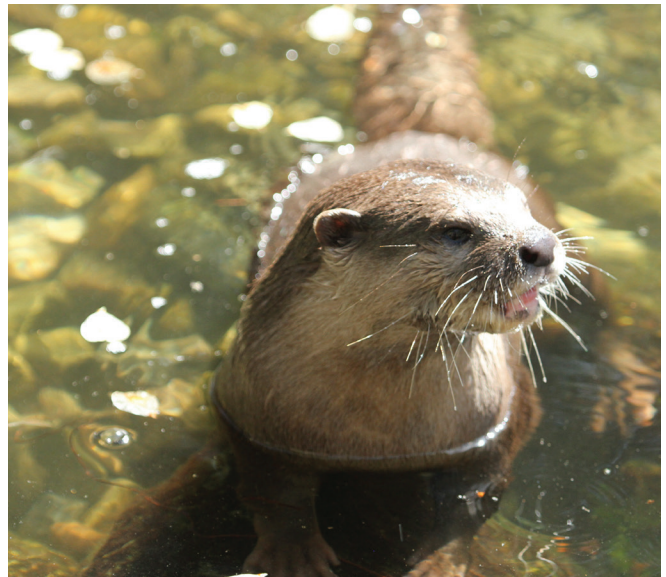
Submissions should include the following information:

- Photographer's full name
- Preferred phone number
- City of residence
- When and where the photo was taken

Photos will be displayed and winner(s) announced at the SKCG Annual Summer Solstice Potluck, which will be held on July 8, 2015 at Gary Grant Soos Creek Park in Kent.

The Sierra Club may use your entry on the contest web page or for other Club purposes, even if it is not declared a winner. If you wish to restrict the use of your entry, please include an explanation about this in your submission.

Photos can be taken in your backyard or anywhere in King County or the Puget Sound region.



River otter. Photo: Andrea Matzke

More information about the contest and final potluck arrangements are available on the Facebook page for the South King County Group of the Sierra Club.