



~In this issue

- Blanchard Mountain Gets Discovered 1
- Volunteers Needed for Trail Work 1
- President's Message 2
- WA DNR Proposes a Mini-Protected Area for Blanchard Mountain 2
- CC Hires Its First Executive Director 2
- Hiking & Events Calendar 3
- 100+ Businesses Who Love the Chuckanuts... 4

BLANCHARD MOUNTAIN . . .

"For those who think Blanchard Mountain is just a place for local hikers to kick up some dust, the mountain may be saying 'Think again.'"

... Gets Discovered

By Ken Wilcox

On the first day of spring this year, while hiking up the Pacific Northwest Trail toward Oyster Dome, I spent 90 minutes gathering 37 signatures on a petition asking Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark to designate a much larger conservation area (NRCA) than what he's proposed. (More on the NRCA, p. 2.)

In those 90 minutes of ambling up the trail, chatting, nibbling and collecting autographs, I was amazed to be passed by about 80 hikers headed down, all of whom had obviously gotten a more respectable start than I. These were not organized groups, just friends and family enjoying the first day of spring.

While I was pleased that most of the trailsters I spoke with were happy to sign, what shocked me the most was just how far many of them had come to enjoy their day on the trail at Blanchard Mountain.

Of the 37 hikers who signed the petition, only six were from Bellingham. Just two lived in Skagit County. Three others were from Ferndale. That's 11 people—or 30 percent—whom I would consider "local."

Where were the others from? Everywhere. But Seattle, mostly. Seattle and King County accounted for 17 (46 percent) of those 37 people who were concerned enough to sign the petition. One couple came all the way up from Packwood, east of Centralia. Others were from Edmonds, Mill Creek and Oak Harbor.

Later, I met someone from Vancouver, Washing-

continued, p. 3



View-struck hikers atop Oyster Dome.

Volunteers Needed for Trail Work~

To complement our new hiking calendar (see p. 3), the Conservancy is scheduling a number of volunteer trail work parties in the Chuckanuts, including the Raptor Ridge Trail and several weekday walk-throughs—a dabble of work here and there while also enjoying a good hike. We need your help! Widgets, gizmos and cookies provided. Watch our website for new listings. To join our volunteer list, drop a line to volunteer@chuckanutconservancy.org.

WASHINGTON DNR PROPOSES MINI- PROTECTED AREA FOR BLANCHARD MOUNTAIN

SPRING 2010

2

JOURNAL OF THE CHUCKANUT CONSERVANCY

Baby Steps~

IN FEBRUARY, Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark announced plans to establish a 1,600-acre Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) on Blanchard Mountain. While the NRCA is a positive step forward, the proposal contains nearly all of the shortcomings of the “management strategies” adopted by the previous commissioner in 2007. (The Conservancy challenged those strategies in lower court and won, but DNR appealed; we’re awaiting a decision.)

The DNR’s press release acknowledges “amazing recreation opportunities, rich wildlife habitat and sweeping views” at Blanchard Mountain, then fails to offer a proposal that actually protects those values. The 1,600-acre NRCA proposed by DNR simply can’t provide the level of protection that’s implied in the press release.

The DNR’s proposal offers only partial protection of the existing trail system.

No meaningful wildlife corridors are provided, view protection is scant, and many miles of trails would be severely degraded by miles of new roads and logging across two-thirds of the mountain. The largest intact roadless area on the mainland coast of greater Puget Sound would be lost.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, signed into law by President Obama just a year ago, is largely excluded from the NRCA. The agency, however, did agree not to log the parking lot at Samish Overlook.

The Conservancy is recommending a 3,100-acre NRCA (*map, p. 3*). Any NRCA has to be approved by the Legislature, where funding will be key.

We applaud the DNR’s willingness to consider the permanent protection an NRCA can provide. Although the small size of the NRCA is a major stumbling block, we believe a happy outcome is possible if the DNR invites the public to participate in the process.



Please email 40th District Senator Kevin Ranker and ask him to support a 3,100-acre NRCA for Blanchard Mountain:
Ranker.Kevin@LEG.WA.GOV

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE WAYS YOU CAN HELP.

President’s Message~



It is with much enthusiasm that we welcome you to the first edition of **Chuckanut**, your reliable source for all important things impacting the Chuckanut region.

The Conservancy’s ultimate goal is the full protection of the wilder parts of this glorious place, an enchanting natural landscape just outside our back door. Our passion and commitment is undergirded by a belief that without efforts now to create a lasting conservancy, the Chuckanuts will continue to be threatened by future urbanization and clearcuts.

We all know what an attractive place the Pacific Northwest has become for those looking to relocate, and the future here will surely see increasing populations. Because our local County governments control land-use zoning, the future health of the Chuckanut’s splendor dangles precariously on the whims of poor political decisions. Thus broad based, comprehensive strategies must be enacted to create protections that last in perpetuity.

We invite you to support our efforts so that future generations may enjoy this special place just as we all do today.

Seth

Conservancy Hires First Executive Director

This spring, the Conservancy announced that Ken Wilcox will serve as the organization’s first executive director.

“We’re excited to have Ken in this critical role,” said Seth Fleetwood, Conservancy President.

“He’s the perfect person to help us ensure that our kids—and their kids—have an opportunity to enjoy this place as much as we do.”



Wilcox is a long-time advocate for trails and natural areas in the Chuckanuts and is perhaps best known as the author of several regional hiking guides. He has a professional background in environmental and recreation planning and has served on a number of boards, including the North Cascades Conservation Council, Sustainable Connections, Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission and The Mountaineers, where he received a lifetime membership award for community service. Ken is a WWU-Huxley graduate with a degree in environmental policy.

All activities listed are open to the public. For details and to sign up, visit www.chuckanutconservancy.org; or email info@chuckanutconservancy.org.

* Expert-led hike, \$10 donation requested (except May 19, \$5)

***SAT. APRIL 24 - Oyster Dome Geology Hike** with Dave Tucker. Celebrate Earth Day on Blanchard Mountain and learn way more than you thought possible about the geology of Oyster Dome. 4 to 6 miles round trip; 800-foot elevation gain.

WED. APRIL 28 - The Future of the Chuckanuts with Ken Wilcox. Ken speaks about the history of the Chuckanuts, its flora and fauna, fabulous trail system, looming threats and how we can save this urban wilderness. Hosted by the South Neighborhood Association.

***SAT. MAY 1 - Ruins, Relics and Lost Trails** of Blanchard Mountain with Bud Hardwick. There is much mystery to explore on the mountain, including ruins and relics of the railroad logging era, abandoned camps and ghostly trestles. 4 miles; 1,000 feet elevation gain, including light off-trail hiking. Co-sponsored by the Mount Baker Club.

***SUN. MAY 2 - Walking Tour of Historic Blanchard**, Washington, with Tom Wake. The legacy of America's most celebrated journalist, Edward R. Murrow, has roots in this old sawmill town. Learn about Murrow, the utopian Equality Colony, Interurban Trolley and more—maybe meet some relatives. Allow 2-3 hours (2:00 pm start).

SAT. MAY 8 - Raptor Ridge Trail Work Party. The missing link between Raptor Ridge and the Lost Lake Trail should emerge from the duff in 2010—with your help. No experience needed; tools are

HIKES & EVENTS

provided. Plan on a one hour approach hike and a four-hour work day. About 5 to 6 miles round trip, 800 to 1,000 feet elevation gain.

WED. MAY 12 - Rediscovering the Chuckanut Mountains. Ken Wilcox is the guest speaker at the Bellingham REI, 6:00 pm. Free. Visit www.rei.com/stores/65 for details.

SAT. MAY 15, SUN. MAY 23 - Raptor Ridge Trail Work Parties. The work continues (see Sat., May 8).

***WED. MAY 19 - Know Your Islands**, S. Chuckanut Mt. with Jim Orr. Moderate after-work ramble to the islands viewpoint on S. Chuckanut. Bring along breads, crackers, cheeses, etc. to share for a snack supper. 5 miles roundtrip, 900 feet elevation gain (5:45 to 9:00 pm).

***SAT., MAY 22 - Birds of the Chuckanut Mountains** with Paul Woodcock. Moderate, 4-hour foray to Fragrance Lake to discover dozens of resident and migratory bird species that depend on the Chuckanuts. Co-sponsored by North Cascades Audubon Society. About 5 miles roundtrip; 1,000 feet elevation gain. 7:30 am start!

SAT. MAY 30 - Join us at the **Fairhaven Festival (Ski to Sea)** and our booth on the Village Green for fossils, t-shirts, trail maps and good cheer.

***SAT. JUNE 5 (NATIONAL TRAILS DAY) AND SAT.-SUN. JUNE 12-13 - Raptor Ridge Trail Work Parties.** The work continues (see Sat., May 8th).

Blanchard Gets Discovered, continued from p. 1

ton, and several more from Colorado and Nevada who were visiting friends in the area.

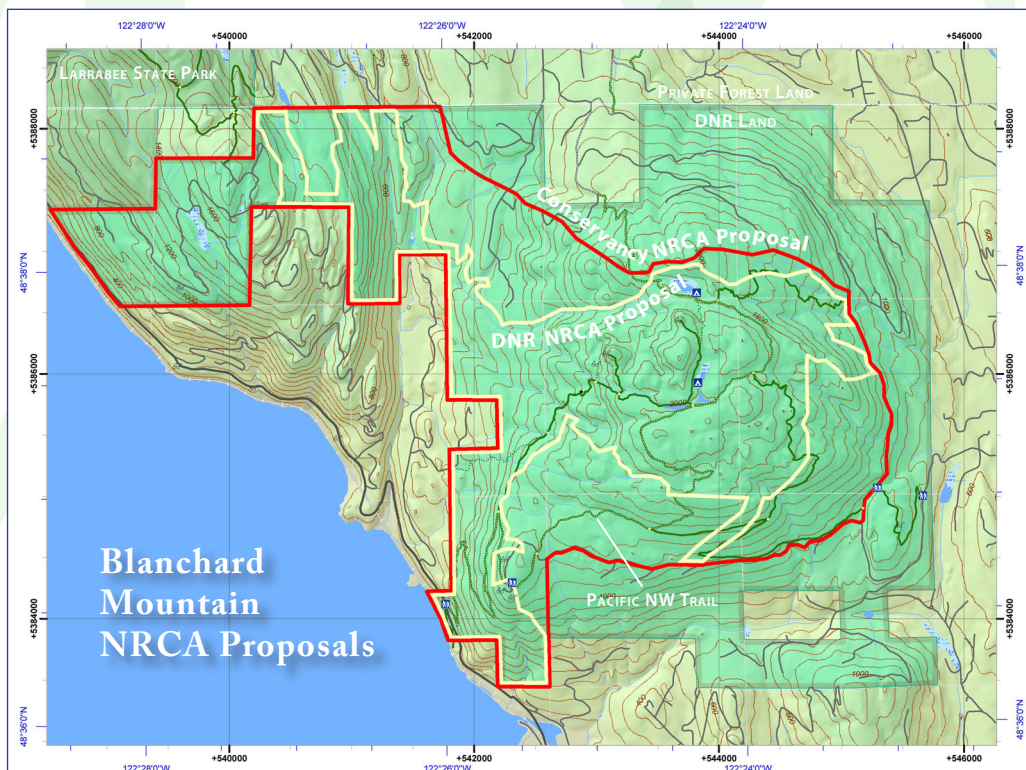
When you do the math and consider all the trails at Blanchard Mountain—a splendid year-round hiking destination—it's not unthinkable that 100,000 people may set foot on the mountain over the course of a year.

It certainly wasn't a scientific survey, but intriguing and enlightening, nonetheless. So, for those think Blanchard Mountain is just a place for local hikers to kick up some dust, the mountain may be saying 'Think again.'

You can help us save this place by donating to the cause—then imagine the roar of 100,000 'Thank you's' (good thing we're not all up there at once).

What All the Fuss is About

This map shows the DNR's proposed 1,600-acre Natural Resources Conservation Area (the "squiggly blob") and the Conservancy's 3,100-acre proposal (outlined in red). Our proposal provides a solid habitat corridor and trail connection to Larrabee State Park; superior viewshed protection; much less fragmentation of the forest and roadless area; and substantially better protection of the trail system, including the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.



Join our Spring 2010 campaign!

100+ BUSINESSES WHO LOVE THE CHUCKANUTS!

HELP KEEP THE CHUCKANUT MOUNTAINS AS WILD AND WONDERFUL TOMORROW AS THEY ARE TODAY!

Count me in! (check donation level)

- Eagle - \$100
- Falcon - \$250
- Steelhead - \$500
- Coyote - \$1,000
- Other - \$ _____

Please apply my donation to: (check any)

- Conservation/Habitat Protection
- Trails & Stewardship Program
- Education/Outreach/Youth Programs
- Blanchard Mountain Campaign
- Any or all of the above
- Other: _____

Business name: _____

Contact: _____ Ph: _____

Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Thank you! Please mail to:

CHUCKANUT CONSERVANCY
PO Box 4003, Bellingham WA 98227

We're looking for at least 100 businesses who care about the Chuckanuts.

Pledge any amount and choose how it's applied. Any business, large or small, can participate. When we've got 100, we'll tally the results and ask the public-at-large to match it, effectively doubling your contribution! Be recognized and help leave a legacy. For more information, please visit our website.

Special thanks to the following for their early, generous contributions to kick off the campaign:

- A-1 Builders
- Adaptations
- Corwin Fergus Jungian Analyst
- Chuckanut Art Farm
- Breadfarm
- John D Stephens, MD, Koala Labs
- Skookum Peak Press

... more to come!

THE CHUCKANUT MOUNTAINS >>> HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE



www.chuckanutconservancy.org

A high quality of life fosters a vibrant business community. We hope you'll support the work of the Chuckanut Conservancy.

CONSERVATION/HABITAT PROTECTION - Protecting the most sensitive lands for wildlife and recreation.

TRAILS & STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM - Providing tools and materials to support thousands of hours of volunteer work on trails and restoration.

EDUCATION/OUTREACH/YOUTH PROGRAMS - Sharing expert knowledge and inspiring action toward the protection and enjoyment of the Chuckanuts.

BLANCHARD MOUNTAIN CAMPAIGN - Ensuring the best of the mountain is not squandered by excessive logging.

How your donation will be recognized:

Eagle (\$100)
Falcon (\$250)
Steelhead (\$500)
Coyote (\$1,000+)

	Newsletter & publications	Website & blog	Events	Greater Prominence	Logo on T-shirts website, newsletter	Special recognition
Eagle (\$100)	✓	✓	✓			
Falcon (\$250)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Steelhead (\$500)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Coyote (\$1,000+)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

For details... call (360) 223-9453
or email ken@chuckanutconservancy.org