



North Olympic Group Newsletter

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

Jan - Mar 2021



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Meetings & Events

- Jan 12** – Kick-off WA Climate Assy
- Jan 20** – Inauguration Day
- Jan 21** – Excom Mtg via Zoom*
- Jan 22** – Comments due on Naval trng
- Jan 23** – Turn in Excom votes
- Feb 18** – Excom Mtg via Zoom*
- Mar 18** – Excom Mtg via Zoom*

* Details will be sent via mass email



Forest in winter

Time for Our EXCOM Election

There are five open positions on the Executive Committee that need to be filled starting January 2021. We have two candidates interested in filling these positions. Our bylaws require that we hold a formal election. The candidates are listed below followed by a ballot that should be **returned by January 23rd**

Without your help, we will not continue to grow, keep on top of issues, and sponsor events.

Candidates

Norm Baker (Sequim) Per Norm: I am one of the original founding members of the North Olympic Group. It has been a genuine pleasure to serve on the Executive Committee and I wish to be reelected. I believe we must act locally and think globally to solve serious environmental problems. Research is currently underway around the world to use biomass sustainably for renewable energy - but that is only the tip of the iceberg. One of the most significant environmental solutions to many of the problems facing modern mankind is biochar. I am working with several people and other organizations (USBI, Ethos, NWBI, Nutriculture PNW, SOG, etc.) across the nation... conducting continuing research... I believe the North Olympic Group of the Sierra Club is one of the most dedicated and more effective environmental organizations I have ever participated in."

Darlene Schanfald (Sequim) is a co-founder of the NOG and has served on its Executive Committee since the Group's inception. She is currently the Chair. In addition, she serves as NOG's Conservation Chair. She also leads the (Sewage) Sludge Free WA project under WA State Chapter's Water and Salmon Committee — working with activists in other groups opposing the land spreading of municipal and industrial sewage wastes on farm, forest and residential soils, and has led an environmental coalition for over 20 years to see that the Port Angeles Rayonier Mill and the Port Angeles Harbor hazardous wastes are cleaned up.

“The Greatest Threat to our Planet is the Belief that Someone Else Will Save It”

- Robert Swan

Group Executive Committee

We are governed by five to seven 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 generally held on the second Thursday of each month alternating between Sequim and Port Townsend. During periods of restricted travel and meetings. We meet via ZOOM.

All Sierra Club members are welcome to attend.



Officers:

Chair: Darlene Schanfald

Vice Chair: Norm Baker

Secretary: Genie Mixson

Treasurer: Genie Mixson

Executive Committee:

Norm Baker

Genie Mixson

Darlene Schanfald

Bob Sextro

Peter Guerrero

Newsletter Editors

Genie Mixson and Darlene Schanfald

There are five positions on the Executive Committee (Excom) coming up for election. The Excom is responsible for administrative decisions, planning NOG activities and deciding on conservation activities. The term of office is two years.

Cut out and mail ballot to:

PO Box 714

Carlsborg, WA 98324

or email ballot approval and/or write-in to:

northolympicgroupsc@gmail.com



Deadline for mailing vote is January 30th

Vote for up to five candidates:

Norm Baker _____

Darlene Schanfald _____

Write-In _____

Write-In _____

Write-In _____



The North Olympic Group

needs volunteers.

Don't be shy about

writing in your name.

Rayonier Mill Cleanup Progress

By
Darlene Schanfald



This photo was taken by Darlene Schanfald and Steve Koehler from a hillside above the mill.

We continue to monitor developments at the former Rayonier Mill site, which closed in 1997 and cleanup contracts were signed in 2000. A current happening has been the removal of the wharf deck's southern portion, and its approximate 1000 (mostly creosoted) pilings are projected to be removed within five years. This removal is critical to move forward with other shoreline and ground water contamination investigations. It is now not possible to get to those sites until the wharf, and the rock jetty to the west of the wharf, are removed.

In the foreground bounded by orange are stacks of cement pads.
Behind the pile are broken up wooden boards that supported the cement pads.
It looks like one-tenth of the south part of the wharf is removed.

COVID-19 Vaccine Brings Optimism

In mid-December the COVID-19 vaccine finally arrived to the north Olympic peninsula. This, at a time when the numbers of cases locally, and across the nation were reaching their highest.

The hope that the pandemic will begin its retreat is beginning to take hold, but the process will take months to reach all of us. Until then, NOG encourages you to continue observing the CDC guidelines: wear masks, social distance, and wash your hands frequently.

Saving Ennis Creek for Salmon Spawning

By Robbie Mantooth



photo by Lee Strucker

Supporters of a small stream that flows from the snowfields of Olympic National Park to Port Angeles Harbor have a big mission: “saving our last best chance of a salmon stream in Port Angeles.”

Ennis Creek, where salmon and steelhead once returned for spawning in such numbers that workers at the mill near its mouth told of watching them in awe, has plenty of challenges. Over its seven decades of operation, the Rayonier pulp mill left the stream and adjacent land and water with hazardous wastes, covered up the brackish water salmonids need for acclimating from fresh to salt water, and restricted the stream into a narrow, straight channel. Development on the mill site and in other parts of the stream also removed trees. Trees help keep the water

cool, and when they fall in the water, they bring bugs that fish eat and help slow water flows so they won't harm young fish and wash away the gravels adults need for spawning. Culverts also interfere with fish passage under Highway 101 and at least one other road.

The non-profit conservation group “Friends of Ennis Creek” (Friends) began about 20 years ago and took on new energy last year. Encouraged by Sierra Club member Darlene Schanfald, Friends joined in sponsoring programs related to WA State Department of Ecology's (Ecology) preferred alternatives for dealing with toxins from the former mill site. After the programs started, public comments submitted to Ecology on this topic went from 12 to more than 150.

Next, Friends volunteers started offering walks to view restoration created by Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe's fisheries biologist Mike McHenry and his team. Their work includes engineered log jams and weirs that help control water flows, encourage stream meander and enable young fish to hide from predators. This work provides a model for other parts of the stream's riparian area.

Wanting to extend learning opportunities and inspiration beyond the walks, Friends found an ally in filmmaker John Gussman. With Jessica Plumb, he created the award-winning *Return of the River* about removal of dams on the mighty Elwha River. The result, *Ennis – A Creek Worth Saving*, is available free at <https://vimeo.com/429119876>.

In the year since Friends reactivated, its other accomplishments include a Facebook page, where retired *Peninsula Daily News* editor and publisher John Brewer, contributes postings; Kelsey Redlin donated a new logo; Events such as a trash cleanup; tree planting; presentations to civic groups and newsletters. A program for recognizing Habitat Heroes are recognized for their work in promoting clean, water, alerting property owners to septic system leakage or other contamination sources, and planting trees has been well received. Friends has awarded more than 200 Ennis Creek Habitat Hero certificates so far.

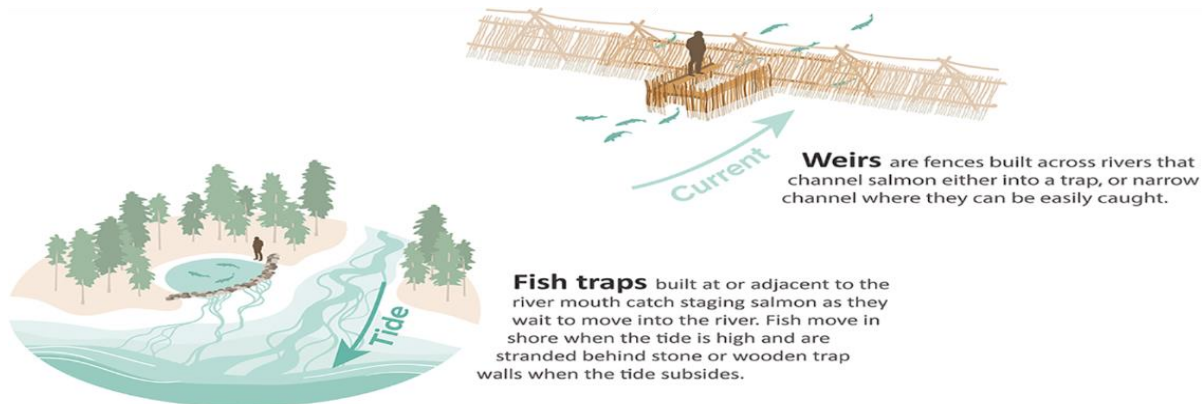
Representatives are working with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the State Department of Transportation on fish passage improvements. They are collaborating with a local teacher who wants to bring small groups of children to the stream for educational experiences. When Ecology issues its response to the comments that Friends helped encourage last year, it will be time to get out more information and encourage environmental advocacy.

“We are doing something just about every day,” one Friend said. “That’s what it takes if we’re going to save what we’re calling our last best chance of a salmon stream in Port Angeles.”

More information about Ennis Creek and opportunities to help are available from ennis@olyphen.com.

Indigenous Salmon Fishing

Amid rapid and deep-rooted changes in ecosystems and fisheries, 10,000 years of Indigenous stewardship knowledge and growing scientific consensus tells us that revitalizing Indigenous systems of harvest and resource governance should be an urgent priority.



A recent Bioscience* study suggests a return to historical Indigenous fishing practices and systems of salmon management are key to revitalizing struggling Pacific Salmon fisheries.

For thousands of years, salmon were sustainably harvested by fishing in or near rivers with low-impact selective tools like fish traps, weirs, reef nets, dip nets, and fish wheels.

A deep view into the current situation of the salmon plight and how colonized fishing techniques targeting ocean fishing could be reversed to sustainably maintain and grow the salmon and their symbiotic partnership through their life cycle is exquisitely explained through a collaboration of over twenty Canadian and American tribes, universities and nonprofits. These authors review and contrast historical methods of Indigenous salmon fishing and management as the fish made their homeward migration to natal rivers with present day practices.

We strongly recommend [this report](#) * be read by all concerned with today’s salmon plight.

* Indigenous Systems of Management for Culturally and Ecologically Resilient Pacific Salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) Fisheries



The Reader's Corner

The Reindeer Chronicles and Other Inspiring Stories of Working with Nature to Heal the Earth.

By Judith Schwartz and Reviewed by Suzanne (NLN)

This is an excellent read. The author, Judith Schwartz, is a skilled researcher and an award-winning science journalist. She takes the reader on a global restoration tour of re-greening landscapes, restoring carbon and water cycles and repairing weather. But it is more than her craft that captured me, it was the heart in her stories that juiced the content and inspired.

I was concerned that reading details of earth devastation would sink me into despair. It didn't go that way. I was encouraged by the speed at which blighted regions can be recovered, especially in the tropics. I dropped previous judgments and became empathetic with people who are forced to degrade their environment in order to survive. I discovered that, I too, was in need of restoration and reading about the ingenuity and passion of ecologists, scientists, journalists, farmers and others who want a better life and who share my love of the earth, helped me regain some lost faith.

The restorations were successful because people stayed open and creative. Leaders were innovative and compassionate and helped people work together in new ways; to overcome their fear and distrust of each other and their despair. The barriers were daunting in their complexity and the orthodoxies of conservatism that blocked change. Success involved openness, listening, perseverance, enlightened leadership and solutions from unlikely places. Always it required following nature's lead often including uncultivated tracts of land where nature healed itself in remarkably quick time and lent that healing to the surrounding areas under cultivation.

I recommend this read for all who could use the uplift of success stories.

Wild Olympics - Was it "Too Good to be True"?

During the summer we were encouraged that the US House version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included the Protecting America's Wilderness Act (PAWA) (which also included the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act). The more recently passed US Senate version of NDAA did not include the PAWA, as the PAWA got dropped in the final version after conferencing.

The Wild Olympics coalition, of which NOG and Sierra Club are key members, will try again next year.

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The North Olympic group is celebrating our 10th year as an independent group, bringing focus to North Olympic issues.

Jefferson County News

The Uncertain Future of Port Townsend's Water Supply

By Peter Guerrero

The pipeline supplying Port Townsend's water was constructed in 1927-28 in cooperation with the Port Townsend papermill. The City issued a bond and the majority of the payments were covered by the mill. The 30-mile pipeline delivers approximately 10-14 million gallons of water per day (MGD) from the Quilcene watershed, of which the mill uses 10-12 MGD and all other city businesses and residents, combined, only use 1-2 MGD.

While of the 30-inch pipe was replaced in the 1950s and 1960s, the pipeline is reaching the end of its design life. With the Mill contract for operating the pipeline up for renewal, the City is considering a management and replacement strategy for the next 100 years.

Climate change has dramatically affected the Olympic snowpack, allowing it to melt earlier in the spring and summer, leaving less water during the dry summer months. Finding ways to incentivize water conservation is key to ensuring adequate water for all in a water scarce future.

Currently, the paper mill pays nothing for its water but, under the existing agreement, must provide for the pipeline's operating expense. The city has reported that the mill values this at just over \$400,000/year. However, if the mill were to be charged what city residents currently pay, its true cost for the water it uses would be in the millions.

While, historically, the mill has been an important partner in providing for and maintaining the city's water infrastructure, the existing arrangement represents a subsidy by all city residents and it seems the city can negotiate a better deal going forward. The current arrangement also provides little or no incentive for the mill to conserve this precious resource.

The city is seeking input as it negotiates a new contract with the mill. For further information and how to get involved, visit the city's "Engage PT" [website](#), and contact your city council members to let them know you want a sustainable, and fair agreement that encourages conservation.

Take Action: Save Rare Dabob Bay Forests Threatened by Logging

Over a dozen conservation organizations, including the North Olympic Group, have urged DNR to expand the Dabob Bay Natural Area boundaries. Over the years, conservation efforts at Dabob Bay have been broadly supported by citizens, landowners, shellfish businesses, and local, state, federal and tribal governments.

Dabob bay is a crown jewel of Hood Canal, with rich ecological diversity and supporting a world-renowned shellfish industry that is one of the county's largest employers.

The Department of Natural Resources has identified areas of globally rare older forest types along the Dabob Bay shoreline and the Toandos Peninsula. Three planned timber sales in the area have been

put on hold to further assess and determine a long-term course of action. Once cut down, these rare forests, the heritage of all Washingtonians, will be gone forever.

DNR can protect these heritage forests using the Trust Land Transfer process. Ultimately, legislative appropriations will be needed to make this happen.

For now, individuals are asked to sign this [petition](#) to DNR and the Jefferson County Commissioners to get the ball rolling on this important conservation initiative:

Washington Climate Assembly

The first Climate Assembly in the United States will kick off here in Washington on January 12 and run coincident with the State Legislature. Eighty Washingtonians have been randomly chosen in a way that reflects the population of this state. They will come together online to learn, work together, deliberate, and decide on recommendations to the State Legislature for mitigating our climate crisis. The local group Olympic Climate Action (OCA) has been assisting on this project. Here are some simple things you can do to help:

1. Read [an article or watch a video](#) about climate assemblies.
2. Go to the [Assembly](#) and [People's Voice on Climate](#) websites to follow/share on social media.
3. Sign up for the *Peoples' Voice on Climate* [newsletter](#).
4. Spread the Word! Tell your friends about the climate assembly— see the [press release](#).
5. Ask [your state legislators](#) to learn about, support, and endorse the Assembly.

Victoria BC No Longer Releases Raw Sewage to the Strait

After 126 years of releasing untreated wastewater to The Strait of Juan de Fuca, the city of Victoria, BC has cleaned up its act. Our neighbor to the north brought their new wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) online in mid-December. To read more, click here for the [PDN article](#).

Sierra Club Statement on Nomination of Tom Vilsack

On December 11th, President-elect Joe Biden introduced Tom Vilsack as his intended nominee for Secretary of Agriculture.

In response, Sierra Club Acting Our Wild America Director Chris Hill released the following statement:

“It is critical that President-elect Biden’s cabinet be filled with nominees who will advance bold solutions -- rooted in justice and equity -- at the size and scale needed to address the climate crisis.

“Tom Vilsack has a track record of ignoring environmental injustice, adopting misinformation from the biomass logging industry, aligning with agriculture chemical multinationals, and advocating for increased logging. He is the wrong person to lead the department.

“The Sierra Club strongly encourages President-elect Biden to reconsider his planned nomination for the Department of Agriculture and select a candidate who will center equity and environmental justice in addressing the climate crisis.”

Climate-Induced Massive Human Migration

This piece summarizes an article published by ProPublica, in collaboration with The New York Times Magazine and the Pulitzer Center. Click here for the [original article](#).

Humanity, throughout its history, has lived within a narrow climate spectrum that supports abundant food production; however, the zone of abundant food production trends north due to global warming. Without adequate climate control, extremely hot regions like the Sahara Desert may increase from the current 1% of the world's land area to 20% by 2070. In this situation, 33% of humanity would live outside the narrow food production band. The result: massive human migration.

Millions of people are already fleeing due to climate change disasters: Eight million Southeast Asians migrated toward Europe, North America, and the Middle East as increasing drought and monsoon rainfall convoluted traditional farming; millions of people are fleeing the African Sahel due to drought and crop failure.

In the best-case scenario, humanity will unite swiftly to effectively mitigate climate change. A range of possibilities exist for human migration and suffering, depending on the extent of our action. If we fail to act, climate change will exacerbate socioeconomic gaps; this will sharply divide Latin America from the United States. The USA has, unfortunately, contributed very little thus far. The narrow time frame in which humanity can successfully mitigate climate change is drawing to a close.

Climate change has induced widespread species extinction. Loss of biodiversity, coupled with rampant deforestation and loss of wildlife habitat, push people closer to wilderness, where diseases have in the past been too remote for human contact. In the past 20-40 years, however, exposure to illness-causing pathogens, primarily from bats and birds, has soared. Some research estimates 3,200 existing coronavirus strains in bats, awaiting opportunity for human spread and infection.

In addition to increasing our disease exposure, climate change also increases humanity's disease susceptibility. Warm winters, extreme weather, and capricious temperature swings significantly increase risk of respiratory disease, including flu. With unchecked climate change, researchers anticipate a 50% jump in flu epidemics and flu-related death this century.

Planet earth will experience dramatic environmental change due to global warming. According to Scott Weaver, the director of the Institute for Human Infections and Immunity at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, "We're on a very dangerous path right now, and I think that increases in disease are going to come along with it."



Where Will We Go?

Let's Talk About How Climate Change Is Driving Human Migration

a free digital event
Tuesday, Sept. 29
3-4 PM ET | 12-1 PM PT

Register at
propublica.org/ClimateTalk

NOG Asks its Members to Oppose the Navy's War Exercises in Our Parks



Despite having more than adequate training facilities of its own, the Navy has proposed to transport SEALs from the eastern and southern parts of the U.S. to conduct war games in 29 Washington State Parks. As described in their November 2019 Final [Environmental Assessment](#), these exercises may take place at Fort Flagler, Fort Townsend, Fort Worden, Shine Tidelands, Triton Cove and Sequim Bay State Park. Training includes beach landings from submersibles, scaling bluffs, and forest battles with shotgun plastic paint balls. WA State Parks and Recreation's Commission (Parks) is proposing a Mitigated Determination of Non Significance [Mitigated Determination of Non-significance](#) despite this inappropriate use of public recreational facilities and the potential for conflicts and injury to the public.

Parks determination of non-significance is also contrary to its mission to:

...care for the State's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places, and cherish destinations with natural, cultural, recreational, artistic, and interpretive experiences that all Washingtonians enjoy, appreciate, and proudly support.

If permitted, these military exercises would limit the public's use of its parks as well as tax Parks' staff with more responsibilities at a time when the State is furloughing and cutting back staff hours and resources.

The North Olympic Group is urging its members to oppose this inappropriate use of our parks. Written comments can be submitted until January 22. Individuals can also [sign up](#) to make verbal comments at a January 26 hearing.

<https://parks.state.wa.us/1168/Navy-training-proposal>

Additional Information: Thorough discussions of this proposal can be found in the [Peninsula Daily News](#) published on January 1, 2021 or the Port Townsend [Leader](#) on December 31, 2020.

Oil-Train Derailment

On December 22, 2020 a 108-car BNSF Railway train carrying Bakken crude oil from North Dakota went off the tracks in Custer, Whatcom County. Three cars ruptured, sparking a fire and forcing temporary evacuations in the town. A stretch of Interstate 5 also was shut down for several hours. A representative from The Department of Ecology stated that the environmental impacts of the spill appeared to be minimal. A BNSF spokesperson on site confirmed that the oil tank cars involved in the derailment were DOT-117Rs — an older variety of tank car that the company retrofitted in recent years to meet with new federal safety standards for transporting the heavy Bakken oil. Officials are still investigating the cause of the accident.