



North Olympic Group Newsletter

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<http://www.sierraclub.org/washington/north-olympic-0> July – August, 2015

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Meetings & Events

July 6 – Teamsters & Turtles Concert (Page 4)

July 9 – Excom meeting in Sequim, 1 to 3 PM. Contact Norm Baker ntbakerphd@gmail.com for more information

July 11 – Marbled Murrelets Program (Page 3)

July 12 – Grand Valley Outing (Page 5)

August 4 – Primary Elections (Page 4)

August 14 - Excom meeting in Port Townsend, 1 to 3 PM. Contact Peter Guerrero exploreolympics@gmail.com for more information



“What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?”

Henry David Thoreau



On June 4th the Wild Olympics Coalition cheered the reintroduction of the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by Senator Patty Murray and Representative Derek Kilmer. The Wild Olympics will permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries, a total of 464 river miles, as Wild and Scenic Rivers. If enacted, the legislation would designate the first new wilderness in Olympic National Forest in nearly three decades and the first-ever protected wild and scenic rivers on the Olympic Peninsula.

"This is truly landmark legislation for the Olympics' unprotected wild lands – places like lower Gray Wolf, Jupiter Ridge, South Fork Skokomish and South Quinault Ridge – and visionary in its sweep," said Tim McNulty, of Sequim, Wild Olympics Coalition member and author of *Olympic National Park: A Natural History*. "Conservationists have been working for Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River protections in the Olympics since the 70s. This bill is a historic step forward in the long story of Olympic conservation."

The Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild & Scenic Rivers Act has been [endorsed by over 500](#) local businesses, farms, faith leaders, local elected officials, CEO's, hunting, fishing, recreation & conservation groups.

Thank you also to all the NOG members who mailed postcards, signed petitions and phoned or emailed our representatives.

Special kudos to Connie Gallant, chair of the Quilcene-based Wild Olympics Coalition, who has worked so diligently to keep portions of the Olympics wild.

Group Executive Committee

We are governed by seven volunteers, with help from our conservation committees and interested members.

Meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each month alternating between Sequim and Port Townsend.

All Sierra Club members are welcome to attend.

Officers:

Chair: Robert Sextro

Vice Chair: Peter Guerrero

Secretary: Bill Volmut

Treasurer: Monica Fletcher

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Complaints, suggestions, opinions are always welcome



SIERRA CLUB SUES SHELL

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, gave conditional approval in May to Shell's resumption of fossil fuel exploration in the Arctic, which was paused after a mishap-filled 2012.

On June 2nd the Sierra Club and nine other groups sought to overturn the government's decision in a petition with the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday. According to the petition, the plaintiffs are conservation and Alaska Native groups, the members of which "use and enjoy the affected area for recreational, aesthetic, or scientific purposes or whose members depend on the ecosystems and wildlife of the Arctic for subsistence, cultural, and traditional uses."

In approving Shell's plan, U.S. agencies said the company would still have to obtain additional permits and biological opinions to protect resources, wildlife and workers. Environmental groups contend that weather conditions make it impossible to safely drill in the Arctic, a region that helps regulate the global climate because of its vast layers of sea ice.

"Both science and common sense is crystal clear in telling us that undeveloped dirty fuels, especially those in the Arctic, must remain in the ground if we are to avoid the worst consequences of climate disruption," said Dan Ritzman, Alaska Program Director for Sierra Club's Our Wild America campaign. "Downplaying the threats drilling poses to our climate, communities, and environment—as Shell continues to do—does not in reality make the threats any less serious. The Obama administration must say no to drilling in the Arctic Ocean, cancel these leases, and remove future leasing from the five-year offshore drilling plan."



MARBLED MURRELETS

and why the species is in severe decline
throughout its historic range

Kevin Schmelzlen, Campaign Coordinator for the WA State Murrelet Survival Project will show a power point presenting a general overview of the life history of the Marbled Murrelet and reasons for its decline, as well as policies implemented to help protect the species, what is still needed, and how citizens can help save this endangered bird.

Saturday July 11th

1 – 2:30 PM The Dungeness River Center, Sequim

6:30 – 8 PM Port Townsend Recreational Center, Lawrence & Tyler Streets

The Murrelet Survival Project is a campaign organized by several WA State conservation organizations to raise awareness for the Marbled Murrelet and to implement a long-term strategy for the threatened seabird's survival. Campaign Coordinator Kevin Schmelzlen received his B.S. in Political Science from University of California, Irvine and worked in electoral politics and government until beginning his career in conservation as Education & Outreach Coordinator at the California Wolf Center for three years. Kevin fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a landowner by purchasing 5 acres of forestland in Mason County WA where, on his time off, he can be found hiking, spending time with his dog and two cats, or digging holes on his mini-farm.



MURRELET TIMBER TRESPASS

a message from Josey Paul in the field

Here are some photos of the timber trespass into marbled murrelet habitat. Some of the trees felled are 4 to 5 feet in diameter. Until 1997, this stand was on the fringe of a very large stand of high-quality nesting murrelet habitat.

That year, the DNR cut most of the stand, leaving fragments to the north and south.

The Twin Mix cut, which was just completed, had a large buffer stand that was just starting to produce more high-quality nesting habitat. Now that potential is lost, per DNR policy. And the remaining island of trees is small and now daylighted through theft.





PRIMARY ELECTIONS COMING UP AUGUST 4TH

The NOG Political Committee is working on endorsements for the primary elections in Clallam and Jefferson Counties. The primaries include positions with more than three candidates running for office.

We are currently pursuing information for the following positions.

CLALLAM COUNTY

County Commissioner Dist. No. 1 - Partisan Office, 4-year term

Bryan D. Frazier (Prefers Democratic Party)

Mark Ozias (Prefers Democrat Party)

Jim McEntire (Prefers Republican Party)

Port Angeles City Council Position No. 5 - Nonpartisan Office, 4-year term

Michael Merideth

Marolee Smith

Shan Pak

JEFFERSON COUNTY

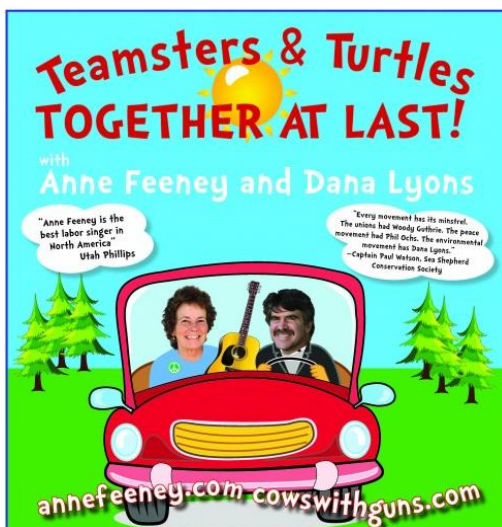
Port Townsend City Council Member Position No. 6 - Nonpartisan Office 4-year term

Paul S. Rice

Todd Wexman

Amy Smith

Be sure and watch for a NOG action email with endorsement information prior to July 15th when ballots are mailed out. The September/October newsletter will include endorsements for the November election.



July 6, 2015

7 P.M

Unitarian Fellowship Hall

73 Howe Road

Agnew

Admission by Donation



UP AND DOWN HILL WITH THE NOG

In June we hiked the Gold Creek trail, using cars at both ends allowing for us to cover more ground. Ken Wilson, an expert naturalist, did some really nice botanizing along the way. We saw some uncommon and lovely flowers as well as Rhodys in bloom.

JULY OUTING

Our next event is July 12 to Grand Valley off Obstruction Point. In a more typical year this would be a wildflower extravaganza but this year, without a normal seasonal snowpack, we'll have to make do with what will probably be a diminished show. On the other hand, Grand Valley is, indeed, one of the Grand places to hike in the subalpine Olympics. This is a challenging outing and not for beginners; there is significant elevation gain and it's a full day's hike.



subalpine Olympics

AUGUST OUTING

The originally scheduled Seven Lakes Basin backpacking hike has been canceled. This will be replaced by a day hike. Check our Meet Up site below for information.



For details and to RSVP (required): <http://www.meetup.com/North-Olympic-Group/>

Navy Proposed Electromagnetic Warfare Range Update:

SOME GOOD NEWS AT LAST!



In a letter dated May 18, 2015 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Ambassador contacted the U.S. UNESCO Ambassador to request an Environmental Impact Assessment concerning the potential impacts to Olympic

National Park from the U.S. Navy's plan to conduct war games in its environs on the Olympic Peninsula.

Olympic National Park was accepted as a biosphere reserve in June 1976, and as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1981. UNESCO selected the Park because of its "spectacular coastline, scenic lakes, majestic mountains and glaciers, and magnificent temperate rainforest. It is the lowest latitude in the world in which glaciers form at relatively low elevation. Its relative isolation and highly varied rainfall have produced complex and varied life zones."

Game-changer on Climate Action

Bob Sextro

Pope Francis made history on 18 June 2015 with the Encyclical titled *On Care of our Common Home*—a papal letter addressed to all bishops in the Catholic Church and to “all people of goodwill” regardless of faith—declaring the moral imperative for humanity to act on climate change. The Pope declares the urgent challenge “to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development”. The pontiff clearly appreciates those of us who have been working on climate change when he states “I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the common home we share. Particular appreciation is owed those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic events of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest”. He also “urgently appeals for a new dialog about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all”.

In the landmark letter, the pontiff supports the scientific evidence that climate change is mostly caused by human activity and our continued use of fossil fuels. In section 165 the pope says “we know that technology based on highly polluting fossil fuels—especially coal but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas—needs to be progressively replaced without delay”. He said the world’s resources are “being plundered because of shortsighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production, and called for an end to what he describes as a “culturally perverse economic system” in which the world’s wealthiest countries exploit the poorest, leaving the Earth looking “more like an immense pile of filth”.

The Encyclical and the Pope’s statements therein drew praise from global and environmental leaders. President Obama said that he welcomed the pope’s letter and admired Francis’ decision to make the case, with the full moral authority of his position, for action. Sierra Club’s executive director, Michael Brune said “the vision laid out in these teachings serves as an inspiration to everyone across the world who seeks a more just, compassionate and healthy future.”

The timing of the Pope’s action was designed to build further momentum for upcoming international climate negotiations in Paris later in 2015, and comes on the heels of major global initiatives including an unprecedented agreement between the US and China to cut carbon pollution dramatically, and a strong commitment by the world’s largest economies to completely eliminate fossil fuels this century. Overall, the Pope’s Encyclical offers moral guidance to the world on addressing climate disruption and it will inspire us with its sense of urgency. The pontiff states clearly that “it is my hope that this Encyclical Letter can help us acknowledge the appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge we face.”

In my work with other groups on climate change, we have always talked about the need to engage faith-based groups in our discussions. I think this Pope and his Encyclical can be the beginnings of that dialog and a real game-changer both in the US and around the world.

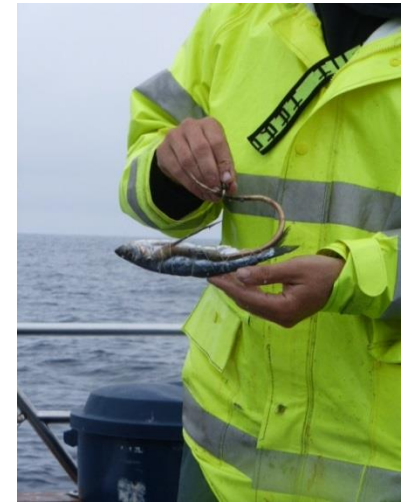




Fisheries Science in Action

by Norm Baker

The Makah Tribe was recently awarded a grant through the *Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program* from the *International Pacific Halibut Commission*. The goal of the grant is to compare the historical Makah halibut hook, called čibu-d (and



pronounced chi-bood), to modern circle hooks. The goal of this experiment was to reduce bycatch of endangered species of Rockfish. The čibu-d hook has the unique ability to only hook halibut between 12 pounds and 40 pounds. Very few other species of fish are caught on the čibu-d. In fact, in two full days of fishing, I never saw anything but halibut caught on the čibu-d.

The Makah tribal biologists contracted the charter fishing vessel *Windsong*, based in Neah bay, for the sport fishing experiment. Ten anglers fished for halibut using modern sport halibut fishing equipment. Anglers fished six poles with čibu-d hooks and six poles with circle hooks for 30 minutes at 10 different locations. On each hook type, every fish caught was measured and recorded. All of the halibut, yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish were returned to the sea quickly after they were measured and recorded. Other fish caught, such as lingcod or yellowtail rockfish, were retained and filleted and the fillets distributed evenly among all anglers on the boat. Lingcod on the grill back in camp, with fresh asparagus and a nice white wine was delicious.

The Makah fisheries biologists are excellent researchers. Joe Peterson is the ground fish biologist and was born and raised here in Sequim. John Scardino is the Marine mammal biologist and a participant in the International Whaling Commission. Very knowledgeable and interesting men to talk with. This was a very interesting fishing trip since we accomplished a bit of science, everyone caught a lot of fish and we had a lot of fun. Over a two day period, I caught four sizable halibut, a true cod, a dogfish shark, a large lingcod and a large skate that took nearly 20 minutes to reel in - especially since the water was up to 300 feet deep with a 2 pound sinker at the end of the line. Unfortunately, as promising as the data on the čibu-d hook was for reducing by-catch, it was also very poor at catching almost anything else. My guess is modern circle hooks caught 10 times the number of fish. Unfortunately, we also caught endangered rockfish and several other species of groundfish.



... AND A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM ...



On July 23rd King County Superior Court Judge Hollis Hill issued a landmark decision in *Zoe & Stella Foster v. Washington Department of Ecology (DOE)*. This is a climate change case brought by eight young citizens of Washington State. Judge Hill ordered the Washington DOE to reconsider the petition the eight youth filed last year asking for carbon dioxide reductions. Judge Hill also ordered the DOE to report back to the court by July 8, 2015, as to whether they will consider the undisputed current science necessary for climate recovery.

“The effect of this decision is that for the first time in the United States, a court of law has ordered a state agency to consider the most current and best available climate science when deciding to regulate carbon dioxide emissions,” said Andrea Rodgers of the Western Environmental Law Center, attorney for the youth petitioners. “The court directed Ecology to apply the agency’s own findings that climate change presents an imminent threat to Washington and demands immediate action. The ball is now in Ecology’s court to do the right thing and protect our children and future generations.”

For more details:

<http://ecowatch.com/2015/06/25/court-rules-state-address-climate/>



Don't Forget - WAmend is out in force collecting signatures for an initiative that would clarify that corporations do not have the same constitutional rights as the people and that spending money is not free speech. Watch for local petitioners at the libraries, stores and local events and please sign this petition.

Better yet, help out. Clallam County members contact Andrea Radich at andreasangels@msn.com; Jefferson County members contact Dianne Diamond at diannejoydiamond@yahoo.com to volunteer or request a copy of the petition to gather signatures from interested friends and relatives.