

.... in their natural beauty

Eleanor Heller, Chairman



MORE HIKERS IN MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

The gasoline shortage has been putting even more hikers on low-elevation trails close to Portland. The trails look well worn.

The Mt. Hood National Forest, closer to a metropolitan area than other National Forests is faced with increasing hiker use and decreasing trail construction and maintenance funds. This means more people using unmaintained and deteriorating trails. The Forest Supervisor and the District Rangers decided that something had to be done.

The Forest Roads and Trails (FR&T) budget for each Forest, as set by Congress and the Administration, was decreased about two years ago. The proportion of this budget assigned to trails did not provide enough funds even to keep the trails maintained. Starting July 1, the Mt. Hood will receive approximately the same amount of money to spend on roads and trails for the year. However, the Forest has decided to increase the amount for trail funding by over \$20,000. In other words, trails will get a little more money and roads a little less.

This increased trail funding helps, but more Congressional appropriations for trails are needed. Back in Washington, D.C., the National Scenic Trails, such as the Pacific Crest Trail, are recognized by appropriate funding. Apparently the effect of the gas shortage on the use of trails on National Forests near a metropolitan area has not been recognized in the national capitol, as trail funding is inadequate.



WILDERNESS USE

Wilderness permit system statistics show that 13,055 people made overnight trips into the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness and 12,200 into the Three Sisters Wilderness last summer.

For the Mt. Jefferson, the largest number (24%) of the overnights came from Multnomah County. Next was 18% from adjoining Marion County. For the Three Sisters, 35% were from adjoining Lane County. Next largest number by counties was 15% from Multnomah County.

It would seem that people tend to select the nearest Wilderness Area for overnight use. This would seem logical, especially on week ends or trips of short duration. This also indicates the need for other Roadless Areas near population center.

TRAIL GUIDES

Copies of a hiking guide for the Badger Creek Roadless Area, prepared by Ken and Ruth Love, will be available at the Mazama Clubrooms sometime in June. Ask the Secretary for a copy.

East of Mt. Hood, the steep ridges and rugged creek canyons of the Badger Area extend on eastward from Lookout Mountain. The comparatively dry and sunny climate of this Roadless Area provides a unique recreational opportunity in the Mt. Hood National Forest. The hiking guide will help you get acquainted with this interesting area.



LAKE NEEDS IDENTITY

In exploring for the location of a proposed trail system in the Trapper Roadless Area above Government Mineral Springs, Mazamas have become aware of the importance of good names for identification of geological features. The two existing trails that start at the Springs are known as the Observation Peak Trail and the Lost Lake Trail. No, this trail goes to the little Lost Lake in Washington's Wind River Area, not to the big one near Oregon's Mt. Hood. And did you know there are over 30 Lost Lakes in Washington?

To eliminate the name confusion and to give identity to this lovely little lake nestled in the crater of Soda Peaks in the Trapper Area, the Mazamas suggested that the name of the lake be changed from Lost Lake to Soda Peaks Lake. This suggestion, made to the Washington State Board of Geographic Names, has been passed on to the United States Board of Geographic Names and will be placed on their next docket for consideration.

LESS FIRE DANGER

Dead branches and snags in alpine or timberline areas are a picturesque part of the scene. They should not be disturbed. Fire wood should be obtained from ground litter only.

However, in heavily timbered areas the dead branches of trees that "pruning" themselves make a ladder effect that increases the fire hazard. Removal of these dead branches, which will rot off soon anyway, will decrease the danger of forest fire. Campers who remove these dead branches and who pick up branches and sticks from the ground are helping cut down on the forest fire danger.

ESTACADA TRAIL FUNDING

Walking about the mountains is one of the great recreations of the Northwest. Unfortunately, most of us do our hiking and climbing in the same famous and beautiful locations — causing a crush of bodies in the campsites and sometimes even "parades" on the trails.

The coming of snows exacerbates this phenomenon because, in the Mt. Hood National Forest at least, there are but few low-elevation routes for hikers who don't wish to don skis or snowshoes. What's needed is an expanded network of trails below two-thousand feet and repair or relocation of existing trails to provide more access to mountain scenery.

What the problem is — and a possible solution — is exemplified in the Estacada Ranger District. This beautiful area astride the Clackamas Gorge includes Roaring River, Bull of the Woods, and Bagby Hot Springs among its present trail destinations. It also has a lot of trails left over from the old 1930's maintenance and fire network. These paths are being kept open even though they often slither through meadows, switchback up open hillsides, crash down steep grades and pass blindly by excellent viewpoints only a few yards away.

The Estacada District also has the potential for what could be some of the finest low-elevation recreation in the area: The Clackamas Gorge itself. The leaping water, mature timber and volcanic benches along this route are ideal reasons for a pathway across the river from the existing road. The trail would be open the year round except during occasional snows — it would be screened visually from the highway in most places and the water-sound would erase civilization's noise — it would run initially between Fish Creek and Whale Creek but could easily be extended up and down stream. Such a trail could relieve the winter hiking congestion of Eagle Creek and other Columbia Gorge routes. It would be a joy in summer.

Unfortunately, the Clackamas Gorge Trail probably won't be built. And those necessary repairs and reroutings on existing trails won't be done. Not unless hikers speak out and ask that Forest Service trail funding be increased to provide them.

Fact is, there is just barely enough trail maintenance money coming to the Estacada District from Mt. Hood Forest headquarters to provide a once-each season brushing out of the 150 miles of existing trails. This year's budget is \$4,500. With labor rates, travel time, and supplies, that works out to about two hours and twenty minutes a year of work per miles of path. One hundred and forty minutes! It isn't enough to maintain trail treads and drainage, much less relocate or do major overhauls. There have been no construction funds allocated to Estacada for several years; and mileage has declined yearly (even on the entire Mt. Hood Forest, where about 50 miles of new trails have been built since 1966, trail mileage has decreased by 225 miles in the same period).

The source of the problem is hard to pin down, being tied to local trail plans as well as national forest policy. Trails declined in importance as roads took over the administrative, logging, and fire-fighting role. Increased timber harvesting bulldozes roads over trails (the direct, visible reason for trail mileage decline). The trail budget is tied to this forest road budget and administered largely by engineering staffs who have little expertise in trails for recreation. Calls for more recreation facilities don't influence trails because of their tie to roads, not campgrounds. Finally, from the President down, the call is for more timber cutting and — quite naturally in

these tight-budget days — subsequent slashes in recreation, wildlife, and range funds.

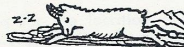
As one forest manager put it, "If a Ranger doesn't maintain his trails, he might hear from a few people. But if he doesn't make his (timber) cut, he's really in trouble."

What we must do is make sure the Rangers, and everyone else in trail funding up to the Congressional level, hear from more than just a few people. The plans for new trails are waiting. Ron Koenig, Resource Assistant Ranger at Estacada estimates his maintenance needs require three times the money he's now getting. The reconstruction of important existing trails to protect fragile areas and make more scenery visible to more hikers will take up to \$40,000 per year for a few years. And what is perhaps the most important project — the low-level all-year Clackamas Gorge Trail — will require about \$75,000 to build.

Citizen action in writing to Congressmen, talking to District Rangers, and helping brush out old trails reaped major improvements in the trail network in the Columbia Gorge.

Your letters can help now to increase trail funding for the Estacada area and make the Clackamas Gorge Trail a reality. When you write your Congressman, make copies of your letter to send to your Senators and to Appropriations Committee members, Wendell Wyatt and Al Ullman. Address for Congressmen: House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Senators: Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

— Gary Braasch



NO BOTTLES OR CANS

A new regulation proposed for Shenandoah National Park sounds like a way to beat the problem of broken glass and tin cans in trail camps:

"Possession of a full or partially filled discardable glass or metal food or beverage container, except one which is made of metal foil, sheet plastic or paper is prohibited in backcountry camping areas."



PLANS FOR MT. RAINIER

The Master Plan and the Wilderness Proposal for Mt. Rainier National Park, along with the Draft Environment Statements, were received in December. Public meetings and hearings will be held between January 16 and 19 (See Bulletin Board).

Written comments on the Master Plan can be made until February 4 and on the Wilderness Proposal until February 19. Address comments to: Superintendent, Mount Rainier National Park, Longmire, Washington 98397. For information contact Dick Reedy or John Allinger.