



2019 Summer Newsletter
Edited by Julie Odell, Chair

A History of Bird Creek Meadows and Justice William O. Douglas

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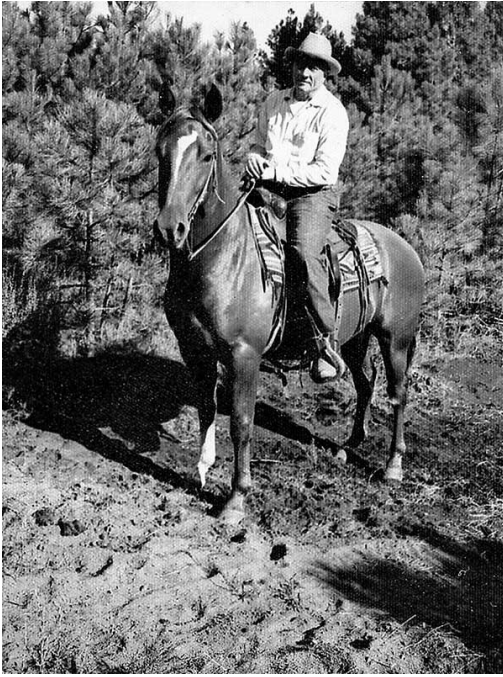
U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas called Bird Creek Meadows a "place of wonderment and worship." He loved Mount Adams since he was a boy, climbed it first in 1945, and wrote eloquently about the mountain in two of his 34 books. In 1960, Douglas wrote *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* during his summer stays at his "cabin" in the Glenwood Valley of south-central Washington.



The summer home of "Justice Bill" and Mercedes Douglas was only about a mile north of the Flying L Ranch—where I grew up, and in 1972, built a home. My place was on wooded and pasture land just north of the Flying L. Now, after 22 years of living in Hood River, Oregon, I still use Justice Bill's massive Douglas fir desk, upon which he penned his *"My Wilderness"* books.

Douglas was a well-known champion for the preservation of wild places. He felt that remoteness and the struggle to reach a pristine alpine lake or meadow were essential to the wellbeing of not only the individual, but for the American people. He wrote: "Man must be able to escape civilization if he is able to survive. Some of his greatest needs are for refuges and retreats where he can recapture for a day or a week the primitive conditions in life."

Beginning his first season of living in Glenwood in 1958, Justice Douglas had not seen the Bird Creek Meadows in over 30 years. Initially, the road ended at the base of Snowplow Mountain, and it was a "stiff hike" to reach the meadows. Douglas was dismayed when he and Mercedes took their jeep on "a good dirt road" all the way to the eastern meadows at 6,000 feet. And his "heart sank" when he found 27 cars ahead of them. The sanctuary had been "desecrated by the automobile," he wrote. Days afterward he was depressed by



how the “sacred precincts of a great mountain” had become accessible to “potbellied men smoking black cigars, who never could climb a hundred feet.” Bird Creek Meadows was no longer a wilderness.

He was also distressed that the area would be ruined by sheep, such as what he observed in the meadows on the northwest side of the Adams also around 1958 or 1959. At the time, Bird Creek Meadows area was completely within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and parts of it—within the Bird Creek S&G Allotment—were still being grazed. In 1962, the Forest Service finally closed the sheep range, and the area was “held in rest condition.”

At the time, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest “Bird Creek Meadow Forest Camp” was at the end of the road that Douglas was saddened to find. This same camp was our favorite place to sleep under the stars when Darvel and I were kids in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Our family and friends would hike the well-developed trail system in the area. The best loop hike of 5.8 miles doesn’t exist anymore, unless you

go off-trail—and today that would be against Yakama Nation rules. The missing link is a 2.1-mile section that was called “Snowfields Trail.” It headed north from the Round-the-Mountain Trail about a mile west of the camp, and met the “Hellroaring Ridge Trail” near the edge of the big permanent snowfield at 7,300 feet. I don’t recall seeing sheep or cattle in the meadows when we did our hiking as kids. The recreation area—with its campgrounds, trails and dirt roads—was a Forest Service showpiece. A 1940 map shows the extensive trail system, including one planned to Shadow Lake and loop cut-offs.

In 1972, when the Yakama Nation took over the area, the last three-quarters of a mile of the road to Bird Creek Meadows was converted to a section of the Round-the-Mountain Trail. Much of the old campground at the end of the road burned in the 2015 Cougar Creek Fire. Even though the Yakama Tribe called it a “Picnic Area,” very few people actually picnicked there, because the wooden legs of the old, massive tables have rotted away.

I’m not sure if William O. Douglas knew about the road shortening. My last contact with the Justice was in 1971, when my wife, Susan, and I visited him in his Supreme Court chambers. We talked mostly about Mount Adams and our new Wilderness Institute program. Douglas had not been on the mountain since 1963, the year he moved away from Glenwood. My friendship with “Justice Bill,” along with his extensive writings, had a huge influence on my life. I became a passionate advocate for protection of wild areas in the late 1960s and have been ever since.

Fortunately, the 2015 Cougar Creek Fire spared all but a portion of easternmost Bird Creek Meadows. The fire destroyed the Mirror Lake Campground and most of the campsites at Bird Lake. Fortunately, the much larger campground at Bench Lake escaped completely. The Yakama Nation Mount Adams Recreation Area has remained closed to the public since 2015. Considerable road and trail work was accomplished in the area during the 2018 season. According to Everett Isaac, manager of the Yakama Nation Recreation Area, the Tribe’s priorities are “road work, campground work and safe access.” Last year, Washington Trails Association provided valuable assistance in trail repair, particularly Bird and Bluff Lake Trails, and Trail of the Flowers.

SAVE THE DATE!

People in Nature: Interactions on Mt Adams in a Warming Earth

Friends of Mt Adams Community Seminar

Saturday April 25, 2020

9:00 am to 4:30 pm

Columbia High School Gymnasium, White Salmon, WA

The full agenda is not yet confirmed, however, the keynote speaker will be noted scholar, biologist, and writer Dr. Robert Michael Pyle. For 35 years, Dr. Pyle has been a full-time writer, biologist, teacher, and speaker. He has published hundreds of articles, essays, peer-reviewed papers, stories, and poems. His twenty-two books include *Wintergreen*, *The Thunder Tree*, *Where Bigfoot Walks*, *Chasing Monarchs*, *Walking the High Ridge*, *Sky Time in Gray's River*, and *Mariposa Road: The First Butterfly Big Year*; as well as two poetry collections, and a flight of butterfly books including *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies*, *The Butterflies of Cascadia*, and *Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest*. His first novel, *Magdalena Mountain*, recently came out from Counterpoint Press. A life-long lepidopterist, Dr. Pyle is co-coordinator of the Northwest Butterfly Survey. For his work on behalf of butterfly studies and conservation, he received the John Adams Comstock Award from the Lepidopterists' Society and a Distinguished Service Award from the Society for Conservation Biology. He is a Distinguished Alumnus of both the University of Washington and Yale University forestry schools, a Senior Fellow of the Spring Creek Project at Oregon State University, and one of seventeen Honorary Fellows of the Royal Entomological Society.

In addition to Dr. Pyle, the agenda will include speakers to address how we can expect climate change to affect earth, wind & fire, fish, birds & mammals, and humans—all of whom rely on Mt Adams for emotional, economic and cultural sustenance. We are especially hoping to include members of the Yakama Tribe, who are stewards of half of the mountain.

US Forest Service Update at FOMA's Annual Meeting



Friends of Mt. Adams (FOMA) held its annual board meeting on June 4, 2019. We had a fantastic guest speaker, Andrea Montgomery, US Forest Service South Zone Botanist. Andrea brought us up to date on cattle management on the mountain. The Confederated Tribe of Yakama is working on the cattle allotment drift fence on their section of the recreation area, including Bird Creek Meadows, and Mt. Adams Ranger District of the GPNF will be working on their section, which includes the Gotchen Meadows boundary drift fence. Then the Ranger District's Range Technician will be surveying the fence line every two weeks for patency. We discussed with Andrea the importance of a potential permitting system for the South Climb, which has seen a

growing number of climbers in the summer, creating increased environmental impacts. The Forest Service is developing a Native Plant Bank for seed dispersal to selected landscapes on the east side, some of which has burned three times. The native plants include lupine, Oregon sunshine, yarrow, ocean spray, penstemon, Idaho fescue and others. Another FS project underway is tree thinning that is targeting tree invasion of priority meadows such as Lost Meadow, Lost Creek Meadow, Peterson Meadows, and Gotchen Cabin Meadows.



Yakama Nation Update Tia Beavert, Tribal Forest Manager

Repairs are underway to reopen Bird Creek Meadows, which was extensively damaged in the Cougar Creek fire in 2015. Bird Creek Meadows is located in the tribal area open for public recreation. Work left to be done in order to make the area safe includes:

- The remainder of the road work needs to be completed
- Water pipes need to be repaired
- Outhouses are built and need to be installed
- Fence line will be put up for the season

A tentative opening will be dependent upon completion of the remaining repairs. Questions can be directed to Yakama Nation Tribal Forest Manager at Tia_Beavert@Yakama.com.

White Salmon River Monitoring Pat Arnold

In support of the Upper White Salmon Wild and Scenic Management Plan, Friends of the White Salmon, Friends of Mt. Adams, and the Suskдорfia Native Plant Society are working together with the US Forest Service to monitor specific areas and concerns, such as dispersed campsites, trails and invasive species.

Monitoring activities got off to a great start on May 23 with a training session at the Trout Lake ranger station. Justin Ewer provided a very thorough monitoring protocol and introduced us to the tablets available at the ranger station to be borrowed for a monitoring hike. The tablets are fully loaded with maps and monitoring questions. They can be used in the field with or without internet connection. When they are returned to the ranger station, the data is downloaded so there is no need for paper reports. The monitoring protocol also includes paper reporting forms for those who prefer to use them. The most challenging part of the training was learning to estimate area by pacing off the perimeter and then doing the math. Most of us had no problem with a square or rectangle, however the triangles and trapezoids were more challenging, requiring formulas long forgotten.

The monitoring areas include: a section of the PCT, which is the longest monitoring section; a couple of miles of Buck Creek; an unofficial trail from lower Buck Creek to the forest edge; and unauthorized camp sites. We split into pairs and each pair took one assignment. We'll have a group meeting sometime in late July to check in and change assignments.

Many of the monitors are FOMA members, so many thanks to all of you, and to Justin Ewer for getting us all set up.

Wolf Reintroduction Research
Dr. Samuel Wasser, Center for Conservation Biology
University of Washington

With support from the Washington State Legislature, the Center for Conservation Biology is examining how the medium to large carnivores are using their habitat in the absence of wolves and how that changes as the wolves spread into the area. Four Conservation Canines detection dog teams surveyed the Central Washington Cascades from Hwy 2 south to the Columbia River. Over the course of a few months our teams collected almost 1200 scats that are now being analyzed to confirm the carnivore species that left each sample and its diet. Samples likely include coyote, bobcat, cougar, black bear, marten, fisher and fox. Thus far, the only wolves confirmed in our samples were from the known Teanaway Pack. The remaining samples are still being tested for wolf presence.



This is an exciting opportunity to see how the top predators in our state change their behavior and/or prey preferences as a long-absent apex predator returns to the area. We're appreciative of the State Legislature, WDFW, The Johnson Foundation, The Dawkins Charitable Trust, Mt. Rainier NP, Mount St. Helens Natl Monument, Weyerhaeuser, the Nature Conservancy and many others for helping to make this possible.

For more information: <http://conservationbiology.uw.edu/>

FOMA Award: Fisher Research, Mitchell Parsons
University of Washington Graduate Student

In June 2017, Friends of Mount Adams awarded a \$500 grant to Mitchell Parsons to support his research on fishers in the South Cascade Mountains. This spring, the first half of his research was published in the Journal of Wildlife Management (<https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jwmg.21670>). Mitchell used radio tracking locations of fishers released by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Park Service, and Conservation Northwest, along with an array of wildlife cameras and forest habitat data to examine what forest types fishers prefer and how fishers interact with prey (snowshoe hares) and predators (bobcats and coyotes).

Mitchell and his collaborators found that fishers preferred old forests that provide complex structures like large trees, dead snags, and fallen logs, but that fishers also chose to be close to younger forests where snowshoe hares, an important food item, tend to be more numerous. Fishers were also most active from morning to mid-day, possibly to avoid nocturnal coyotes and bobcats which can kill fishers.

This work will help fishers recover in Washington after being gone for 50 or more years. Understanding what habitats fishers prefer to use is the first step in managing forests to help them recover. The findings should also help balance conservation and timber extraction, as Mitchell's research added to growing evidence that fishers prefer old forest but use edges between old and young forest also.

The second half of Mitchell's research looks at what forest types provide the most food for fishers and what foods fishers prefer to eat and should be coming out soon!



Mt. Adams Wilderness Character Assessment Report **Paul Moyer, FOMA Board Member**

Last September 2018, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (GPNF) completed their "Wilderness Character Baseline Assessment Report" for Mount Adams Wilderness. The purpose of the Baseline Report is to assess the current state of the wilderness area and provide quantifiable measures for future management decisions.

Based on the 1964 Wilderness Act's definition of wilderness character, federal agencies developed a management model that measures the following four characteristics:

Untrammeled: Wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation. Monitors any human actions in the wilderness, both authorized and unauthorized, that intentionally manipulate the environment. Authorized actions include seed collection, fire suppression, invasive species treatments, etc. Unauthorized actions would include visitor created trails.

Natural: Wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. Monitors the effects of human actions and modern civilization on natural systems, including plants. Measures non-indigenous plant and aquatic animal species, haze, water quality, commercial livestock use, etc.

Undeveloped: Wilderness retains its primeval character and influence, and is essentially without permanent improvement or modern human occupation. Monitors buildings, roads, evidence of other people, or improvements on the landscape. Measures non-recreational physical development, inholdings, and use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and mechanized transport.

Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Although managers cannot guarantee or require that visitors experience solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, they must protect and uphold the *opportunity* to have such experiences. Measures include remoteness from human sights and sounds, facilities that decrease self-reliant recreation, and management restrictions on visitor behavior.

To learn about the results of the Baseline Report, you can request the 67 page pdf, “Wilderness Character Baseline Assessment Report -- Mt. Adams Wilderness”, or for more information contact -- Justin Ewer, Wilderness Manager, Trout Lake Ranger District, GPNF.

Bicycles in the Wilderness **Paul Moyer, FOMA Board Member**

In support of the 1964 Wilderness Act’s restriction of mechanized modes of travel in Wilderness Areas, FOMA joined 149 other organizations (including the Mazamas and Cascade Forest Conservancy) last June 2018, by signing on to a group letter opposing bills before the U.S. House and Senate to amend the Act to allow bicycle use. The letter was drafted, signatures collated and posted by policy analysts of Wilderness Watch to members of Congress. Both bills stalled, but iterations of them were expected to resurface.

On May 23, 2019, Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) introduced Senate bill S. 1695 to the U.S. Congress. If signed into law, this bill will weaken the Wilderness Act by directing local officials administering Wilderness Areas nationwide to determine and regulate usage of mountain bikes and other human-powered machines within their respective jurisdictions.

If this bill becomes law it appears to redefine “wilderness character” within the Wilderness Act to include mechanized, human powered transportation. Wilderness character, as described in the 1964 Act now serves as a definitional foundation for monitoring wilderness trends throughout the National Wilderness Preservation System. The definition thematically frames the GPNF’s “Mt. Adams Wilderness: Wilderness Character Baseline Assessment Report” reported on above.

Spring Hike into the Mt. Adams Wilderness **Dean Myerson, FOMA Board Member**

For an early season overnight hike on Mt Adams, I started at the Buck Creek trailhead, near Mt Adams Horse Camp. This trailhead is under 3000 feet and so melts out very early. And since it is a popular equestrian trail, it



is maintained to a high standard. Many trails connect in a short distance: I started on the Buck Creek trail, then continued on the Morrison Creek trail. When that ended, I crossed a remote dirt road onto the Crofton Ridge trail, which ended near Morrison Forest Camp. A couple hundred yards on the road and I was on the Shorthorn Trail, which climbs into the Mt Adams Wilderness shortly. This trail reaches the Round the Mountain Trail under three miles, but I finally started hitting snow before that, at about 5700 feet, so I set up camp, after about 10.5 miles of hiking. From camp I did hike through more snow and some open slopes on the Shorthorn Trail to reach the RTM trail and great views all around. Of course those interested in a

shorter hike could just drive to Morrison Forest Camp and hike the last part of this route. But although the lower trails are popular with equestrians, I rarely see them and these trails also provide a lot of solitude in the lowland forests, most of which has not burned as the higher altitude has in recent years. So a long hike like this provides a great variety of what Mt Adams has to offer, stretching from healthy lowland forests and creeks, up to the subalpine snowline.

For more information about Friends of Mt. Adams or to make a donation, see our website at mtadamsfriends.org. Our current Board members are: *Julie Odell, Chair; Alec Maule, Vice-Chair; Jurgen Hess, Conservation Chair; Paul Moyer, Secretary; Dean Myerson, Treasurer; Darvel Lloyd, Darryl Lloyd, and Bill Weiler.* Our next board meeting will be held in October. Please watch our website for time and place. All are welcome!