



## Washington's National Park Fund News



### January 2015

#### Elwha Restoration Progress

*With your support, Washington's National Park Fund has been able to fund Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns as they restore the land that was once covered by water held back by the Elwha Dam in Olympic National Park. These interns have been key to the restoration operation.*

*Horizons Foundation funded Sarah Pritchett's 16-week internship this past summer and fall. Future internships require continued philanthropic support as the operation enters its final years. To learn more, read on.*



Photo courtesy of Joshua Chenoweth

The [Elwha River Restoration](#) project is one of the largest restoration projects ever attempted by the National Park Service. Horizons Foundation funded a vital 16-week Student Conservation Association internship in 2014 for the revegetation operation, which was in its most labor-intensive period of a seven year adaptive management project.

The Elwha River and Ecosystem Restoration Project's revegetation plan aims to restore the newly-exposed land from the Lake Aldwell and Lake Mills reservoirs with more than 400,000 native plants. You can read the full plan [here](#).

The Matt Albright Native Plant Center, Olympic National Park's greenhouse facility, is the center of these efforts. Park botanists and a team of dedicated volunteers began planting in the Elwha reservoirs during the first year of dam removal, and will continue monitoring and replanting over the next three years.

"We really need to have at least two short-term interns each year, but we try to extend at least one of those to a longer nine-month internship," said Joshua Chenoweth, Restoration Botanist at Olympic National Park. "That's very funding-driven, and is dependent on grants and philanthropic donations."

This summer, Horizons Foundation-funded intern Sarah Pritchett collected seeds, transplanted seedlings, and supported all nursery functions. Her efforts led to the production of more than 30,000 plants. She also helped to monitor 95 plots in the project areas. The data collected at these plots allow the team to understand and adaptively manage the project.

"There's an unprecedented amount of sedimentation," said Chenoweth. "No one knew how plants were going to perform in these conditions." The team uses that data to monitor how species are doing and shift focus if needed.

"We really need to ensure that native trees become established," he said. "Grasses and other herbaceous plants are not enough. We want the sites to become forests. The data tells us what species are doing well, and what is naturally propagating. We've had a lot of success, and we expect to have even more success in the next three years, since we will have a lot more data to teach us what is working."

In the fall, Sarah assisted with seeding more than 40 acres of project lands and planting more than 10,000 plants. Planting season continued after her internship ended, with the goal of planting more than 80,000 native plants by the end of March 2015. In 2015, the team will be propagating and planting close to 60,000 native plants and surveying more than 100 permanent plots.

Thanks to WNPF and Horizons Foundation, a nine-month SCA internship has been funded for January-September. That intern started on January 12th. In the final three years of operation, staff and budget will become more scarce, so SCA interns are more important than ever. "It's part of my plan to keep the project going in the future using only interns funded by public support," Chenoweth said.

*Below: The newly-planted former Lake Mills reservoir.  
Photo courtesy of Chris Wilson*



## Crews Hard at Work on the Sahale Arm Trail

*The season for trails maintenance is short and the list of necessary tasks is long. It takes several seasons of work to restore trails that have badly degraded. Skilled crews maximize the time they have to maintain vital trail access to beautiful places in our parks. The Sahale Arm Trail crew and others are funded by your donations to WNPF.*

*Photo courtesy of Don Mann*





**Were you at last year's Spring Dinner and Auction?  
This powerful video was shown.**

**[Click here to enjoy it now](#), if you haven't seen it, and be inspired.**

With guidance from park employees (our state's trails experts), the trails in our National Parks are cared for, maintained, and rebuilt throughout the short summer season. This takes planning, preparation, coordination, scheduling, supervision, thoughtful intent - and funding.

Guests who attended the 2014 Spring Dinner and Auction contributed more than \$53,000 for trails maintenance and restoration during the Fund-A-Need portion of the evening. Those funds were quickly put to use in Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks.

Don Mann, Trail Maintenance and Historic Preservation Supervisor, explains how funds were used in North Cascades National Park.

"We work to maintain approximately 380 miles of trails in North Cascades National Park," he said. "In 2014, Washington's National Park Fund supported two critical trails projects in the park. A crew of four employees worked on the Sahale Arm Trail for two months installing rock steps, repairing braided trail segments, and improving trail drainage. A second crew installed a pedestrian bridge on the Rainbow Lakes Trail. This work protects park resources and enhances the visitors' safety and enjoyment of their beautiful park. Assistance from WNPF helps us continue to maintain and repair trails, which supports the mission of the park and the purpose of wilderness."

**Will you join us for this year's Spring Dinner and Auction on April 11th?  
Tickets are on sale now! [Please click here to register.](#)**



## Washington's National Park Fund Spring Dinner and Auction

Saturday, April 11, 2015 | Seattle Design Center



**We are so grateful to these 2014 Fund-A-Need donors.**

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## **Pedestrian footbridge added, thanks to your donations!**

*When it comes to crossing a river, who doesn't LOVE a good footbridge?*

*A 30-year-old footlog (right) has served as the previous bridge on the busy Rainbow Lake Trail up in North Cascades National Park for years. Donations funded the construction and installation of a safe, seasonal cable bridge at this site (photo below).*

*Photo courtesy of Don Mann*



The Rainbow Lake trail crosses Rainbow Creek below the trail junction of the Rainbow Lakes and Rainbow Creek Trails near Bench Creek. The crossing is a critical part of two popular backpacking loops, one starting from Stehekin, the other from Highway 20. The crossing had consisted of a horse ford and a footlog in very poor condition. A footlog was installed approximately 30 years ago after an off duty NPS employee died in the ford. There was a second incident in 2005 when a hiker was injured fording the creek upstream of the trail because she didn't know about the log. The footlog was greatly deteriorated.

With your donations, the log was replaced with a seasonal cable bridge. Work began in September and was finished in late October. There is another seasonal bridge about one mile downstream at Rainbow Ford. Both bridges are installed and removed on the same days each year, so it does not add substantially to the annual workload.

The installation site required rock cribbing on one side to gain elevation above the creek, and some brushing of vine maple and alder. Rigging was used to build the rock cribs so that rock large enough to withstand flooding can be safely moved.

The bridge isn't designed to withstand snow loading, and there isn't any need for it in the winter, so staff pull the decking in the fall, and re-install it in the spring

before hikers are out and about. This is a great solution for this site, fairly low tech, functional, and significantly less expensive than a permanent structure.



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**1904 Third Avenue, Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98101  
(206) 623-2063**

**For more information about Washington's National Park Fund,  
please  
feel free to contact:**

**Laurie Ward, Executive Director  
(206) 623-2063**

**[Laurie@wnpf.org](mailto:Laurie@wnpf.org)**