

## Old Cascade Tunnel another acquisition target

By Jim Chapman

The Cascades Conservation Partnership is not the only group involved in Alpine Lakes land acquisition efforts. Working with the Forest Service and Volunteers for Outdoor Washington (VOW), The Mountaineers Foundation is trying to buy a very significant piece of real estate right in the middle of the three-mile-long Old Cascade Tunnel at Stevens Pass. The parcel is a one-mile long, 200-foot wide segment of less than 25 acres that includes both the tunnel and the surface above it. If successful, the Foundation will transfer ownership to the federal government. The state Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation and the Stevens Pass Greenway also support its acquisition.

The property's significance is primarily historic. Great Northern Railroad trains passed through the tunnel from the time it was built in 1900 until the current tunnel replaced it in 1929. It is part of the Stevens Pass Historic District. The Iron Goat Trail currently ends at its western portal. The former town of Wellington was located here and was the site of the infamous 1910 avalanche that killed over 100 train passengers and crew.

The property's surface, which lies about a quarter mile from Skyline Lake, is very scenic



JIM CHAPMAN

*Looking west to the old path of the Iron Goat.*

although somewhat hard to reach. The Pacific Crest ridgeline passes over the tunnel at the property's western end and looks straight down to the Iron Goat Trail and its Wellington trailhead. The eastern segment is a pristine part of the Nason Creek watershed.

The property is owned by Tye Valley Tunnel Co., a family corporation formed in 1968 by J. Gaylord & Ella Riach and Elizabeth Olson. The late Mr. Riach, a Lynnwood attorney, once owned much of the area around the Wellington town site

and planned to turn it into a ski resort. The company's purchase of the tunnel property from Burlington Northern was formally recorded in Chelan County in 1984.

VOW was able to locate Mrs. Riach, the surviving owner, in September 2003. She promised to donate the land to The Mountaineers Foundation on the condition that it be called the Riach Memorial Tunnel. This can be done since points of interest may have several formal names.

So far, so good. The greater difficulty is that while the local Forest Service people want the land, their regional office has instituted a policy that it must receive all subsurface (mineral, oil & gas, etc.) rights as well or it will not accept the property. Burlington Northern, now Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, still owns all these rights. It has expressed a willingness to sell, but at a price far above the going rate for subsurface rights with no proven value. If VOW and The Foundation were to agree to this demand, they would be

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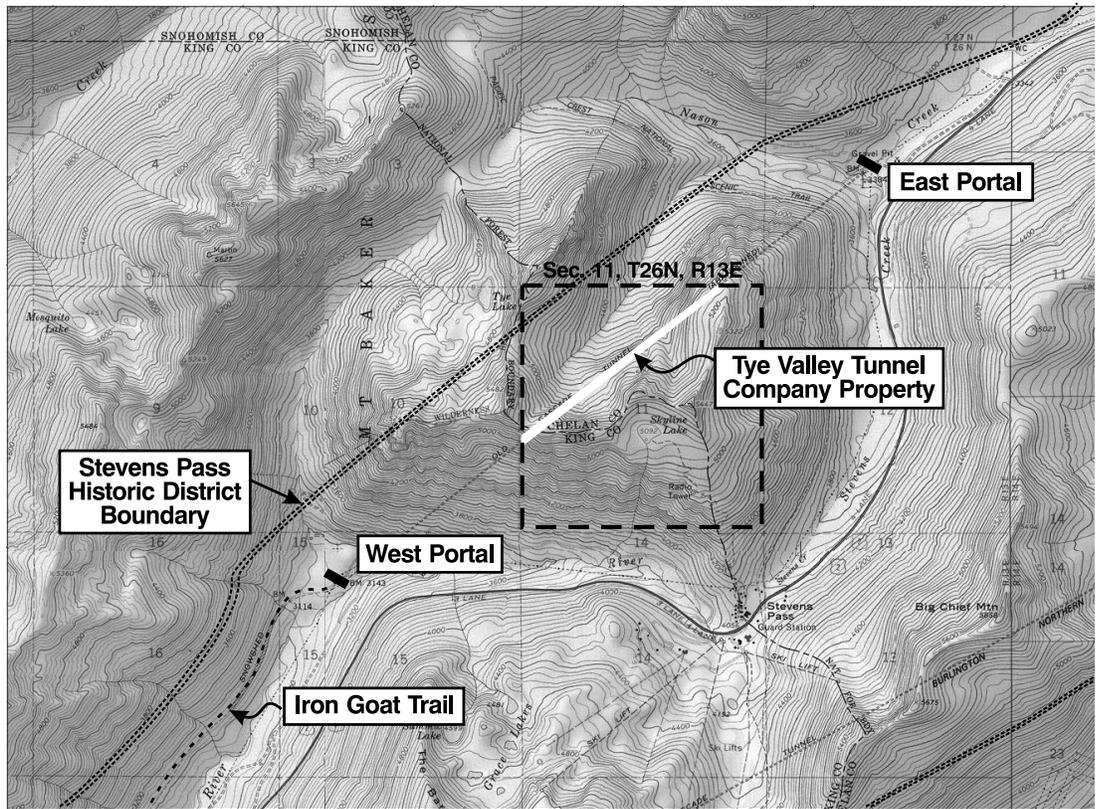
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jacking up the price for mineral rights everywhere, which no conservation or government group wants to see.

The two groups are actively trying to negotiate with Burlington Northern Santa Fe and want all issues to be resolved by the end of 2004.

Stay tuned. ■



## Alpine Lakes News & Notes

### **Wild Sky Wilderness has one determined opponent**

Richard Pombo, California Republican chairman of the House Resources Committee, continues to care about preservation - of old roads and logged-off areas. He wants approximately 16,000 acres removed from a package now at 103,000 acres, because some parts are not in pristine condition. This goes against past legislative practice and also against the intent of the writers of the Wilderness Act of 1964. On July 21, Pombo reiterated his opposition to the bill in the form requested by Reps. Rick Larsen, George Nethercutt, and supported by Snohomish County. Last year, nearly the same package passed the Senate with the active support of Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. The House scheduled a public hearing for this July 22. ALPS trustee Mike Town was scheduled to testify on behalf of Friends of the Wild Sky.

### **ALPS takes a stand against underground laboratory**

From a recent ALPS letter to the Wenatchee World: "The DUSEL project would have many negative effects on the Icicle valley, and would set a terrible precedent for development in a protected Wilderness area. We believe the DUSEL proponents have been less than candid about the true scale of the impacts it would have, and also about the suitability of alternative sites in South Dakota and California. For these reasons, ALPS opposes DUSEL as currently proposed, and we urge the residents of Chelan county to take a long, hard look before signing on to it." — ALPS president Don Parks

### **Cle Elum district studies roads**

The Forest Service is attempting to come to grips with over 100 miles of roads that have come to it in the

past five years, most of it from Plum Creek Timber. Some of these will be closed but some are considered important for recreation access and maintenance. A list was published in March. Contact Leslie Doak at the district office for further updates or public involvement opportunities.

### **Recreation passes— simpler?**

The Northwest Forest Pass is \$30 for an annual pass, \$5 for a single day. It is required for parking within 0.25 mile of developed Forest Service trailheads and some other marked locations. If you also spend a lot of time at state or National parks you may want to consider the Washington and Oregon Recreation Pass, which at \$85 will cover most park admissions and forest trailhead parking in the region. For information or to purchase passes, go to [www.naturenw.org](http://www.naturenw.org) or call 1-800-270-7504.

# Welcome to ALPS



JOHN WARTH

*A quiet morning at Snow Lake.*

**W**elcome to the Alpine Lakes Protection Society! Whether you are a new or renewing member, or just reading this as a "visitor," thanks for pulling up a chair. Since we have had a number of new members join recently, we (the ALPS board) thought it would be timely to say a little something about ourselves.

## **What does ALPS do?**

ALPS has a tradition of taking positions on issues only after carefully researching them and thinking through the questions at hand. Being on-the-ground people, we base our advocacy on detailed knowledge of the local landscape, acquired the old slow way, on foot throughout the Alpine Lakes region in Washington's Central Cascades. We sometimes challenge unlawful actions in court, but we will more often sit down with the project proponents to negotiate reasonable solutions. ALPS board members, who handle most of the business of the organization, have earned the respect of the US Forest Service and other major land managers in the area. Still, many of the challenges we face are complex and we need fresh minds with new ideas to

help deal with these issues and keep our organization vital. Some of the issues we are currently working, and which you can participate in right now are:

- Fighting inappropriate off-road vehicle use. We have successfully prevented expanded use in upper Negro Creek and carte blanche allowance in the Teanaway area. Stopping unauthorized rerouting by motorcyclists of the Mt. Baldy trail, just west of the south end of Lake Cle Elum, was a recent victory.
- Promoting the expansion of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness from Snoqualmie Pass to east of the Cle Elum River. The Forest Service is due to make its recommendation to Congress by the end of this month.
- Working to establish a Wild Sky Wilderness Area, just north of the Alpine Lakes.
- Developing a Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley access management plan that would convert the upper Middle Fork road to a trail, as well as build new trails, a new campground, and other recreational developments.

- Retaining the wild character of the Pratt River Valley, near North Bend, as a refuge for wildlife.

- Taking a careful look at the University of Washington's proposal to drill two tunnels and an underground research laboratory underneath Mt. Cashmere, next to the Icicle River Valley. These facilities would require major construction adjacent to and beneath the wilderness. Other U.S. locations may be more suitable. We are opposing this development, based on current information.

## **What can you do?**

Participation can take many forms. Here are just a few:

- Take pictures! The ALPINE and the ALPS website are in constant need of good photos to grace our pages and help make our points. For use in the ALPINE, keep in mind that we print grayscale only. We can scan prints but prefer digital images. We will credit you with your photo, of course.
- Check out the Forest Service websites for upcoming projects and studies. Get on their mailing lists for specific projects. Write a letter to the Forest Service or your elected representatives on any issue you find of interest on websites, the ALPINE, or your newspaper.
- Pass along your special knowledge of an area or issue, including breaking news, to ALPS via email or phone (see back cover for contact info).
- Come along to a Forest Service public meeting with ALPS board members. If you hear of something coming up that piques your interest let us know - we'll try to team up.
- Commit yourself to lead an issue or project as ALPS' point person. You may find yourself on the board before you know it!

At whatever level, we appreciate your membership and/or interest in ALPS, and we hope to have the chance to work with you soon. ■

# Sawmill Creek parcel purchased

## *2004 goal is Final Four Option lands*

*By Jim Chapman*

The Cascades Conservation Partnership raised just over \$100,000 at its special December 6 auction held at glass artist Dale Chihuly's boathouse. Top item was a 2004 Toyota Prius, which brought in \$29,500. This gave The Partnership the money needed to buy the northern-most of three targeted Plum Creek parcels along the east bank of Sawmill Creek. A press conference to announce the purchase was held March 22 in Tacoma.

The final sale price was just under \$2.0 million. Of that amount, the City of Tacoma paid \$350,000 and will become the owner, since the parcel is in its Green River watershed. The Cascade Land Conservancy will hold a special easement that prevents any commercial logging.

Everyone in The Partnership, including ALPS, considers the protection of Sawmill Creek to be crucial. It forms the eastern boundary of the Kelly Butte Special Management Area, created by the 1999 I-90 Land Exchange legislation. Its large stands of old-growth Douglas firs and cedars provide excellent habitat for marbled murrelets and amphibians. An old Forest Service trail follows along the east side of the creek much of its length.

The 302-acre north parcel that was purchased has the most valuable trees and was the most threatened. Plum Creek planned to build a road from the east into the middle parcel, and then up through the north parcel. With this purchase, Plum Creek has a much lower incentive to



JIM CHAPMAN

*Long valley below Scatter Mountain, an early victory.*

build the road at all since there are not nearly as many trees to cut. Without the purchase, all three parcels would have been subject to heavy logging.

Although the threat to the two other parcels has been reduced, it is still there. Both the 150-acre middle parcel and the 260-acre south parcel need to be acquired. How that will be done remains to be seen.

### **Option Lands**

The \$5 million that Congress appropriated last year was enough for the government to buy four of the remaining I-90 "Option Lands" - Paris Creek and Thorp Creek to the north of I-90 plus Frost Creek and Lodgepole Creek to the south, a total of 2,677 acres.

That leaves a "Final Four" of the original 21 Option Land parcels to

be acquired and complete this four-year-old acquisition program left over from the I-90 Land Exchange. The four parcels are Salmon la Sac Creek, Little Salmon la Sac Creek, Branch Creek and Section 33 southwest of Thorp Mountain. All are north of I-90.

President Bush has budgeted \$2 million for I-90 purchases in FY2005, but \$3.4 million is needed. ALPS and The Partnership will be working hard with our congressional delegation to get the necessary funds.

### **Forest Legacy**

The \$1.5 million that Congress appropriated last year for Forest Legacy is targeted to buy development rights on 224 acres a mile east of Swamp Lake on the north side of I-90's Stampede Pass Interchange,

# Trustees Election Ballot

The terms of four ALPS Trustees expired last year, so an election is required for the next three-year term, which will be 2003-2006. (Yes, we know. This is a bit late.)

Trustees Jim Chapman and Kevin Geraghty are running for re-election.

Rita Burns has moved to Shelton, WA, and will not run for another term. She helped put the Alpine together and got it mailed. We want to express our great thanks and best wishes to Rita. Former president Bill Beyers has agreed to run for her position.

Don Parks' election as our new president makes him an automatic member of the board, so he is not running again. The Trustees will fill his position later and have provided a place for you to suggest someone. If you yourself are interested or would like to attend one of our meetings, please contact Don at 425-883-0646 or [dlparks@jps.net](mailto:dlparks@jps.net).

Outgoing president Rick McGuire automatically moves into the Immediate Past President position formerly held by Len Gardner, who is now enjoying the sunny climes of Southern California.

Here are brief biographies of the candidates.

## **BILL BEYERS**, Seattle

*Professor of Geography at the University of Washington. Bill was an ALPS Trustee/Officer from ca. 1972-1983 and ALPS President 1974-76. He was active in the campaign to pass the legislation enacted in 1976 that established the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and Management Unit. Bill left the ALPS Board in the early 1980's, feeling that membership should rotate. More recently he helped prepare a fiscal impact analysis that was critical to getting the Kittitas County Commissioners' support for The Cascades Conservation Partnership's land acquisition project. Bill also led the team that brought the 3rd edition of the Alpine Lakes map to production.*

## **JIM CHAPMAN**, Edmonds,

*Retired engineer, ALPS Trustee/officer since 1973. President, 1978-80 and 1989-92. Jim worked on several land exchanges, including two with Longview Fibre and the I-90 exchange with Plum Creek. He lobbied Congress for money to buy parcels on Icicle Ridge, along the Icicle River and in the Silver Creek watershed. He has been ALPS' representative to The Cascades Conservation Partnership.*

## **KEVIN GERAGHTY**, Seattle

*Replaced the late Henry Steinhardt in 2002. Kevin is currently developing a new website for ALPS. He has been especially active in west-side issues including wilderness designation and road and trail system planning.*

Please mark the ballot below, fold it and tape it closed. Mail to the address on the backside of this sheet.

**BILL BEYERS**

**JIM CHAPMAN**

**KEVIN GERAGHTY**

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(Suggested New Trustee)

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**DON PARKS, PRESIDENT  
ALPINE LAKES PROTECTION SOCIETY  
P. O. BOX 27646  
SEATTLE WA 98165**

plus other land just south of Lake Easton. This will cut the property's market value about in half.

The lands could still be logged. The parcel near Swamp Lake, also referred to as "Amabilis North", is a key piece of the wildlife corridor and provides excellent cross-country skiing. The Partnership and Trust for Public Land are working together on a complex transaction to protect it by finding one or more conservation buyers.

The owners of the property have already platted four lots on twelve adjacent acres and could subdivide additional lands unless a buyer is found.

### **HCP**

Last summer, the Interior Department approved a second Habitat Conservation Program grant of \$1,849,720 for the Yakima River wildlife corridor. Prime candidates for protection will be lands near Cabin Creek that are owned by several parties, including American Forest Resources (the new name for US Timberland).

The grant is conditioned on nonfederal groups or agencies buying other land worth about one-third of the grant value, in the same area. The Partnership has secured most of that amount and is working to fulfill the grant terms. The lands will be managed by Washington State Parks or the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Partnership has also submitted a third and final application for \$1.76 million to buy more land west of Cabin Creek. The state Department of Natural Resources would provide the one-third local match by transferring trust land in the same area to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.



JIM CHAPMAN

*Serpentine slopes east of Cle Elum River Valley.*

### **Moolock Lakes**

On December 10, the state's Department of Natural Resources purchased another Partnership target, a 597-acre parcel commonly known as Moolock Lakes. Located just northeast of Mt. Si, it will be added to the Mt. Si Natural Resources Conservation Area.

Purchased from Crown Lakes LLC for \$4,250,000, it is a ridgeline parcel located primarily in the North Fork Snoqualmie watershed. About 30 acres in the southeast corner drop into the Middle Fork Snoqualmie watershed. It includes three lakes (Moolock, Nadeau, and SMC) and features views of Seattle and the Olympics.

DNR and the Cascade Land Conservancy worked together to negotiate the purchase. The high price tag was due to the development potential for lakefront estates.

Crown Lakes LLC reserved the right to continue removing talus

rock on the Middle Fork side of the ridgeline for 30 years. It will be visually isolated from the rest of the section.

Purchase money came from the state-funded Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

### **Please Help**

While The Partnership is winding down its efforts, you can still give money to help it lobby and buy more land this year.

Contact The Partnership at 206-675-9747 or [www.cascadespartners.org](http://www.cascadespartners.org).

See if your employer will match your gift. If you're a Boeing employee or retiree, send your gift to the Cascade Land Conservancy ([www.cascadeland.org](http://www.cascadeland.org), 206-292-5907) and designate it for The Cascades Conservation Partnership.



**alps**

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Liz Tanke



*The old cabin at Pete Lake.*

JOHN WARTH



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