Volunteers Needed for Trail Work

To complement our new hiking calendar (see p. 3), the Conservancy is scheduling a number of volunteer trail work parties in the Chuckanuts, including the Raptor Ridge Trail and several weekday walkthroughs—a dabble of work here and there while also enjoying a good hike. We need your help! Widgets, gizmos and cookies provided. Watch our website for new listings. To join our volunteer list, drop a line to volunteer@chuckanutconservancy.org.

 Blanchard Mountain

“... Gets Discovered

By Ken Wilcox

On the first day of spring this year, while hiking up the Pacific Northwest Trail toward Oyster Dome, I spent 90 minutes gathering 37 signatures on a petition asking Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark to designate a much larger conservation area (NRCA) than what he’s proposed. (More on the NRCA, p. 2.)

In those 90 minutes of ambling up the trail, chatting, nibbling and collecting autographs, I was amazed to be passed by about 80 hikers headed down, all of whom had obviously gotten a more respectable start than I. These were not organized groups, just friends and family enjoying the first day of spring.

While I was pleased that most of the trailsters I spoke with were happy to sign, what shocked me the most was just how far many of them had come to enjoy their day on the trail at Blanchard Mountain.

Of the 37 hikers who signed the petition, only six were from Bellingham. Just two lived in Skagit County. Three others were from Ferndale. That’s 11 people—or 30 percent—whom I would consider “local.”

Where were the others from? Everywhere. But Seattle, mostly. Seattle and King County accounted for 17 (46 percent) of those 37 people who were concerned enough to sign the petition. One couple came all the way up from Packwood, east of Centralia. Others were from Edmonds, Mill Creek and Oak Harbor.

Later, I met someone from Vancouver, Washington—continued, p. 3
**Washington DNR Proposes Mini-Protected Area for Blanchard Mountain**

**Baby Steps~**

In February, Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark announced plans to establish a 1,600-acre Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) on Blanchard Mountain. While the NRCA is a positive step forward, the proposal contains nearly all of the shortcomings of the “management strategies” adopted by the previous commissioner in 2007. (The Conservancy challenged those strategies in lower court and won, but DNR appealed; we’re awaiting a decision.)

The DNR’s press release acknowledges “amazing recreation opportunities, rich wildlife habitat and sweeping views” at Blanchard Mountain, then fails to offer a proposal that actually protects those values. The 1,600-acre NRCA proposed by DNR simply can’t provide the level of protection that’s implied in the press release.

The DNR’s proposal offers only partial protection of the existing trail system. No meaningful wildlife corridors are provided, view protection is scant, and many miles of trails would be severely degraded by miles of new roads and logging across two-thirds of the mountain. The largest intact roadless area on the mainland coast of greater Puget Sound would be lost.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, signed into law by President Obama just a year ago, is largely excluded from the NRCA. The agency, however, did agree not to log the parking lot at Samish Overlook.

The Conservancy is recommending a 3,100-acre NRCA (map, p. 3). Any NRCA has to be approved by the Legislature, where funding will be key.

We applaud the DNR’s willingness to consider the permanent protection an NRCA can provide. Although the small size of the NRCA is a major stumbling block, we believe a happy outcome is possible if the DNR invites the public to participate in the process.

Please email 40th District Senator Kevin Ranker and ask him to support a 3,100-acre NRCA for Blanchard Mountain: 
Ranker.Kevin@LEG.WA.GOV

**Conservancy Hires First Executive Director**

This spring, the Conservancy announced that Ken Wilcox will serve as the organization’s first executive director.

“We’re excited to have Ken in this critical role,” said Seth Fleetwood, Conservancy President. “He’s the perfect person to help us ensure that our kids—and their kids—have an opportunity to enjoy this place as much as we do.”

Wilcox is a long-time advocate for trails and natural areas in the Chuckanuts and is perhaps best known as the author of several regional hiking guides. He has a professional background in environmental and recreation planning and has served on a number of boards, including the North Cascades Conservation Council, Sustainable Connections, Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission and The Mountaineers, where he received a lifetime membership award for community service. Ken is a WWU-Huxley graduate with a degree in environmental policy.
What All the Fuss is About

This map shows the DNR’s proposed 1,600-acre Natural Resources Conservation Area (the “squiggly blob”) and the Conservancy’s 3,100-acre proposal (outlined in red).

Our proposal provides a solid habitat corridor and trail connection to Larrabee State Park; superior viewshed protection; much less fragmentation of the forest and roadless area; and substantially better protection of the trail system, including the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.

It certainly wasn’t a scientific survey, but intriguing and enlightening, nonetheless. So, for those think Blanchard Mountain is just a place for local hikers to kick up some dust, the mountain may be saying ‘Think again.’

You can help us save this place by donating to the cause—then imagine the roar of 100,000 ‘Thank yous’ (good thing we’re not all up there at once).
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Business name: __________________________
Contact: __________________________ Ph: __________
Address: __________________________
City/State: __________ Zip: __________
Email: __________________________
Website: __________________________

Thank you! Please mail to:
Chuckanut Conservancy
PO Box 4003, Bellingham WA 98227

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**THE CHUCKANUT MOUNTAINS >>> HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE**

A high quality of life fosters a vibrant business community.
We hope you’ll support the work of the Chuckanut Conservancy.

**How your donation will be recognized:**

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For details... call (360) 223-9453
or email ken@chuckanutconservancy.org

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We’re looking for at least 100 businesses who care about the Chuckanuts.

Pledge any amount and choose how it’s applied. Any business, large or small, can participate. When we’ve got 100, we’ll tally the results and ask the public-at-large to match it, effectively doubling your contribution! Be recognized and help leave a legacy. For more information, please visit our website.

Special thanks to the following for their early, generous contributions to kick off the campaign:
- A-1 Builders
- Adaptations
- Corwin Fergus Jungian Analyst
- Chuckanut Art Farm
- Breadfarm
- John D Stephens, MD, Koala Labs
- Skookum Peak Press
- ... more to come!

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We can’t save the Chuckanut Mountains without your help! Please contribute.

[www.chuckanutconservancy.org](http://www.chuckanutconservancy.org)