

# INSIDE/OUTSIDE

CONSERVATION NEWS AROUND THE NORTHWEST



## A year of I-90 wildlife watch

As of this February, I-90 Wildlife Watch has more than a year's worth of data

on animal sightings in the Cascades near Snoqualmie Pass. The group, which encourages drivers on I-90 to report sightings of animals dead or alive on their website, have a record of 240 reports.

"Live animal data are an especially important complement to other wildlife monitoring efforts in the Snoqualmie Pass region, as they help boost our understanding of how and where wildlife try to cross the highway," said Robert Long, a research ecologist with Western Transportation Institute in Ellensburg.

The most common I-90 animal sightings were of deer and elk, but black bears, coyotes and several other species were also reported.

Information on animals' habits in the area is key for the development of wildlife overpasses, reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions, and ultimately helping protect and connect the animals' habitats.

*Find out more about the project at our website, or visit [i90wildlifewatch.org](http://i90wildlifewatch.org).*

## Boots on the ground, animals in the area

From March to November 2011, Conservation Northwest's Citizen Wildlife Monitoring Project captured thousands of photos of wild animals, including wolves, elk, brown bears, and Canada lynx.

Citizen scientists trekked out into beautiful wild country and set up cameras at 23 locations in the Olympic National Forest and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

The Citizen Wildlife Monitoring Program is a joint effort between Conservation Northwest, I-90 Wildlife Bridges Coalition and the Wilderness Awareness School. Since the program's inception in 2001, hundreds of volunteers have taken to the wild and helped us capture images vital to wildlife conservation.

Visit our website to see last season's photo and video highlights, and to find out how to join the team or to adopt a monitoring team!

## It's all for the wildlife

Mitch Friedman, Conservation Northwest's executive director, was featured on the cover of *The Seattle Times*'s March 10th issue of *Pacific Northwest Magazine*!

The article, "For the Wild Things," outlined the journey of Conservation Northwest's founder.

Writer Ron Judd quotes Mitch about the return to the Pacific Northwest of wildness and wildlife like wolves, fishers, and wolverines, "The Northwest landscape is shouting affirmation at me. That feels good."

Finding a way to common ground, Mitch started Conservation Northwest and set us on the road to protecting wildlife and their vital habitats. You have been a partner in decades of success: Thank you!

## South End, right direction

Thanks to your support, in February the Colville National Forest supervisor decided against opening 170 miles of road to all-terrain vehicles in the south end of the Colville National Forest, near Chewelah. Earlier, they were dead set on opening up the roads. Your letters helped change their minds.

Taking action this January, Conservation Northwest, Kettle Range Conservation Group and the Lands Council sent a joint letter to the Region 6 appeal deciding officer of the Colville National Forest, who will decide on the merits of our appeal over the next few months.

While we don't mind ATV users driving on roads, the South

End Project was heading in the wrong direction. Opening more roads but not more trail can lead to greater abuse of backcountry, as many ATV users are unsatisfied with road travel alone.

## ORVs contained in booklet

Conservation Northwest partnered with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to produce a set of policy principles to guide the



*Requiring license plates for ATVs would help control illegal off-roading.*

Legislature in decision making about off-road vehicles. ORV use is one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities in the United States. In eastern Washington's Colville National Forest, illegal ORV use is on the rise and

the miles of illegal trails are growing rapidly.

The booklet outlines key steps that the Washington legislature should take to put a dent in illegal and harmful ORV use: require large, visible cense plates on all ORVs; waive the "officer presence rule" so that anyone who witnesses ORV abuse can file a report that will lead to prosecution; and create substantial criminal penalties for unlawful use of ORVs on public lands. The booklet also encourages the state to plan and fund construction of quality off-road facilities, and to fund restoration of areas damaged by ORVs.

## Ranch retention

Bryan and Deb Gotham own 2,200 acres on the west slope of the Kettle River Range, which they manage for production of timber, cattle, and horses. Bryan contacted Conservation Northwest to explore options for improving their financial viability while committing their property to open space, agriculture, and wildlife habitat. Last November, Conservation Northwest purchased a conservation easement for 303 acres of the Gotham Ranch. We are raising funds for an additional 200 acres, while also pursuing a federal Forest Legacy Program grant that would protect most of the rest of the property.

This partnership with the Gothams is part of a greater effort by Conservation Northwest to maintain a viable wildlife habitat corridor between the Cascades and the Rockies. Maintaining this landscape connection requires us to work on both the public lands of the Colville National Forest and key private properties like the Gothams'.

Bryan and Deb Gotham said, "Our dream is for generations of our family to raise cattle, horses, and timber in this beautiful country. Selling the development rights helps us today without compromising our dream for the future. We're very happy."

Mitch Friedman, Conservation Northwest's executive director, said, "The Gotham Ranch is providing beef, timber, and livelihoods in a way that is compatible with the needs of wolverine, lynx, and other wildlife. Nestled right up against the Kettle Crest and the potential wilderness lands there, this represents a great balance that I think a lot of people can get behind."

## Forging ahead after controversy

This January, Omak resident Jay Kehne was appointed to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission by Governor Chris Gregoire.

Jay works with Conservation Northwest part-time as an Okanogan County outreach associate. He joined us after a 31-year career with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, where he put his wildlife biology and soils degrees to work providing conservation assistance to farmers, ranchers, and landowners in eastern Washington. He has lived in eastern Washington almost his entire life.

Jay's ties with Conservation Northwest caused something of a backlash in Okanogan County—so much so that he appeared before a Senate committee in February. The Senate hearing was organized by Jay's opposition in order to pose him difficult questions and force him to defend his appointment. Okanogan



*Jay Kehne, new Washington state fish and wildlife commissioner. Photo Rita Kehne*

County Republicans argued his conservation values didn't jive with eastern Washington's views, and therefore he should not sit on the commission representing the region.

Despite the

adversity, the hearing went well. Senator Kevin Ranker said he was impressed with Jay's performance.

"I think that the diversity that you bring and the background that you bring is powerful," Ranker said. "I think your presentation and your answers to the questions for this committee make it very clear for me that the governor made an excellent choice."

At the hearing Jay laid out his plans as a commission member.

"I will take pride in being able to combine my skills and training in making solution-based decisions...that benefit the fish and wildlife of Washington, considering the concerns of the people most affected by those decisions," he said.

## Jumbo resort, jumbo problems

After more than 20 years of staving off development on Jumbo Mountain in Canada, the BC government relented this March and signed the Master Development Agreement, the next step in building a \$1 billion ski resort atop four glaciers of the Central Purcell Mountains.

The proposed resort location is critical habitat for grizzly bears. If built, it would shatter the bears' travel corridor in the Purcell Mountains.



*Not what grizzly bears need right now, a major new road into the wild Jumbo Valley. Photo JumboWild*

The Ktunaxa First Nation, who have lived in the surrounding lands for 10,000 years, vehemently oppose the development. The area, known to them as Qat'muk, is home to the grizzly bear spirit.

The fight is not over yet; there remain many steps left before development can begin. Investment, land-use zoning, and First Nations cultural values all remain unresolved.

For example, say opponents, if you think it's a lot of work getting up to Whistler in winter, getting to Jumbo will be much worse. There's no major airport and the nearest town, Invermere, is a four-hour drive from Calgary, the closest large city with an international airport. Driving from Seattle or Vancouver would take eight to ten hours. Indeed, there's no road to the resort site and that alone is estimated to cost as much as C\$200 million.

*Visit [jumbowild.com](http://jumbowild.com) to get involved and stay updated.*

## A costly Cross-Base mistake

On April 26, the Puget Sound Regional Council met, and you helped send the message that they should remove the Thorne Lane Interchange, "gateway" to building the highway, from their project list. Previously, they voted to support the \$160 million interchange, the gateway to the Cross-Base Highway, under the guise of reducing traffic on I-5 near Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Just 3% of our state's oak woodland prairies remain, and construction of the Cross-Base would harm prime habitat for 19 plants and animals facing extinction, including streaked horned lark, water howellia, Mazama pocket gopher, and Taylor's checkerspot butterfly.

Updates will follow on the Council's decision, and we thank you for your efforts in trying to prevent this costly (in more ways than one) mistake.



*Prairie in flower, Cross-Base. Photo © Rod Gilbert*

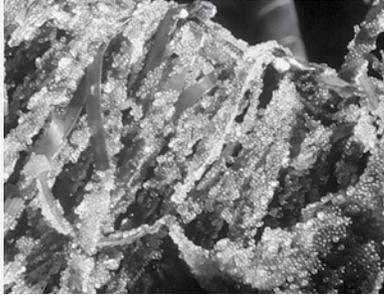
## 2 big steps for connecting habitat

January was a good month for wildlife habitat connectivity. Governor Chris Gregoire announced her Connect Washington Plan. "The governor's transportation package benefits Washington's wildlife by accelerating the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project, and steering clear of the destructive Cross-Base Highway," said Jen Watkins, Conservation Northwest conservation associate. Although the plan did not move forward during this legislative session, it informs any new transportation package that develops next session and we are glad to see I-90 as a priority.

Also, the Bureau of Land Management announced it will use connectivity science to inform land management on the almost 500,000 acres of arid and highly fragmented lands in Washington. They will use maps and models they helped generate with the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, of which Conservation Northwest is a part. In April the working group released a connectivity analysis for the Columbia Plateau ecoregion that covers nearly all of BLM's ownership in Washington, available at <http://wacconnected.org/columbia-plateau-ecoregion/>



“Use of the Connectivity Working Group’s tools by BLM will make a tangible difference for our wildlife, from mule deer to sage grouse, and badgers to jackrabbits,” Jen said.



*Cherry Point herring eggs on eel grass. An oil spill from increased tanker traffic would harm an already endangered resource. Photo Kurt Stick/WDFW*

## Not a red herring: Coal isn't clean

Last summer, SSA Marine began moving ahead on their Cherry Point Coal Terminal project by illegally clearing trees and grading at the proposed site. If built, the terminal would move coal from the Powder River Basin to the Northwest, where it would be exported abroad, most likely to China.

The Whatcom County coal terminal is not the only proposed coal terminal project in the region. There are at least six high-volume terminals planned for Washington and Oregon’s coasts.

This April, the Environmental Protection Agency sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers, asking them to thoroughly review the environmental and health impacts of a terminal at Port of Morrow, Oregon.

Former coal mine manager Bill Ritchie told a forum recently at the University of Montana, “There’s no such thing as clean coal, and shipping it abroad doesn’t clean up the problem. Coal industry ads blur the line between clean coal and clean-coal technology. Improving the efficiency in how much energy you get from burning a pound of coal doesn’t make clean coal.”

Conservation Northwest advocates for the Cherry Point herring, a threatened local species still unprotected by the Endangered Species Act. The coal terminal could pose big problems for this little fish. Take action against the coal terminal through Re-Sources, a local nonprofit environmental education organization. *Visit their website at re-sources.org.*

## Volunteer and intern thank yous

**Citizen wildlife monitoring:** Drew and Cathy Gaylord, Melissa Reitz and Emil Babik, Matt Miller, Jim Clark, Tana Baur, Sean Den Adel, Dave Werntz, Robert Sinclair, Shannon Schelinder, Simon Buzzard, Mike Pagan, Aaron Crow, Jay Friedman, Ayako Okuyama-Donofree, Katie Remine, Yinghua Zhang, Tricia Enfield, Nathan Johnson, Tana Kaiser, Reed Riker, Alex Pittman, Jenn Coe, Sarah Stewart, Lorelee Strength, Denise McElhinney, Amy Bogaard, Kathryn True, John Duffy, Georgia Ray, Gail Tamura, Erin Ryan, Michael Stringfellow, Anna Michel, Chad Maurer, Chris Bailey, Kelly Staples, Sang Cho, Maureen Corlas, Michelle Peziol, Eli Loomis, Tom Stonehocker

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**Hwy 97 safe passage project:** Bob Pfeifer, Adelle Waln

**General Bellingham office:** Susan Rhodes, Doris Ferm, Michael Hinkel, Ariel Logan, Megan Whiteside

**Newsletter distribution:** Liza Weeks, Alex McCarty, Danny Labrie, Brandon Crostich, Angela D’Elia

**Interns:** Aaron Theisen, Lindsey Moyer, Jenn Clarke, Katherine Owen, Emily Chudek, Robin Turnblom, Hanna Jeter

## Support Conservation Northwest, shop REI!

Now you can indulge in some online shopping, while contributing to Conservation Northwest! Use our special link to REI’s online store ([conservationnw.org/rei](http://conservationnw.org/rei)), and 5% of your purchase will go to wildlife—wolves, grizzlies, caribou, and the open spaces we all like to roam. It’s good all year.



*These volunteers with the Cascades Citizen Wildlife Monitoring Program are looking good in their winter gear! Shop REI for your gear and support us along the way.*