

## **Wilderness Management Review**

### **Glacier Peak Wilderness**

Submitted by: Art Pope

Date: 7/24-26/18

Report Title: Glacier Peak Wilderness

Route: Where did you go? How many days were you camping?

We were on a six-day trip through the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the neighboring Henry Jackson Wilderness. A separate management review is being filed for each of these wilderness areas.

Summary: 250-word max

We followed the Lost Creek Ridge-Round Lake Trail to its junction with the Pacific Crest Trail and followed it north to a campsite on Glacier Creek—notably we saw no-one during our day and a half on the Lost Creek Ridge Trail but met twenty or so hikers along the PCT. From Glacier Creek, we hiked south on the PCT to the Wenatchee Ridge Trail—this trail is on the boundary between the Glacier Peak Wilderness and the Henry Jackson Wilderness—and, with difficulty, followed it to its junction with the Cady Creek Trail.

Wilderness or Wild River: Glacier Peak Wilderness

Management Unit: Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest

Administrative Location: Everett, WA

Head of Administrative Unit: Jamie Kingsbury, Forest Supervisor

Trip Report: Grade the success of the management agency with an A to F letter grade. Comments must support letter grades in each category; skip any category on which you do not want to comment.

**D** Access; is resource damage occurring at campsites on trails or at trailheads?

Trails show significant signs of erosion—often trenched ankle to knee deep. Though it is often hard to tell, no brushing, maintenance of drainage structures, installation of new drainage structures or placement of check dams has occurred in a number of years. Seemingly, management is not overly concerned about protecting the public's significant investment in the area's trail system from significant erosion damage.

Campsites are typically marred by fire pits. It was not uncommon to encounter sanitation issues.

**B** Management; regulations, permit systems, education, enforcement actions.

The user registration system is low-key and simple—just add your name and to a spread sheet and answer a few questions. No-trace information posted at the trailhead was limited and basic. No agency staff were encountered during this hike.

**C** Stewardship; are management actions in accord with wilderness values and best practices in wilderness management?

Minimal management activity seems to be creating a wilderness that is more wild and difficult to access. A significant creek blowout from years past remains unrepaired; roads are closed, bridges are out and the trail quickly becomes confused in thickets of brush, log jams and landslides. Other expensive and high quality reroutes appear completely abandoned. Although such management practices may fail to adhere to what many

consider “best practices” or meet the expectations of many users, this level of management neglect does serve to enhance wilderness.

The use of metal culverts is generally not considered appropriate in a wilderness area where the use of historic trail practices would be more appropriate. The abandonment of old culverts is certainly not appropriate—particularly by an agency that aggressively promotes a pack-it-in, pack-it-out philosophy. Managers might do well to model the behavior they promote to the public.

**C** Wilderness; how well is management protecting the wilderness resource?

Trails are typically heavily brushed over and show signs of significant to severe erosion. Even the iconic Pacific Crest trail is in a sad state; blocked by numerous windfalls and frequently deeply entrenched. The center section of the Wenatchee Ridge Trail was difficult to follow and well on its way to returning to wilderness. Strangely, a remote section of the PCT just south of Red Pass was in a state of reconstruction though the control of severe erosion in other locations might be argued to be a higher priority.

**B** Fire Management, Wildlife Management, Other

One small smoke was noted but appeared to be burning freely without suppression efforts. It is unclear whether this was due to a lack of resources or a premeditated management decision.