Traditions Rooted in Public Lands

Our Wild Heritage: Bob Ferguson, Washington State Attorney General

Choose Your Own Adventure: Enjoy Washington's Incredible Experiences Year-Round

Protecting the Source of the Sound for Orca Recovery
Nearly six years ago I joined the Washington Wild board because of my belief in their mission and my passion for protecting the wild rivers which have always been a part of my life.

Growing up my family spent our summer vacations rafting the Wild & Scenic stretch of the Rogue River, and I believe many of my greatest life lessons were learned on the river. Through our rafting experiences I learned about good judgement, when to take calculated risks and when not to, how to be independent, how to effectively communicate, and how to be creative and make your own fun. But I believe the most important lesson was being a good steward of rivers and the environment; protecting and caring for the very thing that has given me so much in my life.

Now that I have kids of my own, I am passing along to them the tradition of experiencing Wild & Scenic Rivers. As my wife and I get our kids out on the river, just as my parents did with me, I hope that they learn many of the valuable life-lessons I did. And I also hope their experiences lead them to be passionate champions for good environmental stewardship.

As I’ve gotten older, I now appreciate how important it is to provide permanent protections for our rivers. As you see rivers without protections, you notice that things change, and not always for the better. And for that reason, I believe that the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act is an incredibly important tool that protects the resource and the access for our kids and our kid’s kids.

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, I hope you will take a moment to consider the wonderful life lessons you have learned through a connection with wild lands and rivers.

Tim Overland, Washington Wild Board of Directors
Traditions are all around us. No matter your cultural background or where you were born, we all have traditions that connect us to the thread of human existence. In Washington State, many traditions are tied to our public lands and outdoor experiences.

Some traditions are well known; many of us often flock to camping areas on Memorial weekend, go on hikes in the fall to see the golden larches, hunt for mushrooms, or return to that perfect stretch of river for fishing, rafting, or just reading a book in the sun. Many traditions are more subtle, even though they are happening all around us. Like the ebb and flow of the tide or how glaciers melt and rebuild as the seasons change.

Our public lands sustain many traditions including dark skies to view constellations, the commute of the endangered marbled murrelet, and the iconic salmon runs.

**DARK SKIES**

“For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.” — Vincent van Gogh

For centuries, viewing the night sky has mesmerized all of humankind. We look up to the stars for inspiration, guidance, and hope. Constellations hold millions of stories passed down through generations to help make sense of the wonder that is our universe.

In Washington State, we are lucky to have expansive public lands including Olympic and Rainier National Parks and national forest land from which to view the night sky to its full potential. Every year, the opportunity to view the Perseid Meteor Shower in mid-August draws people from near and far to seek out the darkest skies where onlookers can watch as falling debris lights up the night sky in a brilliant display.

In the Olympic National Park, Dark Sky Rangers like John Goar lead programs all summer long to guide participants through the magnificence of the night sky.

“When people consider the scale of the universe and our place in it, I think it makes people think about the Earth and their lives in different ways. There are so many unanswered questions in astronomy which people are drawn to when they attend my programs. These questions are valuable because they, too, provide new perspectives.”

Our state’s wilderness and roadless areas, in addition to our expansive national parks, are not only places to escape from the stress of everyday life, they provide visitors with opportunities to gain new perspectives on life. Washington Wild works hard to keep these places as protected (and therefore as wild) as possible, and ensure Washingtonians have access to discover new inspirations by turning their gaze up towards the night sky.

“There are so many unanswered questions in astronomy which people are drawn to.”

John Goar, Dark Sky Ranger, Olympic National Park

---

The Perseids are a prolific meteor shower associated with the comet Swift–Tuttle and are called the Perseids because they appear to hail from the constellation Perseus.
Washington State boasts one of the most unique ecosystems on the planet. The combination of old growth mossy forests and fresh sea water and all that comes with it has supported many species unique to the region. One of these species is the marbled murrelet, a sea bird with a deep tradition rooted in a daily commute between our old-growth forests and salt water like the Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean.

Murrelets spend most of their time at sea. Their wings have evolved much like penguins to “fly” underwater to catch fish. However, unlike penguins they are also able to fly long distances to return to their nesting grounds deep in old growth forests. Scientists have documented that murrelets rarely choose hardwood trees for nesting, instead relying almost exclusively on conifer species. They choose the largest trees – those with larger limbs that are big enough to support the single egg they lay each year. They also choose older trees whose limbs are covered in moss, creating natural platforms that help support the egg, and sites with high overhead cover to protect their nests from predators.

When murrelet eggs hatch, the adult birds commute daily between salt water and the forest to feed their young.

“The thing that’s amazing about murrelets are the distances they cover,” says U.S. Forest Service Emeritus Senior Scientist Martin Raphael, “while harvesting small fish during the day, they can cover between 75 and 100 miles. Then at dusk they fly inland up to 55 miles to find the exact limb of the tree where their nest is in the complete darkness. The whole feat of managing the commute to the forest is mind-blowing.”

Since the murrelets depend on the proximity of old-growth forests to salt water, they are considered an indicator species. This means that scientists can study their habits to gain information on the health of their habitat and the surrounding ecosystem. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed murrelets as a threatened species in 1992, as the population saw a significant 30% decline. This decline is attributed to the loss of suitable habitat due to human interferences like logging and development. In the Olympic and Cascade Mountain Ranges alone there is an estimated loss of around 90% of historic old-growth forests.

Washington Wild is working to protect Washington’s public lands and our remaining old-growth forests to keep the amazing murrelet commute a tradition that our grandchildren will also be able to marvel at.
THE ANNUAL SALMON RUN

If you live in Washington State, there’s no doubt you know about the iconic salmon runs that occur during summer and fall. Whether you’ve watched salmon struggle up the Ballard locks in Seattle or have enjoyed fishing throughout the 70,000 miles of rivers in Washington State, this naturally occurring tradition holds a special space in our state’s culture.

When it’s time for salmon to spawn at the end of their life cycle, they make the journey from the ocean back through Washington’s rivers upstream towards the area they were born. This is no simple task, the salmon use nearly all their life’s energy to make this trek.

The return of the salmon each year is remarkable and holds special significance for many Native Tribes in Washington State.

“My Tribe, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, holds a First Salmon Ceremony and Blessing of the Fleet in May each year,” said Lorraine Loomis, Chair of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. “We welcome the salmon home with drums, songs and prayers. Because salmon binds us all together as communities, we invite our neighbors to share this food that has sustained us for so many years. We honor the First Salmon by returning its remains to the water and we pray for the protection of our fishermen and their boats. Salmon is food for our bodies and our spirits. For us, salmon is not optional. It is essential.”

In recent years, the amount of salmon returning to Washington State has declined. This decline affects ancient traditions rooted in Native American culture, the health of other endangered species like orca whales, and a decline in our state’s fishing economy.

Leading threats to salmon survival are existing and proposed dams that block access to quality salmon habitat and impacts to healthy salmon streams from logging and mining. Washington Wild is helping to lead efforts to permanently protect intact watersheds which include healthy low elevation forests that surround salmon streams and free flowing rivers from future dam proposals.

The Olympic Peninsula is home to some of Washington’s most iconic wild rivers like the Hoh and Sol Duc, but none are protected as Wild and Scenic – the highest form of federal protection. Washington Wild is a leader in the Wild Olympics Campaign which, when successful, will designate and protect the first Wild and Scenic Rivers on the Olympic Peninsula and preserve forested watersheds in the Olympic National Forest as Wilderness.

Traditions connect us to the past and to our communities today. By honoring processes that have been occurring throughout the history of the world, we honor those who have come before us. Traditions are also important in the fabric of our lives today. They connect us to our families and provide opportunities to try new things and build new connections. When we all come together to share our traditions, we honor the differences in our own backgrounds while learning how people different from us move in the world.

Washington Wild is committed to working with people who appreciate our public lands in different ways, and we honor diverse perspectives. We look forward to building new relationships with community members and creating new traditions together as we work towards a wild future for public lands and waters!
Choose Your Own Adventure!

River rafting

Fly fishing

Ski touring Mt. St. Helens

Ice climbing

Winter bird count

Spring cultural cedar bark harvesting

Winter snow fun
Choose Your Own Adventure!

Whether we're playing in a field of wildflowers, rafting down a river, or snowshoeing with a mountain view, our public lands here in Washington State make it possible for us to enjoy incredible experiences year-round.

What are your favorite seasonal activities and why? Send your story to info@wawild.org for a chance to be featured on our blog!
I was a little nervous about taking my 10-year-old twins on the “Save Our Coast” hike this summer. Jack and Katie are experienced hikers for their young age, but a 20-plus mile, three-day hike along Washington’s rugged, untamed coastline is a challenge for even experienced backpackers.

The “Save Our Coast” hike was a response to the Trump Administration’s proposal to open up our coastline to offshore drilling.

I sent a letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke warning that if such a proposal moved forward I would file a lawsuit against the federal government to protect the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline in the lower 48 states.

But my idea for a protest hike was inspired by our state’s rich tradition of conservation and advocacy for our natural spaces. Six decades ago, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas led a hike along the Washington coast to protest a different threat—the proposal to move U.S. Highway 101 to the coast, through the untamed landscape. His effort was successful.

Inspired by Justice Douglas, I led a journey along exactly the same route between Rialto Beach and Lake Ozette 60 years to the day after his hike.

Passion for the outdoors is a tradition in Washington. We have a responsibility not only to honor that heritage, but to continue working to protect our wild places for future generations. That’s a conviction I share with organizations like Washington Wild. Their extensive work to protect public lands aligns with my own convictions.

As Attorney General, I established the Environmental Crimes Unit and Counsel for Environmental Protection. My team has won more than a dozen convictions for crimes against the environment. We are leading major lawsuits against Monsanto and other powerful interests that have polluted our waterways.

That advocacy has grown more intense since the Trump Administration came into office. Nearly half of the 32 lawsuits I’ve filed against the Trump Administration involve the defense of critical environmental protections. My office has defeated President Trump’s EPA in court six times. We have yet to lose a case.

Bringing our kids along on the hike was important to me and my wife Colleen. But, were the twins up for the challenge? They were, and Jack and Katie still talk about their experiences with excitement.

They saw sea lions, otters, eagles and whales. My kids listened attentively to acclaimed Olympic Coast author and environmental activist Tim McNulty as he talked about his work to preserve our wild spaces. My daughter, who made “Save Our Coast” buttons for the hikers and volunteers, made a trade with poet Derek Sheffield—extra buttons for an original poem.

Katie recently received that poem in the mail and we often read Derek’s poem together at night when I tuck her in. Some of our favorite lines:

Like the stick figures of hikers
Katie drew for our buttons, we go on, stepping over the guacamole-green anemones in skylit pools, pausing in the hole at Hole-in-the-Wall to let some of their many arms tongue our dipped fingers.

My family and I were proud to make the journey with a group that included authors, poets, leaders of environmental organizations, and avid backpackers from my office.

At the hike’s conclusion, I joined Jack, Katie and fellow hikers in a celebratory, albeit chilly, jump into the Pacific. As we took pictures standing in the surf, I thought, in a few decades, maybe Jack and Katie—and their children—will lead their own hike along the northern Pacific coast of Washington.

My hope is that they repeat our journey not because they need to protest some new threat, but simply in celebration of what they, and you, helped save.
This summer it was nearly impossible to escape the heartbreaking news about the plight of Puget Sound’s own southern resident orca population. The unexpected deaths of J-50 and the infant calf of J-35 have saddened individuals around the world, not just those of us who live around the Puget Sound.

In response, Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed Executive Order 18-02 designating state agencies to take several immediate actions to benefit southern residents and establish a Task Force to develop long-term recommendations for orca recovery and future sustainability.

An often-overlooked factor to orca recovery is working to protect the intact forest, upper watersheds and free flowing rivers of the Olympic and North Cascades mountains that serve as the source of the Puget Sound. These headwaters provide cold clean water into major river systems like the Skagit, Skykomish, Elwha and Dungeness Rivers. These rivers sustain critical salmon spawning habitats and deliver rejuvenating water to the ailing Puget Sound.

“The Task Force is looking to both protect what we have and restore what we have lost to recover our orca populations,” said Sheida R. Sahandy, Executive Director at Puget Sound Partnership and member of the Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery Task Force. “We need to avoid any additional negative impacts to the health of the sound and salmon spawning habitat in the surrounding forested rivers while also working to improve the conditions needed for recovery of the magnificent marine mammals.”

In response to a request for public comment, Washington Wild coordinated a joint comment letter signed by 30 organizations including Save our Wild Salmon, Trout Unlimited, National Parks Conservation Association and American Rivers to the Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery and Task Force. The letter expressed the importance of protection of our federal public lands for the overall health and recovery of our resident orca populations in Washington.

Federal lands, like our national parks and national forests, as well as Wilderness areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers, often include the headwaters of the Puget Sound. The health of these federal forests and watersheds directly impacts the main food source for orcas—salmon. Orcas desperately need improvements in the health and abundance of their prey and their prey desperately need quality habitat. Neither orcas nor salmon can afford to have a deterioration of the intact and functioning watersheds that currently contribute to the existing population.
Lucky Envelope Brewing has been a dedicated Brewshed Partner since 2015. They brewed our first charity collaboration beer, the “WA Wild Spruce Tip IPA”, participate in numerous events each year, and sign on to conservation comment letters in support of clean water, our roadless areas, and protecting public lands.

Named Washington Wild’s unofficial photographer, Ray is an amazing community partner and is extremely supportive of protecting wild places. As a valued partner to the organization, he has attended countless Brewshed events and gotten involved with aspects of our conservation work. Ray has visited 17 of the national parks in the United States and still has dreams of one day becoming a landscape photographer for the National Parks Service. At Lucky Envelope, Ray manages the back-office operations of the brewery including business development, corporate partnerships, and distribution strategy.

Barry Chan is the head brewer of Lucky Envelope. He first got involved in environmental protection in his last career as a structural engineer. He was an accredited professional in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED AP) and volunteered his time to work on structural carbon footprint reduction studies utilizing new building technologies.

As the head brewer at Lucky Envelope, Barry works day in and day out with water as the finished product. The Washington Wild Brewshed Alliance was born out of the belief that protected watersheds and clean water make better downstream beer, and that’s why Barry’s a strong supporter of Washington Wild.

“Washington Wild’s conservation efforts to protect our sources of water allows us to make quality beer. Lucky Envelope Brewing is proud to be a Brewshed Partner and is committed to raising awareness for the importance of preserving our state’s lands.”

Ronni McGlenn founder of Washington Outdoor Women

“I remember that growing up in the 50’s was magical,” said McGlenn, a Northwest native. “There were no cell phones or computer screens. The outdoors invited freedom and adventure and its own kind of learning – it was the best!” Encouragement and coaching from three older brothers and a supportive mother instilled a love and respect for the environment and wild things.

In 1998, Ronni founded a new organization committed to helping women enjoy the outdoors with more confidence and awareness. Washington Outdoor Women (WOW) offers hands-on workshops dedicated to teaching women and girls traditional wilderness skills such as map and compass, survival, fishing, hunting, wildlife identification, and more. A particular success is that these skills are taught to women by women in outdoor settings.

In 2011, Ronni received the Governor’s Recognition Award issued by Governor Christine Gregoire on behalf of the people of the State of Washington for her work with WOW. She is the 2018 recipient of Washington Wild’s Karen M. Fant Founders Award for her decades of dedication as a volunteer activist, inspiring women to experience the outdoors through Washington Outdoor Women, and for protecting wildlife habitat and wild landscapes through the Washington Wildlife Federation.

Learn more about Washington Wild and our supporters at wawild.org
Thank you to our sponsors, guests, board, and volunteers for helping us raise over $75,000 at Wild Night Out 2018.

Washington Wild and our community of supporters celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act at Wild Night Out on October 4th at the Ballard Bay Club. We recognized the following individuals who have championed the fight to protect Washington’s Public Lands and Waters: Bob Ferguson, Washington State Attorney General; Ronni McGlenn, Past President of Washington Wildlife Federation and Founder of Washington Outdoor Women; and Raymond Kwan and Barry Chan, Lucky Envelope Brewing.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES GUTTING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

This July, the Trump Administration announced its proposal to gut the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the legislation that protects the most threatened animals and plants from extinction. The very agencies who are charged with protecting and saving these species, the Department of Interior and Department of Commerce, are the ones who have proposed to weaken the ESA and strip the law of its bedrock provisions under the Trump Administration.

In Washington State, the ESA is essential in protecting threatened and endangered species and their unique habitats. These include orcas, woodland caribou, and the Canadian lynx, among others. In opposition to stripping the ESA of its key provisions, Washington Wild activated our members and sent over 200 signed postcards to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke.

OVER 70 GROUPS CALL FOR COMMENT EXTENSION ON EFFORT TO WEAKEN ALASKA’S TONGASS’ ROADLESS AREAS

Washington Wild coordinated a joint comment letter signed by 78 elected officials, local businesses, and recreation and conservation groups to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue regarding an effort to weaken roadless area protections for Alaska’s Tongass National Forest.

We need to send a strong message against weakening roadless area protections starting in Alaska. If we don’t Washington State’s nearly two million acres of national forest roadless areas could be next!
Together, for our public lands.