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## The Planet, 1992, Volume 21, Issue 02

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*Western Washington University*

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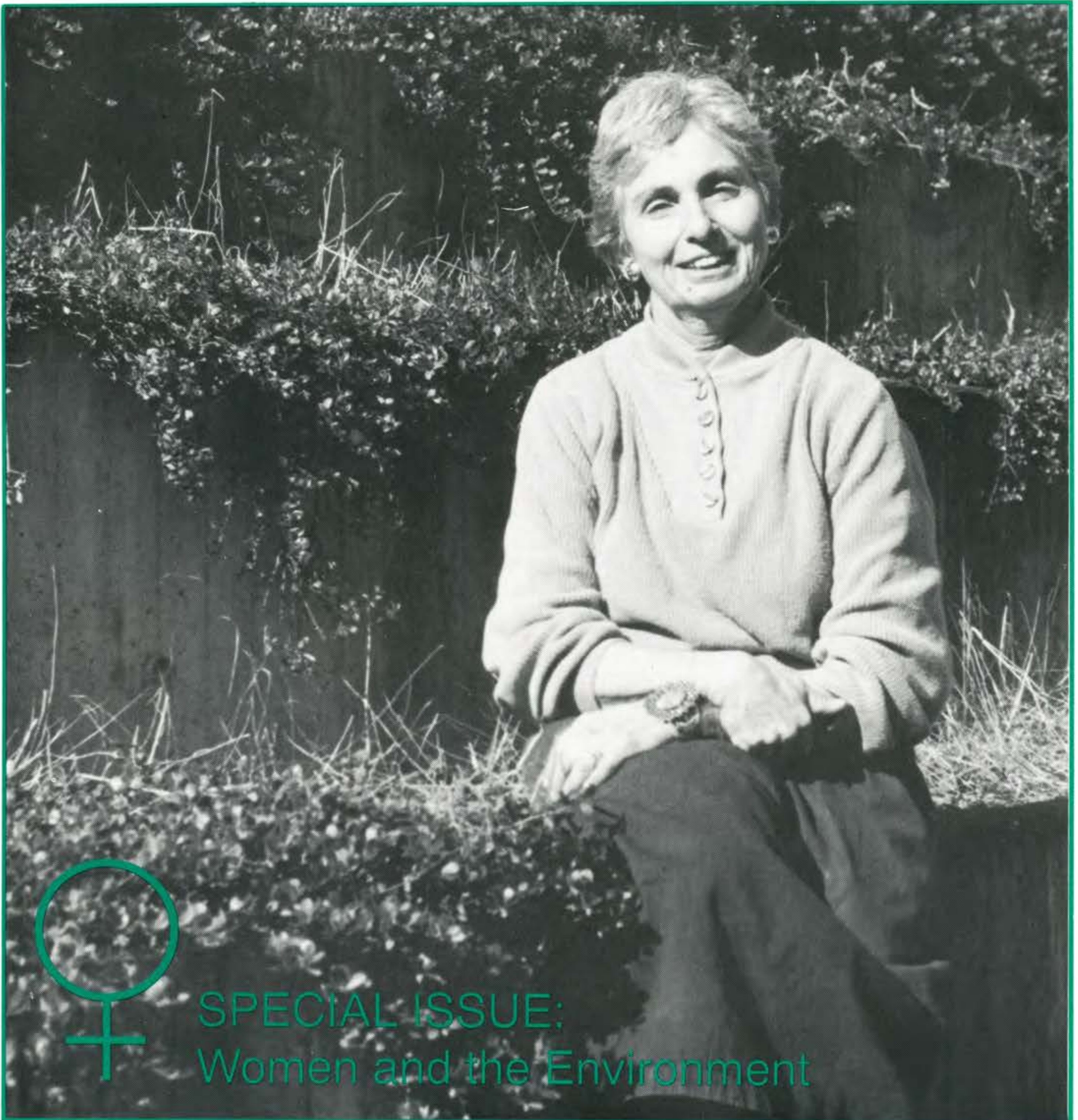
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# PLANET

Western Washington University's Environmental Quarterly • Winter 1992



SPECIAL ISSUE:  
Women and the Environment

*The savanna warms me with  
 Her golden radiance.  
 Dry, she holds in her hands  
 The rays of the sun.  
 Free, she whispers her desires in the breeze.  
 Strong, she carries the trees on  
 Her back now bent with age.  
 She is loved  
 By those who feel her generosity,  
 Who taste her sensuality in their  
 mouths.  
 I feel the life in her body  
 As I travel far from home.*



***Beneath What I See:***

Written and Illustrated by Deborah Martinsen.

Editorial:

***Visible at last -- the real movers and shakers***

Since I've been a student at Western Washington University, I've learned a lot about environmental leaders and thinkers -- Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Howard Zahniser, and others. I've written essays and term papers about the *men* who fought for natural resource conservation, species diversity and wilderness protection. Now, in retrospect, I realize I missed something -- something important.

I heard very little about the work of Rosalie Edge, Hazel Wolf and Winona LaDuke. I've learned about them mostly *outside* of class. But they are important too. In my opinion, LaDuke's efforts to advance the indigenous peoples' movement compares with Muir's efforts in preserving Yosemite as a national park.

This issue of *the Planet* celebrates women in our communities who are making a difference -- women like Sherilyn Wells, fighting to preserve the Lake Whatcom watershed, and Sally van Niel, educating for tomorrow's future, and the women faculty at Huxley College.

"Women have been almost invisible in policy-making and development issues. They're present in large numbers at the grass roots, but at the top of important non-governmental organizations we find only male leadership," charges former U.S. Congresswoman Bella Abzug, of the Women's Environment and Development Organization.

Abzug and others criticize the environmental movement for being too white, too male and too elitist. Even today, most of the sources quoted by the media, scientists in the field and presidents of prominent organizations are white males of middle class background. These individuals tend to set agendas and tackle problems at the exclusion of others. For too long, those "others" have been people of color and women.

I don't think the environmental movement can stand alone. It's a function of other movements of our time. We can't truly expect a healthy natural environment without having a healthy social environment and vice versa.

But things are changing.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration named Sylvia Earle as its first woman chief scientist. Earle advocates establishing large "ocean wilderness" areas where human activities would be prohibited or strictly limited. Kathryn S. Fuller recently became the first woman president of the World Wildlife Fund.

I draw even more hope when I see women in other countries initiate environmental movements that we can all cheer. Women such as India's Amitra Devi who started the Chipko movement there. Chipko is a national movement that passively resists destructive commercial forest practices. In Kenya, Wangari Maathi founded the Green Belt Movement, a broad-based community tree-planting campaign which has planted over two million trees since 1977.

I think even more important than the CEOs and organization presidents are the thousands of women working at the local level, heading grass roots organizations and neighborhood groups. They are the real movers and shakers.

The environmental movement is finally looking toward promising horizons we can all see. We learn from one another the greatness each of us holds. People around the globe and here at home recognize the importance of cooperative involvement and that a healthy social and natural environment, complete with racial and gender equality, must be first and foremost on everyone's mind.

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**PLANET**

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# Environmental classroom

Community college instructor preps students for Huxley



*Sally van Neil with one of her students.*

Photo courtesy of Curt Given

Becci Oxner

The lively, dark-haired instructor stood in front of a class of 50 plus community college students spouting off startling statistics like friend's phone numbers. When she told us that every day three species become extinct, I straightened in my chair listening intently. When she told us that within ten years three species will become extinct every hour, I wrote it down and so did many others.

The instructor was Sally van Niel, my teacher at Everett Community

College. The class was "Humans and Their Environment."

Besides teaching this class and other science courses, Sally is an active environmentalist.

"She is one of the leaders in the state on environmental matters," said dean of Huxley College John Miles. He further described her as a "great pre-Huxley faculty member," because of the many students she sends to Huxley from Everett Community College.

I remember her soul-stirring lectures. She knew how to change our thoughts and open our eyes to what was going on around us. The class was a revelation for me and I know it was for many others, too. Once I completed the course, my perceptions were forever changed. I no longer felt that my actions would be small and insignificant.

Sally has spent nearly two decades dedicating her life to teaching and working on environmental issues.

The path has not always been easy. For instance, early last year she worked on a critical-areas' committee for Snohomish County to establish a wetland's policy. Eight property developers and eight environmentalists met each week for three hours from January through April. In the end, the committee could not agree on a policy. "Now it's back in the county council's office," she said.

Sally is frustrated by similar road-blocks, but she forges ahead, knowing sooner or later, progress will be made.

Raised in Diablo, Washington, amid the beauty of the North Cascades, Sally's appreciation for nature began at a young age. The towering firs, rugged mountains, jeweled lakes and jagged peaks, never cease to impress her.

As she matured, married and began her family, she never lost sight of that beauty. But she saw it change.

"I looked around and realized it was going away." She knew then that she wanted her children to know the same beauty she experienced as a child. This "driving force" shaped her life as it is today.

Since the early 1960s when Sally helped organize some of the area's first Audubon chapters, her involvement in environmental issues has grown. She is chairperson of the Snohomish Wetlands Alliance, co-chairperson of the Washington Environmental Political Action Committee and coordinator of the Snohomish County Breeding Bird Atlas. She works on committees, negotiating such issues as wetland protection, protection of the Lake Ballinger watershed, flood management and state hazardous waste management.

How does she manage all of this?

Her husband Jon van Niel has an answer, "She has an efficient right-sided brain that thinks on three tracks at the same time."

Jon also teaches science at Everett Community College. Their common interests make them more than a couple: They are a team, each supporting the other. Moreover, their discussions are like volleyball, where ideas bounce back and forth.

Raising a family and juggling meeting schedules is not always easy. Sometimes it means conflicts, but when problems arise, Jon and Sally

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*Being a woman has not hindered her environmental crusade. As long as you have the facts and know a few "little tricks," somebody will listen. By playing the right card, Sally's often a winner.*

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find a way of working them out.

Sally said her "driving force" has changed over the years: Fear is her impetus -- a fear that comes from her visions of the future.

Jon said the ability to project what will happen down the road is part of a scientist's training and Sally is very good at it. "She has a depth-length of vision that many people don't have."

Two years have passed since I took Sally's class. Seated in her under-sized office, cramped by bookshelves and filing cabinets, I know by listening that her "depth-length" vision is still the same.

"In 1988 we didn't grow enough food or grain to keep up with population in this country," she said. "We're considered to be the food supplier to many countries in the world. If we don't have enough to feed ourselves, we certainly aren't going to have enough to feed the world. So when we talk about providing food to Russia...what we are really doing is taking food from the people here, who are poor and can ill afford it, and giving it to the people there...I don't think enough people have stopped to realize what we are doing."

Through the years Sally's dedica-

tion has been unrelentless. Jon said her work was never spurred by "what's in it for me." Instead, her caring and concern are always for others. He calls this "altruistic nurturing."

When asked what kind of sacrifices she makes to support this type of dedication, Sally hesitated. Finally, she said, "You don't get to play a lot."

If sacrifices do come, they are made

by her family, but she emphasized their support of her efforts. "My husband has always been supportive because he can see the need for it." She says the struggle is worth it.

Being a woman has not hindered her environmental crusade. As long as you have the facts and know a few "little

tricks," somebody will listen. By playing the right card, Sally's often a winner.

Since I took Sally's class, I no longer take nature's beauty for granted. I know that even simple acts such as recycling my newspapers or turning off the water when I brush my teeth help the environment. And if others do the same, together we can make a difference. That is exactly what Sally wants her students to understand.

*Becci Oxner is a journalism major at Western. She plans on working as a freelance writer, focusing on the outdoors.*

## EARTH DAY 1992

### "Go for the GREEN"

The Environmental Center sponsors its annual Earth Fair. Join in this outdoor celebration to raise awareness about Earth's environmental issues and offer opportunities about how people can make a difference.

**When:** April 25, 11 to 6

**Where:** Western's Performing Arts Center Courtyard

# Newsmakers of Neighborhood groups at work in our

Carin Coates

Neighborhood groups in Bellingham are the newsmakers of the year. They tackle tough issues of growth, development, open space and pollution -- and make a difference close to home.

I wondered, though, who leads these groups and how much do they really accomplish? It turns out that the backbone of these groups is composed of energetic women such as Leslie P.



Alabama Hill Neighborhood co-chairs Enfield (l.) and Richardson (r.).

Richardson and Mary G. Enfield, chair and co-chair respectively of the Alabama Hill Neighborhood Association (AHNA); Dudley Evenson, initiator of Interurban Neighbors; and Sherilyn Wells, chairperson, Friends of Lake Whatcom (FOLW).

"Women become involved since for women the bottom line isn't money, it's harmony," Evenson told me. "Women don't want to control nature, they want harmony and balance in a gentle way."

Leading a neighborhood group demands time, patience, and commitment. "Getting involved was a dream, and I'm amazed at the time it takes. It's essential to be available all day, either at home or

with an extremely flexible job." Enfield said. "I need to be there when the problem is there, since it must be dealt with now. Tomorrow can be too late."

These women voluntarily work as hard as if they were paid, maybe even harder. Richardson often loses sleep. "I have sleepless nights, chewing something until I find the question I haven't asked, the door that hasn't been pushed, a missed point on an issue, or concern over whether they will get through the process before you find the magical key."

When I entered Richardson's home, I found evidence of hard work in every corner. A high-pitched noise filled the room, indicating a whizzing computer. Papers cluttered her desk, and spilled over onto the floor.

Richardson indeed works diligently.

"A great deal of AHNA's success is due to Leslie Richardson," Enfield told me. "Leslie is the equilibrium of the group, and spends a great deal of time doing research and bringing it to the group."

Almost three years ago, Richardson and Enfield involved themselves in AHNA to protect neighborhood integrity.

"Neighborhoods need to watch out for themselves and the community as a whole," Enfield said.

Arriving at Evenson's home I encountered a gorgeous view of the forest -- the land she strives to preserve. She sees herself playing a role in destiny:

"I must have been planted here on this hill overlooking the proposed development for a purpose. Someone else might have said, 'That's the way it goes.' But I can make a difference."

Wells tends three children, including a two-year-old, but still finds the energy to chair Friends of Lake Whatcom.

Looking around Wells' home inspired me to improve my own "low-impact" lifestyle. She lives a very low-impact life compared to most Americans -- a lifestyle using few lights, no heat, and alternative transportation.

Wells moved here 18 months ago and immediately became involved in FOLW:

"As a parent I am constantly aware of the type of world being created for our children and I want to leave them as clear a legacy as possible. I also look at the watershed and see massive clearcutting and development, and it's physically painful to see destruction to something you love."

Richardson and Enfield both find the Alabama Neighborhood Association tremendously effective. The group's accomplishments include saving the wetland arboretum, educating the public, protecting Roosevelt Safe School Trail, and preventing the extension of Barkley

# the year

## communities

Boulevard and Illinois Street. They also have participated in city work, such as cleaning storm drains with the Boy Scouts and Earth Day clean-ups.

Bellingham nominated Friends of Lake Whatcom as "News Makers of the Year" for 1991. FOLW urges cities and the county to develop a Lake Whatcom watershed preservation plan. Presently, the group publishes a newsletter, conducts seminars, workshops, and meetings on watershed value and protection.

Wells expresses deep concern about the continued degradation of the Lake Whatcom watershed:

"This is an irreplaceable resource, the water supply for both city and county. We need a management plan to ensure clean water and preserve streams for fish and wildlife. We want the city and county to work with citizen groups to expedite action."

Evenson helped organize Interurban Neighbors, a group dedicated to preserving the local ecology and quality of life. The group's efforts currently focus on preserving 100 acres of Chuckanut Ridge facing potential development.

Interurban Neighbors educates the public with newsletters and videos. The possible destruction of Chuckanut Ridge has become a city-wide issue.

The group's other intentions include informing citizens about wetlands and alternative communities -- clustered communities that recycle, practicing organic gardening and utilizing alternative transportation, and are sustainable.

"Bellingham has the potential to become a model for a sustainable community since the citizens are conscious and have concern for the community," Evenson told me. "We need to look at changing the way we live on this Earth, so that we can operate sustainable communities that consider the long-term picture, not just the dollar."

I felt excited knowing that citizens actively participate and positively respond to the neighborhood groups.

"Citizens are very willing to call a city council member or write a letter," Wells told me.

Evenson agreed, "When numbers of participants are needed for a meeting the citizens are there to partake. Citizens appreciate that someone is leading."

More than 125 active members belong to AHNA and FOLW. Beyond these paying members, though, are many supportive citizens. Richardson and Enfield, for instance, received 600 signatures when they went door-to-door to save a wetland.

The frustrations rise when a developer doesn't notify a neighborhood group of a proposed project in its community. "I thought it unfair when the AHNA wasn't notified of a proposed development in the neighborhood," Richardson said.

"We need ordinances to protect neighborhood integrity. Property development should fit with the community's vision of what it sees itself becoming. It's the community's decision whether we want greenspace, trail systems, and trees -- not the developers."

Wells understands that neighborhood action groups ameliorate the political process:

"With strong citizen involvement you see more of a return to a true democracy, with citizen participation. Neighborhood groups' alliance is what will make the changes. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Decisions used to be made by small groups, and now they are spread out among a great number of people."

Speaking with Wells reminded me of our enormous political responsibility. "I encourage people to take part in the process. If you want to get involved, get involved in small groups. That's what creates change and makes things hap-



*Evenson of Interurban Neighbors.* Erik Kvilaas pen."

As citizens we can make a difference. I too am occupied, with only fractions of time to spare. Despite a lack of time, I feel responsible for my surroundings. Complaining doesn't create change -- action does. The choice is ours: apathy, or a democracy where the individual is heard.

*Carin Coates is an Environmental Science major at Huxley College and in the midst of experiencing one of the greatest adventures -- LIFE.*



# Hiking and Healing:

*Our wilderness correspondent finds*

Colin Wilcox

*Wander [the woods] a whole summer if you can....*

*Thousands of God's wild blessings will search you and soak you as if you were a sponge, and the big days will go by uncounted.*

-- John Muir

I'm a slow learner. What's worse, I often learn life's lessons the hard way. For instance, I learned the hard way to avoid rear-ending other motorists. But sometimes a lesson sinks in effortlessly, and when it does I am usually outdoors. I was born with a love for wilderness, and for some strange reason my mind functions better when surrounded by trees.

Three years ago I learned some of those "effortless lessons" during an eight-day trek along the Pacific Crest Trail. The most important, a lesson in the value of nature, but there were others. They took me by surprise.

All I wanted was to escape reality. I was trying to piece my life together after watching my photography career fade and die, the victim of burnout. The loss had depressed me deeply, and I knew that hiking would be a way to have fun and take my mind off the pain. Since childhood I had viewed the Cascade mountains as a playground, with backpacking as the ultimate in fun and games. During my stint as a photographer, I also saw them as grist for my camera, a chance to have fun and make money at the same time.

But this trek taught me that my view of nature was incomplete. Depression slowed me down enough to learn that gentle, but unforgettable lesson: Wilderness is meant for more than profit, fun, and games. Its ability to foster emotional and spiritual healing far outweighs its value as a THING.

School began immediately. The roar

of traffic along Stevens Pass faded as my trusted friend, John Murphy, and I entered the trees. Thick fog closed behind us. It was quiet, like the velvety silence furnished by a crackling fire and a good book. The photography studios in which I'd slaved were driven by loud rock and roll. So was my Toyota. Constantly surrounded by noise, I had forgotten how relaxing and comforting birdsong and breeze could sound.

Silence also brought me closer to my surroundings. A journal entry captured one such observation:

*A familiar rhythm takes hold as we walk. It is the deliberate thud of boots on the trail, my ice axe going "kerchunk" on a stone, the creaking of my pack, and the chattering "glurgle" of the water bottles in the pocket by my left ear. They set up an odd, comforting cadence: Thud-chunk-creek-glurgle, thud-chunk-creek-glurgle. These are some of the happiest sounds anywhere. I've never known them until now.*

That first day not only taught me a valuable lesson -- find a quiet spot, relax, and listen -- it set the stage for healing.

I was blissfully unaware of my civilized life for three days, and then reality stepped in. Late in the afternoon of the fourth day, hot and very tired, the question of where my life was going landed on my shoulders like a cackling gremlin. As I walked, I cast my mind down the possible avenues open to me: "Get a job in



Illustration from a picture by Galen Rowell.

Alaska, go to college." The answers I reeled in were thrown back, seen as either dead ends or chances to sit at a desk and get fat.

I slid into a blue funk. We had planned to climb the highest mountain in King County, Mount Daniel, the next day. But I was so full of self pity that by the time we made camp I was ready to wimp out. I decided to tell John that I needed time to plan the rest of my life, or that my feet were dying; any excuse would do. But for some reason I kept quiet. The next day, John's preparations for the climb -- packing lunch, deciding on gear and lacing boots -- created a momentum

# his way through the fog



Peter Donaldson

that carried me along. Before I knew it I was out of the tent and heading uphill. Another lesson was in the works.

We earned the summit after three hours of climbing. The view was so spectacular it would have embarrassed a roll of Fujichrome. My journal caught part of it:

*We can see forever. From Mount Baker to Mount Adams. The sky is cloudless, and the air has a chilly bite. The eagles soar below us. The sheer, overwhelming beauty of this place reduces us to silence....*

As I wrote, I noticed that something was missing. The previous day's worries had evaporated without warning or explanation. With the extra weight gone my anxiety and depression began to heal. I returned to camp footsore and tired, but the future looked far brighter than when I'd started.

That evening, as John and I discussed the day's events over hot chocolate, I had an insight.

"Yonny," I said, "I think the healing was waiting for us to slow down, to take our minds and lifestyles out of high gear."

John, a veteran hiker, agreed.

"Nature has a very clear order, and our lives are so complex that we need that order to help us stay balanced. But nature moves slowly. That balance can't be obtained from a drive-through window."

We hiked for three more days through warm, quiet forests, and ended at the Salmon La Sac campground near Roslyn. We lounged against our packs on the ranger station lawn, and watched an endless, loud parade of motorhomes roar in and out of the campground. After a few minutes, a final lesson sank in: I experienced healing because I took the risk of being vulnerable to nature. I then fed that risk by choosing to rely on myself and my partner instead of the usual props. There were no jobs, cars, fancy clothes, or 911 emergency service. The glaciers we crossed could have swallowed us, and the bears could've run toward us instead of away. The R.V. owners, on the other hand, were sheltered by, but tied to, their steel and fiberglass cocoons. It saddened me to realize that they would park their expensive machines on concrete slabs, have a good time, but never experience nature as I had. My reward for taking that risk was the knowledge that nature restores life's rips and gouges. I was reminded of what John Muir said: "...there was no personal crisis, no anguish of night, that nature could not heal." He's right.

*An unkept, oil-soaked Colin Wilcox washed ashore on Bellingham Bay after the Exxon Valdez hit the rocks. He launched his career as an environmental journalism student after being discovered living in a dumpster by Al Sharpe, night janitor at Parks Hall.*

# Complex, caring and dynamic

## Huxley's women profs -- role models for

Wendy May

When Huxley College of Environmental Studies opened its doors in 1971, the number of women faculty members totaled zero. Today, Huxley employs three full-time and two part-time women -- one fourth of the faculty. Each of them plays a key part in the college.

I've taken courses with two of them and talked with them all. They are com-



Chris Maguire.

Mike Wewer

plex, caring and dynamic. They are models for their students, illustrating the opportunities and possibilities for women, as well as men, interested in environmental studies.

Their teaching and research specialties encompass a wide range: environmental pollution; risk assessment; small mammal habitats; aquatic ecology; environmental education; and more. Many of us have taken classes with these instructors and know that side of their personalities. In interviewing them, I stepped beyond into their personal lives to see how they arrived at this time and place - standing in front of us in the classrooms as instructors, mentors and friends.

"I have been interested in science ever since I can remember," Professor Ruth Weiner told me. "I was your basic science nerd." Ruth's parents were both scientists, and both of her grandfathers were physicians. She never considered any other field.

After many years of postdoctoral work and university level teaching, Ruth came to Huxley in 1974, serving as dean from 1974 to 1977.

Her introduction to environmental activism came in 1964. A friend invited her to a meeting in Denver where a professor from Colorado College discussed a proposal to build dams in the Grand Canyon. "Over my dead body," Ruth responded! "We ran a group called the Grand Canyon Workshop out of my living room."

At the time, challenging research appointments were not available to Ruth. Environmental activism gave her a creative outlet and also legitimized her growing interest in the outdoors. Since



Wendy Walker.

Mike Wewer

then, Ruth has focused her knowledge and energy on air pollution, risk assessment, energy issues and writing. She co-authored two textbooks, *Environmental Engineering and Environmental Pollution and Control.*, and hopes to write more in the future.

"I've learned over the years that the only thing that is really influential is what you write down," she confided.

Assistant Professor Robin Matthews recalls collecting mud and water as a child from the local creek in her hometown of Concord, California. That interest eventually led to a Ph.D. in aquatic ecology.

Prior to her arrival at Huxley in 1988, Robin worked as an environmental scientist for Dupont, and as an environmental consultant.

Last year, Robin was granted tenure. "Now I can stop worrying about whether I would continue here and focus on how I want to continue here."

Robin enjoys Huxley College because the focus is on applied science. "The focus isn't just the basic lake or stream, but what happens when people develop around the lake... it's problem solving."

Robin is presently involved in moni-

# Dynamic us all

toring the Lake Whatcom Watershed. "The Lake Whatcom Watershed is a microcosm of all the issues facing the state -- development, logging, water quality and water rights -- aesthetics almost gets lost."

Robin pointed out that compromises must be made, but there are also times we shouldn't compromise. "There is a ray of hope... in Whatcom County I see a lot of people with strong commitments to the environment working in local government."

Assistant Professor Chris Maguire grew up 12 miles outside of New York City in "concrete haven." A day in the country meant fighting for a spot on the crowded New Jersey beaches. As an adult, Chris has been immersed in the woods.



Robin Matthews.

Erik Kvilaas

People told Chris that studying small mammals would never get her a job. But for 10 years she's never been without one. Following her Ph.D. in zoology and ecology, she conducted biological research for the EPA Research

Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon. She was also a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, coordinating northern spotted owl prey research. She has researched in several states.

Chris wants to continue her work researching how small mammals adjust to habitat disturbance. She believes small mammals are indicators of a healthy ecosystem. Chris compared small mammals to the foundation stones of a house [the ecosystem]. One stone can be pulled out and the house will still stand, but eventually one will get pulled out and the house will crumble. "We don't know how close we are to that," Chris cautioned.

Claire Dyckman returned to the Northwest in 1970 after working for the Peace Corps in Chad. She wanted to share her interest in global issues, and to connect Americans with other concerned people around the world. She realized most people in the Northwest weren't interested in global issues, but eventually saw ecology as a way of connecting people with a global perspective.

Claire taught environmental education at Huxley from 1972 to 1976. Before returning here in 1990, she worked as an environmental analyst, planner and educator.

Claire set a precedent by developing a consensus among eight parties with EPA to clean up the Strandly super-fund site. "I was able to combine economic concerns with environmental concerns and to keep the government out."

Claire plans to apply her abilities to many areas: working with others to preserve topsoil, conserving energy in order to avoid a nuclear or coal plant, working toward ecologically sound food production, and focusing on children.

"We are selling them short with what we do with our finances in this country and what we do to our air, soil, water and wildlife."

Wendy Walker attended Fairhaven



Claire Dyckman.

Erik Kvilaas

College in the late '60s and early '70s. People were talking about Paul Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. New awareness about the health of the planet pushed Wendy and other students into activism. They organized the first state-wide campaign to ban non-returnable beverage containers, and even got an initiative on the ballot. They also organized a Bellingham-wide pick-up-litter contest for kids, creating a mountain of garbage on 11th Street.

Since then, Wendy has applied her creative zeal and respect for the planet to teaching, writing and attempting to change the Forest Service through 22

years of interpretation.

She commented, "I learned a lot by toughing it out within a big cumbersome organization. It's satisfying when you see something change because of your being there and saying something."

Her photo-essay book, *Washington National Forests*, was published in 1990. And she wants to write more. "Something that comes straight from my heart and mind."

*Wendy May is an English major and an Environmental Science minor. This is her second quarter with the Planet.*

## Advice to Students

### Claire Dyckman

"Be honest, be heard and know the difference between confronting the action and belittling the person." Also, "Get used to modeling the way we need to live. Start your life out in a way that is ecologically sound. It is hard for people to change."

### Robin Matthews

"Be willing to take chances and be willing to accept the opinions of others." Robin also commented that students often see industry as the bad guys and therefore don't want to work for it. "If industry doesn't get good professionals, what kind of scientific advice are they going to get?"

### Chris Maguire

"Get a well-rounded degree... you need a broad view -- chemistry, pollution, sociology -- all the various aspects."

### Wendy Walker

"Value yourself more highly and go out and find someplace where there is a blend between the deadness you need to try and enliven, but not too far from the source of light."

### Ruth Weiner

"The attitude of sin and virtue (concerning environmental issues) never works.

"Learn to appreciate the scientific method, make observations then conclusions, not the other way around."

"Be tough, but constructive."

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# Olympic's controversies

## Park boss discusses career, park service and problems

Shawn Tobin

Olympic National Park is an important place to me. Growing up in Westport, I lived my life in the shadow of its craggy peaks and majestic forests. It's a place of inspiration. But my special relationship with the park leaves me wondering about its future.

Too often parks are over managed and under led. I see too many managers, people who do things right, and not enough leaders, people who do the right thing. But doing the right thing is hard -- it requires character, vision, and courage.

In January, I went to Port Angeles to talk with Olympic National Park Superintendent, Maureen Finnerty. I wanted to know who was in charge. We talked about her career, the park service, and some of the park's controversies. Finnerty, who has been here since 1990, hopes she's a leader.

"Clearly my job here at Olympic, and I would hope with other superintendents, is to leave these parks in as good or better condition than we found them. That should be everyone's job," she said.

Olympic National Park is one of the few select national parks to receive worldwide recognition as both an International Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. Of Olympic National Park's 896,599 acres, 95 percent are classified as wilderness. These designations reinforce the long-term value of Olympic as a protected area. It is also one of the most visited national parks in the United States, with more than three million visitors a year.

Many park superintendents scarcely know their own parks; except for possibly the highway, visitor center, and concession facilities. Finnerty, though, tries to hike 100 miles in the park every year.

Finnerty, 45, began her park service career 18 years ago as a program analyst at the Washington D.C. headquarters. She rose through the ranks to program coordinator in the Office of Management Policy and then to



*Superintendent Maureen Finnerty in her office.*

her first field assignment as assistant superintendent of Everglades National Park.

In Florida, she worked for Jack Morehead, now the regional director in Alaska. Morehead said of his former employee, "I've seen her deal with controversial issues, she's very analytical and extremely intelligent. She deals very well with controversy."

From there she went to Philadelphia as the associate regional director for operations for a five-state 30-park region.

"My park service career is a little atypical. Unusual in that I started my career in Washington D.C., moved up the ranks there and then came to the field in a management position. Most park service people start in the field."

Park Service photo

Finnerty told me that many park service women start in the field -- and stay there. Of the 358 national parks, national monuments, and historic sites in the system, only about 30 have women superintendents. Finnerty is the first woman superintendent of what the park service calls a grade 15 (major) park.

"We (women) are starting to make inroads. The numbers still aren't there, but there are a lot of good women in the system, and they're starting to move up."

Since Finnerty's appointment, women have become superintendents of other major parks: Independence National Historic Park, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

While park service administration is predominantly male, roughly half of the front-



Signpost on the Elwha River.

Shawn Tobin

line rangers are women. "I don't sense a bias. I know some women will tell you a different story, but I haven't felt it."

Finnerty has felt the heat from the park's two main controversies: removal of the Elwha dams, and the mountain goat removal plan.

Most of the Elwha River watershed lies within Olympic National Park. But the river hasn't run wild for 79 years; it's blocked by the Elwha Dam, built in 1913, and the Glines Canyon Dam, built in 1926. The Glines Canyon Dam has been within the park boundaries since congress established the park in 1938.

Prior to the construction of the dams, the Elwha River nurtured one of the largest salmon and steelhead-trout runs on the

Olympic Peninsula. The river supported five salmon and three steelhead species. There were 75 miles of spawning habitat -- now there are only five.

"There's not another situation quite like it in the country. There are other dams in national parks, but almost the entire Elwha watershed is within this park. Research strongly indicates that we can get significant restoration if the dams come out," Finnerty said.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has relicensing power over the Elwha Dam. FERC also claims the right to relicense the Glines Canyon Dam. The dam's license expired in 1976. Since then FERC has been issuing temporary one-year licenses, while it considers the legality of

relicensing.

The fate of the dams is tied into a dispute over bureaucratic control. The National Park Service (NPS) disputes FERC's claim, since the Glines Canyon Dam is within Olympic National Park. NPS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service advocate removal of both dams. FERC estimates dam removal will cost \$65 million.

The dams, owned by the James River Corporation, supply electricity to the Daishowa pulp and paper mill in Port Angeles. FERC, in its draft environmental impact statement, and dam removal advocates, claim the mill can become more efficient, eliminating the need for the dams. Despite these claims, FERC's final environmental impact statement, due this spring, is expected to recommend relicensing the dams.

"If FERC comes out in favor of relicensing, which everyone expects they'll do, we'll contest that in court," Finnerty said.

While the park service is in court, it's very likely that animal rights activists and concerned citizens will contest the park's mountain goat policy.

"That may ultimately end up to be the most difficult issue we have to resolve," she said.

Park biologists believe that the animals were introduced to the Olympic Peninsula in the 1920s, and are destroying native alpine vegetation. The National Park Service, mandated by congress to protect the park's unique native biology, wants the goats out. To remove the estimated 300 remaining goats, the park service is considering continued live capture, sterilization, or shooting.

"I know folks think I'm locked into shooting. I'm not locked into anything, except

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that we need to make a decision. We've been studying this situation for fifteen years," she said.

For nine of those 15 years, the park service captured goats. The captured goats were released into areas where they could be hunted or used to rebuild native goat populations, such as the Cascades.

But the live capture program was suspended in 1990 for safety reasons. The park service decided that the helicopter maneuvers necessary to capture the remaining goats, by then in very treacherous areas, were just too dangerous.

The remote removals were dangerous to the goats too; near the program's end 20 percent died. Many of the goats, scared by the helicopters, fell to their deaths.

Because goats know no boundaries, Olympic National Park, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Wildlife are developing a goat management plan for the entire Olympic Peninsula. An interagency team is writing an environmental impact statement for goat management. This is a public process. A series of public meetings have been scheduled to discuss goat management. For more information contact:

*The Interagency Goat Management Team,  
Olympic National Park,  
600 E. Park Avenue  
Port Angeles, WA 98362*

NPS and USFS are mandated to maintain a viable population of all native plant and animal species. Department of Wildlife wants to



Illustration by Peter Donaldson

maintain the goat population, especially on the peninsula's east side, where a hunting season still exists.

"The preferred alternative for goat management will very likely be different for goats inside the park versus outside the park," Finnerty said.


The overall plan for the park has already been decided. The park service wants to build a visitor's center on the coastal strip near Kalaloch, but other than that, Finnerty assured me, "we're not going to develop this park."

But the park service has a dual mandate: both to protect nature and serve the visitor.

Maureen Finnerty believes, "When the dual mandate comes into conflict, you clearly have to side with preservation. It's more critical than ever that we protect our natural resources."

Finnerty often talked in bureaucratic terms -- "preferred alternatives," "scoping meetings," and "management options." But I sensed that basically, despite her training, she cares about Olympic National Park. Maybe as much as I do. Let's hope so.

*Shawn Tobin is an Environmental Education major at Huxley College and originally a resident of the Olympic Peninsula.*




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# Lake Whatcom Connector

## Does the watershed need another road?

Matt Krogh

Imagine a County Council that would spend \$100,000 to plan the construction of a road, despite clear environmental and financial problems, without first considering possible alternatives. In the case of the Lake Whatcom Connector -- a proposed road along the north slopes of Lookout Mountain that would connect Yew Street and Lake Louise Road -- that is precisely what happened.

The connector, if constructed, would provide easier access to Bellingham for residents of Sudden Valley and the southern areas of Lake Whatcom. Even today, heavy traffic at peak hours creates safety problems for residents along Lake Whatcom Boulevard and traffic jams for commuters. The county intends to use the new connector to mitigate those problems.

However, the Lake Whatcom watershed, Bellingham's sole source of drinking water, is already strained by overdevelopment. The road would increase pressure to develop residential areas in the watershed, further damaging an already degraded resource.

"We need to attack the problems (the Lake Whatcom Connector and further development in the watershed) using water quality as the top priority," said Sherilyn Wells of Friends of Lake Whatcom.

Wells' point is well taken. Just a few weeks ago, the Washington State Department of Health declared the waters of Lake Whatcom a health hazard -- a direct result of development around the lake.

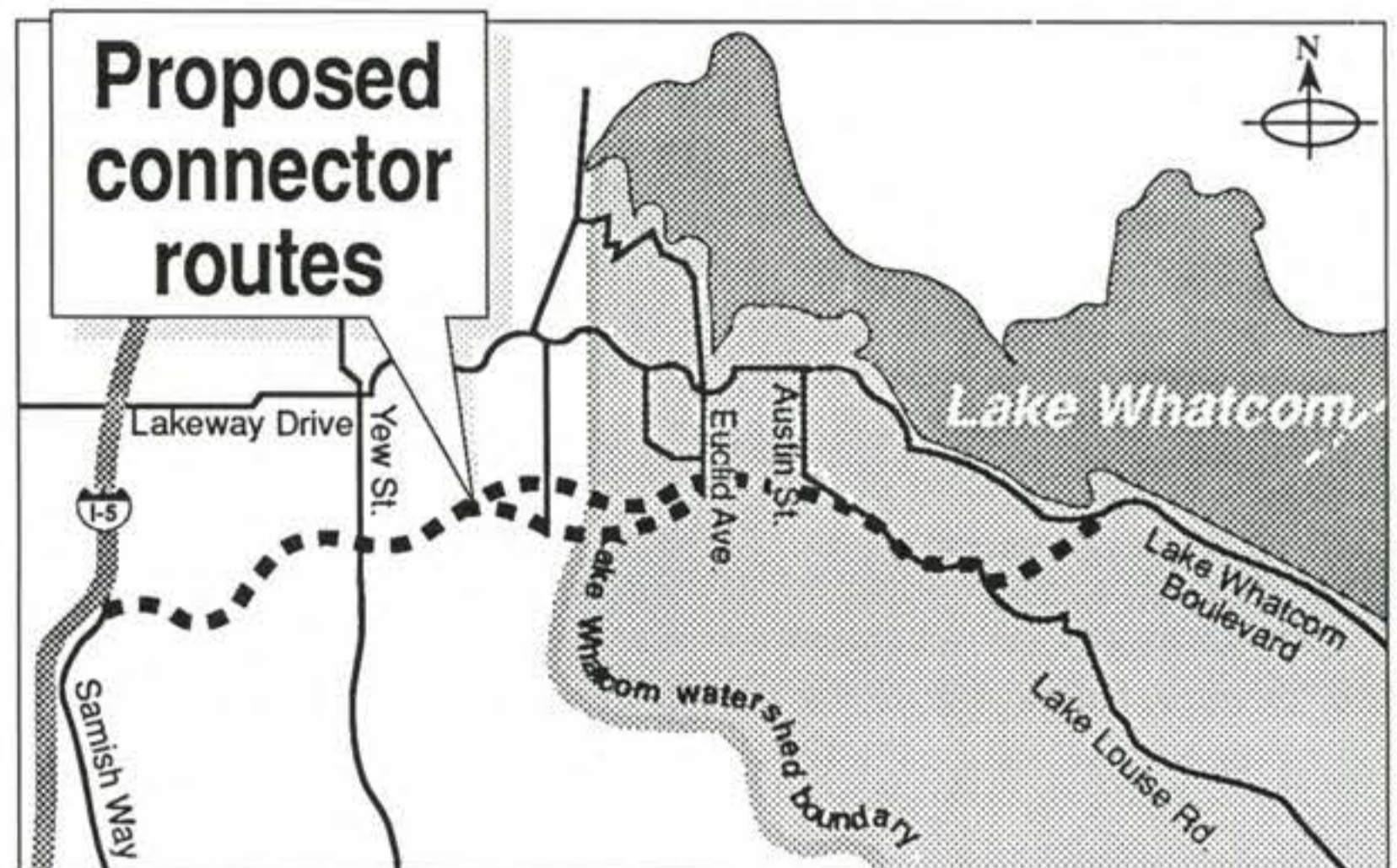
The Lake Whatcom Watershed Storm Runoff Monitoring Project conducted by the Institute of Watershed Studies at Huxley College states:

"...Creeks that drain residential areas were found to contain higher concentrations of pollutants traditionally associated with urban runoff, including phosphorus, suspended sediment, dissolved metals (especially copper and zinc) and fecal coliforms, than creeks in forested areas."

These pollutants wash directly into Bellingham's drinking water from developed areas.

"What is now a quiet, dead-end street, safe for kids to bicycle in, would be turned into something like Alabama Street," said Jay Taber, Whatcom Falls' representative to the Mayor's Neighborhood Council. Taber complains that not only will the proposed road ruin his neighborhood, but it will cut off access to the quiet hiking and biking trails that wind across the north side of Lookout Mountain.

Taber also sympathizes with the residents of Lake Whatcom Boulevard. "People on Lake Whatcom Boulevard have a legitimate gripe -- traffic is a safety issue for people along the boulevard." But he feels the road would worsen conditions and cause more damage.



Map courtesy of The Bellingham Herald.

More development, for example, would contribute to existing water supply problems.

"An increase in housing density would strain current water supplies under the existing permits," said Bonnie Spode, manager of Water District 10, the resource agency in charge of water issues within the Lake Whatcom watershed. "Although open to individual water draw, the basin is closed to further withdrawal applications by government agencies. We cannot increase the draw from the North Shore well, one of the primary areas for future development in the watershed."

The Sudden Valley development demonstrates problems already evident in the watershed. Although only one third of the 4,200 platted lots in Sudden Valley have been developed, the sewer system is already strained -- instances of stormwater infiltration have caused the system to overflow, creating water quality problems.

Unlike Sudden Valley, further development in the South Bay area would be unable to connect with the city sewer system. Each home owner would have to operate a household septic system, even though septic systems don't work well in much of the watershed's soil. In certain areas, septic system leachate can trickle directly into the lake after minimal filtering, leading to higher levels of fecal coliform contamination. Even today, less than half the septic systems currently in operation in the watershed are officially monitored.

The Growth Management Act (GMA), adopted by the state legislature in 1991, requires growing counties like Whatcom to designate the uses for lands throughout each county. The existence of the Lake Whatcom Connector would encourage developers to push for zoning changes, from forestry into residential. This would lead to more development of the watershed and increase water quality degradation.

The proposed road poses several potential problems, which include the following:

- Both proposed routes run along unstable soils along the north side of Lookout Mountain. Landslide danger there is high.
- The area has potential difficulty with road icing during the winter.
- Both routes cross a designated wetland.
- Road construction increases the rate of water drainage, leading to increased erosion. This, in turn, leads to increased water turbidity, which would degrade water quality both in Lake Whatcom and Whatcom Creek.



Author's friend surveys steep slope on proposed connector route.

Matt Krogh

- The cost to the taxpayers would be somewhere between \$12.3 and \$13.35 million. That includes only initial estimates for construction costs, not maintenance costs.
- Maintenance of the road, due to the unstable soils and icing during the winter, would be extremely costly.

Today, few alternatives to automobile transportation exist for the residents of Sudden Valley and the other areas of the watershed. Some possibilities include extending bus service earlier in the morning and later at night; providing incentives to carpool; improving the shoulders of Lake Whatcom Boulevard and Lake Louise Road for bicycle traffic; and staggering working hours to spread out the peak traffic load. Transportation alternatives need to be implemented before taking a drastic step like building a road.

Philip Urso, the president of the Sudden Valley Community Association, has a different view.

"I don't see any real alternatives to the Connector," he said. "We are here, more people are coming -- the problem won't go away."


Roger Bourm, director of the Lake Whatcom Boulevard Safety and Preservation Association, agrees.

"The boulevard is not an all-weather, heavy-duty road....The Council should just adhere to what it spent our good money to ascertain which way to go."

The forms of alternative transportation listed above, however, are viable options. They are cheaper and easier to implement than road construction. In addition, they would not increase pressure to expand into the area, while still improving transportation for current residents. The current county council seems willing to support these sorts of alternatives.

Under the provisions of the GMA, the county has an opportunity to rezone areas of the watershed to prevent urban sprawl. If the council chooses, forest lands can be designated as such in perpetuity. This would help to maintain the quality of our drinking water, preventing its further degradation by development in the watershed. Regardless of whether or not we build the connector, the primary issue of development in the watershed needs to be addressed first.


*Matt Krogh is a student in Environmental Education, and an avid skinny-dipping stream jumper.*



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# Washington's Wildlife Wo

## Endangered species: fighting for survival and making a comeback

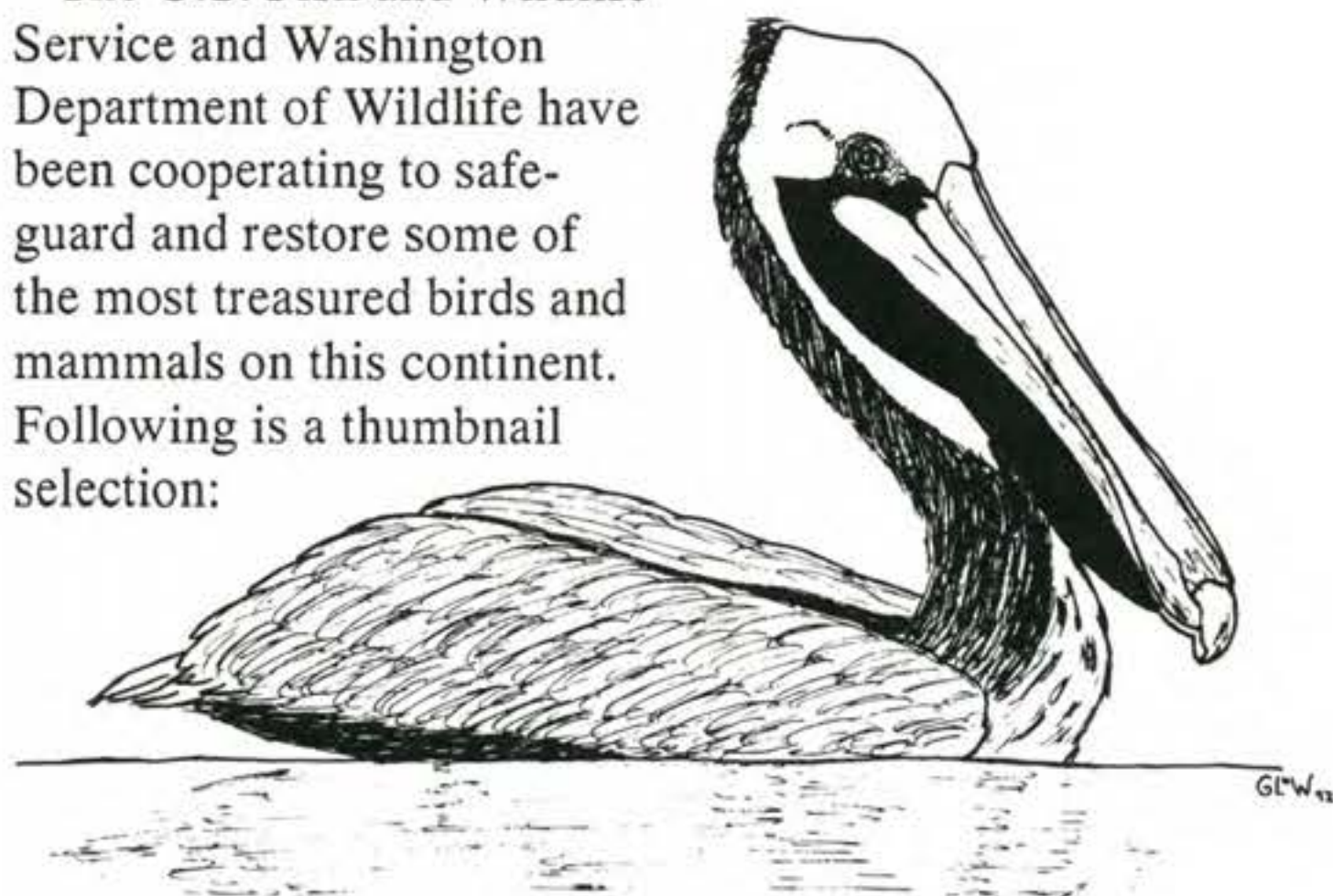
Story and Illustrations by Gail L.O. Woessner

"If all the beasts were gone," Chief Seattle said, "men would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to man."

Yes, wildlife plays an important role in the human experience. Because many people care, laws have been passed to provide for the protection of species.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, one of the most historic federal laws relating to wildlife, deals specifically with animals near extinction or threatened in a portion of their range.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Washington Department of Wildlife have been cooperating to safeguard and restore some of the most treasured birds and mammals on this continent. Following is a thumbnail selection:



Brown Pelican -- *Pelecanus occidentalis*

The brown pelican population has increased since its listing as endangered in 1970, following the elimination of chemical pollutants such as DDT and DDE.

Although brown pelicans do not breed in Washington, they do migrate through, and winter along the coast. Fish and Wildlife waterfowl surveys from 1990 reported a record 4,980 brown pelicans along the Washington coast.

Another slowly recovering species is the sea otter. Overharvesting by fur traders decimated sea otter populations by the 1900s. In 1969, 30 Alaskan sea otters were reintroduced off the Washington coast. In 1990, Fish and Wildlife counted 212 individuals. Current populations range offshore from Kalaloch to just south of Cape Flattery. Most of this area is protected as part of the Olympic National Park and the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Oil transportation and commercial fishing along coastal waters aggravate the restoration processes.



Sea Otter -- *Enhydra lutris*

The peregrine falcon is the only raptor federally listed as endangered in Washington. Its recovery is slow but steady through both natural recolonization and reintroduction. The primary cause of the peregrine's decline relates to pesticide use.

In 1975 only one known pair of peregrine falcons remained in Washington. By 1990, Department of Wildlife counted 15 falcon pairs in the 15 known sites throughout the state. Four of these sites are in the San Juan Islands.

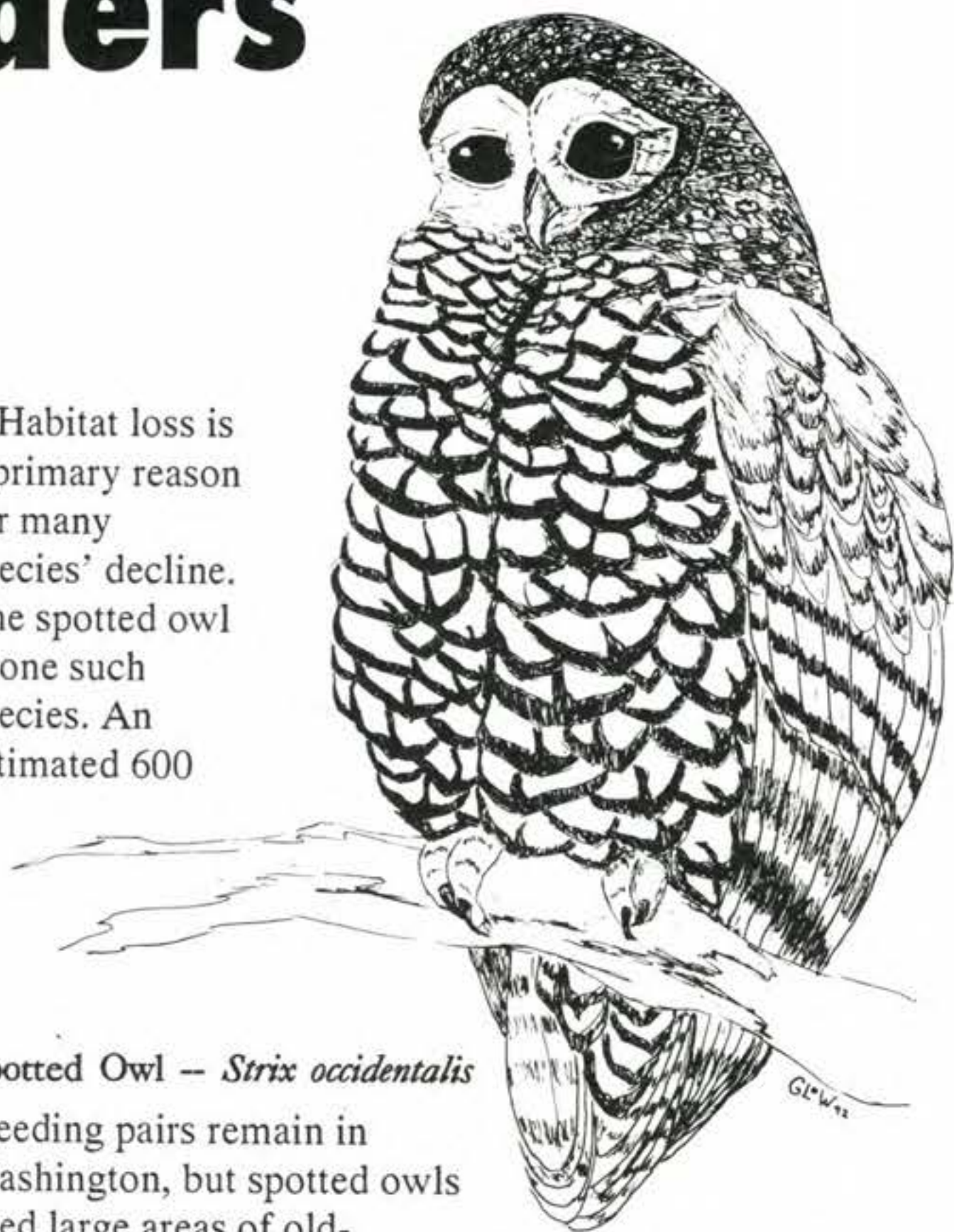
To protect known sites, the Department of Wildlife works with conservation groups and other government agencies to provide guidelines for development projects; close trails near nest sites, enhance habitat at selected nest sites, and acquire sites for permanent protection.



Peregrine Falcon -- *Falco peregrinus*

# nders

Habitat loss is a primary reason for many species' decline. The spotted owl is one such species. An estimated 600



Spotted Owl — *Strix occidentalis* breeding pairs remain in Washington, but spotted owls need large areas of old-growth coniferous forest to meet their territorial and feeding requirements. While over seven million acres have been set aside for the protection of the spotted owl, controversy over logging places the bird in continued jeopardy.

Along with habitat loss, some species have been directly persecuted by humans.



Grizzly Bear — *Ursus arctos horribilis*

Grizzly bears were legal game animals prior to 1969. Grizzlies once numbered in the thousands. Today's estimated population is less than 50.

After a five-year study ended in 1990, Department of Wildlife recorded four sets of confirmed grizzly bear tracks in the North Cascades along with 128 reported observations. Fish and Wildlife considers 200-400 bears as a viable population and is working toward a recovery plan under terms of the Endangered Species Act.

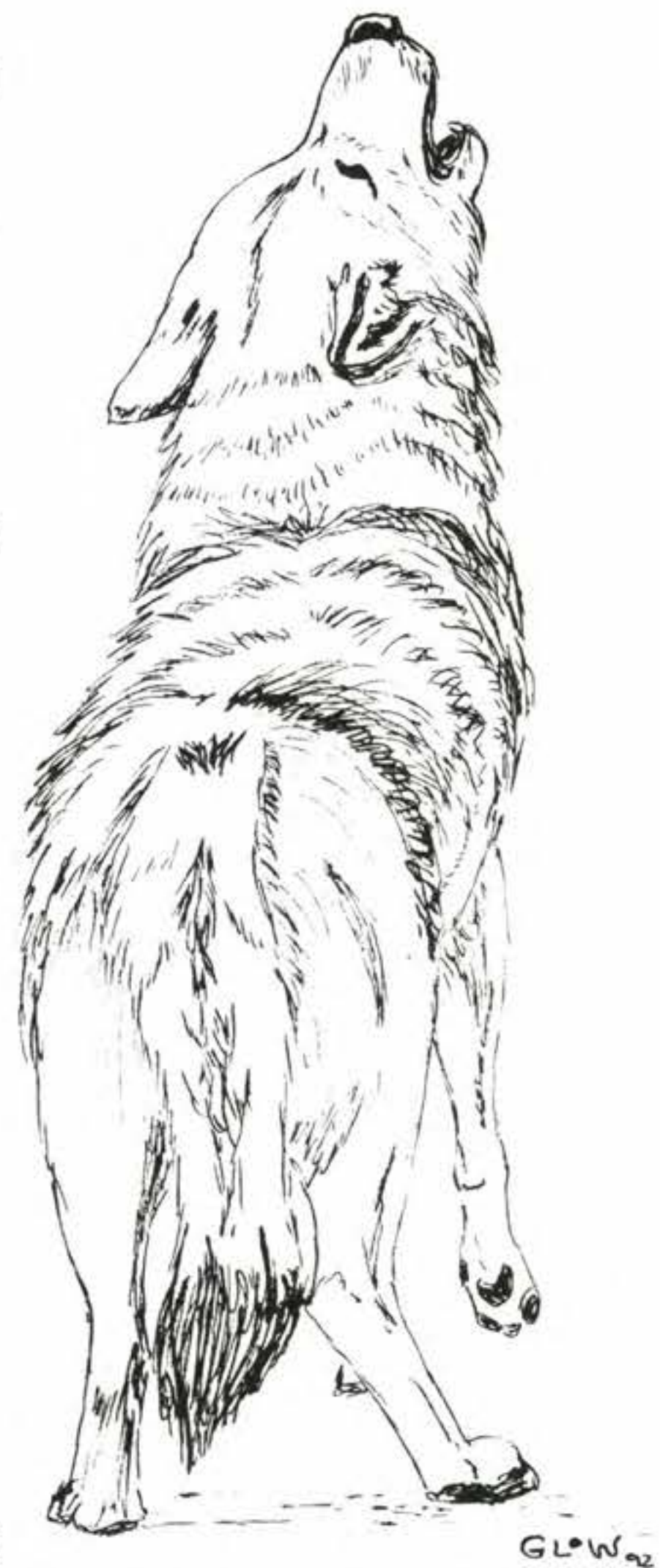
Like the grizzly bear, the wolf suffers from a bad reputation among humans. Wolves were extirpated as a result of trapping and federal government-sanctioned predator control. The last known wolf in Washington was shot in the 20's.

In 1990 Department of Wildlife documented two pairs of breeding wolves in Washington. In February 1992, Department biologist Jon Almack radio-collared a wolf near Glacier. This is the first wolf caught and collared for tracking in Washington. As wildlife agencies discuss management and recovery plans, survey work continues.

Predators, like the grizzly bear and wolf, have negative images that need to change. Habitat preservation and reduced pollution are primary requirements for saving wildlife.

Wildlife is not only an aesthetic resource but an indicator of the health of the environment. Once wild animals disappear, can the human animal be far behind? Recovery programs in the state show that hopes for both can be realized.

Gail is a Huxley student planning to continue her studies in wildlife ecology next year at Oregon State University.



Gray Wolf — *Eschrichtius gibbosus*

