

## **Elizabeth Creek**

*Skagit and Whatcom County - New Name*

**Township:** 36N&37N

**Range:** 14E and 16E

**Section:** 14E=36, 16E=5,32, and 33

**USGS Quad:** Crater Mountain

**Location Description:** Stream; 2.5 miles long; Begins in the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest N of Gabriel Peak at 48° 39' 5.325" N, 120° 55' 9.264" W, flows NE to enter Granite Creek at 48° 40' 15.681" N, 120° 52' 34.002" W.

**Proposal Summary:** Elizabeth Creek: Stream; 2.5 miles long; Begins in the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest N of Gabriel Peak at 48° 39' 5.325" N, 120° 55' 9.264" W, flows NE to enter Granite Creek at 48° 40' 15.681" N, 120° 52' 34.002" W; Name commemorates Elizabeth (Barta) Widel (b. 1917, d. 10/24/2017) who ran a newspaper column "Exploring the Okanogan" starting in 1957. Elizabeth produced over 3000 weekly columns, and often featured geographic features in her articles. In 2015, Elizabeth wrote a column highlighting a waterfall she had visited many times on an "unnamed creek" at milepost 43.; Skagit & Whatcom Counties, Washington; Sec 36, T36N, R14E & Sec 5,32&33, T37N, R16E, Willamette Meridian; 48° 40' 15.681" N, 120° 52' 34.002" W; USGS map - Crater Mountain 1:24,000.

Proposed name commemorates Elizabeth (Barta) Widel (b. 1917, d. 10/24/2017) who ran a newspaper column "Exploring the Okanogan" starting in 1957. Elizabeth produced over 3000 weekly columns, and often featured geographic features in her articles.

In 2015, Elizabeth wrote a column highlighting a waterfall she had visited many times on an "unnamed creek" at milepost 43, the proponent wishes to name this creek in Elizabeth's honor.

Landowner: USFS

"Elizabeth" features in WA:

Cape Elizabeth - Grays Harbor County  
Elizabeth Creek - Grays Harbor County  
Elizabeth Creek - Pierce County  
Elizabeth Lake - Pierce County  
Elizabeth Ridge - Pierce County  
Lake Elizabeth - King County  
Mount Elizabeth - Ferry County

**Proponent:**

Marsha Aufenkamp  
506 Third Ave W-1942  
Omak, WA 98841

**Proposal Received:** 5/22/2023

**Initial Consideration:** 12/11/2023

**Final Consideration:**

**WA Committee Decision:**

**WA Board Decision:**

**US Board Decision:**

**Opinions:**

# WASHINGTON STATE Geographic Name Application



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Proposed Name: ELIZABETH CREEK

County: SKAGIT AND WHATCOM COUNTIES

Township: 37 N Range: 14 E Section(s): 25 & 36 (From 1999 USFS  
16 E 33 & 33 Rec. Map Protraction)

Lat. 48° 39' 8" N, Long. 120° 55' 6" W (Begin)

Lat. 48° 40' 17" N, Long. 120° 52' 33" W (End)

(Lat/Long from 1963 USGS 7.5' Crater Mtn. Topo Quad)

New Name

Controversial Name

Name Change

Location Clarification

Spelling Clarification

## Description

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): Stream

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): This mountain stream flows from west to east

passing beneath US Highway 20 at Mile Post 143, approximately 1/2 mile down stream from the mouth of East Creek. The main stem of the creek is  
approximately 3 miles long.

If a stream, number of months it flows on a yearly basis: Perennial

Is this feature identified by other names or spellings? Please list variant names: No

Has it ever been signed, posted, or publicized? If so, when? No

## History

*Please provide a brief history of the feature and its immediate surroundings, this might include information on the following: 1 Native American; 2 First settlers; 3 Historical background pertinent to feature; 4 History on how the land is/was used; 5 Natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.) 6 Any significant cultural events. If appropriate, geology, flora and fauna. Cite sources. Use additional pages if needed.*

Origin of name: The subject creek is located in the heart of the rugged North Cascades Mountains and was mostly inaccessible until completion of the  
North Cascades Highway in 1972. The creek may have been used by natives, miners, surveyors and explorers that passed through the Granite Creek valley heading  
east or west through the mountains prior to that time. The creek is now crossed by US Highway 20 and is viewed by countless travelers as they enjoy navigating the  
scenic byway.

If a commemorative name, provide a brief summary of the ENTIRE life of the person including how and the length of time he/she was associated with the proposed feature: Elizabeth (Barta) Widel was born in Chicago, IL in 1917. She worked in Brewster, Washington as a high school

teacher in 1944-46. She returned to Okanogan County permanently in 1954 to marry Glen Widel and began working for the 'Omak Chronicle' as a Linotype operator.  
Glenn and Elizabeth began a weekly 'Chronicle' newspaper column on May 9, 1957 entitled "Exploring the Okanogan," featuring photos, descriptions and ruminations of  
local scenic, geologic, historic or cultural features they loved. Elizabeth continued publishing the column even after Glenn's untimely death in 1961, eventually producing  
over 3000 weekly columns. Only her death on October 24, 2017 at age 100 would end this record-breaking legacy. Elizabeth especially loved the North Cascades and  
featured sights along the North Cascades Highway numerous times over the years. August 26, 2015 her column highlighted a waterfall she had noted many times, an  
impressive cascade on an "unnamed creek" at milepost 143. This is the creek we wish to name in her honor.

# Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature? The subject creek is a scenic feature along the beautiful North Cascades Highway in Okanogan County

Please state why the proposed name will best serve the public interest: The proposed naming of this here-to-fore unlabeled stream will serve to recognize the contributions of Elizabeth Widel to the local community and her long career chronicling the many and varied natural and cultural features of Okanogan County and vicinity.

How long has the proposed name been in use? By whom? N.A.

Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name) 1999 USFS Recreation Map; 1963 USGS Crater Mtn. 7-1/2' Topographic, Quadrangle; "Omak Chronicle" (1957-2017 issues; Weekly Newspaper, The Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle, Omak, WA.); "Exploring the Okanogan" (2015; Elizabeth Widel); "Elizabeth Widel, 1917-2017 (Unpub. Memorial)

What type of support is there for the proposed name?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

Please see the attached petition.

## Application submitted by:

Name: Marsha Aufenkamp  
Address: 506 Third Ave W-1942 City: Omak State: WA Zip: 98841  
Phone #: 509-826-3423 Email: m.aufenkamp@gmail.com Date of Application: DEC. 18, 2017

**I am aware that all information submitted is considered to be public information.**

Printed Name: Marsha Aufenkamp  
Signature: Marsha Aufenkamp Date: Dec 18, 2017

Please mail completed form along with copies of any additional materials to:

**WA State Board on Geographic Names**

**PO Box 47030**

**Olympia, WA 98504-7030**

(Phone: 360-902-1280 - Fax: 360-902-1778 - Email: [bogn@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:bogn@dnr.wa.gov))

WASHINGTON STATE  
Geographic Name Application



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Proposed Name: ELIZABETH CREEK ~~ELIZABETH~~

New Name

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Controversial Name

Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Section(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name Change

Lat. \_\_\_\_\_ N, Long. \_\_\_\_\_ W (Begin)

Location Clarification

Lat. \_\_\_\_\_ N, Long. \_\_\_\_\_ W (End)

Spelling Clarification

**Description**

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): CREEK with falls goes under Hwy 20 into

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): GRANITE CREEK AT MILE post 143. ON LEFT SIDE OF Hwy 20 heading west.

**WA STATE DNR GEOGRAPHIC NAME APPLICATION**

**"ELIZABETH CREEK"**

**DESCRIPTION:** Creek with falls, goes under Hwy 20 into Granite Creek at appx. Mile post 143 on the left side of Hwy 20 heading West.

**WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS THERE FOR THE PROPOSED NAME?**

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL
------	---------	-------	--------

- |   |                          |   |                     |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 | <u>Ozelia Welling</u>    | <u>715 Jasmine St #12 Aniak, Wa.</u>    | <u>826 1865</u>     | <u>ozelia.welling33@outlook.com</u> |
| 4 | <u>Deborah J. Hunley</u> | <u>P.O. Box 93 Condonully, WA 98819</u> | <u>206.550.1241</u> | <u>hunleygirl@hotmail.com</u>       |
| 5 | <u>Steve Fletcher</u>    | <u>PO Box 1323 Okanogan WA 98840</u>    | <u>[Signature]</u>  |                                     |
| 5 | <u>Mary Fletcher</u>     | <u>P.O. BOX 1323 OKANOGAN, WA 98840</u> | <u>[Signature]</u>  |                                     |
| 6 | <u>MARILYN CURCH</u>     | <u>PO Box 231 CONDONULLY WA 98819</u>   | <u>[Signature]</u>  |                                     |
| 7 | <u>Leland Church</u>     | <u>PO Box 231 Condonully, WA 98819</u>  | <u>[Signature]</u>  |                                     |

1 WA STATE DNR GEOGRAPHIC NAME APPLICATION

2 "ELIZABETH CREEK"

3 DESCRIPTION: Creek with falls, goes under Hwy 20 into Granite Creek at appx. Mile post 143  
 4 on the left side of Hwy 20 heading West.

5 WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS THERE FOR THE PROPOSED NAME?

6 NAME ADDRESS PHONE E-MAIL

7 BILL SPROULL PO Box 1692  
 OMAK 98841 826-4888

8 MARSHA AUFENKAMP PO Box 1942 OMAK 5098263423 M.aufenkamp@gmail.com

9 Barbara Christensen 410 Koola Ave, Omak 98841 509826-4652

10 Bonnie K. Coppock PO Box 3461 Omak 98841 5098262404

11 Lynn Lentz 712 Kenwood St. N. OMAK 98841  
 509 322-8868  
 509-826-5108

12 CRYSTAL ATWOOD 235-B OMAK RIVER RD OMAK 98841

13 JOE ATWOOD 235B OMAK RIVER ROAD OMAK 98841  
 509-846-9812

14 Kaari Gutthorson 700 Elderberry #210 OMAK, WA 98841

15 Katie Montanez PO Box 3222 OMAK 98841

16 Shirley Stagge OMAK 98841

17 Susan Ann 557 Gold Springs Rd OK 98840

18 Annie Moon 138 Parker Cutoff Rd Okanogan 98840

19 Bonnie Freese 164 Bide-Wor Rd, OMAK, WA 98841

20 Annie Neuwirth-Palmer OMAK, WA

21 Julie Gysin 741 Ridge Pl OMAK 509-429-5479

22 Jim & Susan Kehler OMAK

23 Maureen Wood OMAK

4	Camille Sproule	Box 1692	Omak
5	Eleana Mark	Box 534	"
6	Rich Stagg	PO Box 3023	Omak, WA
7	Lisa Fahay	PO Box 3023	Omak, WA
8	Kim R. Stagg	PO Box 1349	Okanagan
9	Cheryl Schweizer	Box 137	Moxs Lake
0	Chris Thew	Box 1164	Republic
1	Teresita Myers	Box 4471	Omak
2	Tina M. Schmidt	PO Box 3105	Omak
3	Constance and Stephen Smith	P.O. Box 1384	Omak
4	Al & Lee Gay	PO Box 1236	OKANAGAN
5	Barb Warner	PO Box 36	Conconully
6	Andy Joseph	105 Fry	Omak
7	Nolan Warner	PO Box 36	Conconully
8	Melissa Fletcher	P.O. Box 1238	Omak
9	Robin Glomb	16 Haussler Rd	Omak
0	Alia Schaller	261 Old Riverside Hwy	Omak
1	Evelyn & Bill Butler		
2	Janice Andersen	PO Box 4169	Omak
3	Brock + Adeena Lives	PO BOX 191	TONASKET
4	Pastor Paul Ashbrook	1568 Hwy 174	GRAND COULÉE, WA
5	Ronald S. Smith	P.O. Box 3448,	Omak
6	Josh Lath	P.O. Box 1194	Omak, WA

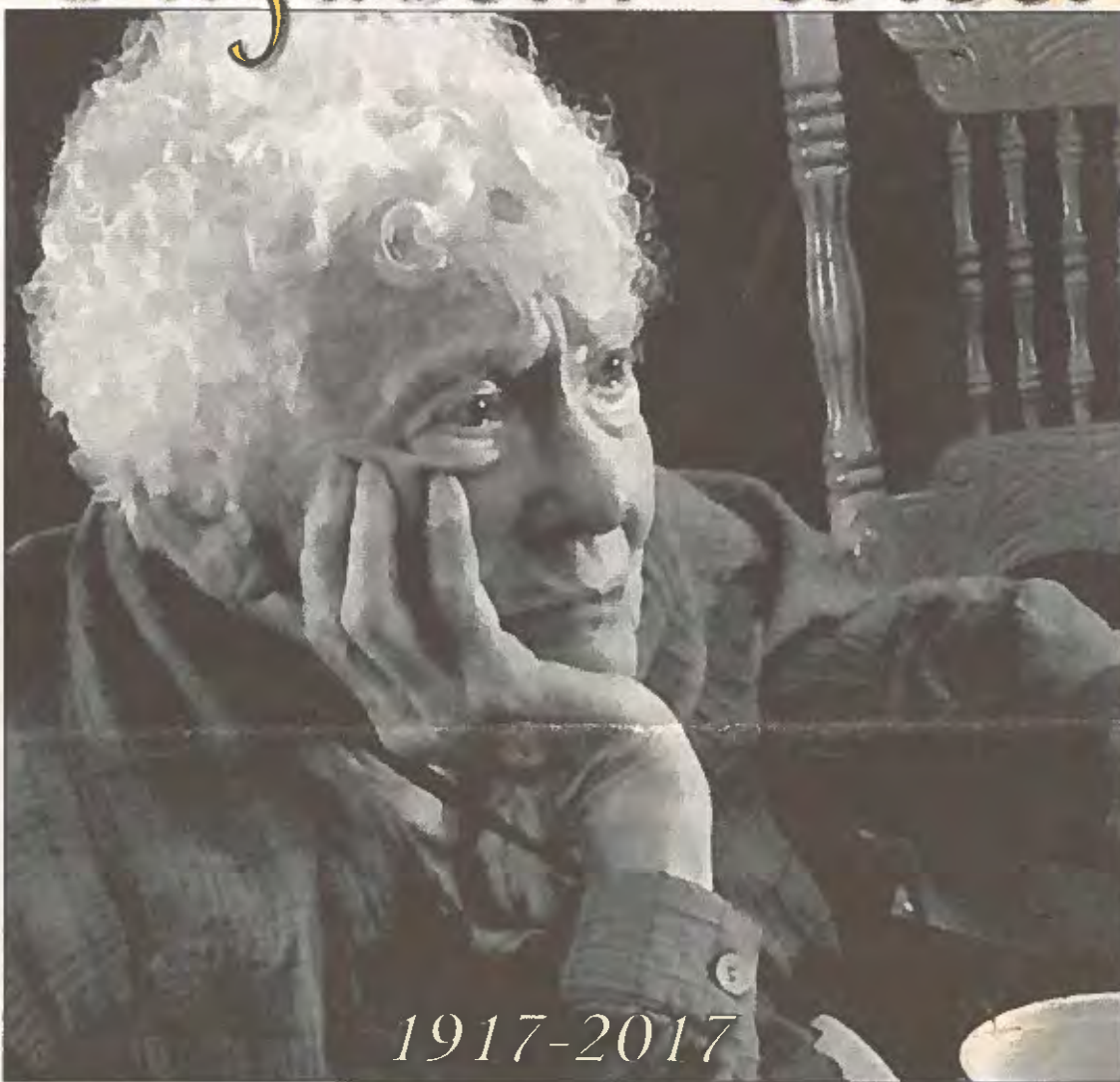
7	Denice Hires	166 Clarkson Mill Rd Tonasket
8	ROGER HARNACK	1721 E. Allen Rd Sunnyside WA
9	Allyn Dukes	511 Timber Ckde
0	Peg R Cally	P.O. Box 4117 Okanogan, Wa.
1	Denise J. Staben	PO Box 4326 Omak
2	<del>Bob MacKenzie</del>	838 Johnson Cr
3	Ann M. O'By	Omak - Riverside 98849
4	Ann M. O'By	PO Box 1235 Omak, WA 98841
5	Ann M. O'By	" "
6	Sally Labrau	PO Box 1194, Omak, WA 98841
7	Gary J. Heedlee	Box 948 " "
8	George Miller - Tony's	82 Jagdish Rd Omak
9	Susan M. Clark	Auto Service
0	William A. Clark	225 Centview, Okanogan
1	Jaleah Edmonds	" " "
2	MARAYNE RIES	PO Box 3226 Omak 98841
3	Karla McCoy	1509 2 <sup>nd</sup> AVE NE OKANOGAN
4	Karla McCoy	PO Box 49 Malott 98841
5	Donna Sanford	P.O. Box 49 Malott 98841
6	Paul Fren	P.O. Box 845 OMAK, WA 98841
7	Judy Z. Smith	164 B. & W. W. Sec Rd Omak
8	Tommy Nyberg	P.O. Box 3448, Omak, <sup>Isiah 58</sup>
9	Louise Dierig	PO Box 4421 Omak WA 98841
		B.O. Box 137, Omak,



0	Suzan Felder	PO Box 1238, Omak, WA
1	Rodney Gentry	712 Kenwood St N, Omak, WA
2	Lionel Aaden	P.O. Box 1172, Tonasket, WA 98855
3	Glenda Free	PO Box 231, Omak, WA 98844
4	PAT Kain Day	<del>PO Box</del> 330 Emmons Omak
5	Johny Buckle	19 Fiker Rd Omak
6	John K. Shuler	PO Box 1668 Omak, WA 98844
7	Angelle Naramatin	1288 51st Bonanza, WA - 98840
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# Elizabeth Widel



1917-2017





*Memorial celebration of the life of*  
**Elizabeth B. Widel**

July 8, 1917 – Oct. 24, 2017

*Greetings . . . Pastor Jack Schneider*  
*Organist/Pianist . . . . . Mary Koch*  
*Congregational hymn “God of Grace and God of Glory” \**  
*Obituary*  
*Prayer*  
*Readings of Galatians 5:22 (The Fruits of the Spirit)*  
*Sermon*  
*Sharing of memories and reflections*  
*Musical solo “Into the Woods My Master Came”*  
*Elizabeth’s Psalm, together by all \*\**  
*Lord’s Prayer*  
*Congregational hymn “This is My Father’s World” \*\*\**  
*Closing prayer*  
*Benediction*  
*Dismissal*

*Please join us for fellowship and potluck*

## Obituary

Elizabeth B. Widel - longtime Chronicle employee, award-winning journalist, philanthropist and Omak resident - died Oct. 24 at age 100.

She was one of the nation's oldest working journalists, possibly the oldest.

Widel began working for The Chronicle in August 1954 and had been writing her column, "Exploring the Okanogan," since May 9, 1957. Her final column, No. 3,154, appeared Nov. 1, 2017.

"Elizabeth was a courageous woman who lived a long life filled with the beauty of Okanogan County and beyond," said Chronicle Publisher Teresa Myers. "She will be missed."

"Elizabeth's commitment to understanding her community and our place in the world was extraordinary," said former Chronicle publisher Roger Harnack, now publisher of the Daily Sun News in Sunnyside. "Every day I learned something new from her."

"Writing a column every week for 60-plus years is an achievement few journalists ever come close to matching. Her work ethic is something every one of us should strive to achieve in our lifetime. Elizabeth was steadfast in the belief of the strength of the written word. In this day and age of texts and tweets, her presence in journalism will be sorely missed."

"The end of an era at The Chronicle with Elizabeth's passing," said retired Chronicle publisher Judy Z. Smith. "What an amazing woman. Our lives were blessed by knowing her."

"Of all the attributes that stand out in my memories of Elizabeth — and there are so very many — it was her gift of writing that I especially cherish," said former Chronicle co-owner and publisher Mary Koch. "A master of the craft, her voice was unique. She owned a fluid, rich vocabulary yet was never pedantic."

"Her quiet sense of humor bubbled through in surprising ways. She held strong opinions, offering them calmly, always within the limits of civil discourse. In that sense, she was a significant mentor to the many young journalists who passed through The Chronicle newsroom doors."

"She was a loving, giving person, and helped many people and organizations too numerous to count," said Marsha Aufenkamp, a longtime friend and companion. "Her awards and honors began as a Girl Scout and continued throughout her life in work, in church and many activities."

An open house marking Widel's 100th birthday was held in July at Welcome Home Villa, Omak, where she lived during the last months of her life. She had lived in her own home until age 99, just a couple weeks after celebrating the publication of her 3,000th Exploring the Okanogan column.

Widel was born July 8, 1917, in Chicago, Ill., to Marie and Deszo "Dave Darius" Barta. She had three younger siblings, Bob, Dave and Barbara. The family later moved to Lombard, a suburb west of Chicago.

Longevity runs in her family — her father died three months short of his 100th birthday and her mother was 89 when she died. Both her brothers lived into their 80s; sister Barbara Barta — 11 years Widel's junior — still lives in Lombard, Ill.

After high school, Widel studied for two years at a college supported by her church, then spent her last two years at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. She earned a teaching degree, and was honored in college for academics and vocal music.

She first came to Okanogan County in the early 1940s to teach typing and business classes at Brewster High School. Because of World War II, many of the male teachers were being called into the service so she took on other subjects.

She returned to Illinois for a brief time, working as

registrar for the Roosevelt College School of Music, and then returned to Okanogan County.

"By that time Glen had entered the picture," she said just before her 100th birthday, referring to Glen Widel, whom she married Oct. 9, 1954. He worked for the Brewster newspaper during the years she taught in Brewster, and later became The Chronicle's shop foreman.

"She fell in love with the country," her sister recalled.

Elizabeth Widel took a job in The Chronicle's front office in August 1954 and, over the years, worked as a typesetter — from Linotype to PC — society editor, reporter, copy editor, proofreader, photographer and columnist. She was a stockholder in the paper for more than 20 years, and also worked with the paper's finances.

Glen and Elizabeth Widel began writing their column, "Exploring the Okanogan," on May 9, 1957. She continued writing it after his death in 1961.

An editor's note that appeared with the first column said the Widels "travel nowhere without their cameras, and during the past several years have built up a striking collection of scenes and distinctive landmarks from every corner of the Okanogan."

Elizabeth Widel's reply, when asked about taking her camera everywhere, was always, "Did you ever try to take a picture with a camera you left at home?"

Every tree, rock, child, animal and object held interest for her — her photographs ranged from sweeping landscapes to close-up photos of everyday items such as eyewear and coffee mugs. Until she was physically unable to do so, she scrambled up cliff sides, down into creek beds and over boulder-strewn fields for photos as willingly and easily as she stood on a sidewalk or sat in a theater seat to snap a picture.

She especially loved the North Cascades, and trekked on foot into the mountains long before the North Cascades Highway was finished. She marveled at the engineering required to build a road through such rugged peaks.

The Exploring the Okanogan column provided an upbeat, thoughtful perspective on her adopted county and state. She embraced the area's beauty, geology, people, plants and animals, and conveyed that sense of wonder and appreciation to her readers.

Widel was honored in 1997 by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association as the first recipient of the Dixie Lee Bradley Award, which is presented each year to an outstanding, non-newsroom employee of a member newspaper.

And this year, Exploring the Okanogan won first place in the general interest columns or blogs category during WNP's annual Better Newspaper Contest.

The Chronicle dedicated its "Chronicles of the Okanogan" book, celebrating the newspaper's 100th birthday in 2010, to Widel. She was informed of the honor during a book release party Feb. 9, 2011, and Omak Mayor Cindy Gagne declared Feb. 9 as "Elizabeth Widel Day" in perpetuity.

Gagne's proclamation recognized Widel's Chronicle contributions, support of the arts, recycling efforts and preservation of history.

Widel also was honored June 10, 2015, on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-4th District.

He called her "one of the most senior journalists in the Pacific Northwest. She has shared her love of the outdoors, her photography, and passion for all things concerning the Okanogan community."

Through her column and by sharing her stories, "her down-to-earth words of wisdom and her curiosity of the world around her, Elizabeth has shown a profound connection with the Okanogan Valley and has inspired generations of readers and those who know her. Please join me in celebrating the contribution and dedication of this remarkable lady, and explorer of things great and small," Newhouse said to his congressional colleagues.

Her love of geology was acknowledged by The Chronicle, which dedicated to her a boulder of gneiss in

its parking lot.

Widel was active in the Omak United Methodist Church, serving as a lay speaker, bulletin editor and longtime treasurer, and was active in the church's recycling program. The State of Washington recognized her recycling work with an award in the early 1990s.

She received the church highest honor, the Bishop's Award, on Feb. 12, 1994, from the United Methodist Church Columbia River District for her work as lay leader and chairperson of the district council on ministries. She was a lay speaker for churches in the local district.

She was a longtime member of P.E.O., and a longtime supporter of the arts, from the Okanogan Valley Orchestra and Chorus to the Omak Performing Arts Center and many others. She wrote reviews of musical events and plays for many years.

Widel devoted many hours to the Okanogan County Historical Society, printing many historic photos for its files and working on its quarterly magazine, "The Heritage."

Sam Reed, then-Washington secretary of state, made a special stop in Omak to visit with Widel during a statewide tour in 2009. He acknowledged her longevity in the newspaper business and dedication to the state's history and geology.

Among her many hobbies and skills were geology, woodworking, listening to music, hiking and reading. She enjoyed reading a diverse array of books and publications, from those about the landscapes and history of the Pacific Northwest to musical critiques. C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower series and Lilian Jackson Braun's "The Cat Who..." series of murder mysteries.

She was always a good reader and liked to sketch, said her sister.

"I think of her as an extremely gifted person," Barta said in 2010. "She has a way of putting words together. She's totally, totally honest and dedicated to anything she puts her heart to."

Widel was an author as well as a reader. Her first book, "Okanogan County... a profile," was published in 1973 and features a shared byline with her late husband.

A second book, "Exploring the Okanogan," was published in 2015 and features many of her Chronicle columns. Proceeds from the book were donated to the Omak Performing Arts Center Foundation.

She also enjoyed exploring Okanogan County from the air, flying numerous times over the area with friends in their small planes and, in the mid-1980s, taking her first hot air balloon ride.

Over the years she was adopted by a series of cats, and she enjoyed their company. She once said she never intentionally went looking for a cat — they just came to her at the right time.

She is survived by her sister, Barbara Barta, Lombard, Ill.; sister-in-law Phoebe Barta, Nazareth, Penn.; nieces Allyn Dukes of Houston, Texas, Mary Whitwell of Rocky Mount, N.C., and Shirley Staggs of Omak; nephews David Barta of Eugene, Ore., and Robert T. Barta of Lombard, Ill.; granddaughter Martha Watkins, McBee, S.C.; grandnephews Clifford Dukes of Pierce, Colo., Reece Dukes of Houston, Texas, and Max Whitwell of Rocky Mount, N.C.; grandnieces Erica Walla of Eugene, Ore., Phoebe Whitwell of Rocky Mount, N.C., Johanna Whitwell of Rocky Mount, N.C.; great-grandnephews Kalen Walla of Eugene, Ore., and Alex Dukes of Pierce, Colo., and longtime friend and companion, Marsha Aufenkamp, Omak.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Glen Widel; her parents, Marie L. and Darius David Barta; her brothers, David D. and Robert L. Barta, and sister-in-law Gladys Brown.

A memorial service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at the Omak United Methodist Church, 130 N. Cedar St., with a potluck following.

Memorials are suggested to Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 1679, Tonasket, WA 98855, or the Omak United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 524, Omak, WA 98841.

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN



Dramatically eroded slopes of a hillside bordering the Loomis Valley provide the first in this series of Okanogan county scenics taken by Glen and Elizabeth Widel. This series will appear weekly in the Chronicle. WIDEL

## From Mountains to Wild Flowers, Little Escapes Widels' Viewfinders

It should be understood from the outset that we are strongly partisan in our views: We love Okanogan County in all its sprawling size, from the dramatic grandeur of the Sawtooth Range on the west down to the shyest wildflower hiding in the grass.

Weekends we like to provision the car, grab the cameras and take off. En route we notice wildlife (the oddest car counter we ever saw was a doe deer on the Loup Loup one Sunday afternoon), geologic formations, communities and their histories, and ever and always the mountains.

Most people, we have found, do not know the names of their near mountains. They live in the presence of grandeur and can't identify. What's the name of your peak? If we were to meet you one weekend, we probably would ask, for we like to know.

In addition to stopping just to look and sort of drink it in, we also try to see it through a viewfinder. Thus we can have all the county in all seasons, even with six feet of snow keeping us in the valley come winter.

This picture was taken on the way to Loomis. It is the chief area in the county where we have found this type of erosion. You can see it at intervals all the way from the old highway clear through to that tortuous road above the Similkameen. The water-scarred slopes stand above irrigated fields of the lovely Loomis Valley - E.B.W.

Published in the May 9, 1957, issue of *The Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle*

## 'Via con Dios. Go With God'



ELIZABETH WIDEL

Here is the last one. It had to end sometime (no surprise).

Some 15 or 20 years ago a man told me he thought this was the longest-running column in the Pacific Northwest, but everything comes to a close.

I remember the day when I had just seen something intriguing and was delightedly telling a woman about it. "Well, I know that," she said scornfully and turned away, leaving me flattened.

So let me assert, if it is not too late, that what I have been doing in writing this series was a sharing, not an attempt to pose as an expert. My husband had a very colorful definition of an expert, perhaps better not repeated here.

To a person brought up in the flatland just outside Chicago, this area has been a never-ending marvel. All those wonderful things to see and learn about, all the wonderful information on the steadily lengthening list of books written for the amateur, like me, on what we were seeing.

I have rejoiced in the beauty of ranging mountains, sparkling lakes, broiling streams, orchards in all stages, waving fields of wheat and other crops, to cite only a few.

I have delighted in the details of the formation and form of those mountains, and a host of other natural things, including the wildlife. And I have stood in awe of the majestic sweep of our landscape in form after form, from sweeping valleys where herds range to mountains that punctuate the sky.

I have rejoiced in the man-made beauties of buildings and other structures, and all the other beautiful things that people can make and do.

I have rejoiced in the many wonderful details of living here. And I have rejoiced in some wonderful people.

All of this is wrapped up in gratitude to God, the creator of it all.

I have been uneasy at times about making a misstatement, either because the technology has changed, which goes on all the time, or from being just plain wrong. It's a chance one has to take.

And I have taken heart in the fact that many of you have felt the same things and love the area as I have. Glen, my husband, was as proud of this area as though he had built it himself. I think he was not alone in this.

Sometimes there have been people who did not behave in consonance with the glory of the land we live in. But that's life.

There always will be some of them. The rest of us can appreciate the more to make up for it.

I have enjoyed the feeling of sharing with you and the belief that you understood and also loved it. And I am grateful.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the help of Marsha Aufenkamp, a good friend who, as my sight and hearing deteriorated, helped with proofreading and transmitting my column. She has raced with a deadline many times to get the column in on time.

My thanks, also, to Dee Camp, editor and friend, who help many times, and friend Mary Koch.

To all of them, my warm thanks.

Our "goodbye" is a contraction of "God be with you," but the meaning gets lost, and "talk to you later" is crowding it.

The Spanish do it beautifully: Vaya con Dios. Go with God.

Let us do so.

Elizabeth Widel, who celebrated her 100th birthday in July, died Oct. 24. She had been a columnist for *The Chronicle* since 1957. This is the 3,154th and final column in a series.



Elizabeth in her element - out in the woods with a camera around her neck. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Published in the Nov. 4, 2017, issue of *The Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle*

## 2016 WNPA Better Newspaper first place award columns

### EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

# Reflection on 3,000 columns brings appreciation



ELIZABETH WIDEL

It was Bruce Wilson's idea when he was the owner/publisher of *The Chronicle* to write a column, and I started out tentatively with the feeling that I had the whole world to write about.

I was new then to both the newspaper and the area.

At that point I was on what some people call "a learning curve," and that has not changed in fact, but it has in content. The more I have learned, the more I realize how much there is to the subject.

And as my information has increased with ongoing reading, the more cautious I become about making wrong statements.

"I am afraid that one day someone who knows will say to me, 'How could you possibly make a statement that wrong?'" I said to him. To this he cautiously replied, "It hasn't happened yet."

But my love of the area has increased with what I have learned about it. Some years ago I called it "an open love letter to Okanogan County." And that still holds.

Various publications have addressed the whole spectrum of worldwide information about our planet and its multiple facets of information. I do not expect to outlive these sources of information.

This includes its physical beauty, scientific wonders, the growth of knowledge and infinite variety. There is the comforting feeling that we will never know it all.

Along with all this informational wealth comes the feeling that there will always be something more to learn.

I mention particularly the invaluable helpers who have stepped in with enormous amounts of support as my eyes have failed, my hearing is failing and I can no longer drive, and these people have kept me mobile. Particularly I will mention Dee Camp, Marsha Aufenkamp, Mary Koch, Lorraine Derig and Kaari Guttromson – the list is too long to be complete – but the others have provided inspiration and assistance.

The interaction of people and the inspiration they provide are appreciated. It is such a comfort to know that I am in no danger of running out of information.

For the occasional examples of encouragement and help with information, I will be forever grateful.

Many years ago a member of the staff, now long gone, said, "Elizabeth tends to harp on the same subject." As long as that subject is the power and beauties of life in the Okanogan, I could hardly do better.

My role is recognition and appreciation. I am content to have it be so. Thanks for listening.

Published in the July 13, 2016 issue of *The Okanogan County Chronicle*

# Animals provide various services to us

We have talked before about the things animals have done on occasion to save property and life from approaching danger.

One of the most obvious of these is an occasion when an alert dog leaped up on the bed of a household member, alerting her to the fact that a kettle on the stove had boiled dry and was about to start a fire, which could have destroyed the house and people.

Thus alerted, the kettle was snatched from the stove and the situation saved.

There also was a situation when a car driving upgrade into a family garage, where invisible to the driver, a child was in the path of the car.

That dog recently had a glancing blow from a car, but somehow she knew the car had to be stopped to avoid running over the child. Shaking with fright, the dog stayed in the pathway of the driver and saved the child's life.

Another and slightly different story concerns a cat with a clutch of kittens nesting in the basement of a downtown building, which was well away with fire. One by one, she picked up her kittens to take to safety, the only way she knew how, by the scruff of their necks.

One by one she carried them to a safe spot. Though she was burned in the process, the babies were safe.

An alert photographer took pictures of the mother carrying her four babies to safety one at a time, though it involved considerable danger to herself.

That alert photographer later went back to that place and the final shots showed the mother, hair grown back in and kittens substantially larger by that time.

Over the years there have been many similar stories of animals somehow knowing how to save people and families dear to them from situations inherently dangerous to everyone concerned. I have told you before of the cat with a kitten, when a dog invaded the yard the cat, who jumped up on the back of the dog with all claws extended and rode the shrieking intruder out of their yard.

The cat's primary responsibility, in many household situations, is to catch mice, which they know are unwanted. They have also prevented them from coming in at all.

There would be no way of counting how many similar stories have occurred over the centuries. They even serve as indicators of the season, when mice begin to attempt to enter the house in the fall, signal it's time to break out the mouse traps. Between traps and cats, the invasion by the rodents is either halted or prevented altogether.

In larger cities, the invaders not infrequently are rats and sometimes this involves a fight between the two animals – the invaders seeking shelter and people with that shelter wanting them prevented or eliminated. The battle probably is centuries old, and will continue for centuries more, or as long as there are rats and cats.

If people do not want mice in their houses, how much more do they not want rats! Situations might be even worse if snakes were involved.

There are probably thousands of such stories of the battle between the species. This seems to be a long-continuing struggle coming down through the ages. Can you imagine what it could be like without the cats?

Published in the Dec. 7, 2016, issue of *The Okanogan County Chronicle*

# Jumbled memories of worthy performances

It can be amazing what memory will come up with and sometimes what it will not.

This reaches back into memories that now extend over several decades. I have a couple memories sort of tangled up in my mind. One is a group of men, singers, who called themselves the Esquires. They sang as a group under the direction of Myron Smith, a much beloved leader.

The other was another group also directed by Smith. Part of that reason for that regard was the many beneficial things he had done for his students/singers.

That's one of the memories.

When a kid got into trouble, he could count on Smith to help solve the problem. That is part of the tangle.

The other was a group of adults, and somehow I have them connected with the college.

The first memory is of a concert they gave at what is now the Omak Senior Center. My memory is that he played the cello, others remember a different instrument, but it was a start under either name and now extends over a time period of several decades.

Once, when Myron was ill, one of the kids from the group became a temporary director. One year, near Christmas, they did sections from Handel's "Messiah" and a group of singers met on Sunday afternoons to rehearse.

One of the tenors was a talker and chattered incessantly. It didn't help the rehearsals any. One Sunday afternoon when his chatter was particularly bad, Myron turned from the piano and slammed his fist down on the top with a bang.

"I don't put up with this from my students, and I am not going to put up with it from you," he said vigorously. It worked and the guy quieted down. Somehow this group grew and expanded. Some memories of their first concert tell me they gave sections of Handel's "Messiah."

The group expanded and the first couple of concerts expanded and somehow kept going.

On one early concert, Merilyn Wilson gave an alto solo on the aria "He Was Rejected." She had a rich voice and knew how to use it. At the end of it someone turned to me and said, with a kind of gasp, "I didn't know she could do that."

Having portions of the Handel work as part of a program became a kind of tradition, which still turns up on Christmas programs; witness the most recent concert given by the Okanogan Valley Orchestra and Chorus, a group now much expanded and tackling both this and other difficult choral works.

A series of directors over the years followed those early beginnings.

Last Sunday's concert was a far cry from the half-hour concert of many years before, when one listener said, "at first we had to see the musicians enter without tripping over their instruments."

They now tackle difficult works and carry them off nicely, but years of rehearsal and performance extend between those early attempts and the present realization with a long string of demanding works. They now tackle with confidence difficult past and current works of both early and later composers.

These and other repertory make chorus and orchestra ensembles of which the community can be proud.

Published in the Dec. 14, 2016, issue of *The Okanogan County Chronicle*



Elizabeth celebrating her 100th birthday with family.

## Suggestions for memorial contributions

### Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity

Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build quality, affordable housing. The houses are sold at no profit with no interest charged.

Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity supports the international organization's vision, which is to build a world where everyone has a decent place to live. It also supports the mission of putting God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Volunteers provide most of the labor, and individuals and organizations provide money and materials to build Habitat houses. Partner families must provide 500 hours of "sweat equity" labor to help build their homes. Their mortgage payments also help to build additional houses.

Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity's eighth home is under construction in south Omak.

Memorial contributions may be made to Okanogan County Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 1679, Tonasket, WA 98855, or online at [www.okanogancountyhfh.org](http://www.okanogancountyhfh.org).

### United Methodist Church

As United Methodists, we have an obligation to bear a faithful Christian witness to Jesus Christ, the living reality at the center of the church's life and witness. To fulfill this obligation, we reflect critically on our biblical and theological inheritance, striving to express faithfully the witness we make in our own time.

The Omak congregation is raising money to replace the sound system.

Memorial contributions may be made to Omak United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 524, Omak, WA 98841, or call 509-826-1660.

# Widel book samples life's work

BY K.C. MEHAFFEY  
World staff writer

OMAK — When Elizabeth Widel first started writing columns and pairing them with her husband's photographs for the Omak Chronicle in 1957, her publisher, the late Bruce Wilson, told her to submit a few, "and see how it goes."

Fifty-eight years later, at age 98, she's still writing them.

You can read a sample of her nearly 3,000 weekly columns in a new book, with the same title as her column, "Exploring the Okanogan."

The book's release comes with a chance to meet Widel and get her autograph, along with some readings of her columns by her colleagues, beginning at 2:30 p.m. at the Omak Library on Friday.

An ardent supporter of local arts and music, Widel will donate all proceeds from her book to the Omak Performing Arts Center Foundation.

It was Widel's colleagues who decided to pour through her life's work, pull out samples and compile them in a book. "We're not calling this the 'best' of Elizabeth's columns, for she has always done her best throughout the



Photo provided

Elizabeth Widel's book will be released Friday.

nearly six decades that she's been faithfully writing her weekly column," said Mary Koch, former co-owner and publisher of the Chronicle, and the editor of Widel's book.

In addition, Koch said, it was a monumental task to find the photo negatives that went with all of the columns Widel wrote, as she didn't catalog the two together.

So the team who chose which columns to include in the 140-page book — including Dee and Al Camp, Katie Montanez, Marilyn Reis and Koch — selected them to represent Widel's broad range of subject matter: area geology, community events, the beauty

and curiosity of nature, and the joy and frustrations of photography.

And despite the name, Widel sometimes travels outside Okanogan County for fodder. Just last summer, for her 98th birthday, she took her first ferry ride across the confluence of the Columbia and San Poil rivers, writing about it in Column No. 2,948.

The column was launched on May 9, 1957, with Widel as the writer, and her husband, Glen, as the photographer.

The couple shared a passion for the Okanogan, and for newspaper work. Koch includes the romantic story of their courtship as a forward to the book.

Glen died suddenly of a heart attack four years after they started the column. Just as she mastered other duties in the newsroom, such as typesetting, she took up photography, and continued the column herself.

In an interview five years ago, Widel told The Wenatchee World that she used to tell people that she took her camera with her everywhere, except to church and to bed. But after having to run home from church to get her camera several times, she

started taking it everywhere except to bed.

Koch said Widel is now blind, had to give up her camera. "But if she doesn't have a photo in her files, either somebody from the Chronicle or a friend will take a photo for her," she said.

K.C. Mehaffey: 997-2512  
mehaffey@wenatcheeworld.com



SEPT 13, 2015



## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN



Brock Hires/The Chronicle

**Chronicle** columnist Elizabeth Widel affixes a signature on a copy of her new book, "Exploring the Okanogan." Her privately published book contains a selection of columns published in the newspaper since 1954. About 30 books were sold at Friday's event at the Omak Public Library. Widel, 98, said a steady stream of well-wishers visited.

Sept. 23, 2015

# Cascades Highway was big pro



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Water cascades from a fall on the west side of the North Cascades Highway. ELIZABETH WIDEL PHOTO

“  
**I don't know whether they began  
from both ends simultaneously  
or in series ...**  
”

for the ocean.  
The valley widens  
appreciably thereafter.  
It is impossible to convey

before and behind it.  
At the eastern end, the road  
wound up beside Early Winters  
Creek after leaving the Methow  
Valley drainage. At its west  
end, it ran down Granite Creek  
to Ruby Creek and the coast  
side drainage of Skagit River  
took over.  
Three great dams lie to the

west - Ross, Diablo and Gorge.  
They provide much of Seattle's  
electrical power. From Gorge  
Dam west, the Skagit River  
flows down the valley with  
mountains on either side.  
Those mountains are largely  
vertical and delineate the  
river's valley in its westward  
flow until finally it leaves them

May 25, 2016

BOOK 1

"OKANOGAN County - A Profile"

Copywrite 1973

Elizabeth B. Widel

## Foreword

Omak, Washington

It all was the idea of Grace Kiner, longtime member of the Omak Library Board.

"What Elizabeth ought to do if she wants to make a memorial to her husband," said Grace, "is to make up a book of pictures from those they took while they were getting around the county together."

This is that book.

Actually, many of the pictures have been made since that happy time when we got about together, but I take pleasure that certain of the pages herein are from negatives exposed by Glen himself.

At the risk of sounding apologetic (which would be no way to start out), I should state that we never gave up our amateur standing as photographers. Since both of us were employed, the times we had for picture making were limited. We were unable, as the professionals do, to go back again and again until the light was right or the season was right or the cow had moved into the proper composition. We had to take things as we found them.

By and large, we found them very good.

So here it is, a selection from pictures gathered during 18 years of prowling Okanogan county's highways and byways, seven of them with my husband, eleven more since his death, prowling which has poked into a number of corners of this county which is about 80 miles deep and 100 wide and which, as one woman observed, would be a lot bigger than that if it ever were flattened out.

And to top it all off, there remains at least as much territory to cover as I have yet seen. Glen would have liked that, too.

E.B.W.

# Unnamed creek features a waterfall

Part way up the North Cascades Highway, locally known as the "North-Cross," is a small, nameless creek that flows into Granite Creek.

Granite itself is a kind of dividing line between Eastern and Western Washington. West is coast atmosphere, and east is the Okanogan.

It divides weather systems and wildlife, including rattlesnakes — they are not present west of Granite. Granite is peculiar because it is straight, demonstrating that ice has been down this valley.

Partway down the long, straight valley, there is a small box canyon. Walls on three sides are perpendicular and on the back is a long narrow waterfall. Water pours down the fall and into a creek bed that runs under the highway and into Granite Creek.

From there the flow is to Ruby Creek into Diablo Lake, then Gorge Lake and their respective dams, and out the Skagit River and to the Pacific Ocean.

The first time I saw it, from a moving car, there was a concrete structure over which the water poured in an even line. For years after that I tried to find that spot and finally realized that the concrete remnant of a structure lying in the creek bed had been that concrete structure I had seen.

There must have been a huge force to tear that out and push it downstream, where it lay partly covered by sand and water.

There were times when we hiked up that very narrow valley that we saw something forceful had come down the valley to move a structure like that. The little valley, as I recall it, was not more than 300 feet long above the highway and approximately the same below the highway and its confluence with Granite Creek.

It was a steep, narrow gash in the mountain.

One day, we drove into the little spot beside the creek and walked up the narrow valley hoping to get to the foot of the falls.

We came to a wild pileup of downed trees and branches. My friend Marsha Aufenkamp studied it thoughtfully and said, "I don't think I want to tangle with that." So, we went back to the car, jumping the creek as we did so.

We stopped at that spot each time we went over the highway. One day, there were engineering markers — small

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



flags — up and down that little box canyon. Something was happening. Inquiring at Newhalem yielded no information.

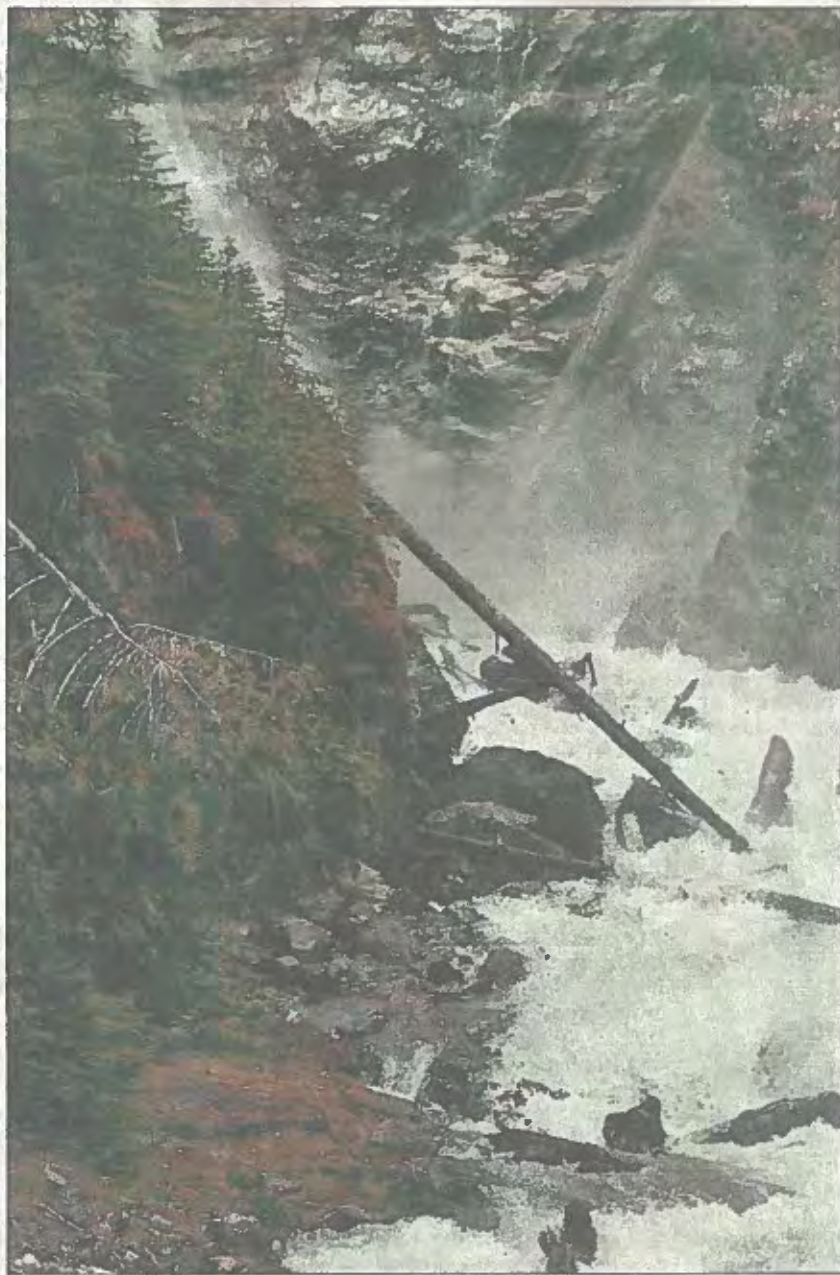
The last time we were there, the creek bed above the highway had been cleared and I think part of the concrete structures that had been lying in the water were gone.

I'm guessing that the obstructions in the creek bed — a combination of broken structures and downed trees — had been removed to save flooding that could have torn out the highway. The little spot where we had previously parked was fenced off and the creek bed was more clear than it had been.

We stop there every time we go over that highway, marveling at the forces that have carved the little box canyon and had been cleared to protect the highway. When you stop to consider the cost that would have resulted from of the forces in that canyon, it was a wise precaution.

I have never seen that spot when the water was not running down the waterfall. At high water, a second, very slim fall flows down another point in the canyon.

*Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,951st column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*



Marsha Aufenkamp

Water rushes down a falls into an unnamed creek along North Cascades Highway

*Retirement awaits*

Aug 26, 2015

# Highway's 44th year comes in September

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



Last week we considered the beginnings of the building of the North Cascades Highway, which many local people call the North Cross.

It hardly seems possible that we will celebrate the highway's 44th year of service in September.

In last week's column, we had reached the summit of the North Cascades crossing by this long-anticipated traversal of these dramatic mountains. I will admit a feeling of unreality on the completion of this dramatic route.

We are now at the Washington Pass summit of the route.

Rainy Pass stands at the head of Granite Creek, which is a sort of dividing line between the eastern and western portions of the route. I have been over the whole route only a few times, but many more of the route from the Methow to Newhalem.

I have a sort of mental dividing line which ends at Newhalem, though the route itself continues from the summit to many miles past Newhalem.

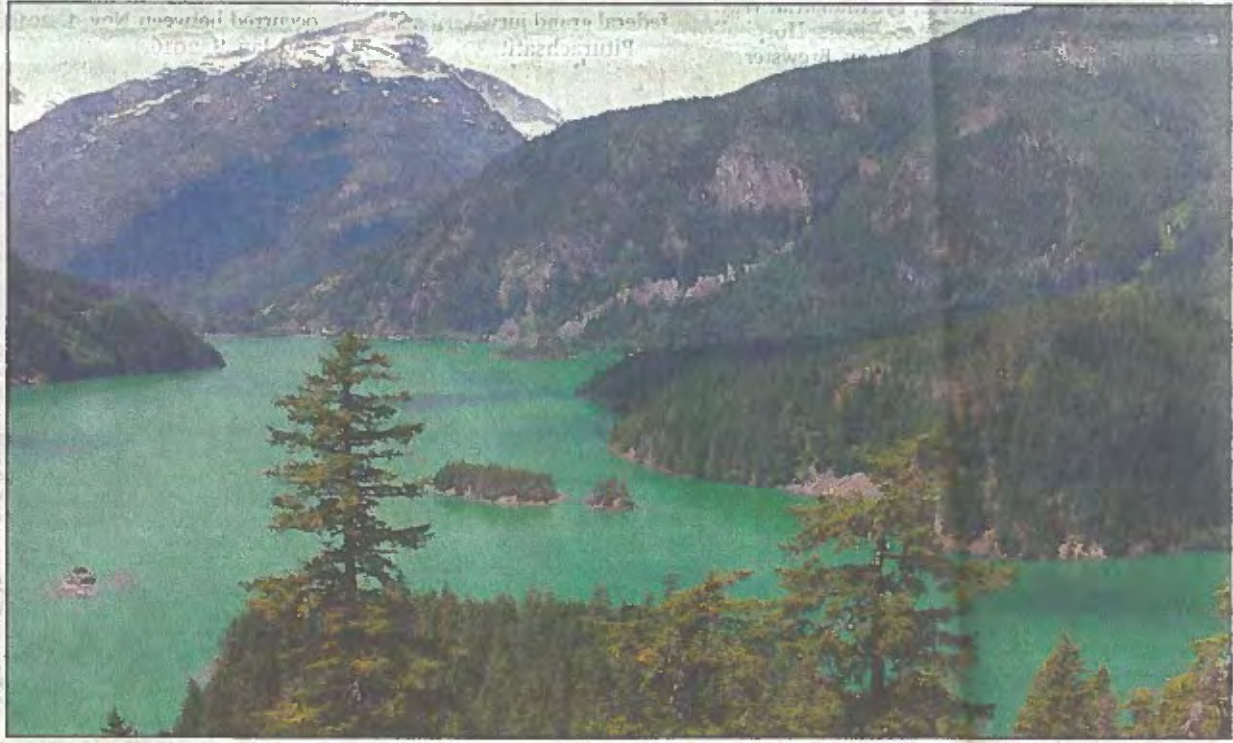
At Newhalem, there is a very nice information center that includes everything from a library of books for sale to some excellent photographs of the area. West of that the route is a fine mountain highway following the western portions from Newhalem to where it joins I-5.

The roadway winds down the valley of the Skagit River.

It does not seem possible that the celebration day, when the highway was open full length, can go back that many years.

The roadway winds through some of the most dramatic country in the nation, with vertical valley walls ending beside the highway and telling a nearly unbelievable geological story.

I remember the day it was opened and cars made the crossing of those difficult mountains for the first time. Some had lettered signs, First Crossing. The final length was a bridge over the river, feeding



Ross Lake's deep blue color is a west side icon of the North Cascades Highway.

down Granite Creek to Ruby Creek to the Skagit River.

The enormous peaks tower over the highway, their often-vertical walls ending at roads edge.

After Newhalem, the valley widens.

Granite Creek is a kind of dividing line between two different climates, the west one wet, the east one dry. It is said that this is the dividing line for rattlesnakes: They are normally not found west of Granite Creek. The whole ecology changes at Granite Creek.

I don't know why I am trying to describe its magnificence and tremendous

variety, which is actually indescribable. One has to see it and feel it to even begin to appreciate it.

Road construction was a dramatic challenge for the builders and the climate is such that it is not kept open during the winter, complete with snow, ice, and slides that cover the highway. Completion of the roadway in this difficult terrain was a tremendous achievement.

Opening and closing of the roadway each year is subject to special announcements in the news media.

No, I do not forget that there are other highways in

other parts of the nation. But the North Cascades Highway is a tremendous achievement, beautiful and dramatic.

Elizabeth Widel is The Chronicle. This column in a series reached at 50%

May 17, 2016

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

# Did you know the Gorge Dam was built two

### North Cross trip makes stop at dam



ELIZABETH WIDELL

I can't say how long it had been since my last trip up over the North Cascades highway, which people around here still call the North Cross. But two weeks ago, Marsha and I started up the highway from Omak to go as far as Newhalem. The highway goes out to and beyond the big coastal highway, but Newhalem was our terminal for that day.

At that point the mountains, rather suddenly, stand a little farther back then down the valley of the Skagit River, with which it is rather tightly aligned, and follows closely along beside.

Geologists tell us that upriver the Skagit flowed Northward, but during the ice ages the ice reversed the flow of the river and held it there and it maintains that configuration to the present.

There is a dam, Gorge, two miles upriver from Newhalem and the engineers built a tunnel from the dam to the town.

There the valley suddenly widens, and contains the employees of operators of this dam, which is a third in a series in the Skagit valley. In order downstream, Ross, Diablo and Gorge.

There is a general store at Newhalem, as well as a nice park, which includes a retired steam engine which had much to do with the building of at least part of those dams.

You can stand beside the spillway of the dam, which makes a fine roar as it goes through the locks and screaming white water. But if you are quick you can hear the little pee-tee-tee of the mountain coney. The dam is part of a series of three which harnesses the river, each with a lake bearing its name, Gorge was the first and the other two followed later. From this configuration of barriers across the river into the power plants of those dams, comes most, if not all, of Seattle's electricity.

In many places along the course of those river-dams, the walls of the valley are perpendicular.

The North Cross State highway skirts the walls of this narrow gash in the hills.

At one and the same time the feature is one of the marvels of coastal geology and the electrical wizardry of Seattle power and light.

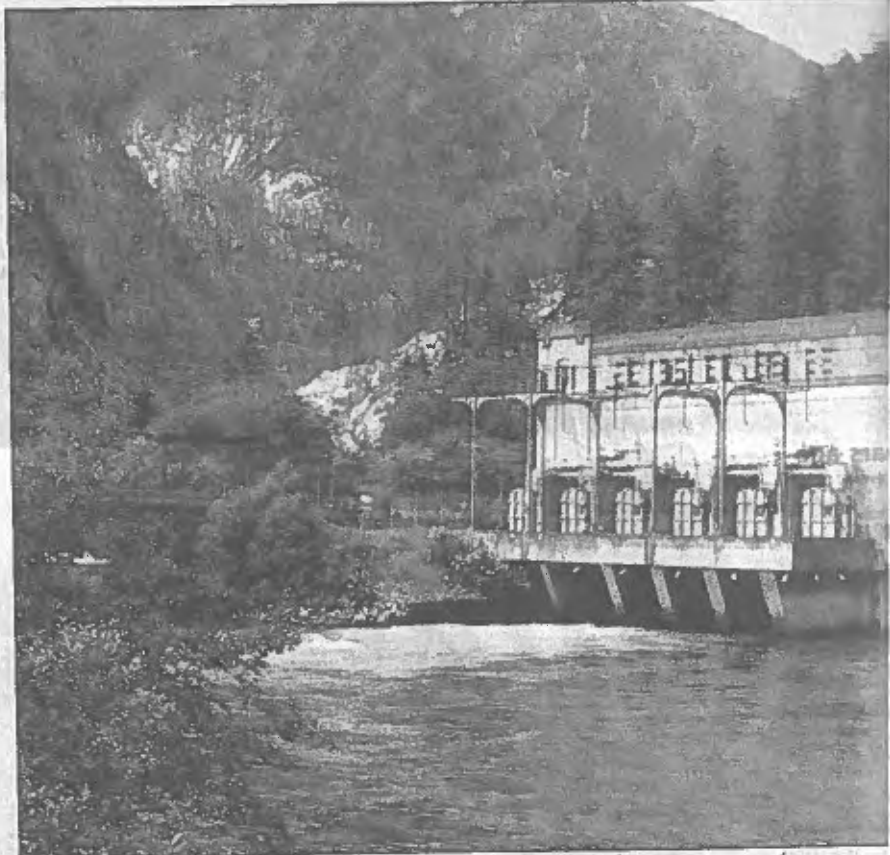
Down river from there, the river runs between the walls of a much wider valley, where logging operations mean you will meet loaded logging trucks headed down valley to their respective mills.

The river is un-dramatic from there to the ocean.

But it is a favored nesting and breeding area for eagles.

From the comfortable area of Okanogan County through the drama of the mountains and the wonders of the power system is a remarkable journey. The story of electrical generation and production is an amazing one.

Ranging from homes for fish, for which the end of the upriver line is at Newhalem to the self-contained lakes behind the three dams, one of the marvels is the use and reuse of water for



The Skagit Hydroelectric Project, which includes Gorge Dam (above), accounts for the electricity used by Seattle City Light. ELIZABETH WIDELL

production.

The story is a marvelous one, and we benefit from it with these and many other products of this river system.

And need one say that this is not the whole story?

Wonders upon wonders and all of it beautiful, in one way or another.

*Elizabeth Widell is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,998th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*

JUNE 29, 2016

Jan 17, 2015

# The book that opened many doors

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



His name was Bates McKee. I never met him, but when I heard that he had been killed in a plane crash on Mission Ridge near Wenatchee, I felt like I had lost a friend.

McKee was associated with Bruce Wilson in the formation of the historical museum at Okanogan. Through Bruce I got a copy of McKee's book, "Cascadia," which Bruce used as a reference in setting up geological displays in the museum.

McKee's book, I realized early on, was that achievement of writing on a complicated subject without "writing down" to the non-professional public. It's an achievement that sounds simple, but is not.

And in no other work on this fascinating field have I found the discussion of the undersea landscape (if that is not a contradiction or even if it is) that McKee included in his work.

He described how rivers carrying sediment to the sea dropped it offshore as the current slackened and the pulverized rock they carried settled out under water, and he forms these deposits took. And how ocean currents shaped the deposits and built the underwater seascape.



Dee Camp/The Chronicle

Bates McKee's book, "Cascadia," which opened a door to geology for many people.

But there it was, and his description with it, and the cause of knowledge advanced a little more. And to my delight, I find there is a considerable interest in geology, particularly local geology here.

The more I learn about it, the more fascinating it gets. And this nation has geological features that are amazing in both subject matter and scope.

There are knots of geologists at work all over the place, prying at the secrets of the birth, development and complexity of features all around us. And the things that have happened and the developments that have taken place are astounding in their scope and complexity are fascinating.

And each new one seems to bring on more. Perhaps I should not be so indignant with

the two men who wrote the geology texts to study when I was in school.

So much has been learned since then. I should be sorry for those guys. Think of what they missed when they missed this part of the country! And I use that word in the context of area, not of nation.

And the discovering goes on. The "everlasting hills" are anything but everlasting. We talk about recycling, but the earth has been at it for a long while - and isn't through yet.

More of it - to greater or less degree - goes on with every rainstorm, every wind, every fire - there is no end to it. The earth is a restless carrier.

It's far from Bates McKee's day and the things he wrote of. But I am grateful to know of his work and the contribution

he made to the interest of people like me, non-professionals - who can enjoy the knowledge he made available to us.

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,944th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.

## Judy Allen's Celeb

You are invited to Judy's celebration on Ir

Potluck: Bring your favorite

Date: July 4, 2015

Time: 1 pm-8 pm

Place: Omak Stampede Par of the arena)

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May 6, 2015  
~~April 29, 2015~~

# Accepting Bretz's theory of geology

## Coulee country serves as reminder of rushing water

A group of high school boys was romping in the coulee country one night, a little high over the end of the term and the beginning of summer vacation.

Finally, one of them said, "Wait a minute."

He picked up a piece of the basalt, which was all around, and threw it ahead of them. They waited for the click of its fall. And waited. And waited.

Finally they heard the click of its landing, far below them. Shaken by their narrow escape, they went back to town. I heard this story from the mother of one of them,

But that is only one item in the story of the coulees. At the time a battle was raging between J. Harlan Bretz, then teaching at the University of Washington geology department, and other geologists.

After years of study during the summers, he claimed that channeled scablands - his name for the area - were caused by water. Established

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



geology did not accept his theory.

They invited him to a meeting, ostensibly to hear his theory, but actually to attack both it and him.

The meeting did not end easily, and the battle went on for years. "Where, in this desert country, is the water?" they asked.

They had him there, for he could not answer the question. The impasse went on for some years.

It was broken by aerial photographs, which showed the hills for what they really were, giant ripple marks, with dimensions of hundreds of feet.

Bretz was deep into his 90s before his theory was accepted.

It was learned that a glacier moved down the Purcell Valley and got stuck not far from Spokane.

This formed a dam that



Roger Harnack/The Chronicle

An aerial view shows channeled scablands just outside Coulee City, at right. Banks Lake is at top.

impounded a lake extending far back into the northern Rockies.

This happened repeatedly at intervals, some say of about 50 years. The marks of this impoundment are still plainly visible in Northern Idaho.

He lived to see his theory vindicated.

The marks of the great lakes

are still plainly visible. The lakes were enormous.

Geology today can regard this as one of the many developments for which proponents had to fight for acceptance.

Without them, where would we be?

Bretz was one of the early

fighters for truth and his work now is accepted.

But an impoundment of over 500 square miles is quite a consideration.

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for the Chronicle. This is the 2,939th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.



Sept 9, 2015

# Widel book release is Sept. 1.

The Chronicle

OMAK — “Exploring the Okanogan,” a collection of newspaper columns by Elizabeth Widel in book form, will be released during a reception Sept. 18 in the Pioneer Room of the Omak Public Library, 30 S. Ash St.



Widel

The reception will be from 2-4 p.m. Colleagues who assisted in compiling the book will read a selection of columns beginning at about 2:30 p.m., and Widel will be available to autograph books.

The columns first appeared in *The Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle*.

An ardent supporter of local arts and music, Widel is donating all proceeds from book sales to the Omak Performing Arts Center Foundation.

“We’re not calling this the ‘best’ of Elizabeth’s columns, for she has always done her best throughout the nearly six decades that she’s been faithfully writing her weekly column,” said Mary Koch, former co-owner and publisher of *The Chronicle* and editor of the book.

Widel, 98, has written nearly 3,000 columns accompanied by her photographs (column No. 2,956 appears this week on

“ She has always done her best throughout the nearly six decades that she’s been faithfully writing her weekly column. ”

Mary Koch

Page A2).

She has received numerous honors throughout the years, both for her columns and her extensive community service. She was recognized earlier this year by U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-4th District, who delivered a tribute from the floor of the U.S. House.

Referring to her as “one of the most senior journalists in the Pacific Northwest,” Newhouse noted that Widel has “shared her love of the outdoors, her photography and passion for all things concerning the Okanogan community for 58 years.”

Columns for the book were selected to represent Widel’s broad range of interests: Area geology, community events, the beauty and curiosities of nature, and the joy — and frustrations — of photography. Choosing the columns was an ad hoc committee of Widel’s current

and former *Chronicle* colleagues: Dec and Al Camp, Katie Montanez, Marilyn Ries and Koch.

The column was launched May 9, 1957, when then-*Chronicle* publisher the late Bruce A. Wilson, invited Widel and her husband, Glen, to write a few columns with photos “and see how it goes.” Glen Widel died suddenly of a heart attack four years later, and his widow continued the column without interruption.

Raised in Illinois, Widel always longed to live in the mountains of the West. After graduating from Northwestern University in 1944, she landed a teaching job in Brewster, where she met Glen, pressman for the newspaper there.

He eventually moved to *The Chronicle*, and they married in 1954. They shared a passion for the Okanogan and for the work of newspapering. She mastered

the demanding craft of setting type in what are called the “hot metal” days, and never missed a beat as newspaper technology evolved through photo typesetting into the digital age.

Widel celebrated her 98th birthday earlier this summer by taking her first ferry ride across the confluence of the Columbia and San Poil rivers. Her account of that trip was *Exploring the Okanogan* column No. 2,948, published July 15, and she continues to write weekly. The book is available at The Corner Shelf, 6 N. Main St., Omak, and will be sold at the reception.



Dec 30, 2015

# Remembering the legacy of Dr. Misch

**UW professor discusses geology**

Quite some years ago I was privileged to be invited to dinner at a local home where the principal guest was Dr. Peter Misch of the University of Washington Department of Geology.

Two other guests were young geologists also at work in the field.

Misch had addressed one of the Omak business groups that day and the dinner invitations followed.

The younger men were reporting to Misch an odd thing they had seen in the field, "You could see where the rock was trying to do" such and such, they told him.

But how, one could wonder, can a rock intend anything? They react to physical fact, not intentions. But he understood.

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



Rocks in their formative state react to unimaginable heat, unimaginable pressure and other physical influences.

And the young men knew how to read the signs of what happened. An interruption of the ordinary processes could produce extraordinary results.

It may have been here that I asked the question whose answer I have quoted here before. It is hard to understand the force that can do things like that, to which Misch answered simply, "You can't understand it."

He had given a slide-

“ Having a mountain named for you, I feel, is no more than right... ”

Elizabeth Widel

illustrated talk to the Omak business group. Included were pictures of them traversing breathtaking areas and views of one or more of them crossing precipitous spots with heavy loads on their backs.

He explained that normally when backpacking in the mountains, the load gradually lightens as the hikers eat their supplies, for anything they need on such a trip must be carried on their backs.

But these trips were different in that they were

picking up rock samples all the way, these to be taken back to the laboratory and thin-sliced, stained with chemicals for seeing certain structures and sliced for use under a microscope.

Misch and his students at the university were among the first to do a lot of the mapping of peaks in the North Cascades, painstakingly traversing the area on foot and with heavy loads on their backs, all this in search of the knowledge they then shared.

They made a first ascent of

first." There must be a certain satisfaction in achieving this.

Slowly, painstaking and often dangerously the information was accumulated, and others can build upon it.

Perhaps that is one reason why I was so pleased to find that someone with imagination has seen to it that Misch now has a mountain named for him. It is listed simply as Mount Misch and appears in a line drawing appearing in the book "Geology of the North Cascades a Mountain Mosaic," by Tabor and Haugerud.

Their work has passed on to us after the struggles and dangers they experienced in getting it for us.

Having a mountain named for you, I feel, is no more than right after the work and dangers they experienced in getting it.

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,972nd

Nov. 26, 2014

# Risky to build on previous knowledge

Some theories  
are considered  
laughable today

One of the dangers of later research is that those depending on the earlier work can have difficulty sorting out what is right, in the light of more recent discoveries.

Some of the conclusions people reached then, even tentatively, are laughable now. Still, they worked with what

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth  
Widel



they had then, and went on working.

Right now, I would like to hear some more about the Skagit country. For instance, somewhere I read that Jack

Mountain, the giant that towers over Ross Lake, was moved more than 10 miles, according to one writer. And in the Straight Creek country (and any watercourse in mountain country is remarkable in itself), there are said to be rock strata in which entire series of deposits have been completely overturned.

Can you imagine the earthquakes that must have gone on while that was happening?

It is common knowledge,

even among amateurs, that the oldest rocks will be at the bottom of the heap when it was being laid in place. So there they are, upside down. All is quiet around them.

Now comes news that they have hooked something onto a comet at astounding speeds. So we are exploring other space bodies as well as our own. And the cosmos gives us plenty of space in which to look.

There still is a great deal to discover and to marvel at, and that is part of the charm of

discovery. And as the discoveries that are new knowledge accumulate, so does our interest in it all.

There still is a great deal to learn about "this hot-hearted planet on which we ride." We haven't lost interest in it yet, and it is comforting to think that we never will.

Meanwhile, the cosmos is waiting.

*Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,915th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*

Nov 19, 2014

# New wonders await our understanding

**Too often we react to ideas with words of disbelief**

The first time we hear something that is radically different from what we are used to, our reaction often is "I don't believe it." And in truth many ideas (later accepted) sound impossible when first suggested.

An experience I had, when it happened, was the notion some parts of the land mass of Washington state had come from 3,000 miles away. That was before I had absorbed the notion of continental movement postulated by Bates McKee of how they move

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



around. Until then, the continents were considered firmly fixed in place.

I don't know who first suggested the idea of continental drift. Some of the doubters envisioned the continents plowing majestically through the earth en route to wherever they were going.

Well, no, not really. I still don't believe that.

But with the discovery of

the earth spewing out hot molten rock which slowly moved an inch or two a year, well, that was different. Those creeping rock plates were carrying the continents on their backs, and when they had delivered them to where they were going, they sank back into the hot depths of the continents' made mountains. I've never forgotten the phrase published in *The National Geographic*: "This hot-hearted planet on which we ride."

Molten, rise from the depths carrying continents or parts of them, and ultimately, through erosion, return to the depths to continue the process.

This can be believed. And with some of today's headlines about things being discovered

about large, authorized machines attaching to comets and moving great distances, well, they are seeing it happen.

All kinds of movement in and around and among the continents are going on all the time.

Charles Lyell postulated the idea of an earth in constant motion, constant change. And he had no idea of some of the discoveries lying ahead of science.

Nor have we.

But some shrugged off the idea of a hunk of Washington 3,000 miles to get to where now. Well, let me at least be little slower at exclaiming, "don't believe it."

After all, there is no way knowing what new wonders will be claiming our attention next.

*Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,914 column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*

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# Traveling the North Cross state highway

## EXPLORING THE KANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



The first time I ever saw the North Cross state highway — North Cascades — it was just the stub of the road neatly graveled and winding off up the valley that contained Early Winters Creek.

Glen (my husband) and I were out for a Sunday drive, and at one point up the Methow Valley, we passed the end of this obviously new road, neatly graveled and winding off among the trees.

"That is the beginning of the new highway," he told me.

It was the first time I had heard of it. I could not tell you how many times I have seen it since.

I have been told that a young woman named Ella Winters drowned in Early Winters Creek, but I don't know when. Over time the name somehow got worked into Early Winters and we have known it that way ever since.

That view of it was the first of many. I don't remember the first time I drove it and the last is yet to come.

As the builders worked on the road, constantly stretching it back into the forest, I was right on their heels.

Fishermen had known of it for some years because of the lake at the foot of where the highway began to rise toward the Whistler Basin and subsequently where two passes — Washington and Rainy — were to take form.

Bit by bit the highway punched through the forest into the head of Early Winters Creek.

After Rainy Pass, the roadway began its drop to the other side of the mountains.

As the growing roadway took shape, I walked its gradual lengthening repeatedly. Bit by bit the roadway extended. I talked with people who worked on it or in support roles.

One day on a section, still afoot, some of us were in



Liberty Bell Mountain, here shrouded in low-lying clouds, has become the signature peak of the North Cascades Highway.

between the passes with the cars some distance behind us in the Lone Fir Campground. We were beyond the graveled portion of the road, when suddenly there was a small explosion from Mildred Eighme.

Over and over she exclaimed, "Look at this! Look at this!"

We were at the foot of Liberty Bell Mountain, which towered over us in stunning grandeur. Somehow the many pictures of that mountain had not conveyed its grandeur.

Liberty Bell and its partner could not be felt in a picture as in that moment when we saw it close up for the first time. It has become the signature mountain of that road.

Ahead of us ran the creek that went down the other side of the pass. It was our first crossing.

Since then, the roadway has been finished and cars zip over it, but that is another story.

The string of campgrounds, like little jewels — Early Winters, Klipchuck, Cutthroat Creek and Lone Fir — dots the valley as the road proceeds

north and then makes its dramatic turn at the end of Whistler Basin and heads for the coast.

You can even hike from the Mexican border to the Canadian border on the Pacific Crest Trail, which crosses the

highway. At the top is the Washington Pass Overlook.

The scenery is dramatic. From a trail originating between the two passes, one can hike down the valley to Lake Chelan.

This is scenery that is

difficult to see, or difficult to feel, but the story as well.

Elizabeth Widel is a co-author of the *North Cascades Chronicle*. This is the 2nd in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1111.

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May 5, 2016

March 18, 2015

# Many items can be composted, recycled

## Re-using products can be beneficial and cost effective

I can't remember now, just how the United Methodist Church got started in recycling. It was an activity that lasted for some years and still goes on in a small way.

But somehow people heard we were interested and began leaving recyclables where they could drop them around the building, which left us looking a little ragged at times. They dropped them by the front door and at the door to the southwest office, effectively blocking both.

So we built a simple shed, and people used it. Then we had a work day and erected a nicely done shed with a reception bin and storage space, and people came and brought a lot of things. Much of it was newspapers and magazines, but there were other things as well.

Technology was entering its great surge of change, which still continues, and people brought their old units as they acquired new ones.

The recycling bin received some remarkable things as people moved to later models. I don't think we ever received a computer, but I am still using a telephone in perfect working order that someone left for a newer model.

A group of junior high and high school boys began

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



showing up on Saturday mornings to help load the pickup, and one would ride with me to the landfill to turn in our load. For some reason it never occurred to me to keep track of how much we took in each week, either in pounds or in income.

As weeks, months and seasons wore away, the material went in for recycling and/or reuse.

But this is only one facet of the total picture. All kinds of other materials are being reused at savings of both money for replacement and remanufacture. At some places, even old concrete can be reground and made into something new, at a considerable saving in materials.

Buildings are redesigned and go on working in a new role. There are buildings all over many of the towns and cities that are now working in a new guise.

Trucks have been converted to new uses. In the hands of an imaginative sewing worker, garments can be converted from one thing to another rather than simply thrown out,

a means of saving and re-use which is not confined to clothing and/or buildings.

But one of these is less spoken of. It is soil.

I was down in the compost pit beside my shed one day when a neighbor came by.

"What are you doing down in that hole?" she asked.

I explained composting, the accumulation of old growth that had decomposed and become soil. For an answer to her question, I scooped up a handful of the soft, workable soil from the bottom of the hole and told her about how rich it is for new growth.

She went home and began her own compost pile.

But the ultimate reuse comes from geology. In this life of the earth rock is used, eroded, reformed, and reused, sometime several times rock may be eroded, subjected to pressures hard to comprehend, new materials added — in short, altered enormously from the form they have had to something new and different.

In short, recycled, in a gargantuan style.

Some time after my conversation with my neighbor, a young pastor came by and found me in the compost pile again.

Again he wanted to know what was going on, and I explained as best could.

But I think I shook him up a little when I concluded by saying, "God has been recycling since long before we ever heard the world."



Elizabeth Widel

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,932nd in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.

Early Winters Spire, companion of Liberty Bell Mountain, is said to be metamorphic rock.

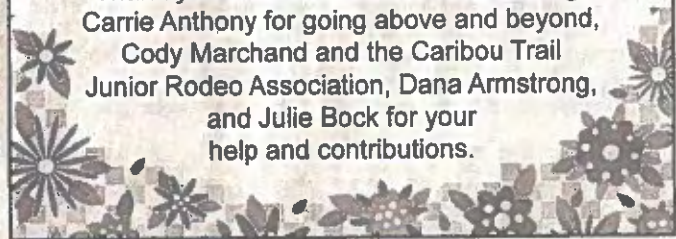
I would like to say a big Thank You to everyone that helped and donated to my dinner and auction, that has helped me a lot. I appreciate it and hope one day to return the help. Thank You All  
Jordan Montanye



The family of Roxann Moore Dietrich would like to thank all who gave flowers, cards, and words of sympathy.

Also thank you to everyone who attended and brought food to her memorial service, making it a beautiful event.

Thank you to Richard Kiefer for officiating, Carrie Anthony for going above and beyond, Cody Marchand and the Caribou Trail Junior Rodeo Association, Dana Armstrong, and Julie Bock for your help and contributions.



We sell

Peace of Mind...

FEB 18, 2015

# Dueling streams shape Whistler Basin

## Great forces are at work in the North Cascades range

Normally, we think of geologic processes as being slow and long-lasting. In most cases, they are.

Recent exceptions have been headlines, but the greater number are slow and long-lasting.

Witness the one still going on between Early Winters and State creeks. It's been in process for ages and is still in process.

The down-cutting water has slowly chewed out its valley, which heads in the Whistler Basin at the foot of Liberty Bell Mountain. Its opponent was State Creek, heading in the same spot, and the two proceeded to wear out creek beds and deepen and extend them, eating down into the solid rock of the area.

The question is which one would claim the headwaters of Whistler Basin. And as time wore away so did the rock.

As you turn up the valley of Early Winters Creek, the valley deepens into vertical walls at certain spots, such as Vasiliki Ridge, which towers vertically into the sky as subsidiary creeks chew out their own courses in its flanks and sweep down to Early Winters and thus to the Methow, the Columbia and ultimately the ocean.

Their down-cutting left dramatic valleys to show their

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



passage. And they headed up at Whistler Basin, which has a set of beautiful curves to mark the headwaters of this rushing, dramatic little water.

The North cross-state highway — commonly called North Cascades Highway — curves across its lower reaches with curve after curve in the solid rock. The highway curves through its upper reaches and then proceeds down valley on its course.

Former *Chronicle* Publisher John E. Andrist loved this spot and came in with dramatic pictures of the flanks of the hills that had been invaded by the eroding water on its way.

The looping highway curves to the west and climbs the hill beside Liberty Bell Mountain. On the way, it passes a little lake at highway level and runs below a higher one on the flank of the mountain.

This mountain and its dramatic setting have become a sort of signature for North Cascades Highway. It's huge, but unless there is something (or someone) to establish the scale, one does not realize just how big it is.

Which back-cutting creek won this battle for territory? I



Dee Camp/The Chronicle

Whistler Basin, at the base of Spiral Gulch on the North Cascades Highway, shows a beautiful set of curves.

hesitate to try to say. Judging contests between rushing

creeks is chancy. But this is the dividing line

between two major drainages, for Early Winters flows out to the Methow and Columbia rivers and thus to the ocean, while State proceeds to Lake Chelan.

Today Whistler Basin stands serenely at the focus of this between two creeks battling for their headwaters. We get to see it as it is today.

Only one thing is certain: It will not stay permanently where it is now, but the process is so slow that we will not live to see the outcome.

The restless components of this drama area will continue to remodel it as time passes. And time has never bothered geology.

For that, great forces are at work. It constantly works on. There is time — lots of it.

*Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,928th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*

786

**The fourth annual OK Fair Supporters Benefit Crab Feed was a success! It was great to see the whole community come together.**

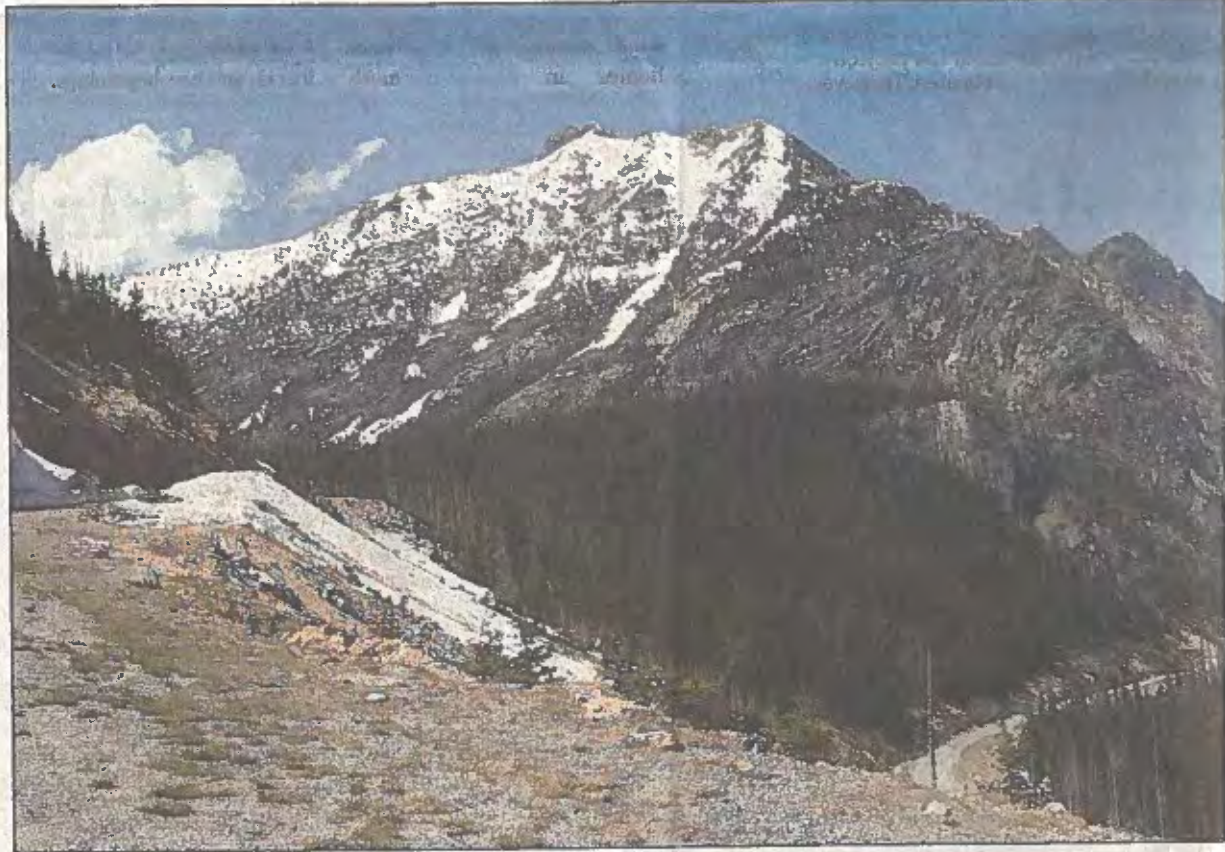
**A HUGE thank you to all involved, the sponsors, donators, volunteers and attendees. Mark your calendar "Fifth Annual Crab Feed" February 13, 2016.**

**Groups/Individuals who helped out during event: We had many more volunteers this year and they did a great job! They were:**

Omak Key Club	Boy Scout Troop 60
Cub Scout Pack 20/60	Blueberry Hills, Manson
Okanogan FFA	Lloyd Caton, Auctioneer
Methow Valley Cascaders 4H	Lexee Howell, Fair Queen
Go Figure 4H	Members of the Okanogan County Fair Advisory Committee
Range Riders 4H	Numerous members of the community helped out - they saw something that
Mid Valley Ranger 4H	
Okanogan Girl Scouts	
County Fair Participants	

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



### Stewart's book sparks discussion on years past

Years ago I had a class in story writing, which included instructions: Never hit your readers with a sudden change.

Always there must be a hint somewhere in the text that this is coming.

They may miss it on a first reading, but it must be there.

I have spoken before about George Stewart's book "Storm," and I want to pick up one little sub-plot.

Two young people who worked for the same company decided to visit relatives on the other side of the mountains. They were inlanders and had to go over a mountain pass to get to their respective families.

It was while they were there, on the coast side of the mountains, that the storm broke.

With their visit completed, Max picked up Jenny, they said goodbye to their respective families and started home.

Jenny's sister watched the car go down the rain-drenched street and then came these words, "They turned the corner and were gone."

"There's my clue," I said to myself. "They're not going to make it"

When the two young people did not arrive at their respective homes, concern in the families grew.

Meanwhile, the storm had broken and the highway over the pass was difficult. Days passed.

The highway department struggled with the road, now very difficult, trying to keep it open. They did not succeed.

Stewart told of their struggles. The families of the two young people were greatly worried. The young people had simply disappeared.

The storm, as I have reported to you before, lasted some 12 days and then began to subside. The highway re-

The view from above the hairpin turn on the North Cascades Highway, looking toward Washington Pass Overlook with the

As things returned closer to normal, the highway superintendent of the section, including the pass, was able to return to the subject of the missing travelers.

One day he and a co-worker set out to investigate a place where there had been a broken snow stake.

They found a place to park, left their truck and walked to the edge of the highway and looked down. It was a long way down. Far below them there were animal tracks on deep snow.

"He smells something," the superintendent said.

They found a way to go down the steep slope to the spot of the tracks, of which there were more now.

They looked at each other apprehensively and went and got the necessary tools.

The animals disappeared at their approach and they began to dig in the drifted snow.

They found the car, under the drifted snow, badly battered from the fall from the highway above.

In it were the frozen bodies of the missing young people, and the crew went for the

They, like the car, were badly battered by the long fall from the highway above. Carefully they removed them and returned them to their grieving families.

Traffic over the pass had returned to normal, or as close to normal as is possible in such a situation.

And the families could get on with proper rites for the lost ones.

Someone from the highway department and a traffic control officer, talking to the superintendent, spoke of the difficulties of traffic control with the highway closed.

With such an introduction, you probably saw what was coming.

With traffic resumed on the highway, life in the area returned as close as you can get to normal — whatever normal is — under those circumstances. The department, meanwhile, wise with the knowledge from this and other storms, reviewed their equipment and prepared.

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,977th column in a series. She may be



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July 13, 2016 U # 3000

### EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

# Reflection on 3,000 columns brings appreciation

## 'Learning curve' leads to lifelong passion for area



ELIZABETH WIDEL

It was Bruce Wilson's idea when he was the owner/publisher of The Chronicle to write a column, and I started out tentatively with the feeling that I had the whole world to write

about.

I was new then to both the newspaper and the area.

At that point I was on what some people call "a learning curve," and that has not changed in fact, but it has in content. The more I have learned, the more I realize how much there is to the subject.

And as my information has increased with ongoing reading, the more cautious I become



A view of Liberty Bell Mountain, icon of the North Cascades. ELIZABETH WIDEL

about making wrong statements.

"I am afraid that one day someone who knows will say to me, 'How could you possibly make a statement that wrong?'"

I said to him. To this he cautiously replied, "it hasn't happened yet".

But my love of the area has increased with what I have

learned about it. Some years ago I called it "an open love letter to Okanogan County." And that still holds.

Various publications have addressed the whole spectrum of worldwide information about our planet and its multiple facets of information. I do not expect to outlive these sources of information.

This includes its physical beauty, scientific wonders, the growth of knowledge, and infinite variety. There is the comforting feeling that we will never know it all.

Along with all this informational wealth comes the feeling that there will always be something more to learn.

I mention particularly the invaluable helpers who have stepped in with enormous amounts of support as my eyes have failed, my hearing is failing and I can no longer drive, and these people have kept me mobile. Particularly I will mention Dee Camp, Marsha Aufenkamp, Mary Koch,

Lorraine Derig and Kaari Guttromson - the list is too long to be complete - but the others have provided inspiration and assistance.

The interaction of people and the inspiration they provide are appreciated. It is such a comfort to know that I am in no danger of running out of information.

For the occasional examples of encouragement and help with information, I will be forever grateful.

Many years ago a member of the staff, now long gone, said "Elizabeth tends to harp on the same subject." As long as that subject is the power and beauties of life in the Okanogan, I could hardly do better.

My role is recognition and appreciation. I am content to have it be so. Thanks for listening.

*Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is her 3,000th column. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.*

## Annual



Oct 29, 2014

# Area has interesting geologic formations

## North-Central Washington has connection to Lyell

In 1817, a student at England's Oxford University was on vacation and, at Yarmouth, visited a site where they were preparing to erect a statue to Lord Nelson, who had fallen in the Napoleonic wars.

As he looked at the excavation, he realized that the sand indicated the city now was four miles inland, which it had not been some years before.

A man who liked to account for things, Charles Lyell, realized there had been changes in the harbor, which had not shifted, though the sand around it had. Only 19 at the time, he had an inquiring mind that liked to account for things.

Lyell lived in the days when the biblical account of the creation of the earth was taken literally. But here was evidence of obvious change.

At term's end, he set out on a trip through parts of Europe, and in the south of Italy he came to some geologic

## EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN

Elizabeth Widel



story. Here, in both the southern Italian mountains and those in southern France, were alternating layers of rock deposits and fossils indicating change, which had cut canyons in the hard gneiss — pronounced "nice" — native to the area. Some of the canyons were hundreds of feet deep.

By tracing the types of rock and fossils as they alternated in the canyons, he found varying species of fossils that indicated the passage of time. With local people as guides, he found many places where such erosion and deposits had taken place.

Travel in those days was basic: Horse and carriage, and sometimes, when his guides learned of his interests, they showed him other striking examples of such deposition and erosion. He went clear to

other examples, and to France and the Auvergne for further examples.

In Italy, he climbed Mount Etna and was sickened by the fumes rising from its crater.

Back home, he began work on a book on his conclusions after exploring the mountains and their depositions and erosion. The book became "Principles of Geology."

When his theories about changes in the earth's constitution came out, they created a furor and certain people were upset. Only with time and much argument was some sort of agreement reached.

Ultimately, several editions of his book, which published in more than one volume, were issued.

He took issue with some colleagues, who believed it was useless to write for non-scientists. And here we have a clear link with this man of nearly two centuries ago. For there is a great interest in Okanogan County about geology, and we have a fine selection of writers in non-professional terms who explain what many people here find interesting.

But Lyell explained the

earth is not just as it was when it came into existence. And thanks in part to him, we do not have either to go to Italy and France to see the processes of erosion and deposition, and the change of rock and life forms.

We could show him some

interesting erosion and change of life forms. I think he would be interested.

I think we would, too.

Elizabeth Widel is a columnist for The Chronicle. This is the 2,911th column in a series. She may be reached at 509-826-1110.



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**Scott D. FURMAN**

Aug. 17, 1961 –  
I would like  
to go back

It was Bill Smith who started it all by calling it the longest drop he had found in Okanogan County. To the waterfall enthusiast the news of that drop on War Creek comes as something not to be overlooked. Last Friday afternoon we headed over the Loup for the Twisp River Valley and the War Creek guard station. It proved to be about fifteen miles west of Twisp.

That Twisp valley itself is something remarkable, for it stabs right back into the mountains with the scenery getting more perpendicular by the minute. There is a beautiful glimpse of a couple of knife-edge summits up the gash of Poorman Creek (Black Pine Lake up there somewhere) and then you go west on the oiled but curvaceous Twisp River Road. The saddle-horn crest of Reynolds Peak looms straight ahead.

One perfect pyramid peak after another crowds around the slimming valley until finally you lose sight of them in the heavy forest. The guard station proved to be deserted, but we turned left on a road which crossed the Twisp River and left the car at a nice little campground. Although there is a road for the first couple of miles, you will walk if you like the forest as much as we do. In a car you never would see the hordes of deer among the close-set trees.

If you go, be prepared to lean into a pretty stiff grade – they fling you right up the mountainside in a long, looping curve. That first long look takes you away from the creek so there is no sound of it, but there are other things. Glen suddenly exclaimed and bent over a dusty track in the road.

“Bear,” he said with a delighted grin. Bruin had ambled down the road for several hundred yards.



*Waterfall on War Creek*

We found where he had emerged from a thicket.

Presently there began to be a faint murmur, and the creek was below us down a marvelous slope.

“By golly,” Glen said, “if a man went off that, there’d be no way of getting him back up. You’d just have to go down to Twisp and wait for him to go by.”

Just about that time, the murmur increased to the brawl of a creek very busy on a rocky bed, and then came the deeper note we had anticipated. Again there was no sign (the only one was back at the campground and said “Falls 1¼ miles”). But the road widens as if for a vista point, and at the foot of a giant tree two bushes screen a faint trace. The deer don’t use that track. Why should they? It certainly does not lead them to water.

At this point in its course the creek makes a dog-leg, and the trace leads out on a hogback in the angle between. We saw white water first, far below, and then as the ground got steeper with the

trace completely exposed on both sides, Glen exclaimed, “Here it is!”

Although we had stood and admired great beds of shale just after leaving the car, the creek in its down-cutting apparently has come across a ridge of harder rock which did not cut out as evenly as the rest. This resistant rock forms the fall, which as luck would have it has its back to the road so that you have to go out on a point to see it. The ground slopes away at considerably more than 45 degrees for a few feet, then cants off to straight down.

It was at this point that Glen’s gadget bag came open and strewed its contents down the slope. He managed to retrieve a few things while I held my breath, but his lens hood and a few loaded rounds of .38 ammunition joined the water in the creek bed more than a hundred feet below.

At the notch in the rock through which the water creams down there is the familiar fluttering and rounded forms which only water on stone can produce. I do not know what this rock is – it is quite dark where it is wet – but one could certainly suspect a hot-rock intrusion of the shale we had seen. The Cascade Mountains are full of such things. Across the slender valley the mountain wall towers much higher and just a few degrees off straight down. The power of water. . .

I would like to go back, of course, once to get the water with the sun on it, which would require being there about midday, and again in the spring when the runoff is high. Glen got back up the slope to the road on two, but I had to get down on four. And as we hiked off down the road with the roar of the falls again dimming to a murmur, we found fresh deer tracks on the footprints we had left coming up.

*This is the last column Elizabeth wrote before Glen’s death. Adjacent to the column, the following news article was published:*

## Funeral Service Conducted Here for Glen Widel

By BRUCE WILSON

Funeral services for Glen Arnold Widel, 53, shop foreman at the Omak Chronicle, were held Tuesday morning at the Precht chapel with the Rev. James A. Moore of Spokane and the Rev. S. Christian Thele officiating.

Burial was in the Omak Memorial cemetery. Glen (I have never referred to him as “Widel” and cannot now) died of a heart attack Friday at his home.

Glen was born February 13, 1908, at Okabena, Minn. His family settled near Brewster in Okanogan County in 1913. Glen grew up there and attended Brewster schools, learning the printing trade he was to follow the rest of his life while still in high school.

He joined the staff of the Omak Chronicle 13 years ago and had been shop foreman the past seven years. He was a member of the Omak Fish and Game club.

Glen married Elizabeth Barta October 8, 1954, at Omak. Other survivors are a son, William E. Widel, Soap Lake; Glen’s mother, Mrs. Emma Widel, Okanogan; two sisters, Mrs. Guy Brown, Okanogan, and Mrs. P.G. Pearl, Seattle; and a brother, Don, Pateros.

I am not going to go into a long tribute because Glen would not have wished it. He was the finest all-around printer I have never known and was the heart of our entire operation. Still, I miss him more as a tremendously vitalizing friend.

# EXPLORING THE OKANOGAN



Excerpts from the Decades of  
Newspaper Columns and Photographs by

Elizabeth Widel

These are not the "best" of Elizabeth Widel's weekly newspaper columns, for Elizabeth has always done her best. For nearly six decades she has explored the grandeur, people and events of Okanogan County. This collection of columns represents the breadth and depth of her interests and the peculiarities of life in the land called the Okanogan.



**A tribute to Elizabeth Widel by Congressman Dan Newhouse, delivered from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives:**

*I would like to recognize someone who is a very familiar voice to readers of the Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle newspaper located in Okanogan County in my district in Washington.*

*Elizabeth Barta Widel is one of the most senior journalists in the Pacific Northwest. She has shared her love of the outdoors, her photography, and passion for all things concerning the Okanogan community for 58 years.*

*Since 1957, Elizabeth has written a column for the Chronicle titled, Exploring the Okanogan. So far, she has written more than 2900 columns on an array of topics, and she continues to add to that number regularly.*

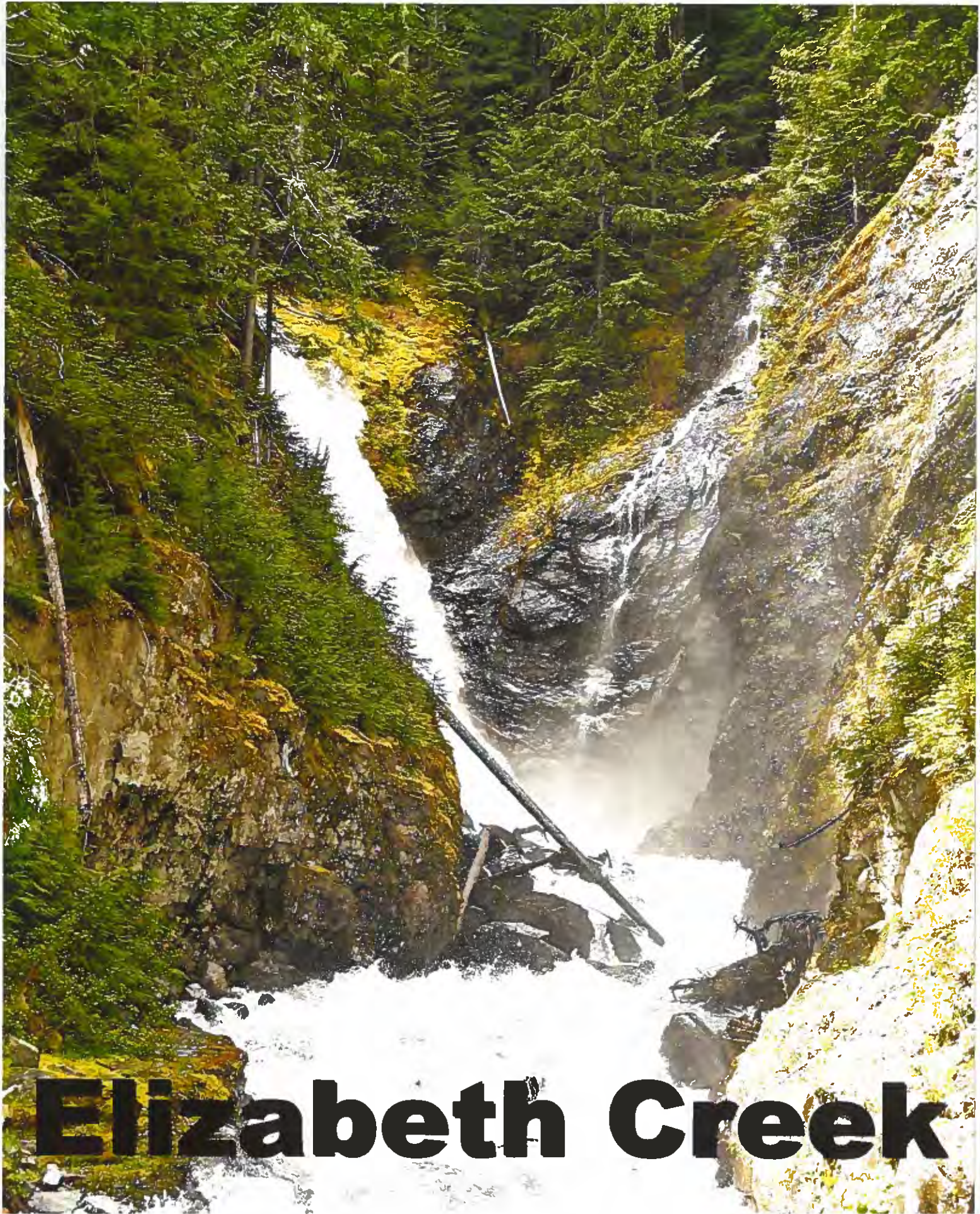
*Through sharing her stories, her down-to-earth words of wisdom, and her curiosity of the world around her, Elizabeth has shown a profound connection with the Okanogan Valley and has inspired generations of readers and those who know her.*

*Please join me in celebrating the contribution and dedication of this remarkable lady, an explorer of things great and small.*

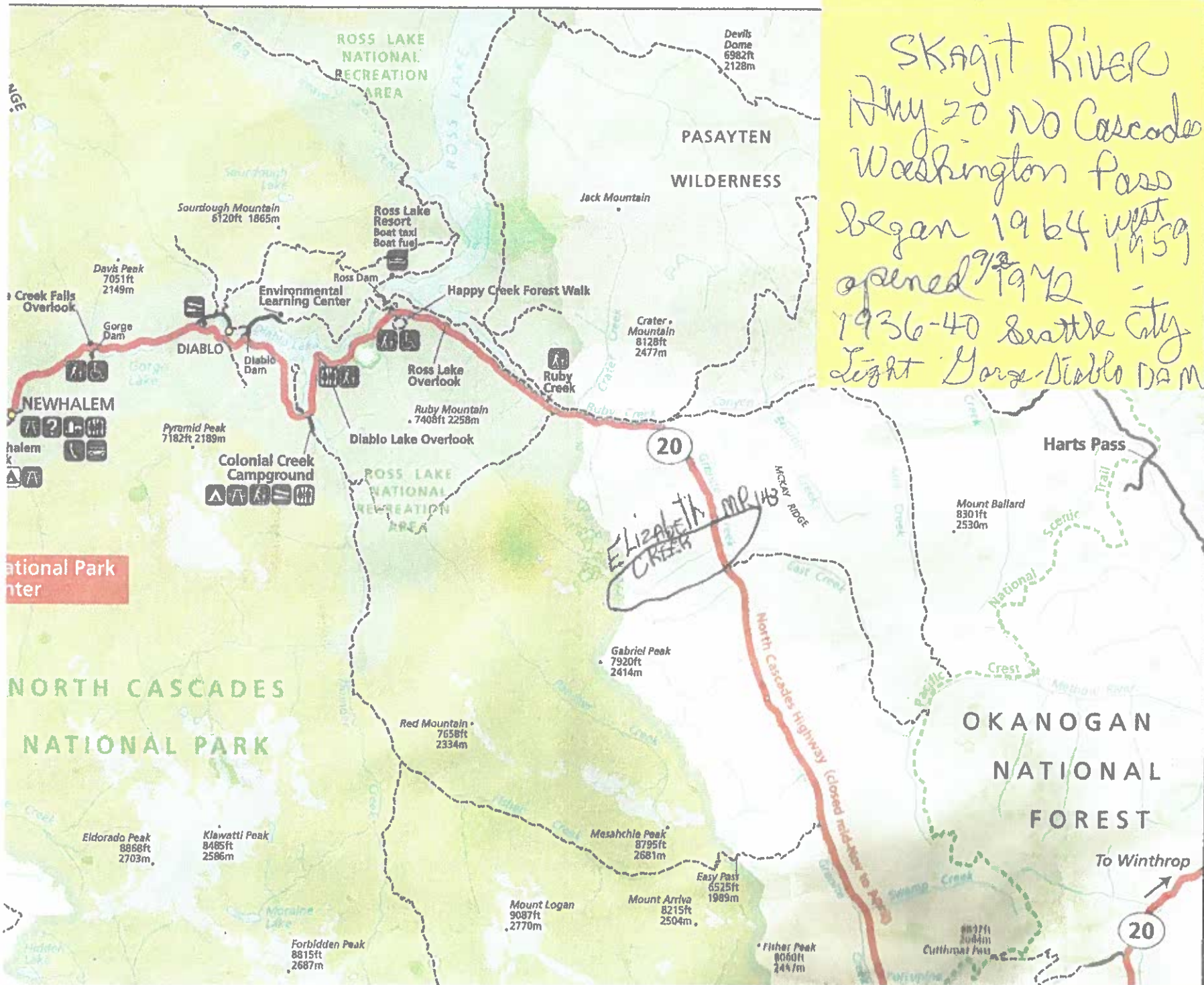
ISBN 978-0-692-43048-4



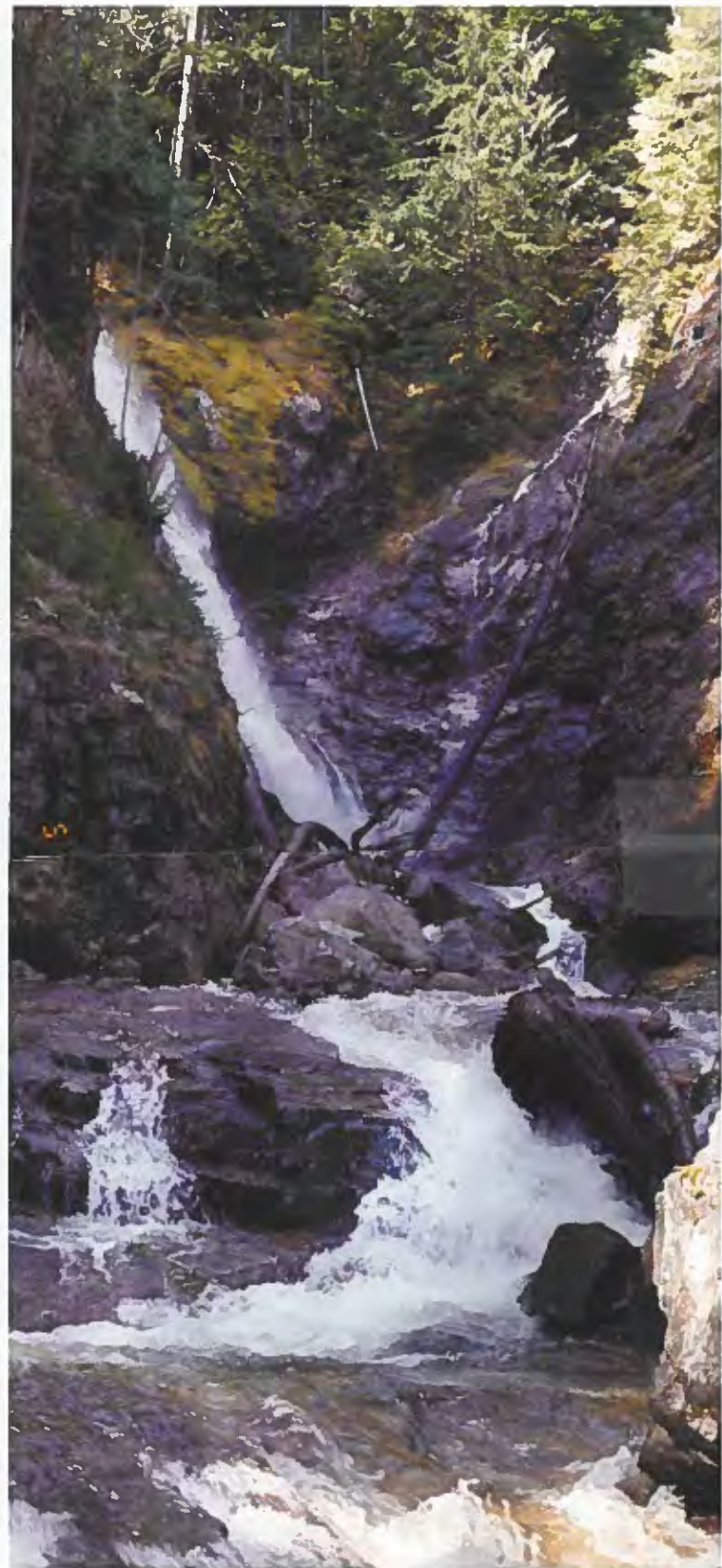
9 780692 430484



# Elizabeth Creek



SKAGIT RIVER  
 July 20 No Cascade  
 Washington Pass  
 began 1964 west  
 opened 1959  
 1936-40 Seattle City  
 Light Gorge Diablo DAM





**From:** [Marsha Aufenkamp](#)  
**To:** [MAKI, CALEB \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** Elizabeth Creek  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:49:05 PM

---

External Email

Thought you might like a picture of the woman we want to honor.  
Blessings, Marsha



Sent from my iPhone

## MAKI, CALEB (DNR)

**From:** Marsha Aufenkamp <m.aufenkamp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 8:51 AM  
**To:** MAKI, CALEB (DNR)  
**Subject:** Article on today's meeting

External Email

Elizabeth Creek



Sent from my iPhone

# Elizabeth Creek - SKAGIT & WHATCOM COUNTIES



Elizabeth Creek

Hwy 20

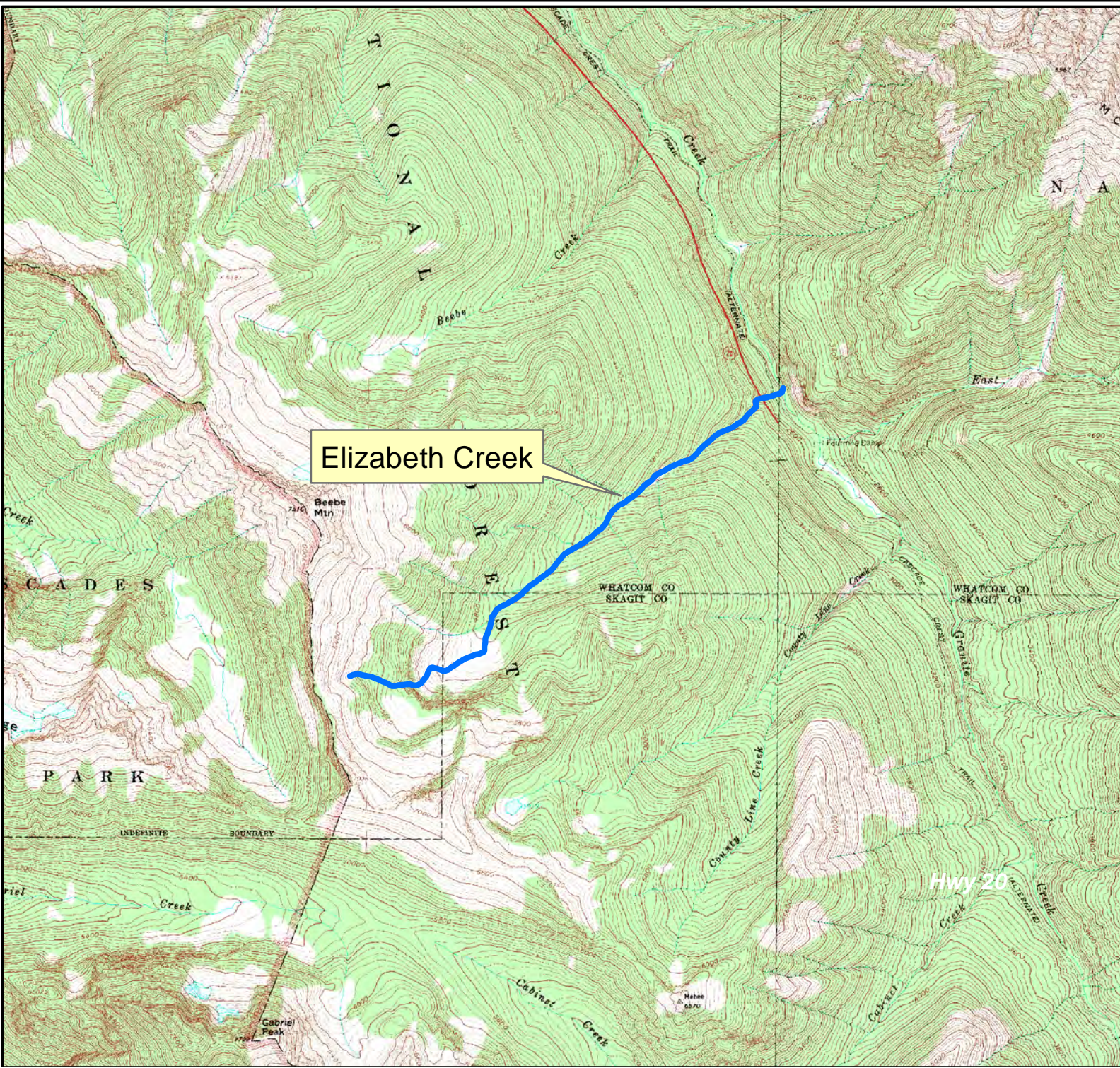
Stream; 2.5 miles long. Begins in the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest N of Gabriel Peak at 48° 39' 5.325" N, 120° 55' 9.264" W, flows NE to enter Granite Creek at 48° 40' 15.681" N, 120° 52' 34.002" W.

Proposed name commemorates Elizabeth (Barta) Widel (b. 1917, d. 10/24/2017) who ran a newspaper column "Exploring the Okanogan" starting in 1957. Elizabeth produced over 3000 weekly columns, and often featured geographic features in her articles.

In 2015, Elizabeth wrote a column highlighting a waterfall she had visited many times on an "unnamed creek" at milepost 43,



# Elizabeth Creek - SKAGIT & WHATCOM COUNTIES



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In 2015, Elizabeth wrote a column highlighting a waterfall she had visited many times on an "unnamed creek" at milepost 43,



## **Mary Pamela Falls**

*Snohomish County - New Name*

**Township:** 29N

**Range:** 8E

**Section:** 28

**USGS Quad:** Lake Chaplain

**Location Description:** Falls; located on an unnamed stream the flows S to enter the Sultan River 1.9 miles S of Forest Road 6126 at 47°58'42.964"N, 121°47'16.118"W.

**Proposal Summary:** Mary Pamela Falls; located on an unnamed stream the flows S to enter the Sultan River 1.9 miles S of Forest Road 6126 at 47°58'42.964"N, 121°47'16.118"W.; The name commemorates Mary-Pamela Awad (d. 1993) who after hearing about a "mystery falls" researched the remote location and visited the feature with her family. In 2021, the family made the trip back to the falls, and proposed the name in honor of their mother.; Snohomish County, Washington; Sec 28 T29N R8E, Willamette Meridian; 47°58'42.964"N, 121°47'16.118"W USGS map - Lake Chaplain 1:24,000.

The proposed name commemorates Mary-Pamela Awad (d. 1993) who after hearing about a "mystery falls" researched the remote location and visited the feature with her family.

Many years later in 2021, the family successfully made the trip back to the falls. and proposed the name in honor of their mother and her adventure and exploration in the Pacific Northwest.

Landowner: WA DNR - Northwest Region

"Mary Pamela" features in WA:

None

**Proponent:**

Ramsey Brown

1910 S Lake Roesiger Rd

Snohomish, WA 98290

**Proposal Received:** 4/24/2023

**Initial Consideration:** 12/11/2023

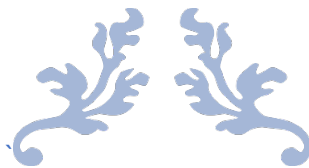
**Final Consideration:**

**WA Committee Decision:**

**WA Board Decision:**

**US Board Decision:**

**Opinions:**



---

# THE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES DOMESTIC NAMES COMMITTEE PROPOSAL FORM

---

This document is for those interested in proposing:

1. **A new name for a currently unnamed geographic feature, or**
2. **A change to an existing name, spelling, or where a name is applied.**

By submitting this form, the proponent acknowledges the [BGN Policies](#) and agrees to work with BGN staff regarding their proposal.



## Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit Proposal:

1. Email this form and supporting documentation to: [BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

i. Save PDF as 'ST\_GeographicName' for example 'CO\_BearCreek'

ii. Email Subject: ST\_GeographicName

OR 2. Send by mail to:

U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523  
Reston, VA 20192

Contact Us:

[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

*Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Is this name in current local use?

Y  N

What is the Feature Class?

Is this to change an existing name?

Y  N

*If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).*

GNIS Name:

Feature ID:

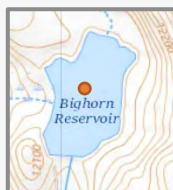
## Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)

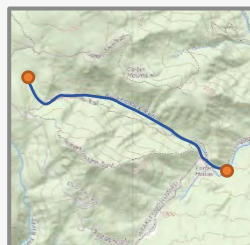


For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)

*General Location:*

State:

County:

City/Town/  
Township/  
Borough:

*Public Land Survey System:*

*Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian*



## Feature Description

*Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)*



## Name Details

### Name information:

*Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.*



Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

*Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).*



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Is the name [commemorative](#)? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons?  Y  N

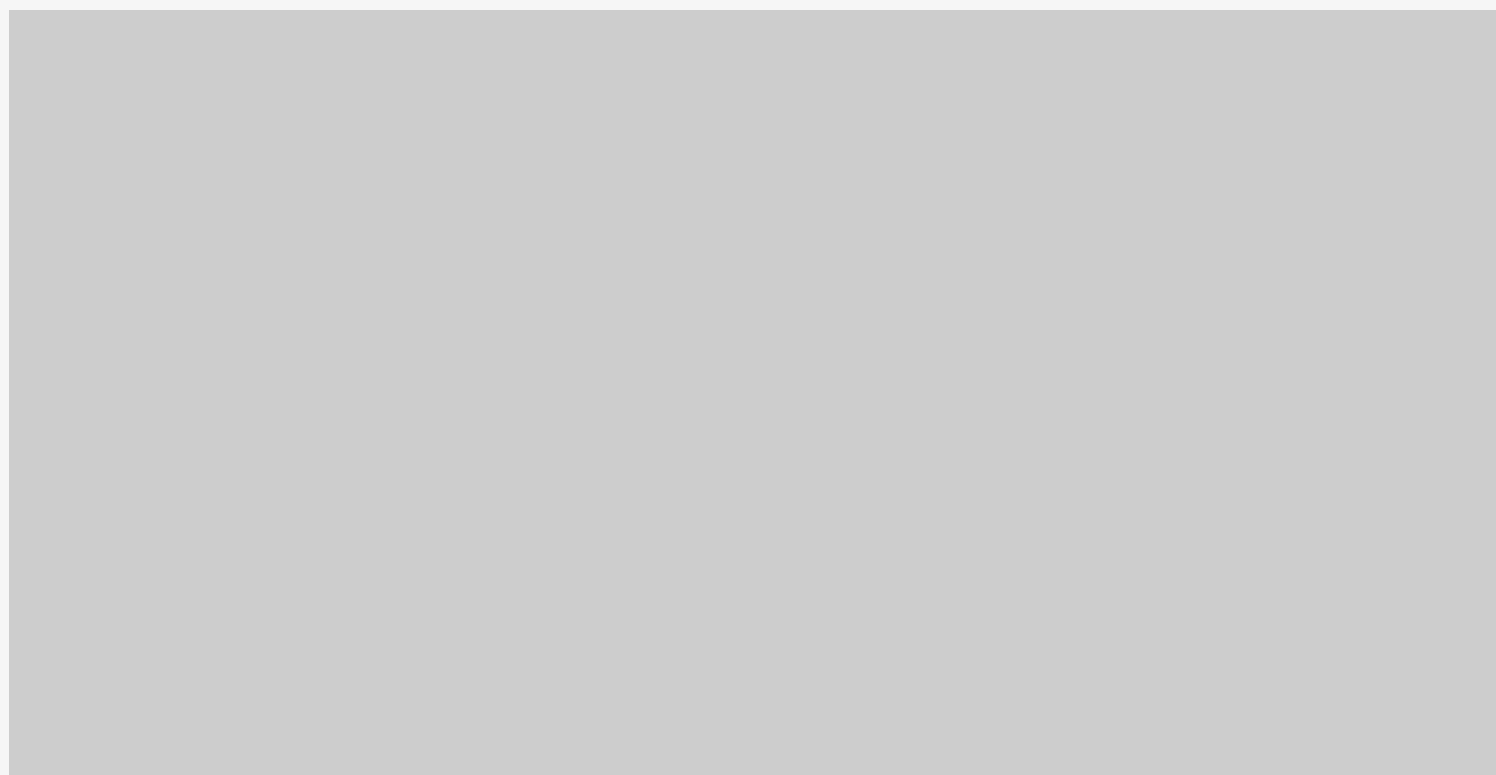
*Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.*

*If yes, please provide the following:*

Honoree's Date of Birth:

Honoree's Date of Death:

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*



Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area?  Y  N  Unknown

If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):

Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.

## Additional Information


Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name?  Y  N

If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:

Additional notes:

## Proponent Information

Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):

 Proponent's Name:

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email:

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else?  Y  N

If yes, please fill out the following:

Completed by:

Full Name:

Email:

Mailing Address:

Phone:









**Comments**

**Received**



**From:** [Guthrie, Jay \(DNR\)](#)  
**To:** [MAKI, CALEB \(DNR\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Bergvall, Laurie \(DNR\)](#); [Arneson, Mark \(DNR\)](#); [Moon, John \(DNR\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Mary Pamela Falls - New Geographic Name  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 2:28:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [jimage003.png](#)  
[jimage005.png](#)

---

Based on your information this is what we can find. We are concerned with the lack of public access and how naming it may increase the public attempts to access with no legal access off of our roads in the vicinity. My understanding is that sites are usually named for historical reasons or existing geographic names for the area or water feature and this proposal does not fit either. However, I do understand the sentiment that makes the family request this name for the falls.

*Jay*

---

**From:** Bergvall, Laurie (DNR) <[Laurie.Bergvall@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Laurie.Bergvall@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2024 3:44 PM  
**To:** Guthrie, Jay (DNR) <[Jay.Guthrie@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Jay.Guthrie@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Mary Pamela Falls - New Geographic Name

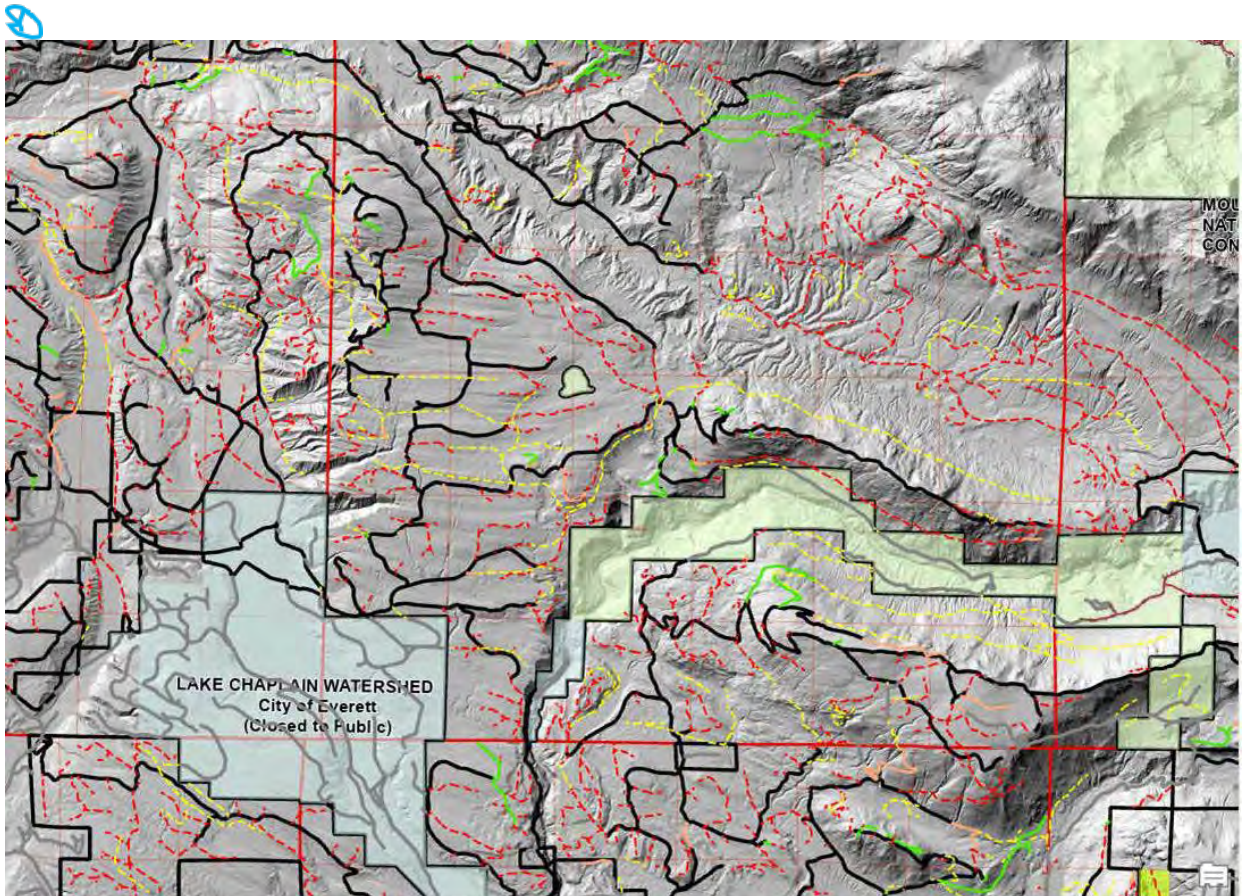
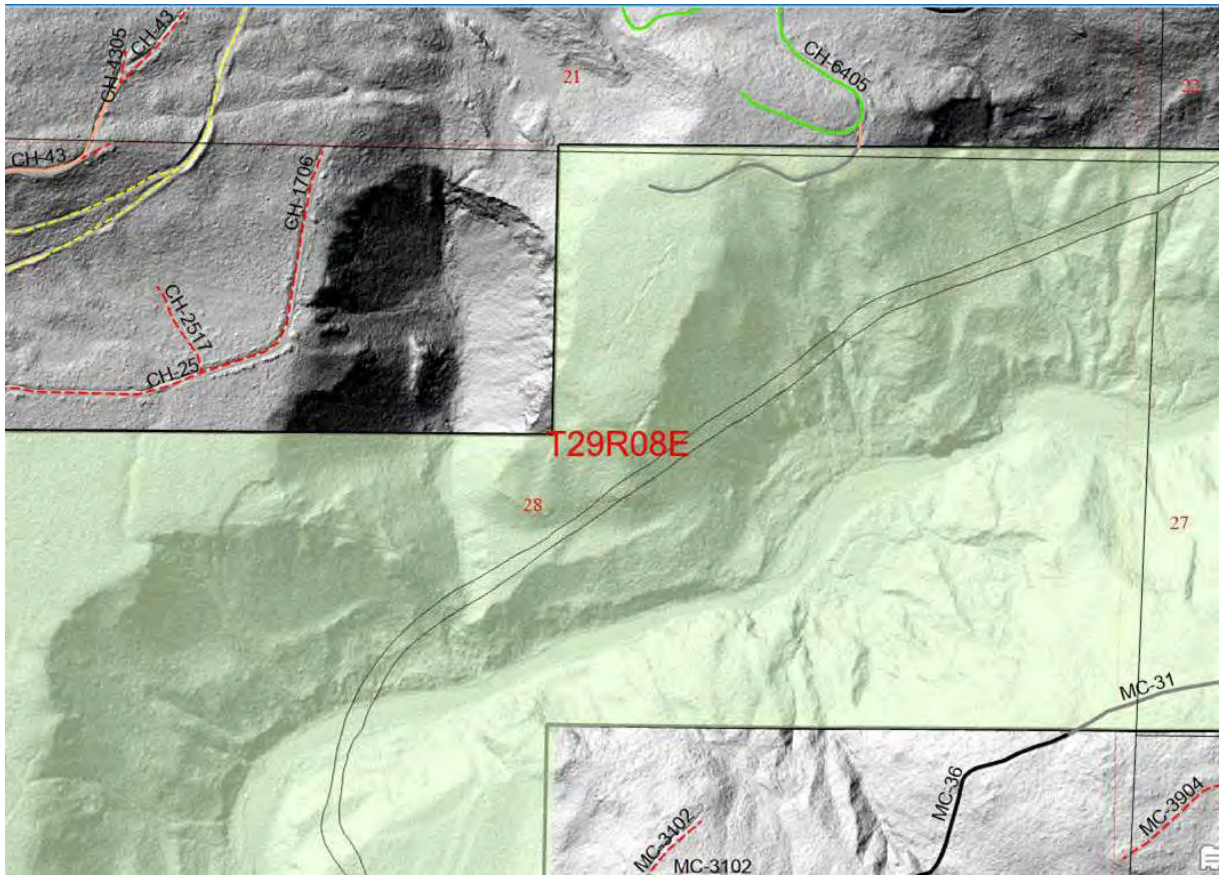
FYI

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**From:** Arneson, Mark (DNR) <[Mark.Arneseon@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Mark.Arneseon@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2024 3:30:29 PM  
**To:** Bergvall, Laurie (DNR) <[Laurie.Bergvall@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:Laurie.Bergvall@dnr.wa.gov)>; Moon, John (DNR) <[John.Moon@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:John.Moon@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Mary Pamela Falls - New Geographic Name

I looked for the area the proposal describes. It is in the upper end of the Echo Lake block – if I have their location correct. The only concerns are around access to this feature. Will naming it inspire more people to try and access the area? Because the nearest roads that get towards this feature are accessed through the City of Everett’s protected watershed. The falls are outside out the City’s watershed - it’s just the drivable road access to get you close to this feature. Chances are this family walked the old FS grades from Spada Lake area, but that’s a good +5 mile hike, one-way.





Mark Arneson

Cascade District Manager  
Northwest Region  
Washington Department of Natural Resources  
360-856-3500 (office)  
360-770-4570 (cell)  
[mark.arneson@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:mark.arneson@dnr.wa.gov)  
[www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov)

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# Mary Pamela Falls - SNOHOMISH COUNTY



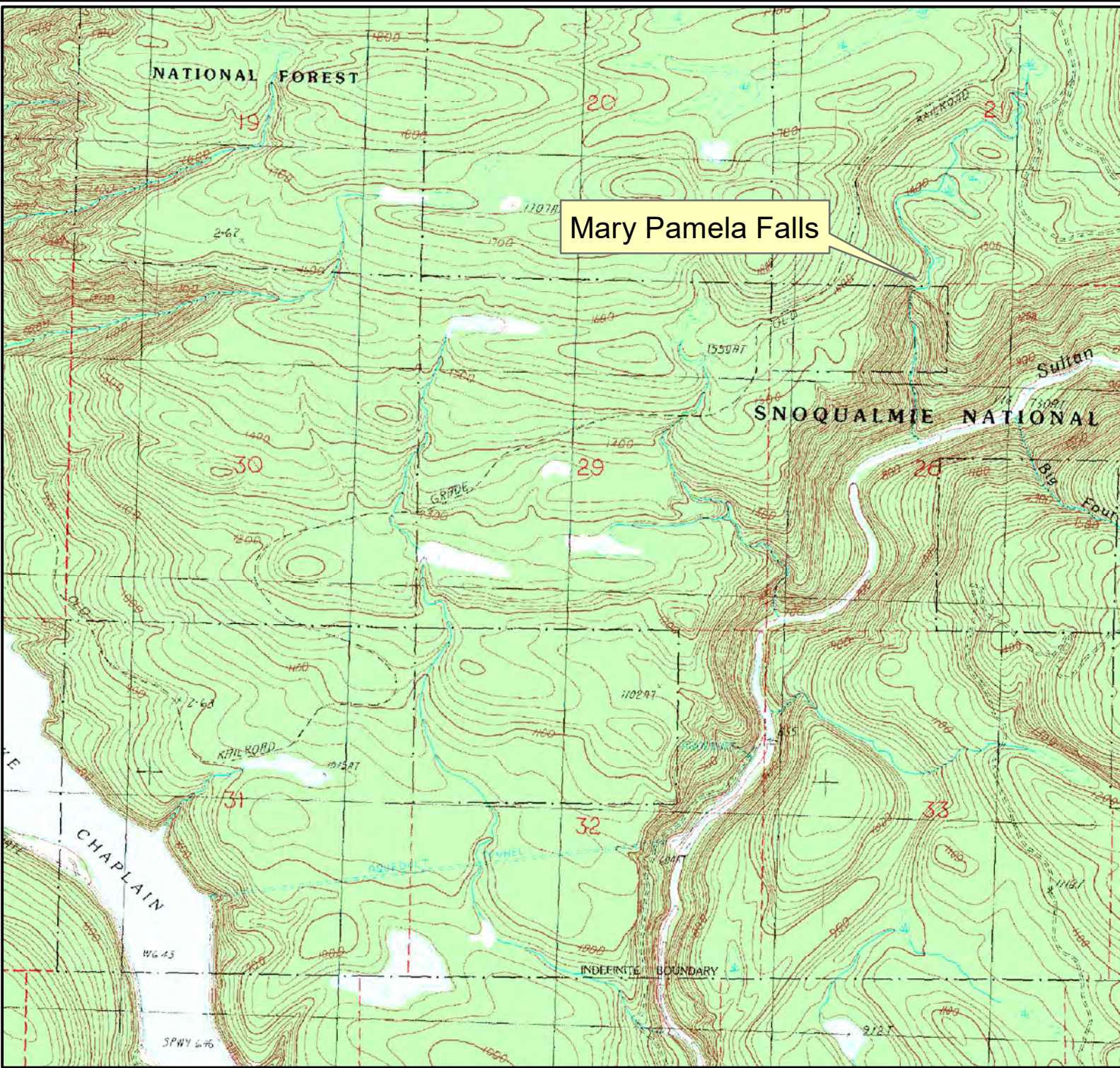
Falls; located on an unnamed stream the flows S to enter the Sultan River 1.9 miles S of Forest Road 6126 at 47°58'42.964"N, 121°47'16.118"W.

The proposed name commemorates Mary-Pamela Awad (d. 1993) who after hearing about a "mystery falls", researched the remote location and visited the feature with her family.

Many years later in 2021, the family successfully made the trip back to the falls and proposed the name in honor of their mother and her adventures and exploration in the Pacific Northwest.



# Mary Pamela Falls - SNOHOMISH COUNTY



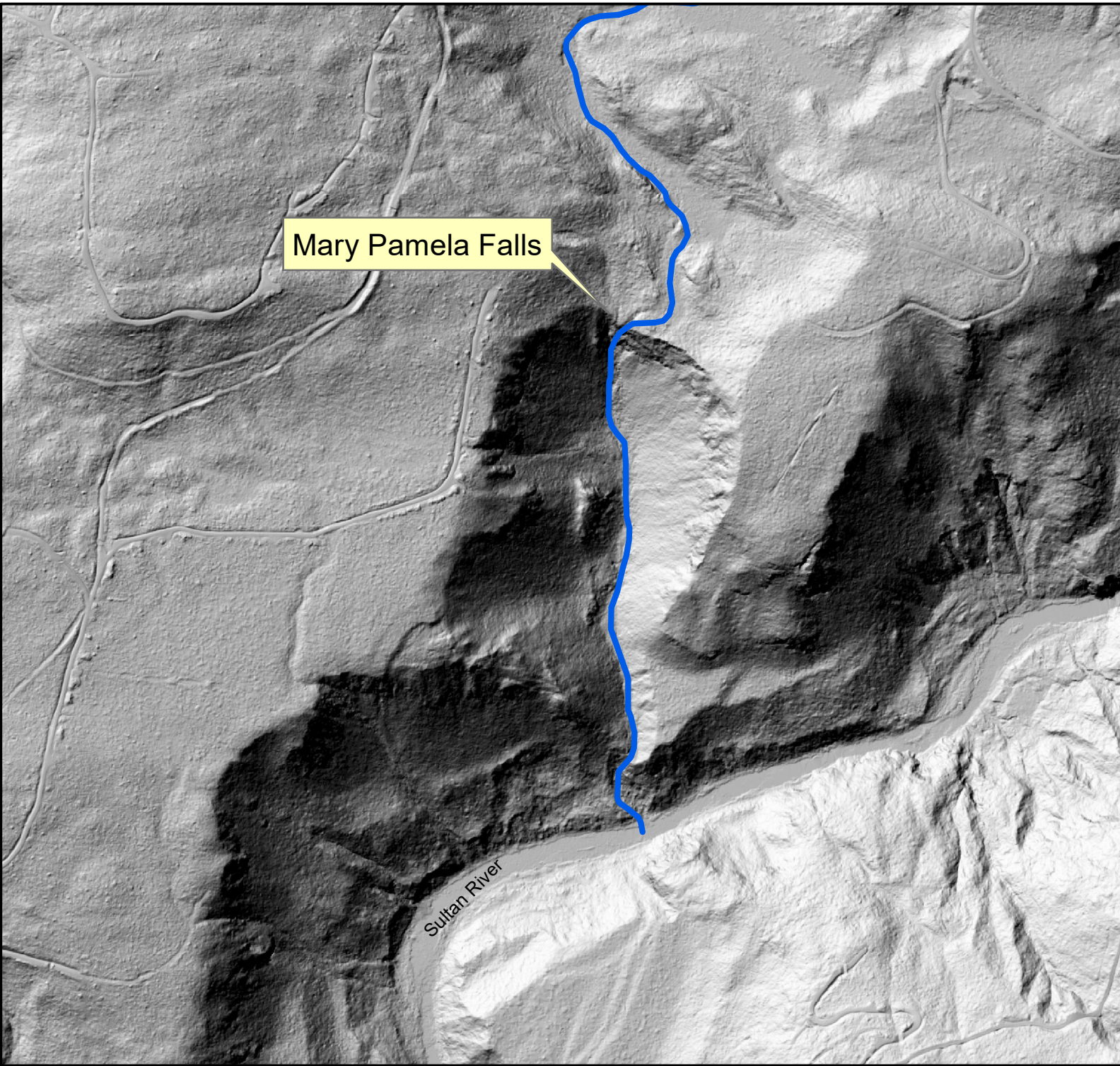
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# Mary Pamela Falls - SNOHOMISH COUNTY

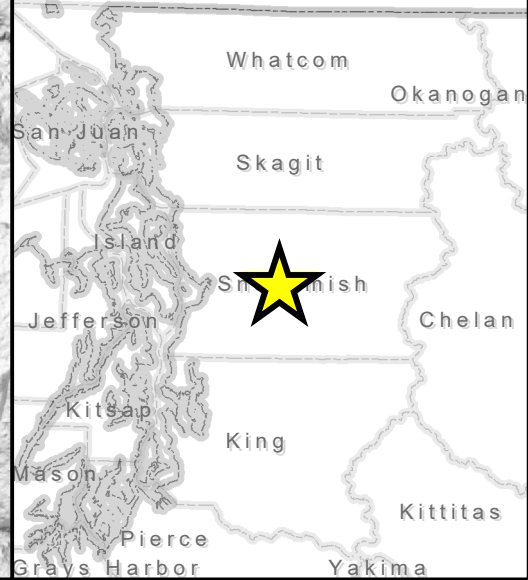


Mary Pamela Falls

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**Prune Hill Creek**

*Clark County - New Name*

**Township:** 1N

**Range:** 3E

**Section:** 9, 39, and 41

**USGS Quad:** Camas

**Location Description:** Stream; 1.7 miles; starting from Haight Reservoir on Prune Hill at 45° 35' 22.146" N, 122° 26' 13.981" W, flows W then S to enter the Columbia River at 45° 34' 50.066" N, 122° 27' 43.493" W.

**Proposal Summary:** Prune Hill Creek: Stream; 1.7 miles; starting from Haight Reservoir on Prune Hill at 45° 35' 22.146" N, 122° 26' 13.981" W, flows W then S to enter the Columbia River at 45° 34' 50.066" N, 122° 27' 43.493" W; Name references the source of the stream, Prune Hill. In the 1880s and 1890s, the hill was covered in Italian prune orchards due to the excellent growing conditions of the area. Prune Hill was named in 1900 at the time when Clark County WA was known as the prune capitol of the world.; Clark County, Washington; Secs 9, 39, and 41, T1N, R3E, Willamette Meridian; 45° 34' 50.066" N, 122° 27' 43.493" W; USGS Map - Camas 1:24,000

Proposed name references the source of the stream, Prune Hill. In the 1880s and 1890s, the hill was covered in Italian prune orchards due to the excellent growing conditions of the area.

Prune Hill was named in 1900 at the time when Clark County WA was known as the prune capitol of the world.

Landowners: Private Citizens - Home Owners Associations

"Prune" Features in WA:

Prune Hill - Clark County

Three Prune Creek - Jefferson County

Three Prune Lakes - Jefferson County

**Proponent:**

Patrick Cooney

3815 NW 9th Loop

Camas, WA 98607

**Proposal Received:** 7/24/2023  
**Initial Consideration:** 12/11/2023  
**Final Consideration:**

**WA Committee Decision:**  
**WA Board Decision:**  
**US Board Decision:**

**Opinions:**



# Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

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The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

- Submit Proposal:**
1. Download and email this form and supporting documentation to: [BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)
- OR 2. Send by mail to:  
U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523  
Reston, VA 20192
- Contact Us:**  
[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)
- i. Save PDF using this format: 'State\_GeographicNameProposed'
- ii. Email Subject: *ST\_GeographicName*
- Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Prune Hill Creek

Is this to change an existing name?  Y  N

*If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).*

Is this name in current local use?  Y  N

What is the Feature Type?

Stream

GNIS Name:

GNIS ID:

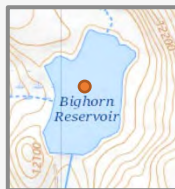
## Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude: 45.58061 (38.94741)

Longitude: -122.46208 (-77.36839)



General Location:

State: Washington

County: Clark

City/Town/  
Township/  
Borough:

Camas

For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude: 45.58061 (38.94741)

Longitude: -122.46208 (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude: 45.58961 (38.94741)

Longitude: -122.43572 (-77.36839)

Public Land Survey System:

Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian

S41 T1N R3E OF WILLAMETTE

## Feature Description

*Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)*

"Prune Hill Creek" flows for 1.7 miles. The creek starts at ~750 feet of elevation atop Prune Hill, a Boring Lava Field Vent. The Creek initially flows to the West through a small reservoir (Haight Reservoir, constructed in 1951 for private agricultural use). It continues West through hardwoods and near houses where it is spring fed as it slightly drops in elevation atop Prune Hill. Approximately a quarter mile before its confluence with the Columbia River, the creek turns South and drops in elevation rapidly down the flank of the hill before crossing under State Highway 14, under an active railroad line, under the Evergreen Highway, and then flows directly into the Columbia River at ~1 foot elevation. The mouth of the creek is just North of Ackerman Island and just North of the state line between Washington and Oregon. The stream ranges in width from about 0.5 meters to 1.0 meters wide along its length, opening to about 5 meters width at the mouth.

## Name Details

### Name information:

*Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.*

The proposed "Prune Hill Creek" flows entirely on top of and down the flanks of Prune Hill. Prune Hill is a Boring Lava Field Vent that rises ~750 feet above the Columbia River in Camas, Washington. In the 1880s and 1890s, Prune Hill was covered in Italian prune orchards. The name "Prune Hill" was adopted for the geographical feature in 1900 because of the excellent growing conditions on the hill for Italian Prunes. At that time, Clark County, Washington, was known as the prune capitol of the world, a title which continued until the Depression when the prune market collapsed. Despite the current lack of prune orchards atop Prune Hill, the name is still proudly used to describe the geographical feature and location within the town of Camas. The elementary school and a large park within the watershed of this creek are called "Prune Hill Elementary School" and "Prune Hill Sports Park". Miles of walking trails and multiple parks are within the watershed and adjacent to this creek (Klickitat Park, Prune Hill Sports Park, Prune Hill Elementary Playground). A group would like to create educational signage about creeks and watersheds and erosion control to erect along the walkways and within parks, but there is no name for this creek. Despite having year-round water within the stream bed and plenty of visibility because of the trails adjacent to the creek, a lack of a name for the creek (beyond "Tributary to Columbia River") has minimized the creek from gaining a proper level of importance and relevance for the community. USGS named the seismic fault running across the hill the "Prune Hill Fault". The proposed name of "Prune Hill Creek" is in alignment with the historical name of the hill and other geographic locations/features where the creek lies. Further, this name continues with the popular regional and cultural name that references more than 100 years of history.

### Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

*Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).*

Map of Camas Quadrangle with Prune Hill and proposed "Prune Hill Creek": [https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv\\_browse.pl?id=d38a6cabd371e395515b1f9b2cb8e469](https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=d38a6cabd371e395515b1f9b2cb8e469)

Naming of Prune Hill: [http://columbiariverimages.com/Regions/Places/prune\\_hill.html#:~:text=The%20name%20%22Prune%20Hill%22%20was,Other%20settlers%20followed.](http://columbiariverimages.com/Regions/Places/prune_hill.html#:~:text=The%20name%20%22Prune%20Hill%22%20was,Other%20settlers%20followed.)

Walking Trail and Park Map of Camas that includes Prune Hill: [https://www.cityofcamas.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/parks\\_and\\_recreation/page/8892/2015camas\\_trailmap\\_hi.pdf](https://www.cityofcamas.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/parks_and_recreation/page/8892/2015camas_trailmap_hi.pdf)

Prune Hill Elementary School: <https://www.camas.wednet.edu/schools-resources/elementary-schools/prune-hill-elementary/>

Prune Hill Sports Park: <https://www.cityofcamas.us/parksrec/page/prune-hill-sports-park>

Prune Hill orchards: <https://downtowncamas.com/wp-content/uploads/Prunes2.pdf>

USGS Prune Hill Fault: [https://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/3017/camas\\_map.pdf](https://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/3017/camas_map.pdf)

Haight Reservoir: <https://data.beaconjournal.com/dam/washington/clark-county/haight-reservoir-dam/wa01039/>

Is the name [commemorative](#)? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons?  Y  N

*Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.*

*If yes, please provide the following:*

Honoree's Date of Birth:

Honoree's Date of Death:

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*

Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area?  Y  N  Unknown

*If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):*

*Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.*

Is the name you are proposing intended to honor Native Americans, their language, or culture?  Y  N

*If yes, to ensure that the proposed name is appropriate, the BGN strongly advises proponents to work with Tribal Leaders, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and/or Native American linguists or other expert(s) associated with the Tribe to determine the acceptability of the proposed name and application. Please review [the BGN's Cultural Sensitivity for Native American Names guidance](#).*

*Proponents should also seek letters of endorsement from the governments (e.g., Tribal Councils) of any affected Tribes. Please indicate below, or in documentation submitted separately (with this proposal or any time after the proposal is submitted), any efforts to solicit Tribal input.*

## Additional Information +

Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name?  Y  N

*If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:*


Additional notes, including any Tribal input details


## Proponent Information


*Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):*


 Proponent's Name: Patrick Cooney

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email: pcooney@smith-root.com

 Mailing Address: 3815 NW 9th Loop  
Camas, WA 98607

 Phone: 352-262-1986

 Are you completing this form for someone else?  Y  N

*If yes, please fill out the following:*

Completed by:  
Full Name:   
Email:   
Mailing Address:   
Phone:

Caleb,

Thank you for your email regarding the potential naming of Prune Hill Creek. I intended to attend the meeting virtually, but was called out to the field that day for work, and was unable to attend.

I just finished watching the video record of the meeting. I thank the committee for their time, comments, questions, and ultimately for moving the motion forward for final consideration.

During the meeting, there was a question about the stream potentially having fish. I will help provide some information here to help answer this question.

Starting at the Columbia River (at the mouth of this creek) and proceeding upstream, there are just over 200 meters of creek that are used by fish. Then there is a culvert under State Route 14 (SR14) that acts as a fish barrier, stopping migratory fish from occupying upstream habitats. Perhaps some day, the migration barrier will be amended to allow migratory fish to move farther upstream.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has the following information about this fish passage barrier: [https://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/fishpassagephotos/Reports/999076\\_Report.pdf](https://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/fishpassagephotos/Reports/999076_Report.pdf)

Please note that this report states that Coho, Steelhead, Sea Run Cutthroat, and Resident Trout use this creek.

Hopefully that helps answer that question.

Additionally, there were questions/comments regarding the names being "Pruney" in this immediate area! That is an excellent observation by the committee! The entire hill is called Prune Hill because it historically was covered in Italian Prune Orchards and was previously considered the Prune Capitol of the World! Therefore, many of the public entities on the hill carry the name: Prune Hill Elementary School, Prune Hill Sports Park, Prune Hill Playground. Further, USGS named the seismic fault running through the hill the Prune Hill Fault. The name is well loved for its historical context and for defining the geographical feature (the hill). Similarly, the application is to help define the name of the geographical feature of the creek. I appreciate the committees time and consideration to help in that effort.

There was another comment from the committee where someone stated that there did not appear to be a commercial angle to this application. That commentor is correct. We have no commercial or financial benefit to this naming application or the naming of the creek as Prune Hill Creek.

Thank you to the committee for consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions or items that I can help with.

Patrick Cooney, Certified Fisheries Professional

Science Director | Solution Advisor



# Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

## Fish Passage & Diversion Screening Inventory Database Report Cover Sheet

The following report is extracted from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory Database (FPDSI). WDFW makes every attempt to keep these reports in sync with FPDSI; however, the dynamic nature of the data and workflows associated with maintaining the database may result in short-term differences.

Users are encouraged to contact WDFW to discuss appropriate use of the data and how we can assist with fish passage barrier removal or inventory. Please visit the Fish Passage web site for contact information at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/habitat-recovery/fish-passage/about>

### Disclaimers:

- Data presented here represent a snapshot observation of conditions in a dynamic environment that is subject to change. Fish passage data are also collected from a variety of agencies and sources. Therefore, WDFW makes no guarantee concerning the data's content, accuracy, completeness, or the results obtained from use of the data. WDFW assumes no liability for the data represented here.
- These data are not an attempt to provide you with an official agency response as to the impacts of your project on fish and wildlife.
- Note that some fish passage features, habitats or species may occur in areas not currently known to the WDFW Fish Passage division, and may not be reflected in this database. A lack of data does not necessarily indicate that a feature, habitat, or species are not present.
- Unauthorized attempts to alter or modify these data are strictly prohibited.
- Bankfull width measurements included in these reports should not be used for fish passage crossing design. They are solely for assessment purposes.
- The barrier status reported in this document is based on the swimming abilities of adult salmonids. Passabilities are a qualitative value, and should not be interpreted as a quantitative calculation. Please see page 1-4 of the Fish Passage Inventory, Assessment and Prioritization Manual for further clarification: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02061>
- EXIF data presented with Image Reports may be erroneous due to camera battery failures and resetting of camera clock functions.

### Abbreviations:

Most abbreviations in this report are defined in the Quick Reference Tables of the Fish Passage Inventory, Assessment, and Prioritization Manual. Additional commonly used abbreviations are defined as follows:

**NFB** = no potential salmonid use, **BB** = both banks, **LB** = left bank looking downstream, **RB** = right bank looking downstream, **US** or **U/S** = upstream, **DS** or **D/S** = downstream, **WSDrop** = water surface drop, **BFW** = bankfull width, **OHW** = ordinary high water, **SLW** = scour line width, **CMP** = corrugated metal pipe, **Q<sub>fp</sub>** = fish passage flow, **V&D** = Velocity and Depth, **ROW** = Right of Way

The FPDSI database often uses default values such as '-99.99' or '-999' to represent null values.

# WDFW Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory Database

## Site Description Report

Site ID

Project

Mitigated

### Geographic Coordinates

Latitude (WGS 84):	<input type="text" value="45.582375094"/>
Longitude (WGS 84):	<input type="text" value="-122.461379951"/>
East (NAD 83 HARN):	<input type="text" value="1,138,225.3"/>
North (NAD 83 HARN):	<input type="text" value="97,061.4"/>

### Waterbody

Stream:	<input type="text" value="unnamed"/>
Tributary To:	<input type="text" value="Columbia R"/>
WRIA:	<input type="text" value="28.0151"/>
River Mile:	<input type="text" value="-999.99"/>
Fish Use Potential:	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>
FUP Criteria:	<input type="text" value="Physical"/>

### General Location

Road Name:	<input type="text" value="SR 14"/>
Mile Post:	<input type="text" value="10.66"/>
County:	<input type="text" value="Clark"/>
WDFW Region:	<input type="text" value="5"/>

### Owner

Type:	<input type="text" value="State"/>
Name:	<input type="text" value="Washington State Department of Transportation"/>

### PI Species

<input type="checkbox"/> Sockeye	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sea Run Cutthroat
<input type="checkbox"/> Pink	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coho	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resident Trout
<input type="checkbox"/> Chum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steelhead	<input type="checkbox"/> Bull Trout

### Associated Features

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culvert	<input type="checkbox"/> Dam	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Barrier	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversion
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Culvert Xing	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Fishway	

### Location/Directions

### Site Comments

11/20/2021

These data represent a snapshot of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's current records. Due to the ongoing nature of assessment and inventory of these features, these data may not accurately represent conditions on the ground, and are subject to change.

# WDFW Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory Database

## Level A Culvert Assessment Report

Site ID: <b>999076</b>	Stream: <b>unnamed</b>	WRIA: <b>28.0151</b>
Latitude: <b>45.582375094</b>	Tributary To: <b>Columbia R</b>	Fish Use Potential: <b>Yes</b>
Longitude: <b>-122.461379951</b>		

<b>Data Source:</b> <input type="text" value="Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife"/>
Field Crew: <input type="text" value="Peter;Thompson"/> Review Date: <input type="text" value="3/13/2007"/>

Culvert Details								Level A Parameters					
ID	Shape	Material	Span	Rise	Length	WDIC	Apron	WSDrop	Location	Countersunk	Backwater	Slope (%)	Sediment
1.1	BOX	CPC	1.22	1.85	87.50	0.02	BE	2.20	Outlet	No		11.40	

All dimensions in meters

<b>Channel Description</b>	
Toe Width (m):	<input type="text" value="1.1"/>
Average Width (m):	<input type="text" value="-99.99"/>
Culvert/Stream Width Ratio:	<input type="text" value="1.11"/>
<b>Plunge Pool</b>	
Length (m):	<input type="text" value="-999.99"/>
Max Depth (m):	<input type="text" value="-99.99"/>
OHW Width (m):	<input type="text" value="-999.99"/>
<b>Road</b>	
Fill Depth (m):	<input type="text" value="15.00"/>



<b>Assessment Results</b>			
Tidal Influence:	<input type="text"/>	Tidegate Present:	<input type="text" value="No"/>
Barrier:	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>	Passability (%):	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Reason:	<input type="text" value="WS Drop"/>	Fishway Present:	<input type="text" value="No"/>
		Method:	<input type="text" value="Level A"/>
		Recheck:	<input type="text"/>

<b>Comments</b>
Verified 42m of fish useable habitat Upstream (13% gradient), then end fish use due to gradient increase (20% to 35% for 160+m.)

<b>Potential Habitat Gain</b>			
Survey Type:	<input type="text" value="TD"/>	Spawning (sq m):	<input type="text" value="-999"/>
Significant Reach:	<input type="text" value="No"/>	Rearing (sq m):	<input type="text" value="-999"/>
		Length (m):	<input type="text" value="42"/>
		<b>PI Total</b>	<input type="text"/>

11/20/2021

These data represent a snapshot of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's current records. Due to the ongoing nature of assessment and inventory of these features, these data may not accurately represent conditions on the ground, and are subject to change.



WDFW Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory Database

Habitat Survey Summary Report

Site ID: <b>999076</b>	Latitude: <b>45.582375094</b>	Longitude: <b>-122.461379951</b>	WRIA: <b>28.0151</b>
Stream: <b>unnamed</b>	Tributary To: <b>Columbia R</b>		PI Total:

Survey Type

Spreadsheet File(s):

**Downstream Survey**

Date:  Crew:  Length (m):

Downstream Comments:

Observed a few dozen juvenile Coho at confluence with Columbia R.

**Upstream Survey**

Date:  Crew:  Length (m):

Upstream Comments:

20%+ gradient from 41.5m US to end of survey.

**Potential Habitat Gain**

Lineal (m):

Spawning Area (sq m):

Rearing Area (sq m):

Distribution  
 Anadromous  
 Resident Only  
 Unknown

Gain Direction (Resident Only):

**Potential Species Benefit**

Sockeye / Kokanee

Pink

Chum

Chinook

Coho

Steelhead

Searun Cutthroat

Resident Trout

Bull Trout

11/20/2021

These data represent a snapshot of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's current records. Due to the ongoing nature of assessment and inventory of these features, these data may not accurately represent conditions on the ground, and are subject to change.

# Prune Hill Creek - CLARK COUNTY



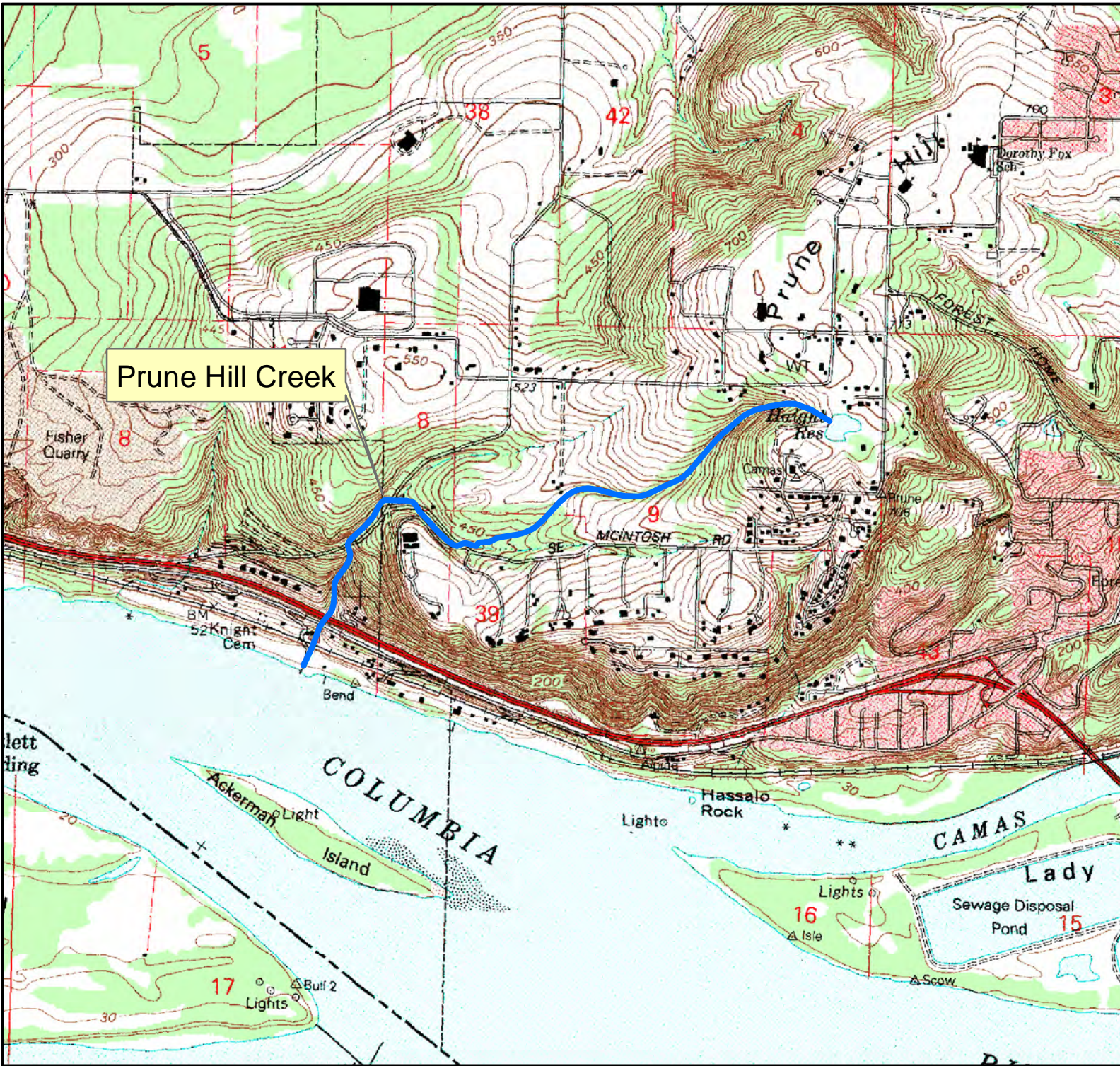
Stream; 1.7 miles; starting from Haight Reservoir on Prune Hill at 45° 35' 22.146" N, 122° 26' 13.981" W, flows W then S to enter the Columbia River at 45° 34' 50.066" N, 122° 27' 43.493" W.

Proposed name references the source of the stream, Prune Hill. In the 1880s and 1890s, the hill was covered in Italian prune orchards due to the excellent growing conditions of the area.

Prune Hill was named in 1900 at the time when Clark County WA was known as the prune capital of the world.



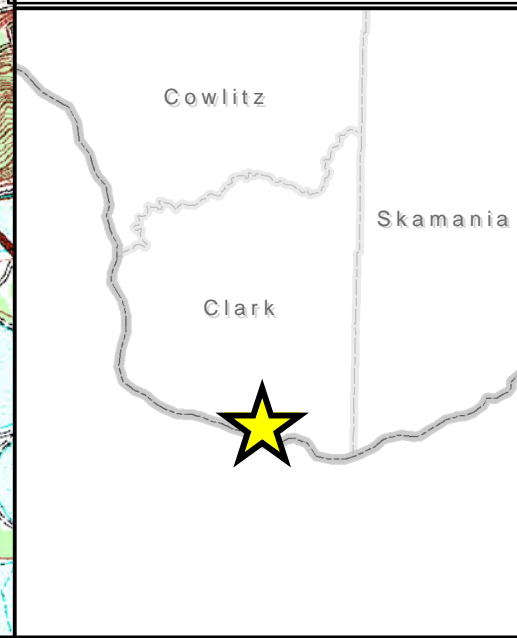
# Prune Hill Creek - CLARK COUNTY



Stream; 1.7 miles; starting from Haight Reservoir on Prune Hill at 45° 35' 22.146" N, 122° 26' 13.981" W, flows W then S to enter the Columbia River at 45° 34' 50.066" N, 122° 27' 43.493" W.

Proposed name references the source of the stream, Prune Hill. In the 1880s and 1890s, the hill was covered in Italian prune orchards due to the excellent growing conditions of the area.

Prune Hill was named in 1900 at the time when Clark County WA was known as the prune capital of the world.



**Wild Plum Creek**

*Stevens County - New Name*

**Township:** 32N

**Range:** 37E

**Section:** 22,23,24

**USGS Quad:** Inchelium & Wellington Peak

**Location Description:** Stream; 1.5 miles long, heads at 48° 15' 9.616" N, 118° 6' 21.246" W, flows W to enter the Columbia River at 48° 15' 27.928" N, 118° 8' 1.785" W, 3.3 miles S of Gifford.

**Proposal Summary:** Wild Plum Creek: Stream; 1.5 miles long, heads at 48° 15' 9.616" N, 118° 6' 21.246" W, flows W to enter the Columbia River at 48° 15' 27.928" N, 118° 8' 1.785" W, 3.3 miles S of Gifford.; Named for the wild plums that grow along the creek.; Stevens County, Washington; Secs 22, 23, and 24, T32N, R37E, Willamette Meridian; 48° 15' 27.928" N, 118° 8' 1.785" W; USGS Map - Inchelium & Wellington Peak 1:24,000

Proposed name references the large amount of wild plums that grow along the creek. The proponent and his wife harvest the plums along the creek every year.

Landowner:

Bear Basin LLC

Proponent

2 Private Citizens

WS DOT flows under Hwy 25

US Bureau of Reclamation

"Plum" features in WA:

Plum Point - Lincoln County

Plum Point - Mason County

**Proponent:**

Edward Slonaker

3747C Hwy 25 S

Gifford, WA 99131

**Proposal Received:** 5/21/2023

**Initial Consideration:** 12/11/2023

**Final Consideration:**

**WA Committee Decision:**

**WA Board Decision:**

**US Board Decision:**

**Opinions:**

## Wild Plum Creek

### Proposal Information

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Proposed name	<b>Wild Plum Creek</b>
Proposal type	new name for unnamed feature
Current official name	n/a
GNIS ID	n/a
Proponent	Edward Slonaker; Gifford, WA
Date proposed	4/25/23
Quarterly Review List	452

### Feature Details

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Primary coordinates	48.25475, -118.13555
Secondary coordinates	48.25261, -118.10603
Feature class	Stream
Feature size	1.46 miles long
Feature description	Heads 1.4 mi. SW of Wellington Peak, flows generally W into Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake on the Columbia River
Name history	Named for wild plums that are found along the stream
USGS primary topo map	Inchelium 1:24,000
State(s)	Washington
County(s)	Stevens County
PLSS	Secs 22-24, T32N R 37W, Willamette Meridian
Land ownership	Private / Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area

### BGN decisions

- None

### Other Names

- Unpublished names: None found
- Published names: None found

### Case Summary

---

The new name Wild Plum Creek is proposed for a 1.46-mile-long tributary of the Columbia River in Stevens County. The stream flows into Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake on the Columbia River, and the stream's mouth is within Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, managed by the National Park Service. The remainder of the stream is on private property.

The proponent states that the stream is intermittent and that they have only seen water flowing in it once in the three years they have lived there. They also report that some neighbors have seen the stream flood the road near the mouth.

The proponent states that the “[n]ame is derived from the incredible number of ‘wild’ plum trees growing along it. We harvest these plums. . . every year. . . .”

The stream “blue line” shown on the 1:24,000-scale USGS topographic map (and digitized in NHD) does not match the stream’s flow based on aerial imagery. The coordinates in this case summary reflect the flow derived from aerial imagery.

### **Stakeholder Input**

---

Local government	Stevens County
State Names Authority	Washington
Federal Agency	National Park Service
Federally Recognized Tribes	All federally recognized Tribes contacted under Policy X

## Domestic Geographic Name Proposal Form

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is responsible for standardizing the names of geographic features within the 50 States and in other areas under the sovereignty of the United States. The BGN retains the legal authority to promulgate all official names and locations of natural features (e.g. mountains, rivers, valleys), as well as canals, channels, reservoirs, and other select feature types.

This form is to propose a new name or name, spelling, or application change for a geographic feature for Federal use. A proponent should carefully review the proposal prior to submission to ensure that it is consistent with the [BGN policies](#). Please note all fields with a red outline are required prior to submitting this form.

The proponent should also be aware that the entire proposal—including personal identifying information and any associated correspondence—is in the public domain and may be made publicly available at any time.

Submit Proposal:

1. Email this form and supporting documentation to: [BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

i. Save PDF as 'ST\_GeographicName' for example 'CO\_BearCreek'

ii. Email Subject: ST\_GeographicName

OR 2. Send by mail to:

U.S. BGN Executive Secretary, Domestic Names  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS-523  
Reston, VA 20192

Contact Us:

[BGNESEC@usgs.gov](mailto:BGNESEC@usgs.gov)

*Please note that anything submitted by mail will be delayed.*

## Naming Basics

Proposed Name:

Is this name in current local use?

Y  N

What is the Feature Class?

Is this to change an existing name?

Y  N

*If yes, please provide the official name and Feature ID as it appears in [the Geographic Names Information System \(GNIS\)](#).*

GNIS Name:

Feature ID:

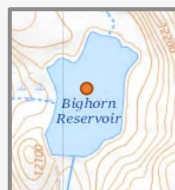
## Location Basics



Where is the feature?

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)

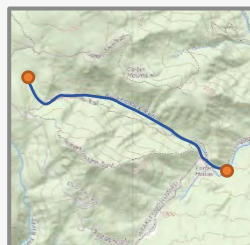


For Linear Features (e.g. stream or valley):

Mouth/Confluence

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)



Source/Headwater

Latitude:  (38.94741)

Longitude:  (-77.36839)

*General Location:*

State:

County:

City/Town/  
Township/  
Borough:

*Public Land Survey System:*

*Section(s), Township, Range, Meridian*



## Feature Description

*Physical shape, length, width, etc. (Maps can be submitted separately by email)*



## Name Details

### Name information:

*Please provide relevant information about the proposed name, such as origin, meaning, how long it has been in current use, as well as current or historical significance. Also include why you believe the feature requires a name or name change and why the proposed name is appropriate. Describe any documents that you will be submitting (separately by email) to support your proposal.*



Please provide a list of supporting documentation, including any web links:

*Examples: Published sources showing the proposed name or letters of support (local government, historical society, etc.).*



---

Is the name [commemorative](#)? Does the name honor or refer to a person or persons?  Y  N

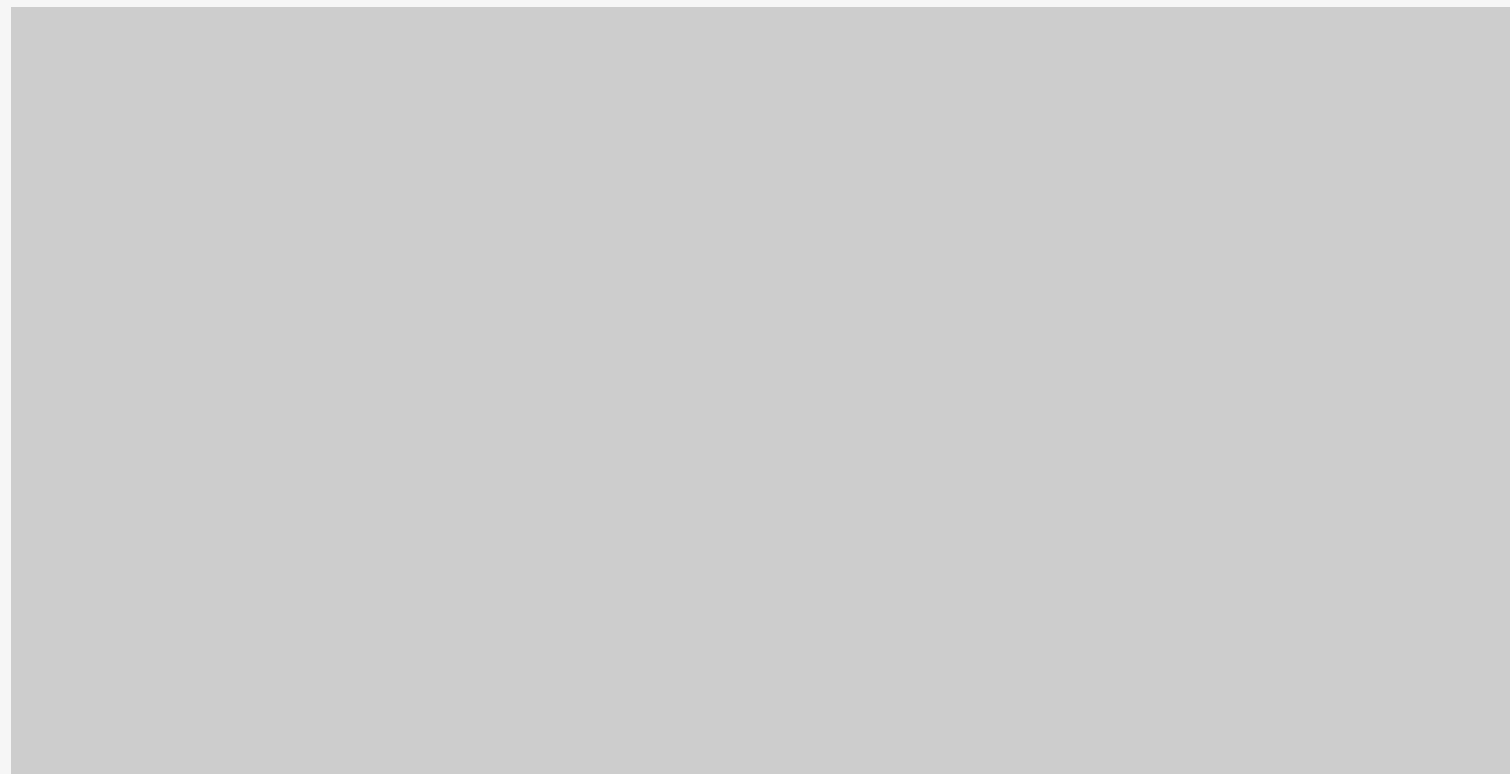
*Please note that the BGN will only accept proposals for names that are intended to honor a person or persons deceased at least five years. The BGN will disapprove names that could be construed to honor living persons. The person being honored should have had either (1) some direct or long-term association with the feature, or (2) have made a significant contribution to the area, community, or State in which it is located; or (3) have outstanding national or international recognition. The BGN discourages the use of an individual's full name except to avoid ambiguity.*

*If yes, please provide the following:*

Honoree's Date of Birth:

Honoree's Date of Death:

Short biography and significance or association with the geographic feature: *(list any additional honorees here)*



Is the feature in a Wilderness Area or Wilderness Study Area?  Y  N  Unknown

If yes, please provide your justification for making an exception to [the Wilderness Policy](#):

Please note that the BGN will not approve new names for unnamed features within wilderness areas or wilderness study areas, unless an overriding need can be demonstrated by the proponent.

## Additional Information


Is there any local opposition or conflict with the proposed name?  Y  N

If yes, please explain and describe any opposition:


Additional notes:

## Proponent Information


Please provide one form of contact (email preferred):

 Proponent's Name:

Agency or Organization, if applicable:

 Email:

 Mailing Address:

 Phone:

 Are you completing this form for someone else?  Y  N

If yes, please fill out the following:

Completed by:  
Full Name:   
Email:   
Mailing Address:   
Phone:



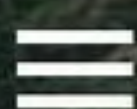








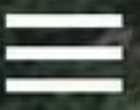




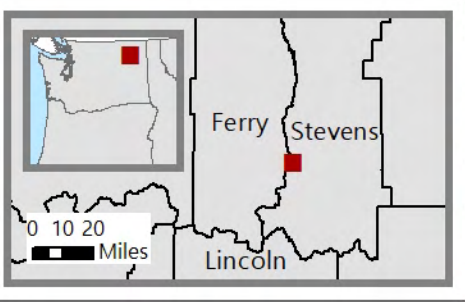
2D



Bissell Flats



Bissell Flats

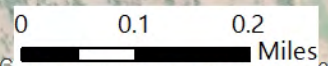


Lake Roosevelt  
National  
Recreation Area

*mouth from imagery  
and proponent*

*NHD flowline*

*Wild Plum Creek  
(proposed)*



**Comments**

**Received**

**From:** [O'Donnell, Matthew J](#)  
**To:** [MAKI, CALEB \(DNR\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Carlson, Tom](#)  
**Subject:** Re: BGN: Wild Plum Creek proposal (new name), Stevens County (Review List 452)  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 10, 2023 6:48:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)  
[NPS no objection.pdf](#)

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External Email

Hi Caleb,

NPS has no objection to the Wild Plum Creek name. We worked out that "Bissell Creek" probably does indeed refer to the creek that flows past the community of Bissell. NPS seemingly has no interest in proposing that Bissell Creek be made official. If this is something the WA committee can do or wants to do, let me know. This doesn't seem to be a name used on any authoritative-enough source to add directly to GNIS.

Matt

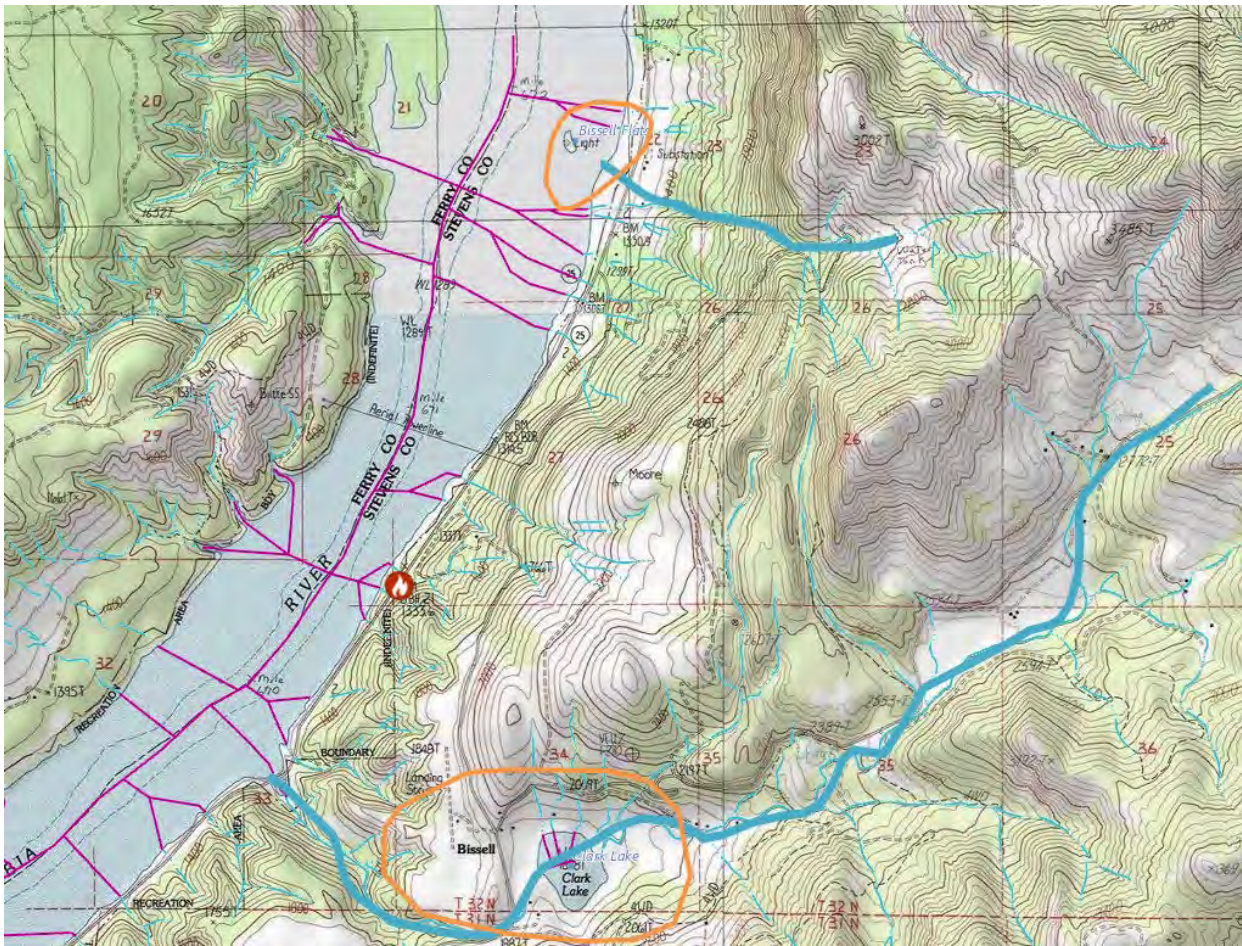
Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff  
Phone: 703-648-4553  
Email: [mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)

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**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J <[mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 10:21 AM  
**To:** MAKI, CALEB (DNR) <[CALEB.MAKI@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:CALEB.MAKI@dnr.wa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Carlson, Tom <[tcarlson@usgs.gov](mailto:tcarlson@usgs.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: BGN: Wild Plum Creek proposal (new name), Stevens County (Review List 452)  
Hi Caleb, a quick follow up on this case.

Our NPS member asked Lake Roosevelt NRA (LARO) to review the proposal; our USBR member doesn't think USBR will need to comment. LARO responded that the stream in question is called **Bissell Creek**; it flows into the Columbia River at [Bissell Flats](#).

There was a fire near there earlier this month: <http://www.wildcad.net/WCWA-NECopen.htm> (STEVENS COUNTY - BISSELL CREEK 32N R37E Sec 27 48 14.226, -118 8.928 [ = 48.237100, -118.148800]). The stream in question doesn't flow through Sec 27, but fires are named after nearby features. See the map below. I plotted the fire coordinates.



Could you check any of your state sources to see if the stream that flows into the Columbia River at 48.25475, -118.13555 is locally called Bissell Creek? It would make more sense if the longer stream that flowed directly past Bissell had that name, but names are often illogical.

Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff  
Phone: 703-648-4553  
Email: mjdodonnell@usgs.gov

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**From:** O'Donnell, Matthew J  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 3, 2023 3:58 PM  
**To:** MAKI, CALEB (DNR) <CALEB.MAKI@dnr.wa.gov>  
**Cc:** Carlson, Tom <tcarlson@usgs.gov>  
**Subject:** BGN: Wild Plum Creek proposal (new name), Stevens County (Review List 452)  
Hi Caleb,

I hope and your family are doing well this summer!

[Review List 452](#) has two proposals for review by the Committee. I'll send the other in a separate thread. I think Jenny already emailed you a bit about each of them.

The first is for the new name Wild Plum Creek for a tributary of the Columbia River in Stevens County. The mouth is within Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, so we'll ask NPS for a recommendation and share that with you. (Although now I'm seeing that the county GIS data show the shoreline of Lake Roosevelt is managed by US Bureau of Reclamation)

Mouth: [48.25475, -118.13555](#)

Source: [48.25261, -118.10603](#) (the usual slow links)

The proponent collects wild plums along the stream. The proponent owns land along part of the stream and there are other landowners.

It's a very intermittent stream, but the BGN allows naming of streams of any kind, seasonal or not. The mouth in NHD doesn't match the imagery—see the map in the packet. We can't do much to update NHD.

Will you begin processing cases before a new Committee Chair is chosen? I trust that you'll do the relevant local outreach as usual. The BGN's Tribal deadline for recommendations will be at the end of September. If we get any input from anyone, I'll share it with you.

Thanks!

Matt

Matt O'Donnell  
BGN research staff  
Phone: 703-648-4553  
Email: [mjodonnell@usgs.gov](mailto:mjodonnell@usgs.gov)

## MAKI, CALEB (DNR)

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**From:** eslonaker elpilon.com <eslonaker@elpilon.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 3:35 PM  
**To:** MAKI, CALEB (DNR)  
**Subject:** Wild Plum Creek

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### External Email

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Just wanted to thank you, again, for calling. I wasn't really expecting anything to happen until the following year. Like I was telling you, I worked for 36 years with Dept of Army back in Texas, so I'm quite used to the "speed" of these things.

If you, or anyone in the committee, would like to see what "Wild Plum Creek" looks like in action, I posted a video on Facebook back in April from my drone. It goes from the shore of Lake Roosevelt up the mountain a little ways before I almost clipped a tree branch and called it quits.

And, again, if you or any of your team find themselves in the area, give us a shout. My wife and I (I don't mind saying) are home artisans of delicious and crafty things. Stop on by!

Cheers!  
Ed.

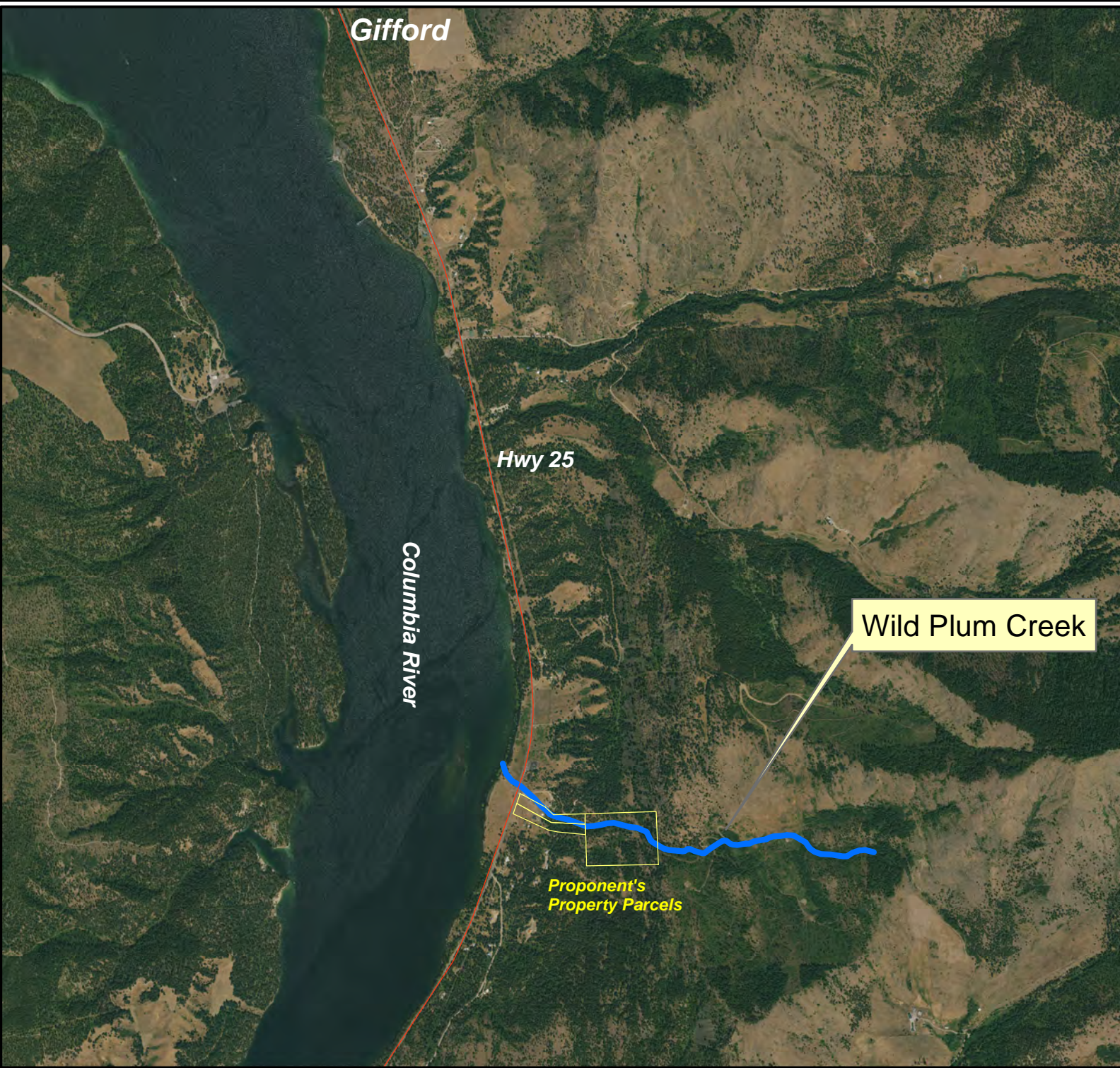
Edward & Kim Slonaker  
3747C Hwy 25 S  
Gifford, WA 99131-9707  
Home: (509) 722-3392  
Cell: (361) 815-6228



Edward Slonaker - Wanted to get some video, with the...  
facebook.com



# Wild Plum Creek - STEVENS COUNTY



Stream; 1.5 miles long, heads at 48° 15' 9.616" N, 118° 6' 21.246" W, flows W to enter the Columbia River at 48° 15' 27.928" N, 118° 8' 1.785" W, 3.3 miles S of Gifford.

Proposed name references the large amount of wild plums that grow along the creek. The proponent and his wife harvest the plums along the creek every year, and the creek flows through the proponent's property.

