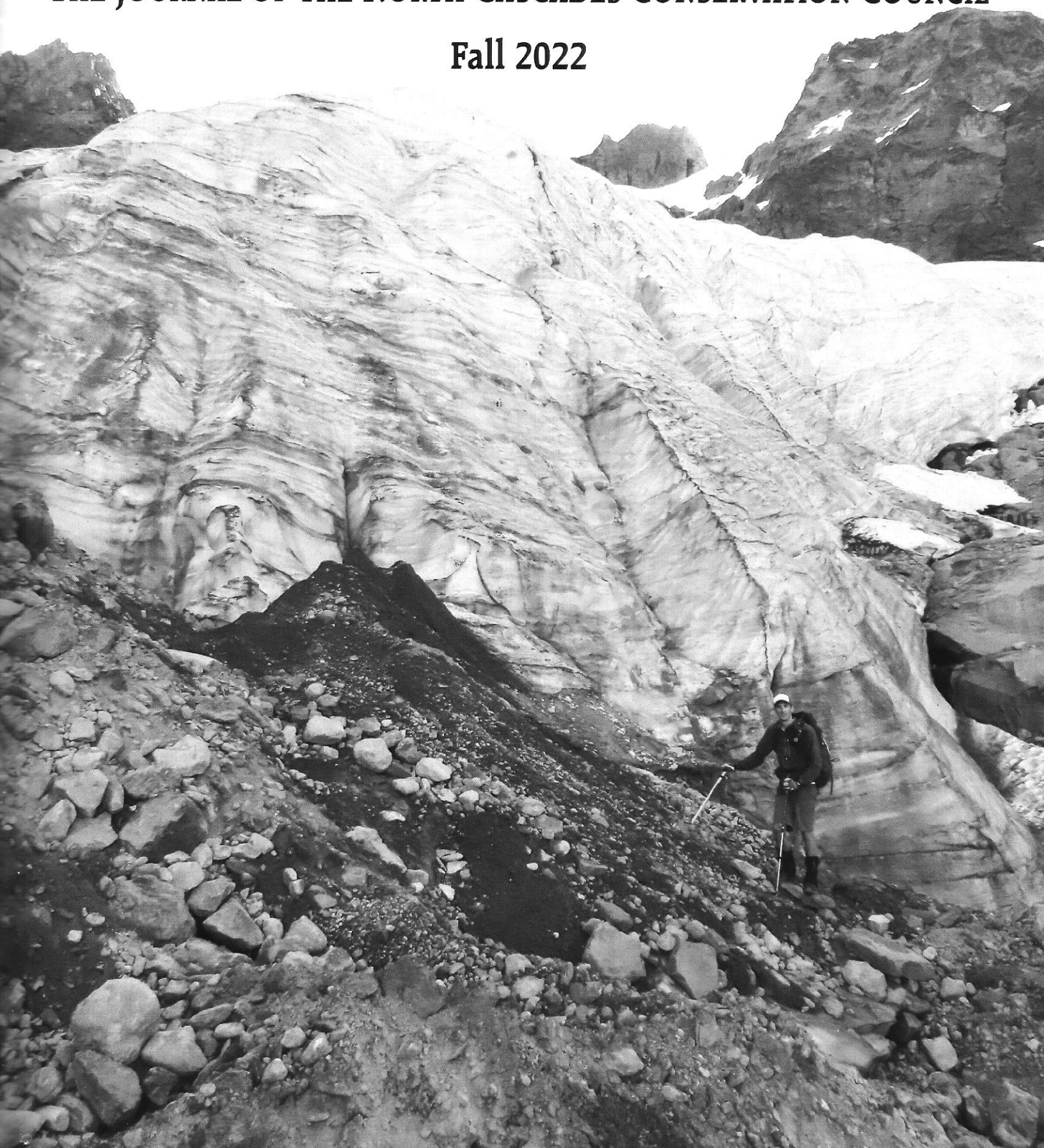


THE WILD CASCADES

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BOOK REVIEW

Tanum by Susan Summit Cyr

Reviewed by Joan Burton

Susan Cyr has written a book, titled “Tanum” about the history of Bumping Lake that is part personal memoir, part regional history, and part tribute to the beauty of the place. She alternates her own lived experiences with those of other heroic characters in Bumping Lake’s past. It is a beautiful book about a beautiful place.

Cyr documents overcoming the problems of construction, such as building the dam during sub-freezing temperatures in 1910 with minimum equipment. Later, fishermen, trappers, herders, miners, and prospectors came to the lake, where they met Jack Nelson, the first Bureau of Reclamation dam overseer, and his wife Kitty, proprietor of a guest lodge.

Jack and Kitty had spent their honeymoon in the overseer’s cabin at Bumping Lake. In their first winter they explored the forests around the lake and found a magnificent grove of old growth hemlocks and pines. They were so massive and inspiring that they named the place the Sanctuary. It is still there today. In addition to Kitty’s lodge, other manmade features include a campground and a lakeshore resort, now closed.

Miners excavated a good amount of gold and silver before the dam was built and later built a high mining camp called Copper City. Cyr has found evidence of the claims and blazes used by prospectors in the 1890s. Without heavy equipment, more than 300 miners relied on hand work and dynamite. One miner, Tom Fife, who wanted to show his patriotism, gave 10 acres of his claim to the Boy Scouts for a permanent summer camp. In 1915 tungsten was discovered. Though it was recognized as potentially valuable for weaponry, mining it and getting it down from 4500 feet proved dangerous. Occasional avalanches exacted a deadly toll.

The water impounded by the dam was intended in part for Yakima orchard growers and farmers. It was the first of a series of six planned dams, which would eventually flood many more acres of forest

and mountains. That plan has never been withdrawn, though the need for the water has dwindled. Homeowners today dread the possibility of the raising of the existing dam to 138 feet and protest the economic justifications given by the Bureau of Reclamation as untrue and unnecessary.

Bumping Lake was known for its abundant stocks of fish. Fishermen came from miles away to catch Chinook salmon, sockeye or kokanee, and trout. But because “scrap fish” had also begun to appear in Bumping Lake, a massive fish poisoning by state fish biologists, approved by the Bureau of Reclamation, killed every fish in Bumping Lake. Cyr reports that fish have never again been as abundant as they once were.

The Depression brought widespread hunger, poverty, and trappers who lived off the land year-round. As in much of the rural west, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was introduced to build and help maintain government structures. A CCC camp was built and local outdoorsmen were recruited to run the camp. Boys who were residents later remembered the hard work that helped prepare them for

adulthood and the beauty of the place.

Several miles down the road from Bumping Lake at Goose Prairie lived two women, Kay Kershaw and Pat Kane, later replaced by Isabelle Lynn, who helped build and open a popular guest lodge, the Double K, in 1947. Retired lodge cook Kitty Nelson shared her recipes and helped Isabelle prepare herself to feed her guests. Because they wanted their guests to know and appreciate the wilderness around them, the women took them on high horseback trips to see it for themselves. However, the “Double K girls” were horrified when U.S. Forest Service clear cutting came to Bumping Lake. They had thought it was immune from logging. They fought the Forest Service to stave off more encroaching clearcut logging and road building.

A frequent guest was Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who became a friend to them and to Bumping Lake. For decades he escaped to its beauty from pressures of judicial work. He bought land adjoining the Double K lodge and built a cabin of his own. He believed the entire area should be set aside as a wil-



Justice Douglas flanked by the Double K girls at Goose Prairie.

derness. Several times he issued Supreme Court decisions by long distance phone from Goose Prairie, once briefly stopping the bombing in Vietnam.

The original Wilderness Act required that sections of untouched land in different regions be set aside. Kay and Isabelle, the Goose Prairie Girls, drafted a proposal that the primeval forests of Bumping Lake area be defined and saved as the Cougar Lakes Wilderness. The ultimate land to be set aside was 125,000 acres. Justice Douglas joined in the battle. Though it was sponsored by N3C, the Wilderness Society, and many other groups, the measure was not passed.

Douglas was undeterred. He contacted the head of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and Senator Henry Jackson and organized other local conservationists into a team. The Double K Girls led pack trips into the wilderness they called "field studies" to familiarize more people with the area. One trip led to a disastrous exposure of logging damage already underway. Douglas was outraged, and brought pressure to prevent three more timber sales from taking place.

In 1964 the Wilderness Act was passed, but without the Cougar Lakes proposal. Douglas didn't give up. He wrote editorials and summoned heads of government agencies to Goose Prairie to talk about saving the wilderness. His health began to fail and he had a massive stroke. He resigned from the Court when he became incapacitated, and died in 1980.

In 1984 the Washington Wilderness Act was finally passed, this time including the Cougar Lakes Wilderness area. After 24 years of struggle the Double K girls rejoiced, and remembered the influence of Justice Douglas in its support. It was named the William O. Douglas Wilderness in his honor. The Bumping River region, or Tanum, had been saved.

The remaining threat today is the continuing possible raising of the dam and subsequent flooding of the forest lands, campgrounds and mountain ridges around it. Opposition to the heightened dam continues.

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Letter to the Editor

August 22, 2022

Editor:

Thanks to N3C and Dr. Miles McPhee for his Spring-Summer TWC article, "How 'non-use' value of restoring salmon made a questionable project 'cost effective'." N3C members will be particularly interested in the WSU Water Research Center's (WRC) 2014 B-C Analysis of [Yakima Basin Integrated Plan] YBIP Projects (pp. 108-109). In addition to looking at the Yakima Plan's sockeye salmon value estimates used to justify billions of dollars of new storage dams, the WRC estimated that using the same methodology (willingness-to-pay to protect 1,000 acres of ancient forest to be flooded by new Bumping Reservoir) the damages (costs) from this lost ancient forest was estimated at \$1.85 billion. This lowered the Benefit/Cost ratio of a new Bumping Lake dam to a range of five to two cents of benefits for every dollar spent. A thousand acres of ancient forest worth \$1.85 billion is another reason for saving ancient forests. (Ref

https://wrc.wsu.edu/documents/2014/12/ybip_bca_swwrc_dec2014.pdf/)

As Dr. McPhee noted, past studies, going back over a half century, of a new Bumping Lake Dam never penciled out. As a result, in January 2008, the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) and Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a Draft Planning Report/EIS Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study, Yakima Project, Washington. The BuRec eliminated a new Bumping Lake Dam as an alternative for a number of reasons, including that the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area, approximately 170,000 acres, is adjacent to the existing Bumping Lake (pp. 2-109 to 2-112). (Ref: <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/studies/yakimastoragestudy/reports/eis/draft/draft-pr-eis.pdf>)

However, Gov. Gregoire, blocked from proceeding with a massive Black Rock dam/storage project east of Yakima, required a separate Ecology FEIS in June 2009, which included a new Bumping Lake dam and outlined all the Yakima Plan elements that were later rubber stamped by the Bureau of Reclamation and Ecology's Yakima Workgroup. Ref: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0912009.pdf>

The Washington Legislature only got around to approving the Yakima Plan

in 2013, in order to purchase 50,241 of privately owned cut-over forests (the Teanaway Community Forest) for close to \$100 million, which had little to nothing to do with new water supplies. RCW 90.38.120(1)(a) also made clear that the Washington state taxpayers would pay for half of the billions that the total Yakima Plan would cost (although state taxpayers could pay 100 percent of any individual projects, such as a new Bumping Lake dam).

For a large collection of national, regional, state, and local environmental and conservation organization opposition to uneconomical and environmentally damaging water projects in the Yakima River Basin see: http://www.ucrsierraclub.org/ucr/yakima/water_overview.html

For N3C members following Ecology's efforts to grab more water out of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, see: <https://crosscut.com/2015/09/the-search-for-peace-on-icicle-creek>. In 2006, the Legislature gave Ecology a new mission: "to aggressively pursue the development of [new] water supplies," by, in effect, creating a state version of the Bureau of Reclamation. RCW 90.90.005(2). In addition, the Legislature required Ecology to complete a Columbia river water supply inventory by November 15, 2006, to be updated annually (RCW 90.90.040(2)), and a Columbia river long-term water supply and demand forecast (Forecast) by November 15, 2006, to be updated every five years (RCW 90.90.040(3)). Ecology finally issued the latest Forecast in August 2022, nearly eight months late and without, as of mid-August, any response to the numerous public comments and concerns submitted on the draft Forecast. <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2112006.pdf>

Even though the Forecast did not consider the potential for water conservation by either municipal or agricultural users to alleviate some of the supply and demand vulnerabilities and ignored new dam proposals in the Yakima Basin and water grabs in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, it is still worth reviewing to gain an insight into how far Ecology has strayed from the mission of environmental protection it projected over the first four decades of Ecology's existence.

Finally, although the accompanying article "Maykut family among those

Letter to the Editor

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objecting to raising Bumping Dam," (p. 17) mentions that the Bumping dam was built in 1910 and was later "remodeled to help provide power and help in the restoration of sockeye salmon runs," a review of Bureau of Reclamation studies and documents does not indicate any later remodel, power generation, or sockeye salmon restoration, and remains a barrier to sockeye salmon runs.

N3C member David E. Ortman
Seattle

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