



Appendix B

TIMELINE OF EVENTS
RELATED TO FISH STOCKING IN THE
NORTH CASCADES COMPLEX

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The following is a summary of the events related to the history of the North Cascades Complex, fish stocking of mountain lakes in the North Cascades Complex, and litigation and agreements between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the National Park Service (NPS).

5,000 B.C. – Native Americans inhabited the area, living from the land by fishing, hunting, and gathering.

Late 1700s – The first Euro-Americans began to settle the area.

1814 – The first recorded crossing of the North Cascades by European fur trader, Alexander Ross.

1846 – The United States established title to the Oregon Territory.

1850s – Congress passed the *Homestead Act* and Donation Land Claim Laws to encourage settlement of the area.

Late 1800s – Lakes were first stocked with exotic trout by settlers for food and recreation.

1890s – Congress established two large forest reserves in the North Cascades region that were administered by the General Land Office of the Department of the Interior. Out of these reserves, Congress created Mount Rainier National Park in 1899, and the remaining land was later transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service, which established five national forests in the area.

1905 – President Roosevelt transferred jurisdiction of the forest reserves from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the newly created U.S. Forest Service.

1907 – The Washington National Forest was created.

1924 – The Washington National Forest was renamed Mount Baker National Forest.

1930s – Stocking had become an established practice in the North Cascades. The Washington Department of Fish and Game (now the Department of Fish and Wildlife) took over responsibility for stocking, which became a major component of its recreational fishing program. Also in the 1930s, recreational groups such as the Washington State Hi-Lakers and Trail Blazers, Inc. were formed. The groups' purpose was to experience and enhance fishing opportunities in the high mountain lakes by carrying out stocking programs. By 1969, the WDFW and fishing groups had stocked 75 lakes in what is now the North Cascades Complex. The lakes that were stocked were thought to be able to support fish populations.

1963 – President Kennedy ordered a review of the North Cascades region in order to determine the highest and best use of the area.

1968 – On October 2, the North Cascades National Park Service Complex was created from land previously included in the Mount Baker National Forest. The purpose and significance of the North Cascades Complex was essentially to preserve and protect lands and provide recreational opportunities for public enjoyment.

1969-1977 – Fish stocking dropped to only four permitted fish plants in the park and seven in the Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas during this eight-year period.



1975 – The park superintendent instituted a policy that prohibited fish stocking in naturally barren (fish-free) lakes and would not stock those lakes into which native trout had been introduced, allowing naturally reproducing trout to remain. The policy would not affect the two national recreation areas. The superintendent received considerable anger and resistance from fishing groups (Hi-Lakers and Trail Blazers) and the Washington Department of Game, as well as political pressure from Senator Henry M. Jackson’s office (Louter 1998). In response, the superintendent proposed a policy variance that would consider stocking on a lake-by-lake basis and not include lakes containing reproducing (self-sustaining) populations or that were fishless at the time. The policy variance was made in hopes of appeasing the Washington Department of Game and possibly lead to a more formal memorandum of understanding between the two agencies. The superintendent also noted the possibility of complete negation of the original policy because some disgruntled anglers might illegally stock exotic species of fish in the high lakes to continue the fishery.

1979 – The NPS issued a management policy variance and entered into agreement with the Washington Department of Game that allowed stocking of nonnative trout to continue at regular intervals in selected lakes.

1985 – The NPS attempted to phase out stocking but received strong objection from the Department of Game. Intense public debate and congressional interest elevated the issue to a national level. Both agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 15, 1985 (see appendix A for a copy of the MOU).

June 12, 1986 – The director of the NPS issued a policy statement that placed all mountain lakes in the North Cascades Complex into three categories: (1) natural fish-free waters, (2) self-sustaining fish population waters, and (3) continue-to-stock waters. The policy basically allowed fish stocking to occur in waters that currently had fish populations and allowed other waters to remain fish-free. It acknowledged that some lakes might be “potential candidates for continued fish stocking . . .” It called for a review to “determine which waters warrant management as an enhanced recreational fishery, and for which continued fish stocking is to be an acceptable action.” The statement suggested a research effort that would focus on the following: (1) establish current fish and aquatic habitat baseline conditions, (2) monitor impacts of fish stocking, and (3) determine changes over time referenced against current baseline or undisturbed natural conditions. The intent of the research would be to provide an informed basis for fish-stocking management in the future (see appendix A for a copy of the 1986 NPS memorandum [“policy waiver”]).

1987 – The Washington Department of Game (name changed to Department of Wildlife) announced plans to stock 12 lakes in the North Cascades Complex that were not approved by the NPS for fish stocking. The NPS responded with a warning that anyone caught stocking these lakes would be issued a violation notice and prosecuted in federal court. No stocking occurred.

1988 – A lawsuit was brought by the North Cascades Conservation Council against the NPS. The council alleged that the environmental assessment associated with the 1988 *General Management Plan* for the North Cascades Complex was not in compliance with the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA).

July 12, 1988 – The Department of Wildlife dropped their 1987 and 1988 plans to stock fish. The NPS and the Department of Wildlife agreed to sign a 12-year Supplemental Agreement (see appendix A) to the 1985 MOU that allowed fish stocking to continue in 17 lakes and allowed self-sustaining fish populations to continue in 23 lakes while the NPS conducted research. It also stipulated that any additions or deletions to the list of lakes would be made only by mutual agreement and added the caveat that research results would be considered in future decisions.



1988 – The NPS initiated a long-term research effort through Oregon State University to evaluate the effects of fish stocking on native biota in mountain lakes.

November 16, 1988 – The *Washington Wilderness Act* was passed.

1991 – A Consent Decree (see appendix A for a copy) between the NPS and the North Cascades Conservation Council was signed. The Consent Decree, among many things, dictated that the “National Park Service conduct a NEPA review of the fish stocking of naturally fish-free lakes . . . upon completion of ongoing research.” It also stipulated that the review would evaluate management measures to protect all natural stocks.

2000 – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW, formerly Department of Game and then Department of Wildlife) agreed to a proposal by the NPS to extend the project two years (to 2002) while the U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division (USGS-BRD) finished a final research report. The USGS-BRD research focused on the effects of fish stocking on naturally fish-free lakes. The first phase research report was completed in 1995, the second phase was completed in 1998, and the final phase was completed in July 2002.

2002 – The NPS initiated development of this *Draft Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (plan/EIS). Preparation of this document is guided by NPS policies, and it conforms to requirements of NPS *Director’s Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, and Handbook and NEPA. A letter from the WDFW to the North Cascades Complex superintendent reaffirms through 2004 the intent of the 1988 Supplemental Agreement to the 1985 MOU. The letter agrees to no changes in stocking (lakes, species, and frequency). The letter also agrees to collaborate with the NPS on an environmental assessment leading to a long-term fishery management plan.

2003 – Public Scoping formally began on January 16, 2003, with the *Federal Register* publication of the notice of intent to prepare this draft plan/EIS (Federal Register Vol. 68(11), pp. 2355–2356). In March 2003, the NPS and WDFW held four public scoping meetings to discuss issues and management alternatives for this draft plan/EIS. The public comment period ended on April 18, 2003. From April 2003 to April 2005, the NPS prepares the draft plan/EIS with input from the WDFW (the cooperating agency).

2005 – The draft plan/EIS is distributed for agency and public review and comment in spring 2005.

