

Park Complex Recovers from Floods

THE PARK COMPLEX EXPERIENCED extensive flooding in the fall of 2006. Floods have turned a portion of the Cascade River Road into a riverbed, caused damage to Company Creek Road in Stehekin, interrupted the Pacific Crest Trail at Agnes Creek and brought an estimated \$4 million in damages park-wide.

The flood that damaged Company Creek Road in Stehekin ranks as the third largest flood recorded for the area. Studies show that in recent years floods are occurring more often and with greater power in Stehekin than in past years. Of the five largest floods recorded for the Stehekin area since the early 1900s, three occurred since 1995. This trend beckons park managers to regularly deal with flooding and its aftermath, which this year includes three major projects—one at Cascade River Road, one in the Stehekin

Valley and the other at the Agnes Creek Trail footbridge along the Pacific Crest Trail. Damage to the Cascade River Road now adds about six miles round-trip to a hike up Cascade Pass, and that doesn't include the approximately 1,000 feet in elevation gain that accompanies the extra miles. The road is now closed beyond the Eldorado Creek parking area at milepost 20.

Park and Federal Highway Administration officials met on April 18 to discuss ways to repair the Cascade River Road area. Definite plans for road repairs were not finalized at the meeting, but they did decide to build a second bridge in the area that would be less susceptible to flood damage. The bridge would allow more water to flow past it, and pending permit approval, would be started in July 2008.

In Stehekin, North Cascades is seeking to repair the damage that occurred to Company Creek Road, and to restore the roadway at 8-mile along the Stehekin Valley Road, which is routinely plagued by floods.

Along the Pacific Crest Trail, a downed tree brought down the Agnes Creek Trail footbridge. The footbridge is located one half mile from the Agnes Creek Trailhead in Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, and serves as part of the popular Pacific Crest Trail, which allows hikers to travel from Canada to Mexico. North Cascades plans to install a temporary bridge by July 2007, and will discuss plans for a replacement bridge in the summer. The park plans to have the new bridge installed by July 2008.

For more on these projects and current updates, visit:
<http://www.nps.gov/noca/parknews>



Company Creek Road



Cascade River Road



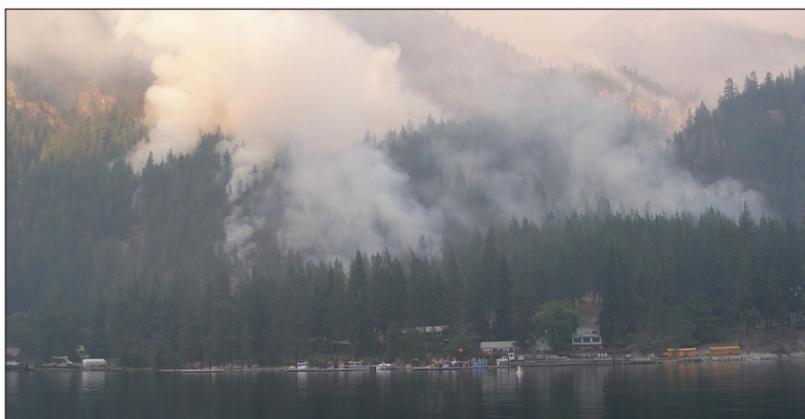
Agnes Creek Trail

Fire Management Plan Uses Fire to Maintain, Restore Park Ecosystems

Prior to the era of wildland fire suppression, lightning-caused fires maintained a diversity of plant and animal habitats in the park. As a natural and vital process, lightning serves an essential role in the park ecosystem. Fire helps to thin underbrush and disease-weakened trees, which allows new growth and helps prevent large, potentially-dangerous fires.

Due to past policies of wildfire suppression (which prevented the majority of natural fires from burning in the park), and the presence of structures and private property, a park fire team must now occasionally perform prescribed burns in order to mimic the role of fire in areas where fire has been absent.

Prescribed fire helps to reestablish a diverse forest mosaic and prevent negative impacts of large wildfires to property and valuable wildlife habitats. This and other fire management actions are detailed in the park's new fire management plan.



Flick Creek Fire in Stehekin 2006

The purpose of the plan is to provide clear guidance to park managers on meeting goals that include:

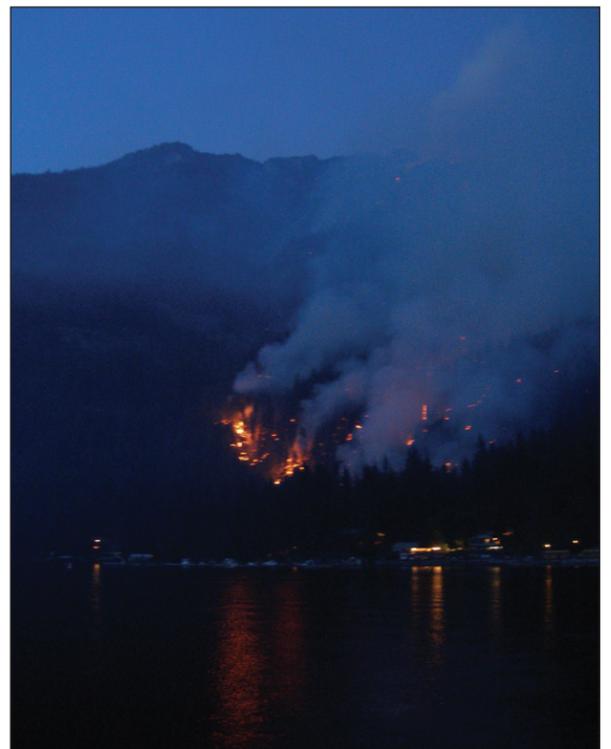
- Protecting human life and property.
- Restore or maintain park ecosystem functions
- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Maintain natural fire processes.

In order to achieve these goals, park managers will use a mix of tools that include prescribed burning, allowing some lightning-caused fires to burn for ecosystem benefit, and suppressing all unwanted and human-caused fires. The park will continue to work

cooperatively with its neighbors in managing fire in and around the park complex.

Fires can affect park visitors and residents, cultural sites, vegetation and wildlife species that make their homes in fire-prone areas, such as the federally-listed spotted owl. The plan's strategies focus on maintaining and restoring fire's dynamic role in park ecosystems by allowing fire to burn under natural conditions as much as possible. This will aid in long-term habitat restoration and habitat protection.

www.nps.gov/noca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm



Flick Creek Fire in Stehekin 2006

The 2006 Flick Creek Fire covered an estimated 7,890 acres. This human-caused fire burned through an overstory of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, and although many structures were threatened, damage was primarily limited to trails and trail bridges.

The Park's fire team worked closely with the Stehekin community, the Chelan county Sheriff's department and several hundred emergency firefighters to protect life and property. There was minimal damage to natural and cultural resources, although the park remains concerned about potential debris flows in several watersheds and the possibility that invasive weed species may become established within the fire perimeter. Park staff will monitor these concerns in the coming years.