

**American Rivers \* American Whitewater \* Washington Wilderness Coalition**

September 30, 2010

Palmer (Chip) Jenkins, Superintendent  
North Cascades National Park Service Complex  
810 State Route 20  
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284-1239

RE: Ross Lake National Recreation Area General Management Plan

Dear Superintendent Jenkins:

On behalf of American Rivers, American Whitewater, and Washington Wilderness Coalition we are writing to provide our input on the Skagit Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Suitability Studies as part of the Ross Lake National Recreation Area General Management Plan (GMP). We wish to express our appreciation for all the work you and your staff have invested in this planning effort to date and thank you for following through on your commitment to conduct a suitability evaluation of the Skagit River and the two tributaries Goodell Creek and Newhalem Creek.

We strongly support the conclusions reached in the suitability analysis recommending the Skagit River from the Gorge powerhouse to the National Recreation Area (NRA) boundary and its two major tributaries Goodell Creek and Newhalem Creek for inclusion in the national Wild and Scenic Rivers system. The analysis included a complete review of outstandingly remarkable values and we concur with the conclusions reached that are summarized in Table 1. These river segments are exceptional regional and nationally significant resources that deserve permanent protection that will protect their free-flowing character, outstanding resource and recreational values, and water quality.

While we understand that available resources did not permit an evaluation of all Skagit River tributaries within the North Cascades National Park Service Complex we appreciate the fact that previous findings for these river segments are incorporated into the GMP. Notably, these findings are summarized in graphic form as figure 2, a map illustrating all the river segments within the North Cascades National Park Service Complex. We thank you for considering our request for specific direction in the GMP to conduct an updated eligibility analysis and suitability analysis for these other rivers in the future. The specific direction to work with the U.S. Forest Service to update the Wild and Scenic Rivers analysis for these tributaries over the life of the GMP is an approach we support.

The Skagit River is clearly a superlative natural feature of the North Cascades National Park, which is unique for the diversity of opportunities for enjoying and exploring wild free-flowing rivers in the conterminous United States. We thank you and your staff for the completeness of your review and offer our strongest support for the conclusions

you reached to recommend designation of the Skagit River and its two tributaries Goodell Creek and Newhalem Creek under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Sincerely,

Brett Swift  
Northwest Regional Director  
American Rivers

Thomas O'Keefe, PhD  
Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director  
American Whitewater

Nalani M. Askov  
Executive Director  
Washington Wilderness Coalition