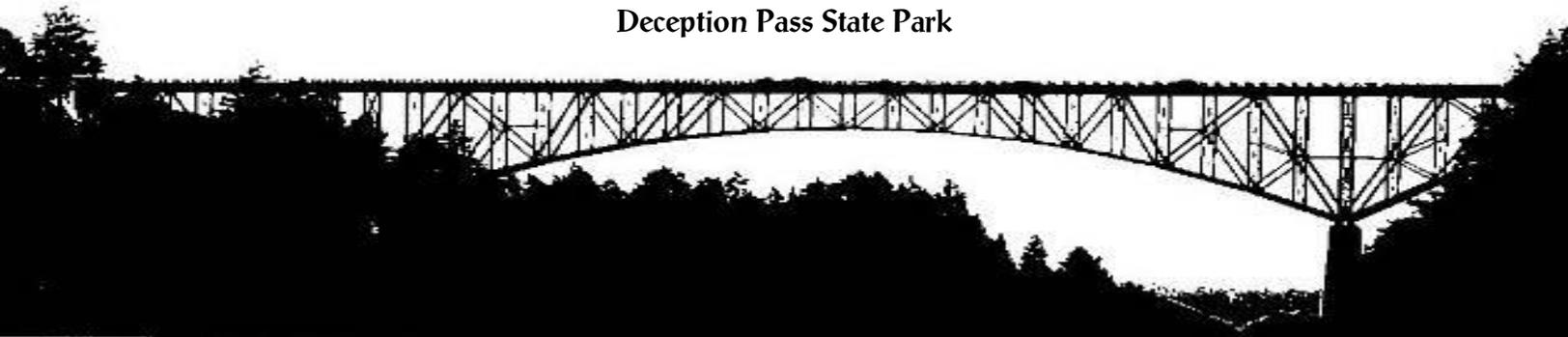


The Bridge

Interpretive Newsletter

Deception Pass State Park



First Month Musings

In my first month here at Deception Pass I spent a lot of time on the bridge. You may have seen me walking from one end to the other, spotting scope in one hand, laminated maps and historic photographs in the other. My plan was to spend a few hours on the clear, sunny days when tourists and commuters alike are particularly drawn to the bridge, greeting visitors and sharing the area's colorful history with them, pointing out geological formations, and showing them plants and animals of particular interest.

As is often the case in the outdoors, my plans were interrupted. It turns out that humans aren't the only ones who appreciate a good view on a nice day. The pair of bald eagles that nest on the northern slope of Goose Rock took to doing some afternoon sightseeing from a few snags and rocks above Canoe Pass. To many visitors, it seemed as though the eagles were posing for pictures—sitting in plain view only a couple hundred feet from the bridge, they were great camera fodder. But although I can't rule out vanity, these bald eagles were probably just being resourceful.

During winter, in order to conserve energy, bald eagles will spend up to 90% of their day perching. If a perching spot is close to a source of food—pink salmon, say—all the better. So instead of telling the story of Berte Olson or explaining why madrones shed their bark, I spent most of my time talking with people who were ecstatic to be getting such a close look at their national bird.

A few decades ago, we might not have been so lucky. In 1980 there were barely more than 100 breeding pairs of bald eagles in the entire state of Washington and only

around 1,000 nationally. DDT, illegal hunting and habitat loss were all culprits. Thanks to the Endangered Species Act and diligent work by conservationists, these crafty, remarkable birds have made an impressive comeback.



Park Manager Jack Hartt took this photo of a bald eagle from the eastern side of the bridge above Canoe Pass. The snag, which reaches out from the rocky cliffs of Fidalgo Island, is a favorite perching spot for Eagles looking to pick off pink salmon.

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Ongoing and Future Projects

🌲 Are you an amateur botanist? Aspiring photographer? Eager explorer? If so, you can help create *Wildflowers of Deception Pass*, a field guide that I'll be writing to raise money for educational projects around the park and to encourage visitors to learn more about the flora of Deception Pass. What you can do is help me locate flowers in the park and photograph them. Your pictures could be featured in the book, and you'll receive acknowledgement for your contributions. I'll be posting a list of target flowers for the book along with expected flowering times and other helpful info on the Foundation's website soon. For more info, feel free to send me an email.

🌲 Be on the lookout for updated and improved orientation maps. I'm collaborating with Ranger Ben Cooksey to develop new maps for the kiosks around the park. We're hoping to have them in place by spring.

🌲 The new classroom at Rosario Beach is almost complete! Construction should be done by the end of the month and then I'll begin getting the interior ready for school visits.

🌲 Jack and I are working together to develop a passport-type scavenger hunt activity to encourage visitors to check out some of the oft-neglected areas of the park. (Have you ever been to Ginnett? Or the bog on Hoypus Hill?) The details are still being hammered out, but the end product may involve smartphones....

🌲 One relic of the park's CCC origins that doesn't get a lot of attention is the incinerator that sits behind the boys cabins at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center (see picture on the next page). At the suggestion of Ranger Kim Horton, I'm working on developing some signage to explain its history and traditional usage.

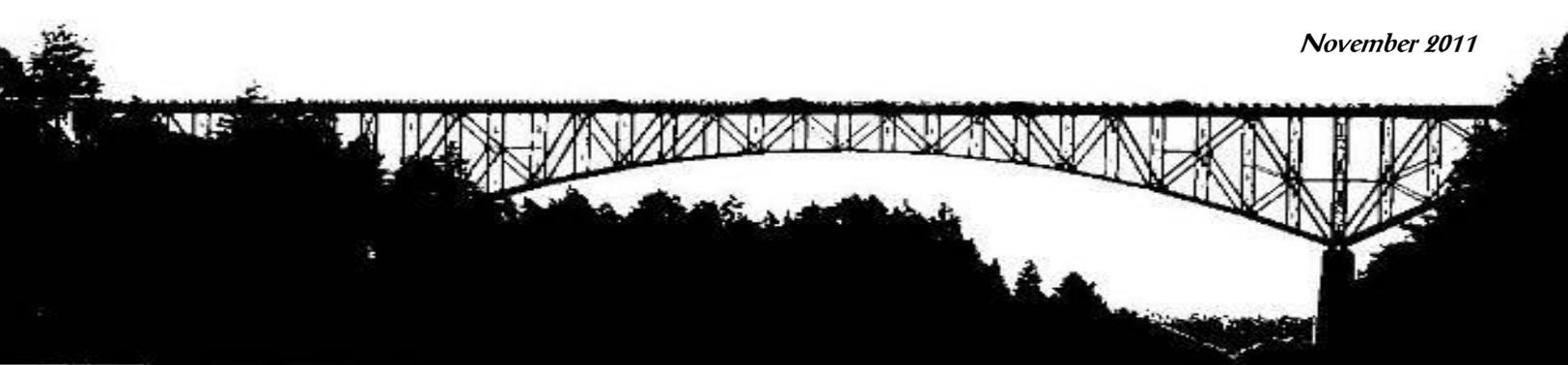
Coming Soon...



This picture of a fairy slipper orchid was taken by Adam Lorio in the park last April.

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Words of Wisdom

"Walking makes the world much bigger and thus more interesting. You have time to observe the details. The utopian technologists foresee a future for us in which distance is annihilated. ... To be everywhere at once is to be nowhere forever, if you ask me."

— Edward Abbey, *Walking*

School Trips at Deception Pass

Tide pool season is fast approaching. Although high tides are currently obscuring the tide pools at Rosario Beach during the day, come spring they'll be back in the sun. Classes have already begun making reservations, so contact us soon to ensure a day with a low tide.

Of course tide pools aren't all that Deception Pass has to offer. We've also got beaches, sand dunes, tide pools, old growth forests and freshwater lakes. You couldn't ask for a better outdoor classroom.

If you are a teacher or know a class interested in taking a field trip to Deception Pass State Park, please contact Interpretive Services to schedule a visit.



The CCC incinerator at Cornet Bay Retreat Center

Park Fact of the Month

Ben Ure Island was once home to Astronaut Charles Brady (1951-2006). His former residence can be seen from the Goose Rock perimeter trail on the western tip of the island and is now owned and maintained by the park.

Contact Info

If you would like to schedule an interpretive program, or if you have any questions about interpretive or educational services at Deception Pass State Park, contact us at sam.wotipka@parks.wa.gov or (360) 675-3767 ext. 31.

