Timeline: Publish as soon as it fits with OA's comms schedule and include it in an upcoming monthly newsletter.

Title: Trip Report: Outdoor Alliance Washington Celebrates GAOA Improvements Near Snoqualmie Pass with Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-08)

OA Blog Tags: Washington; Trip Report; Great American Outdoors Act

Photo:



Photo credit: Outdoor Alliance Washington partners with Rep. Kim Schrier (far left) at the Denny Creek parking lot on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Photo courtesy of The Mountaineers.

Adapted from The Mountaineers' blog here.

Text:

In 2021, we announced that The Mountaineers is leading Outdoor Alliance Washington (OA Washington), a network of organizations representing the human-powered outdoor recreation community in Washington state. For the last three years, OA Washington has been working to

forge strong relationships with lawmakers and land managers so that we can effectively advocate for shared conservation, recreation, and climate priorities.The passage and implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) in Washington continues to be an example of what we can achieve when we advocate together on behalf of more than 75,000 human-powered recreationists across the state.

Earlier this month, OA Washington partners celebrated the completion of the Denny Creek Great American Outdoors Act project with Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-08), Forest Service staff, and other partners. The casual gathering showcased some of the tangible, on-the-ground, recreation improvements resulting from GAOA investment, and underscored the importance of continued future funding. Visitors to the Denny Creek area now experience restored recreation infrastructure, including improved trails, expanded parking, and restored signage.

Celebrating GAOA's Impact in Washington

About seven million dollars of GAOA funding has been invested in the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the form of 17 projects. In the Snoqualmie Ranger District alone, GAOA funded over $4.1 million in projects that leveraged over $350,000 in partner funding and volunteer labor.

Event attendees received remarks from Rep. Schrier, representatives from the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and Washington Trails Association - two key project implementation partners - Forest Service officials, and a representative from the Snoqualmie Tribe. Following a ribbon cutting to celebrate the reopening of the parking lot, attendees hiked as a group to Franklin Falls, stopping to discuss trail improvements and the impact of volunteer stewardship on the project.

Rep. Schrier hiked the same trail two years ago to commemorate the launch of the project. During her time in Congress, she has been a leader on wildfire issues and forest resilience, as well as a strong supporter of the Forest Service's Legacy Roads and Trails program.



Photo credit: Washington Trails Association's Michael DeCramer shares information about trail improvements during the group's hike to Franklin Falls via the Wagon Road Trail. Photo courtesy of The Mountaineers.

Improving Recreation at Denny Creek

Denny Creek and Franklin Falls are two extremely popular hikes near Snoqualmie Pass. The area experiences heavy recreational use throughout the year. More visitation means that tackling deferred maintenance projects is as important as ever to ensure that recreational use is sustainable now and into the future. Before these improvements, visitors would frequently experience a congested parking lot, resulting in parked cars along the narrow, one-way road leading to the trails, as well as ecological damage to the surrounding forest.

The project created a paved parking lot that has 170 spaces (the former Franklin Falls lot only had 30) and turned the road leading to the trailhead into a loop to alleviate traffic congestion concerns. The project also added more ADA-accessible parking spots, bear-proof storage containers, and improved signage kiosks.

Collaboration and partnership between nonprofits and agencies helped make these projects possible. The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust helped support the implementation of this

project by working with small business contractors and other nonprofits, as well as completing work with their professional trail crew and volunteers. Washington Trails Association leveraged the energy and value of volunteers by hosting dozens of volunteer trail maintenance projects at sites across the project area. By the end of this summer, WTA will have hosted more than 80 work parties on trails associated with this GAOA project. As of today, WTA projects have contributed over 7,636 hours of trail work to this project and engaged hundreds of volunteers in this shared stewardship effort.

Enhancing storytelling opportunities at Denny Creek is an important aspect of this project. The Snoqualmie Pass area is the ancestral lands of Pacific Northwest Indian Tribes, including the Snoqualmie Tribe. The Snoqualmie Tribe will contribute to interpretive signage at the trailhead parking area, explaining the area's cultural significance and the importance of recreating mindfully and respectfully on the ancestral lands of Native peoples. Learn more with resources from the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement.

Looking Ahead to GAOA Reauthorization

Funding for the Great American Outdoors Act's Legacy Restoration Fund is set to expire at the end of September 2025. In order to continue to restore and maintain public lands in Washington and fully address the many maintenance challenges impacting our public lands, we need additional GAOA funding. That's why Outdoor Alliance Washington will continue to share Great American Outdoors Act impact stories with lawmakers and the wider recreation community in Washington and advocate for reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund.

Through a combination of direct advocacy, impactful events like this one, field tours, and grassroots engagement, Outdoor Alliance Washington is working to advance our three main policy priorities: investing in the outdoors; protecting special places through land and water conservation; and ensuring an equitable and sustainable future for public lands and waters.

By amplifying the voices of more than 75,000 hikers, mountain bikers, paddlers, climbers, and backcountry skiers across the state, we can achieve a more sustainable future for Washington's outdoors. You can get involved by signing up to hear more about our Washington work here:

[Imbed OA WA sign-up form]