



G'nun*

The newsletter of the Washington Butterfly Association

P.O. Box 31317 Seattle WA 98103
<http://wabutterflyassoc.org>

*G'nun is the official greeting of WBA. It is derived from the name of common Washington butterfly food plants, of the genus *Eriogonum*.



Idie Ulsh with Richard Lindstrom on the left and Richard Youel on the right; Schnebley Coulee, 1998. All three (plus the photographer) were among the cofounders of WBA, which grew from this chance meeting. (D. Nunnallee)

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Upcoming Programs

Sept. 2: Share the Wealth! Always an entertaining, fun and educational program. Bring your photos to share with us for education, entertainment or identification. Everyone works together to make this fun. Bring photos in digital, slide or printed form to be identified or just shared. This informal meeting gives members a chance to get to know each other better. All levels of photography and butterflying are encouraged and appreciated.

Oct. 7: TBA

We Remember Idie

Idie Ulsh, president and cofounder of WBA, was found dead of apparent heart failure at her cabin in Kitsap County on June 11. Nephew Victor Ulsh visited her cabin after difficulty in contacting her and increasing concern about her health. As John Baumann stated for all of us, she was a beloved grandmother spirit to nature lovers throughout the state. She made lasting contributions to the many areas of interest in her life, not the least of which are, in her way, to all the creatures and wild places she loved and loved to share with others. She was truly a person who used the gift of life and talents to make a difference in the world. Education was her professional career and her passion. She contributed to it at many levels. She came to many of us as the "Butterfly Lady", the one who taught her butterfly class or gave her butterfly presentation to our group. Idie was about education joyfully presented. (continued next page)

Idie felt it was important to have a dream and to work at making it come true. WBA was one of her dreams and she worked in her quiet, persistent way to make it happen and to infuse it with her spirit. Those of us who remember the planning for the first WBA meeting remember her emphasis on making sure that the organization always be friendly, positive, personal and good humored.

Idie observed that some cultures regard butterflies as the spirits of those who have gone before us. She would be pleased to think that her memorial will be our remembering her each time we observe a butterfly and thank her for the gift of her life.

Richard Youel.

Many years ago, I don't know just what year, a woman with a memorable name and an unforgettable smile came along on a butterfly course I taught with Thea on Whidbey Island. We didn't find many butterflies, but we had a good time, and it seemed to me that butterflies really "took" with this woman. How right I was. She came on another course, and another; and it wasn't very long until she began teaching butterfly field seminars herself.



Idie teaching one of her Butterfly ID courses.
(Kim Kendall and Reg Reisenbichler)

Of course, we all know her as the founder of WBA, and the indefatigable spirit behind its growth and survival. But we should also think of her as a great butterfly teacher and inspirational force. Whether lecturing on butterflies or bird nests, she was in great demand as a speaker. She took immense pleasure in sharing what she knew with others, in her particularly attractive alto voice. And of course she loved being in the field, among her beloved butterflies and birds, whether near her Tahuya hideaway or in the Cascades or Basin. When we lost Idie Ulsh, we lost one of our most effective ambassadors for butterflies that we have ever known or are likely to know again. In many ways, Idie was the Hazel Wolf of the butterflies; I only wish she could have lived as long as Hazel, and gone on stirring things up and inciting passion for nature for many years to come. In a way, she will, by the very existence of our club. As for me, I'll never forget Idie's enthusiasm on that long ago Whidbey trip, and where it led, for her and for so many others.

Bob Pyle



Idie was a serious photographer. Her photos appear in *The Butterflies of Cascadia*, including the front cover photos. (D. Nunnallee)

A Celebration of Idie's Life will be held in Seattle at the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture at 2PM on Saturday, August 1st. Remembrances are encouraged toward Seattle Audubon Society's BirdWatch program and Washington Butterfly Association scholarship. The August 1 field trip to Bear Creek Mtn. has been cancelled so people may attend the memorial.

16th Annual Butterfly Conference Omak/Okanogan, 2015

Over 50 enthusiastic butterflyers, including 5 children, converged on the Okanogan area for three days of field trips and a presentation Saturday night by Dr. Dave McCorkle on his research with the Johnson's Hairstreak. The heat was 109 degrees in Omak on Saturday, yet we saw leaping, running, and dynamic net styles in Moses Meadows, our first field trip site. New species were seen by many participants including the Northern Checkerspot, Northern Blue, Northwestern Fritillary, Northern Crescent, Arrowhead Blue, Christina's Sulphur. A moose sauntered across the road during our lunch break!

On Sunday our visit to the Sinlahekin brought many surprises. We saw a Great Spangled Fritillary, a freshly eclosed Elegant Sheep Moth, a Sonora Skipper, a bush full of nectaring Behr Hairstreaks, a Painted Lady larva in its web of silk, Old World Swallowtails and a Canadian Tiger Swallowtail. The latter two were new species for many participants. A Monarch larva was discovered in the photos of an Old World Swallowtail by two members later in the day! While eating lunch at Blue Lake, we watched a territorial kingbird force a small brown bat and then a kingfisher into the lake! Many participants said they would like to return to this beautiful area that is so rich in wildlife.

Those that stayed for the Monday loop from Long Swamp to Salmon Meadows were treated to a butterfly feast. Much of this area was recovering from the 2006 fire, and the butterflies were back in abundance along the sides of the road, mudding in the road, and in all the meadows. We saw 46 species that day including patrolling Sara's Orangtips, the Mountain Parnassian, the Large Marble, many sulphurs: Clouded, Pink-edged and Christina's, Anna's Blue, Lupine Blue, the Arctic Fritillary, the Vidler's and the Common Alpine, the Chryxus Arctic. The road lived up to its reputation as being extremely poor.



Lunch at Blue Lake, Sinlahekin area. (M. Witt)

Seventy seven species were detected over the three days. That is more than half the species in WA state, and a record for any previous conference.

Melanie Weiss

Bella's first catch, Moses Meadows.
(M. Weiss)

Two-tailed Swallowtail on milkweed.
(M. Weiss)



Watching Washington Butterflies with Bob Pyle

Number 22

The Beauty of Butterfly Nets



Young naturalist in making in Loess Hills, Iowa. (Melissa Sevigny)

(Author's Note: this piece is adapted from an essay of the same name originally published in *Wings*, the magazine of the Xerces Society, in 2006.)

Epigraph: "Sometimes I feel guilty about capturing butterflies and other insects, but it is giving me so much insight into the web of life at Panakanic [Ranch]. What used to be just a sandy road into the place is now known to be a marvelous habitat for sweat bees, parasitic wasps, tiger beetles and dung beetles. And the shores of a dried up vernal pool a source of food and minerals for skippers, butterflies, moths and many beetles. Everything is so alive and I would have never known this without my butterfly net! -- Joy Markgraf, White Salmon

It is in many ways apt that this piece should be penned on a Friday the thirteenth, the day between Charles Darwin's two hundredth birthday and St. Valentine's Day. The thirteenth, because an unlucky day to me is one when I don't get outdoors in direct contact with nature. Valentine's, because this essay is really a love letter to one of my favorite tools and field companions. And Darwin Day, on account of the simple and certain fact that our all-time greatest naturalist might have merely toiled in quiet obscurity as a country vicar, had it not been for his butterfly net.

When Darwin cut theology classes at Cambridge, he did so to collect beetles and chase swallowtails at Wicken Fen. That's what led him astray, ultimately to his voyage on the *Beagle*, to the Galapagos, and to his residence at Down House where *On the Origin of Species* was written. Things are not too different in our time: E. O. Wilson didn't need a net to study ants, but he made clear in his memoir, *Naturalist*, that his carefree days afield with his insect net were the hours that made him who he is. The godfather of the Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides samuelis*) and a great literary recorder of the "individuating detail," Vladimir Nabokov, put it this way: "The ordinary stroller might feel on sauntering out a twinge of pleasure . . . but the cold of the metal netstick in my right hand magnifies the pleasure to almost intolerable bliss."

Some readers perhaps find it odd to read an encomium to the classic collecting implement in a journal devoted to insect conservation. But this is no contradiction, as was recognized in the earliest days of the Xerces Society, when its collecting policy was carefully crafted. When collecting presents an actual conservation risk with overzealous pursuit of rare or highly restricted species, we of course oppose it. But this is an uncommon event. For the most part, aerial insect populations in particular are reproductively adept, elusive, and highly resistant to overcollecting. Besides, as anyone who has actually tried to catch butterflies knows, a human being wielding a net is one of the most inefficient predators you could design. On the other hand, in order to conserve something, you have to know exactly where it oc-

curs. The great contribution of the net-wielders is in building and updating the database of invertebrate distribution. This is why, as counterintuitive as it may seem to some, butterfly nets have been among our most important instruments for insect conservation.

But that is just one reason we should appreciate these simple and centuries-old implements. True, our field guides, state butterfly atlases, and rare-species surveys have commonly depended upon specimens in hand. More and more these days these functions are being conducted with binoculars and digital cameras instead, and that's all to the good when it serves the purpose just as well. But it doesn't always. The fact is, many butterflies—especially certain blues, skippers, and rare varieties only subtly differentiated from more-common types—require close examination for positive identification. For these it doesn't help to have an approximate ID; positive recognition is essential.



For example, during my 2008 Butterfly Big Year, I was looking (among other things) at the responses of butterfly ranges to changing climate, and I certainly saw some dramatic examples. But, at one spot in arid north Texas, I thought I had found a species abundant more than a hundred miles north of any previous records. Surrounded by my field guides, I still couldn't determine the species for sure from my notes, or from photographs. Even the national authority on the group had to dissect a specimen to be certain which of two species it represented—and in the end, he was able to determine that it was the one that belonged there after all.

The author in Santa Barbara with Marsha. (Debra Piot)

So the reliability of occurrence data is essential—and often it is still the net that sifts good data from bad. Nets are seldom weapons of mass destruction and need not even be lethal. I do a great deal of my field survey and teaching with harmless catch-and-release. I find that people make a deeper connection when they can examine a creature up close, from every angle, and then carefully release it to a flower, or a child's nose. This practice, employing net, tweezers, and a light and practiced touch, gives a far more satisfactory encounter for a group than a fleeting glimpse from yards away.

And that brings us to my favorite reason for loving butterfly nets: they are the cheapest, simplest, and most effective environmental education tools ever invented. Give a child a pair of binoculars or a camera, and he will be occupied for a moment or two, before setting it aside. But give her a net, and watch her go! Besides, the argument that all interaction with butterflies should be conducted solely through optics is an elitist one; most kids can't afford close-focusing binoculars or a good camera, but they can often pull together twelve or fourteen bucks for a basic net from BioQuip—or make one themselves, as my friends and I always did. To this day I chiefly use a net fashioned from a Colorado cottonwood branch—an artifact from my youth—that I named Marsha. I made Marsha more than forty years ago, and she has had a hard life (described in detail in *Walking the High Ridge: Life as Field Trip*). Yet she is still with me, a beloved friend who has helped me introduce butterflies to thousands of children and their parents.

Kids love nets because chasing insects is *fun*. It also brings the chaser face-to-face with exciting, novel, always-surprising *life*. Talk to any number of biologists, doctors, wild-life managers, and other life-science professionals, and the preponderance of them will tell you that catching bugs was a vital early stimulus for their engagement with nature. And consider the current crisis of children's disconnection from the living world, articulated in Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*. Most kids used to wander freely and catch fireflies in a jar—or crawdads, or polliwogs—and, through those encounters, learned to connect with the land on which we all depend. These days, their attachment to electronica almost from birth, their parents' fears for their safety, and the loss of accessible habitats close to home, means that this fundamental experience of roaming freely is now rare. Where will our future conservationists and biologists come from, when kids no longer chase grasshoppers in real life? Well, there is no more effective defense against nature deficit disorder than the butterfly net! That's why the Lepidopterists' Society has initiated the Outer-net Project, to get free nets into the hands of curious kids, and to get them outdoors with knowledgeable mentors.



Kids at Butterfly Walk practicing their swings. (Al Wagar)

Now, some people oppose the use of nets outright. With the exciting rise of butterfly watching and photography in the outdoor-recreation repertoire, an either/or mentality has too often crept into people's attitudes. Since my *Watching Washington Butterflies* (1974) and *Handbook for Butterfly Watchers* (1984) were among the first books to push these activities, I accept some responsibility for this trend. However, I have always promoted watching and photography *alongside*—not *instead of*—responsible netting. I continue to preach mutual tolerance in this regard and an ecumenical approach among watchers and catchers, as parallel and compatible parts of the community of butterfly lovers.

For my own part, I have carried both my binoculars and my netstick (when appropriate) for several decades, and I feel naked without either one. They can be wonderfully complementary means for exploring the living world. During the Butterfly Big Year, I used Marsha a great deal—as net, yes, but also as companion, and walking staff. But I also employed Akito, a beautifully engineered, extendible and collapsible Japanese net, given me by a fine lepidopterist of the same name; a basic BioQuip wooden-handled net, easy to jump out of the car with; and a little foldable job known as Mini-Marsha that fits into a pocket for times when I need both hands. I used them all—or none. When investigating endangered species, such as the Uncompahgre fritillary above thirteen thousand feet in Colorado's San Juan Mountains with Xerces director Scott Black; in parks and preserves, where nets were not welcome; or when in company with watchers uncomfortable with nets, I relied solely on my binoculars. The point is, all of our appliances for apprehending nature, taken together, are like a good tool box: more than the sum of their parts. When a butterfly in the bush just won't do, a net in the hand, deftly and gently wielded, may be just the right tool for the job.

Watching and photographing butterflies as a recreational pastime now draws increasing numbers of enthusiasts. But to me, doing away with butterfly nets, as some advocates of butterfly watching would like to do, would be a great mistake and a sad loss. Many butterfly watchers, like most biologists, began with a butterfly net, and learned much of what they know on the end of it. If they then go on to enjoy butterflies through ground glass instead of gossamer mesh, more power to them. My wish for all children is that they may know the delight of a sunny day afield in company with the bright wings of summer. And if that should involve a net, well then more power to them, too.



Young Lepidopterist. (J. Taylor)

President's Message from John Baumann

On behalf of the WBA Board, I want to express how deeply we appreciate the generous contributions so many of you have made to memorial funds for Bob Hardwick and, more recently, for Idie Ulsh. A kind letter from the Tacoma Nature Center reports that contributions from the Bob Hardwick Memorial Fund are allowing one eleven year old boy to pursue a week-long "Nature Study Detectives" course, while funding a second eleven year old to attend the "Wildlife Biologist Mini-Camp"! Meanwhile, the memorial fund we recently established to honor our founder, Idie Ulsh, will enable two brothers, ages seven and nine, to attend a week-long Seattle Audubon Nature Camp called "Forest Week". The younger brother is in the Evergreen Encounters group for 1st-3rd graders, and the older brother is in the Habitat Restoration Rangers group for 4th-6th graders. Most of the week will be spent exploring Magnuson Park, but Tuesday and Thursday will feature field trips to Cougar Mountain and Discovery Park, where the older group of campers will participate in habitat restoration in partnership with EarthCorps.

We will continue to accept donations to the Idie Ulsh Memorial Fund to foster the growth of young naturalists around the state. Idie and Bob would have loved seeing these opportunities made available as both were life long educators who had the knack for getting children and youth focused on an interest in wildlife.

In the past year, the Board focused much work on ensuring our independence from NABA, while maintaining a monthly pace of good butterfly related programs and capping off our time with a terrific annual conference in Okanogan County. Some of our members have observed that we did not find time to write a "thank you note" to the many donors to the Memorial fund for Bob Hardwick. I am working with several other board members to ensure that these letters will soon be in the mail.

Summary of Conference “Blue Sheets”

At the conference, I briefly asked attendees to consider focus questions intended to guide WBA’s pursuits over the next 5 years or so. On field trips, every car in the carpool wrangled with a large blue sheet of paper on which attendees answered questions. The blue sheets were then stuck all over the walls of our meeting room. Upon reading attendee comments, I was overwhelmed with the thoughtful and enthusiastic responses. It is more apparent to me than ever that folks really love this organization and are excited about all of the opportunities available to WBA. On behalf of WBA now and in the future, THANK YOU for your thorough participation in this process.

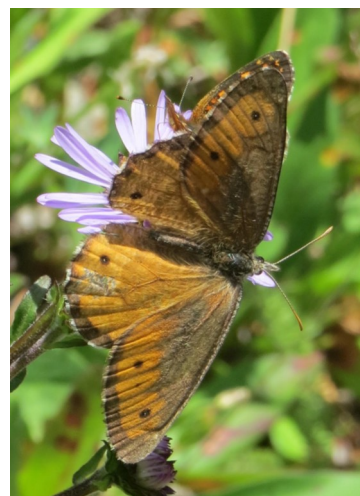
A brief summary of these responses follows. And more detail will arrive in the fall, when all the butterflies have come home to roost, when the WBA board reconvenes, and when the next newsletter is available in October. Many of you indicated interest in volunteering at various levels, and specifics about opportunities will become more widely available in the fall. I’m shooting for October.

The first question asked of conference attendees was “what is your favorite thing about WBA?” A summary of most frequent responses indicates that attendees appreciate WBA as a social arena for similarly interested and like-minded individuals, as a forum for education and sharing of information by experts, and as a provider of field trips to beautiful areas. The second question was “what is your favorite interest related to butterflies?” Key areas of interest are field trips and exploration of new places, shooting and sharing photos, butterfly gardening, the science (identification, rearing, various research interests), and the well-stated bottom line: “watching them majestically fly around meadows.”

By far, most lengthy responses came to the third question: “what is your dream for WBA in the next 5 years?” Attendees offered the following hopes and dreams many times and in many ways: more statewide member interaction (new chapters, activities, field trips, programs), more classes offered statewide, stronger volunteer core with volunteer coordinator, more publicity (radio spots, social media), initiation of projects in which all members are free to participate in all parts of the state (research project, field guides, science team (“citizen scientists” surveying butterflies, for example), stronger voice for conservation, and consideration of becoming the PNWBA (to include at least Washington, Oregon, BC, and Northern Idaho). It is quite difficult in this summary to accurately and respectfully describe the impact of the truly thoughtful, careful responses I received to this question. But it makes me very excited for WBA’s future!

And I am still receiving responses to these three questions and additional thoughts, which I truly appreciate. If you could not attend the conference but desire to express your thoughts, please do not hesitate to contact me at

Brenda McCracken, Board Member



Chryxus Arctic. (M. Weiss) as

Old World Swallowtail. (M. Weiss)



WBA Auction Field Trip Report

A small group of three winning bidders from last year's conference in Moscow came way back east to take a look at early summer butterflies at a very different sort of habitat in Lincoln, Co. Washington. I met the group in Ritzville Saturday morning early enough that we were able to enjoy two stops in some of our best local scabland habitat: Upper Crab Creek south of Harrington, WA, and Twin Lakes BLM land, about 20 minutes west of Harrington. Temperatures had moderated from the scorching heat early in the week, and conditions were sunny and breezy. Our 20 plus species included the Ruddy Copper, Euphilotes Blues, the uncommon Silver-bordered Fritillary and an explosion of some 60-70 Painted Ladies at the Upper Crab Creek site. A very early Zerene Frit also appeared. I was delighted to see that the little Silver-bordered Frits have survived the drought so far this year, but their marsh has surely dried almost to nothing. It made my day when we paused to look out over the Lake Creek Gorge as we left for the day, and one our attendees, Maureen Traxler, commented, "You know, this place is really beautiful". So it is.



Lake Creek Gorge. (B. McCracken)

John Baumann



Gray Hairstreak. (J. Baumann)



Becker's White on rudbeckia. (J. Baumann)



Silver-bordered Fritillary. (J. Baumann)

Military Pet Fair, DuPont

WBA had a booth at the Military Pet Fair held in May in DuPont, across the freeway from Joint Base Lewis-McChord. We were visited by many kids, dogs, parents, and young service members. Al Wagar and Regina Johnson talked to people about butterflies and our organization. Butterflies in plexiglas were a hit with the kids, while the dogs in attendance preferred dried salmon treats..



WBA booth. (Al Wagar)

2015 Field Trip Schedule

Date	Destination/Description	Difficulty	Trip Leader/Contact
August 1	Bear Creek Mtn, Yakima County CANCELLED	4	James and Nunnallee
August 8	Quartz Mountain	2	Maureen Traxler*
August 8 or 15	Monarch Tagging, Grant County RESCHEDULED see next page	1-2	James

Quartz Mountain : One of the highest points accessible by car (6,300 ft) in Kittitas County, SW of Cle Elum. Long, dusty forest roads have a number of productive stops, and the summit is beautiful. A long-time favorite of WBA trips. Access mostly from cars.

Monarch Tagging, Grant Co.: This outing is to catch and tag Monarchs as part of the Monarch migration monitoring program. Tagged Monarchs will hopefully be recovered in California during the winter.

8/7, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28 and 9/4 (all Fridays) Two, or at most three people are needed to inventory butterflies and vegetation along the **Naches Loop Trail**, Mt. Rainier National Park. This is part of the Cascade Butterfly Research Project, a citizen science project in its 5th year. The 3.5-mile trail has a 500 ft. elevation gain.

Non-consumptive appreciation of butterflies is central to our purpose, basic to our approach, and the guiding principal behind general membership field trips. Collecting of adult butterflies is not allowed on these trips. Collecting of eggs and larval stages for rearing is accepted on condition that individuals raised to adult stage are released at their original location.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Anyone can sign up at a WBA monthly meeting or by contacting the trip leader. (See Board and Committee list in this issue for contact information)

RAIN DATES (if any) SHOWN IN PARENTHESES

DIFFICULTY RATINGS:

- 1 Easy, mostly by car, minor walking along roads
- 2 Fairly limited walking, some slopes involved.
- 3 Moderate, up to 1.5 miles walking with moderate slopes.
- 4 Difficult, hiking required, trails or terrain are steep in places
- 5 Very difficult, extended hiking on trails or steep terrain.

WHERE & WHEN TO MEET: Trips depart from the north half of the Ravenna Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. unless expressly stated otherwise. The park & ride is located under I-5 at Ravenna Blvd between NE 50th & NE 65th St. On request we also stop at the Issaquah Park & Ride at 7:30 a.m. To reach the Issaquah Park & Ride: going eastbound on I-90 take Exit 15 (1st Issaquah exit). At exit stoplight turn right (south) and drive 0.45 mile to Newport Way intersection (traffic light). Turn left (east) on Newport Way and drive 0.1 mile to another light, and turn right (south) into the Park & Ride.

If you live in another part of the state, contact the trip leader to arrange where to meet the field trip group.

Please tend to personal matters such as getting coffee or lunch food before departure time so others are not delayed.

Bring your own beverages, snacks and lunch for a day in the field.

All field trips are conducted by carpool. Without the volunteer participation of drivers, the trips are not possible. If you have a car that you are willing to drive, please have the gas tank full and ready to go.

All WBA-sponsored field trips are fully insured.

COSTS: Passengers are expected to share gasoline expenses. Typically this is \$10-20 each. Each rider should also pay a share of any park entry fees, ferry fares, etc. The trip leader will collect a voluntary donation of \$5 per person (children under 12 are free) for each field trip to help offset expenses of the organization.

Monarch Tagging Day

The Monarch tagging day at Crab Creek near Vantage originally scheduled for August 22 may be brought forward to either August 8 or August 15. The extreme heat experienced for much of the summer has resulted in rapid senescence of the nectar plants that allow Monarchs to maintain their population at the Crab Creek site. When the migratory population of Monarchs begins emerging in early August they may be confronted with no nectar and thus disperse rapidly from the site. Normally, they stay at the site until early September.

I will make a decision on which date we will tag by the end of July. If you are interested in participating please keep Aug 8 and 15 open! In order to maximize our chances of tagging many Monarchs and to provide some fuel for their dispersal, I would like to ask all participants to bring some flowers with them!

Buddleia is particularly attractive to Monarchs so if we could have buckets of buddleia blooms set up in a central area, I'm sure we could attract a good number of Monarchs at the site. Other blooms are also attractive including Liatris, asters, sedum, golden rod etc... As well as providing much needed nectar for the Monarchs, our blooms will also facilitate better opportunities for photography, observation and tagging!

If you are interested in coming to the tagging day please let me know at david_james@wsu.edu and I'll let you know when we have a firm date.

Dr David G James

Board Members

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Jon Pelham	Science Advisor	
Marty Hanson	Membership	
Joyce Bergen	Annual Conference	
Available	Field Trips	
By Committee	Programs	
Carolyn Heberlein	Publicity/Website	
Regina Johnson	Newsletter	
David James	Trip Leader, Central WA	