

North Cascades Region Smiles for the Camera

Local News

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SMOHOMISH, Wash. - The North Cascades region is getting a pre-summer boost to its tourism business this weekend, as the star of a new show on Public Television. North Cascades: People, Places and Stories is a video production spotlighting the sheer size and geographic diversity of the region, as well as some of the characters - both humans and animals - who live there.

Producer Doug Tolmie says his focus was to showcase the importance of the area to Washington's environment and economy, and also to prompt more people to help protect it.

"The mood of it is inspirational, and a little bit of, 'My God, aren't we lucky to have this incredibly diverse, amazing ecosystem here?' It's something that a lot of us take for granted."

Even many Washington natives don't realize that the North Cascades ecosystem stretches from Puget Sound to the Okanogan area, and from the Canadian border, south to I-90, says Tolmie. Jennifer Stephens, communications director for *The Wilderness Society*, says the area contains two national forests, one national park, and is the source of much of the water supply in the Puget Sound area.

"The North Cascades is home to old-growth forests, salmon-spawning streams, and magnificent mountains. It is also home to more glaciers than any other place outside of Alaska. The clean, clear-flowing rivers provide fresh drinking water to many of our communities."

The show features the return of wolves to the North Cascades, connecting kids to nature with outdoor education programs. and a profile of famous mountaineer Fred Beckey. It airs this Sunday night at 10:30 p.m. on KCTS, channel 9 and KYVE, channel 47, and again January 20 at 7:00 p.m. The production was co-sponsored by KCTS, REI and *The Wilderness Society*.