



**Washington Trails Association**  
2019 Third Avenue, Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98121

### **Silver Star Scenic Area Motorized Use Barriers**

- The 1902 Yacolt Burn created today's wildflower carpeted meadows on 4,390-foot high Silver Star Mountain. Thin soils and exposure to high winds through the Columbia River Gorge created an alpine-like microclimate and slowed the advance of new forests up the slopes.
- The U.S. Forest Service closed the Silver Star Scenic Area to motorized use in the 1989 Forest Travel Plan. The 1990 Forest Land Management Plan reinforced that decision with the Scenic Area designation for 10,350 acres. A 1993 decision document converted approximately 8.5 miles of old roads to trails. All three decision processes included public involvement.
- Unauthorized motorized vehicle use, including driving through fragile wildflower meadows and across cultural resource sites, has continued since the area was closed to motorized use and degrades its botanic and recreational qualities. Trampling and introduction of invasive species by motorized vehicles threaten the botanic features of the area.
- Past vehicle barricades have been vandalized or circumvented and signs have been destroyed. The abuse has become more flagrant in recent years
- Washington Trails Association (WTA) and the Chinook Trail Association (CTA) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Forest Service and the Washington Department of Natural Resources regarding management of the Silver Star area in order to address this unauthorized motorized use.
- The USFS and DNR needed funding to effectively block motorized vehicles.
- WTA and CTA applied for a 2004 Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) grant under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 for \$59,380 to close and reinforce existing gates and place large boulders at 10 access points to block motorized access. WTA and CTA volunteers will do the finishing work, valued at \$20,144, to fill dirt around the boulders, restore natural vegetation at the trailheads, and spread oat straw for erosion control until natural vegetation becomes established.
- In October 2003, the RAC, impressed by the public-private partnership and eloquent statements in support of the project from Forest Service managers, awarded \$66,802.50 for the project.
- WTA has volunteer trail maintenance work parties scheduled for: Sept. 14, 23, 24, Oct, 7, 8, 19. Sign up at [www.wta.org](http://www.wta.org).