

October 21, 2010

Members of the Sponsored Research/Foundation Grants Committee:

I am pleased to submit a Research Award application for 2011 to fund eight weeks of field work at Mount Rainier National Park. This letter introduces the project and addresses the selection criteria. My curriculum vitae and support letters from Bill Ransom and Tim McNulty are attached.

### Introduction

In July 2009 I taught a 3-week field course for environmental educators at Olympic National Park. A key text was *Olympic National Park: A Natural History* by Tim McNulty. His approach to telling the park's natural history and his descriptive prose of the interconnectedness of organisms and communities were key components of the course. When I returned to campus in August, I resumed my search to find an analog to Tim's work, a book on the natural history of Mount Rainier National Park. After an exhaustive search, the best resource that I found was *Notes on the Natural History of Mount Rainier National Park*, a monograph by Jerry F. Franklin, published in 1969. I found the work to be dated and incomplete. Colleagues encouraged me to fill this gap in the literature.

Under the steady mentorship of Bill Ransom and Sandy Yannone, I have spent 250+ hours during the past year researching the natural and human history of Mount Rainier National Park. At this point, I have a working outline of the entire book and rough drafts of the introduction and portions of several chapters. The Wonderland Trail, the 92-mile loop that encircles the Mountain, provides the structure for my narrative. Ten locations on the Wonderland Trail serve as chapters, each telling the natural and human history unique to that area of the park. The Wonderland Trail has an interesting history of its own and was first hiked by a group from the Tacoma Mountaineers in 1915. I intend to complete the work to coincide with or precede the trail's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

Thinking ahead to a book contract, Bill noted that a publisher would be more interested in the manuscript if I had published some other creative nonfiction in the meantime. To that end, I recently received an acceptance letter from *Washington Trails Magazine* for an article related to the project that will be published in winter 2011.

### Statement of the proposed activity

Natural history begins with the careful observation and study of organisms and processes in their natural environment and describes their interconnections. This orientation makes it essential to dedicate as much time as possible to field work at Mount Rainier. When I asked *Olympic National Park's* author Tim McNulty what he would do differently on his next natural history writing assignment, he responded without hesitation, "Spend more time in the field with scientists and technicians. That's the best way to interview them and learn the stories you need to tell."

Interdisciplinary in nature, natural history draws upon diverse biological and earth sciences. This project, however, goes beyond traditional natural histories by incorporating human history. I have followed with great interest the recent archaeological collaborations between Mount Rainier National Park staff and local Indian tribes. Together they have uncovered new information about prehistoric human activity on and around the Mountain, little of which has been published. Partly as the result of my work in Indian Country as Evergreen faculty, I am especially interested in this facet of the project. My work with park

archaeologist Greg Burtchard has already informed my research, and I anticipate that continued work with Greg and local tribes will deepen my knowledge, understanding, and ability to tell these important stories.

The conditions at Mount Rainier offer a small window of opportunity for field work. Slow melt-off frequently delays trail openings and spring rains usually wash out footbridges, making for a short field season that generally runs from July through mid-September. A full field season for 2011 will prepare me for my spring 2012 sabbatical, during which I plan to make substantial progress on the manuscript.

This application proposes the following field activities at Mount Rainier National Park for 8 weeks between July 1 and August 31, 2011:

- a) Participate in ongoing spotted owl surveys under the direction of wildlife ecologist Mason Reid. Participate in other surveys as time allows.
- b) Participate in the archaeological work underway at the Sunrise Ridge Borrow Pit, under the direction of archaeologist Greg Burtchard. Assist at or visit any other active sites on or near the Wonderland Trail as time allows.
- c) Work with park plant ecologist Lou Whiteaker or Evergreen member of the faculty Frederica Bowcutt to study the Panhandle Gap and Sunrise-area alpine tundra plant communities, which are a unique feature of Mount Rainier's natural history.
- d) Interview park archaeologist Greg Burtchard, wildlife ecologist Mason Reid, and restoration ecologist Will Arnesen.
- e) Dedicate 3-5 field days to study the eastern section of the Wonderland Trail between Box Canyon and Summerland. This section is important because it is among my least studied areas and I wish to locate a chapter in this area.
- f) Dedicate 3-5 field days to study the western section of the Wonderland Trail in the Golden Lakes area. This remote section is important because it supports healthy populations of large mammals and is snow-free for only a short time each season.

#### Purpose and scope of activity

The purpose and scope of the proposed activity is to provide valuable field time to research and study the natural and human history of Mount Rainier National Park. This activity will complement the literature search I have done thus far, will guide my next level of research, and will move forward my working outline and chapter drafts.

#### Broad statement of the author's professional agenda

My professional agenda is to continue to develop as a teacher, an environmental educator, a natural historian, and a writer. The proposed activity challenges and strengthens my development in all of these areas. As a teacher this fall, for example, sharing my writing process and the project's working outline with students has strengthened my ability to teach writing. As an environmental educator, a niche in the college's curriculum I will continue to occupy, my ability to explain scientific and ecological principles is improved by this work. My continued development as a natural historian and writer also translate to working more effectively with Evergreen students.

#### Benefits expected from the activity

If funded, I anticipate that the 2011 field season at Mount Rainier will significantly move forward my research, outline, and time line for engaging the manuscript. My tendency

to be well-organized and my task-oriented approach, paired with pre-existing relationships with key park personnel, give me confidence that the 2011 season will be of great benefit to the overall project.

A natural and human history of Mount Rainier National Park holds potential benefits for the college's curriculum. It will strengthen any curricular offerings pertaining to Mount Rainier, including plans to repeat *Mount Rainier: The Place and its People* in 2012-2013. It will also enhance curricular offerings on the Pacific Northwest, life sciences, or natural history, a field that is enjoying resurgence.

#### Detailed plans for carrying out the activity

If funded, the plans for carrying out the activity are as follows: 1) Contact park ranger Kevin Bacher and arrange to be housed in a tent platform site at the Longmire Campground (closed to the public but open to volunteers and researchers) for the duration of the funding period. A large wall tent will allow me to comfortably compile field notes each evening. 2) Contact Greg Burtchard and Mason Reid to continue discussions that will allow me to participate in their already-formed field plans for 2011. 3) Contact Tim McNulty and Bill Ransom for suggestions as to how to best structure my field season. 4) Make arrangements with other park personnel as needed.

Once the field season begins, I'll base my activities out of the Longmire campground 40 hours per week and make the 1.5 hour drive to my home in Enumclaw each weekend. Time in the backcountry on the Wonderland Trail will be part of the 40-hour work weeks. Regular contact with my mentors will keep me on target toward completing the field work.

#### Dates and length of salary/leave requested

This request is for salary for 8 weeks for summer 2011, between July 1 and August 31. The proposed work is scalable. With partial funding, I would concentrate my efforts on items a through c on page 2.

#### Statement of how the proposed absence might affect the curriculum

This application is for summer 2011. Since I do not teach during the summer session, there will be no adverse effect on the curriculum during the proposed time.

#### Information on other sources of expected remuneration and reports on previous awards

I expect no other remuneration for the proposed activity, nor have I previously received an Evergreen Sponsored Research award.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If I can provide further information, please be in touch.

Sincerely yours,

Jeff Antonelis-Lapp  
Member of the Faculty

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October 8, 2010

To Whom It May Concern  
The Evergreen Foundation  
The Evergreen State College  
Olympia, WA

I wish to recommend Jeff Antonelis-Lapp for sponsored research for the summer of 2011 to pursue field research for his book-in-progress on the natural history of Mount Rainier National Park. As author of a similar work on Olympic National Park (*Olympic National Park: A Natural History*, Revised Edition, 2009, University of Washington Press), I can speak to the importance of firsthand field experience in conveying complex biological and ecological information in graceful and engaging prose.

Experiences from spending time in different parts of a landscape, with scientific researchers and alone, are an important part of a natural history writer's craft. It has been my experience in authoring or coauthoring eleven natural history books that good descriptive writing is essential for drawing readers into a deeper engagement with a landscape and its natural systems. The sophisticated nature of current ecological research requires a humanist approach and onsite field experience to reach a wide general readership.

Jeff has familiarized himself with published research on Mount Rainier and made contact with several researchers active in the field. A Foundation sponsorship would allow him to steep himself in the field experience during the short research season. His writing -- and the ultimate project -- would benefit immensely.

Our national parks, and Mount Rainier in particular, beg for the kind of detailed attention Jeff is bringing to this project. I hope you will consider sponsoring his field work for the coming field season.

Sincerely,

Tim McNulty

Dear Sponsored Research Committee—

I'm writing in full and enthusiastic support of Jeff Antonelis-Lapp's application for Sponsored Research funds to support his excellent book project on Mt. Rainier. I've been on the periphery of Jeff's project all along because it's a very different look at Mt. Rainier than any that have been presented before, including Tim McNulty's "official" Mt. Rainier book. I stuck my nose into Jeff's business because McNulty has been a buddy of mine for 33 years; when I heard Jeff speak about his experiences on the mountain, I realized that he has the missing link, the story of the mountain that has not yet been told. Jeff's book integrates various subjects approached by individual authors who have written about the mountain in the past, but he adds a cultural element, primarily Native American, that is woefully missing from other works.

I've looked over some of Jeff's work and find his style to be comfortable, creative and careful in detail. The resources at his disposal include the park archeologist and members of several local tribes who have worked with Jeff over many years and who trust him to be fair and accurate in his delivery. This book will fill the cultural niche missing from other books—Jeff is delivering the human element into the ecological/environmental mix.

This project is eminently publishable, and Jeff already has contact with an interested publisher, who will start by releasing one of Jeff's articles at the first of the year. This is an outstanding and difficult endeavor due to the unique design of the project, and I personally will do whatever it takes to encourage Jeff to complete this pursuit. I have not told Jeff that my next step is to interest him in a similar offering on the Olympic Mountains, but I don't want to scare him off this early!

In closing, I have to say that this project has great academic and cultural value, regionally and nationally, and I predict that the creative approach that Jeff is taking will have many imitators—but we can say proudly that we have the original right here. If you choose to support his work with Sponsored Research funds, you and the college will be quite proud of the result.

Best wishes, Bill

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