**Great Old Broads Solitude Monitoring Midterm Report 8/30/2021**

The Cascade Volcanoes chapter of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness partnered with the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area and Wilderness Forest Service to establish baseline data for solitude in the Mark O. Hatfield (MOH) Wilderness. The data obtained during the 2020 season was incomplete due to COVID, forest fires, smoke, and timber sale trail closures, and data for 2021 was needed to conclude the baseline data.

Nine volunteers collected solitude data for 16 four-hour sessions and hiked over 108 miles of trail to measure solitude. The trails in the monitoring zones ranged from 2 miles to 10 miles in length. Preliminary data from the monitoring zones indicated that visitors to the Multnomah zone experienced the least amount of solitude per session (mean = 20.6), followed by Whatum (mean = 17.75), and Cedar Swamp (mean = 4).

The MOH wilderness had sustained devasting fires in 2017; notable changes were observed in the landscape, and regeneration of the flora was apparent. Fireweed was the most prolific, followed by dandelions, mosses, beargrass, and vine maple. Another observation was the fact that the duff on the trail was replaced by rocks in the burned-out sections.

Challenges to the 2021 monitoring season were minor compared with the obstacles faced during the 2020 season. The weekend parking situation on the north side of Multnomah Falls challenged our volunteers due to the large numbers of tourists and hikers visiting the falls. Because of this, our volunteers have chosed to initiate the Multnomah hikes from the south end of the trail sections. Another problem we noted was supply chain issues with obtaining our Nat Geo maps from Amazon. Ordered in May 2021, we have yet to receive our Nat Geo Columbia River Gorge Trail maps. Several of us have shared our maps with our group which were purchased in 2020.