

A Voice in the Wilderness

Forty Years of Fighting Forewords 1964-2003

By Harvey Manning (\$17, available from the author, 15819 SE 44th St., Bellevue, WA 98006)

REVIEW BY ANDREW ENGELSON

This much is certain about Harvey Manning's latest "book." It's not pretty.

And to call *Forty Years of Fighting Forewords* a book is probably a stretch anyway. Think of it instead as a class reading packet. Inside you'll find Harvey's forewords from dozens of hiking books, complete with hand-scribbled notes and corrections in the margins.

This unrepentantly un-slick presentation should come as no surprise to those who know anything about the state's most outspoken hiking gadfly. Harvey has never been one to stand on ceremony, and this collection, at turns angry and inspiring, illustrates how the co-author of the popular *100 Hikes* series has unflinchingly fought for trails and wilderness, regardless of whose feathers he's ruffled.

Most of us have read at least one of these forewords. Whether you've bought the recent edition of *100 Hikes South Cascades and Olympics* or Tom Miller's influential 1964 book *The North Cascades*, you've probably read at least one of these calls-to-arms.

Harvey first became involved in the guidebook world after hammering out *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* on a typewriter in 1953 to supplement the Mountaineers Club's Climbing Course. Bolstered by the surprise success of that book, others followed, including the influential *100 Hikes* series, and the *Footloose* series of lowland walks. Harvey is the founder and first president of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club, and also a long-time board member of the North Cascades Conservation Council.

What these forewords illustrate

most clearly are the impressive gains that Harvey and other activists achieved in a remarkable forty-year period. What we now take for granted were hard fought victories that were far from certain: Glacier Peak Wilderness, 1960. Mount Adams and Goat Rocks Wilderness, 1964. North Cascades National Park, 1968. Alpine Lakes Wilderness, 1976. 1 million acres of Wilderness additions, 1984.



Harvey's exhortations to his readers were instrumental in these victories.

What also becomes clear in *Fighting Forewords* is that in Harvey's view, trails are always a means to an end, not an end in themselves. More than a few forewords mention the phrase "use it or lose it." The ultimate goal of his guidebooks was never to promote hiking, but to build a constituency willing to protect wild lands. He writes, "we revere the trail for what it does, not for what it is."

And always, he exhorts his readers to defend wildlands:

Your feet, taking one step at a time at

a studiously slow pace, know the land better than the heads of elected officials. Insert into those heads what your feet know. Your feet bones are connected to your leg bones, leg bones to the hip bones, hip bones to the backbone, backbone to the head bone, head bone to the letter-writing finger bones.

Harvey has never bothered to be polite in his writings. During his long career as the state's hiking gadfly, he's managed to offend just about every outdoor interest group at one time or another. The targets of his pen and typewriter have been legion: forest officials, equestrians, mountain bikers, motorcyclists, and ORV users have all come under attack. Harvey's disagreements with other environmentalists over such issues as the Northwest Forest Pass have sometimes been bitter: Harvey has faulted Washington Trails Association for its support of trail user fees, among other issues. His longtime guidebook collaborator, the late Ira Spring, is singled out in this collection in an unfortunate handwritten harangue for being a "dupe" regarding the Northwest Forest Pass. Manning has also had a falling out with his longtime publisher, The Mountaineers Books, which published many of these forewords.

Yet it is precisely this unwillingness to compromise in the defense of the region's wild spaces that has made Harvey the nagging conscience of the state's hiking community. We may not always agree with each of his principled stands, but we do owe him a debt of gratitude for the energy with which he has advocated for places of wild, serene, and deep solitude. ♦

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