Mount St. Helens Monument scientist leaves behind legacy

The public face of the monument

By JACKSON HOGAN
The Daily News

AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Visitors peer out of display windows at the volcano at the Johnston Ridge Observatory at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument near Toutle, Wash.

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Peter Frenzen has worked at Mount St. Helens for 35 years, yet he still lights up talking about the mountain.

"I've been many places in the world, and maybe I'm biased, but maybe the coolest places I've ever been, anywhere, are around Mount St. Helens," he said. "It never ceases to amaze me. I pinch myself practically every time I'm out there."

Frenzen, 60, who's served as the staff scientist at the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument since its creation in 1982, is retiring at the end of September.

For decades, he's been the public face of the 110,000-acre area, helping to coordinate research, document it for future generations, advocating for its protection and conveying its findings to the public. It's a job that left him no real time for any research of his own.

"I liked doing research when I was doing it, but I personally find the promoting of the understanding of what people are learning to be more satisfying to me," he said. "The impact of having people understand the world that we live in is not a tranquil place (is crucial)."

He has also appeared in many documentaries about Mount St. Helens, speaking about the complex but amazing evolution of natural and geological processes. Today, he's a bit wistful when he watches some of those older productions.

"It's actually kind of disconcerting to watch yourself age," Frenzen said, laughing. "People will (watch these old documentaries) and say, 'You were so young!'"

Escaped to the Northwest

Frenzen, a Midwest native, said he "escaped" to the Northwest to study ecology at the University of Washington. About the time he began graduate studies at Oregon State University, Mount St. Helens erupted and he was able to study the after effects with some of the world's most prestigious researchers.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," he said about analyzing the volcano post-eruption in 1980. "I was just lucky enough to be included."

Jerry Franklin, Frenzen's professor and mentor at Oregon State, said he knew right away his young protege scientist would excel in the natural science world.

"He was always a very enthusiastic individual, and upbeat," said Franklin, now a professor in ecosystem analysis at the University of Washington. "He brought just a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm to his research."

When President Ronald Reagan and Congress created the monument in 1982, Frenzen was immediately hired as a staff scientist, a position he held for 35 years. One of his most important messages from that experience? That it's a big misconception that the volcano's eruption on May 18, 1980, was a freak event.

"One of the things that Mount St. Helens teaches you is, 'Hey, (Earth) is changing and it's going to change," Frenzen said. "We have to be aware of what the Earth is capable of, since we're much better off working with it than trying to push that big rock up a hill, since it's more powerful than we are and we live at its pleasure and benefit from it."

Mount Margaret

Frenzen's favorite spot of the monument — he said this was not an easy choice — is Mount Margaret, where hikers can look across Spirit Lake into the crater of the volcano. The peak, located just northeast of Spirit Lake and Mount St. Helens, is around 5,800 feet tall and is in the heart of the volcano's blast area.

From that viewpoint, Frenzen said it's remarkable to witness how quickly vegetation and wildlife have returned.

"It's hard almost for me to remember what it was like," he said. "I look at photographs, and I do remember, it's hard to forget the way the landscape looked. But it's so different now than it was right after the eruption, that it's almost hard to wrap my brain around that I'm standing in the same place."

Frenzen said one of the U.S. Forest Service's challenges in managing the monument is balancing the needs of tourists with preserving the natural landscape. He believes the Forest Service has done a solid job of walking that tightrope, even though tourists still get upset about being forced to stay on trails.

"There are 200 miles of trails people can hike, and they take you to some of the neatest places," Frenzen said. "I know there are people that are upset that you have to stay on the trail, but you can pretty much see what you need to see from the trail. What defines the trail is the plants on the sides of the trail, and their flowers wouldn't be there if everyone ran all over the place."

Frenzen has received many accolades throughout his career, including the Forest Service's 2010 Gifford Pinchot Award for Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education, and Educator of the Year for Forest Region 6, which includes Washington and Oregon, that same year.

Loves kayaking

In his spare time, Frenzen continues to surround himself with the outdoors. He said he loves kayaking, gardening, cross-country skiing and going on walks with his wife.

Franklin said Frenzen's lifelong dedication to the monument has helped it greatly throughout the years.

"(Frenzen) doesn't give up on ideas or people or activities, and because of his persistence, he's been a very significant stabilizing influence," Franklin said. "He's provided a lot of continuity for what's going on at the monument."

Unfortunately, Frenzen said, his staff scientist position will not be replaced because of budget cuts. Still, even after retirement, Frenzen doesn't plan on abandoning his volcano just yet — but he might explore a few other places as well.

"There are so many trails and places I haven't hiked. Oddly enough, there are a lot of places I haven't hiked at Mount St. Helens I'd like to hike. I plan to do a lot of hiking, travel around North America, probably also other places in the world. I'll enjoy the time I have remaining and the friends I have and live my life."

Washington state youth pot use hasn't increased

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Analysis by a group of Washington state marijuana experts has found that youth use of pot and cannabis-abuse treatment did not increase after the state's legalization of marijuana for grown-ups.

The Seattle Times reported that under the state's legal-pot law, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy is required to conduct cost-benefit analyses of legalization on issues ranging from drugged-driving to prenatal use of marijuana.

Adam Darnell, the state Legislature think tank's lead researcher, says there's not much evidence so far that legalization has caused changes.

Darnell says researchers have, however, found that adults consumed more pot in parts of the state with higher per capita sales.

The experts' report was released shortly after U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions criticized implementation of legal pot in the state.

Washington state threatens legal action over DACA repeal

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Washington state's attorney general is threatening legal action as President Donald Trump ends a program that protects young immigrants brought into the U.S. illegally as children.

The Trump administration announced today that it would dismantle the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program after a six-month delay.

Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said Monday that the attorney general's office will file suit to end what he called Trump's "cruel and illegal policy" and defend DACA recipients.

Ferguson says he's been working with legal teams around the country, and expects to be joined by other states in the action.

Gov. Jay Inslee said more than 17,000 Dreamers live in Washington state and they will work relentlessly to protect them.

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN **TV LISTINGS**

Evening listings
TUESDAY

TUESDAY EVENING — A - Charter Astoria/ Seaside - L - Charter Long Beach — **SEPTEMBER 5**

A		L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2	KATU	2	KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	Bachelor in Paradise (N)		Black-ish	Black-ish	Somewhere "Destiny's Child" (N)		KATU News (N)	(:35) Jimmy Kimmel
-	KOMO	4	KOMO 4 News (N)		Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	Bachelor in Paradise (N)		Black-ish	Black-ish	Somewhere "Destiny's Child" (N)		KOMO 4 News (N)	(:35) Jimmy Kimmel
-	KING	5	NBC News (N)	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	America's Got Talent "Live Show Four" (N)				Game Night "A RuPaul Awakening" (N)		KING 5 News	(:35) Tonight Show
6	KOIN	-	KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight	NCIS "Beastmaster"		Bull "How to Dodge a Bullet"		NCIS: New Orleans "Knockout"		KOIN 6 News (N)	(:35) Colbert
-	KIRO	7	KIRO 7 News (N)	Evening News (N)	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	NCIS "Beastmaster"		Bull "How to Dodge a Bullet"		NCIS: New Orleans "Knockout"		KIRO News (N)	(:35) Colbert
8	KGW	-	KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Live at 7 (N)	Inside Edition	America's Got Talent "Live Show Four" (N)				Game Night "A RuPaul Awakening" (N)		KGW News (N)	(:35) Tonight Show
9	KRCW	3	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Modern Family	Modern Family	The Flash "The Once and Future Flash"		Legends of Tomorrow "Moonshot"		News at 10 (N)	Two and a Half	Two and a Half	Met Your Mother
10	KOPB	10	Ask-Old House	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)		American Masters "James Beard: America's First Foodie"			Rick Steves' Heart of Italy Rick Steves delves deep into the Italian heartland.			Mindfulness	
12	KPTV	12	6 O'Clock News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	The Simpsons	The Mick	Family Guy	The Mick	10 O'Clock News (N)		News (N)	Raising Hope
13	KPDX	-	Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	FOX 12's News (N)		9 O'Clock News (N)		Family Guy	Family Guy	American Dad!	Cleveland Show
-	KCPQ	13	Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	The Simpsons	The Mick	Family Guy	The Mick	Q13 News at 10 (N)		Q13 News (N)	The Simpsons
20	TBS	20	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Conan	
-	KZJO	22	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Friends	Friends	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half	Two and a Half
29	ESPN	29	(4:00) ITF Tennis U.S. Open (L)				SportsCenter (N)		SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		SportsCenter (N)		SportsCenter (N)	
30	ESPN2	30	SportsC. "Marty Smith's America" (N)		Mano a Mano (N)	Mano a Mano (N)	30 for 30 "The Band That Wouldn't Die"		30 for 30 "Trojan War"			Jalen & Jacoby (N)	The Fantasy Show	
31	NICK	31	The Loud House	Henry Danger	Henry Danger	The Thundermans	The Thundermans	NickyRickyDicky	Full House	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends
32	DISN	32	Jessie	Bunk'd	K.C. Undercover	Raven's Home	Andi Mack	Stuck in Middle	Bizaardvark	Andi Mack	Liv and Maddie	K.C. Undercover	Bizaardvark	Raven's Home
34	FAM	34	(5:30) ★★★ Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory ('71) Gene Wilder.				The Fosters "Prom" (N)		The Bold Type "Carry the Weight" (N)		The Fosters "Prom"		The 700 Club	
35	FMC	35	(:55) ★★ The Guilt Trip ('12) Barbra Streisand, Seth Rogen.			(:50) FXM Presents	The Sitter (2011, Comedy) Ari Graynor, Jonah Hill.			(:40) FXM Presents	★★ Water for Elephants ('11) Reese Witherspoon, Robert Pattinson.			
36	LIFE	36	Dance Moms		Dance Moms		Dance Moms		Dance Moms Mothers live vicariously through their daughters.				(:05) Little Women: LA	
38	ROOT	38	Mariners Access	MarinersPre-game	MLB Baseball Houston Astros at Seattle Mariners Site: Safeco Field -- Seattle, Wash. (L)						Post-game	MLB Baseball Houston Astros at Seattle Mariners		
39	FS1	39	(4:30) UFC UFC 209			MLB's Best (N)	MLB Whiparound (L)		Speak for Yourself		Skip and Shannon: Undisputed Opinions on the biggest sports topics of the day.			
43	SPIKE	43	Ink Master "Pin-Up Panic Attack"		Ink Master "Drill Baby, Drill"		Ink Master "Grim Inker"		Ink Master "Pit Fall"		Ink Master "Sell Out" (N)		Ink Master (N)	Tattoo Night.
44	COM	44	Futurama	Futurama	Futurama	South Park	South Park	South Park	★★ Joe Dirt (2001, Comedy) Dennis Miller, Brittany Daniel, David Spade.				The Daily Show (N)	The Daily Show
45	HIST	45	Forged in Fire "Cavalry Saber"		Road to 9/11 "Brooklyn Jihad (1990 - 1995)" 1/3				Road to 9/11 "The Bin Ladens (1995-2000)" 2/3 (N)				(:05) Road "Brooklyn Jihad (1990 - 1995)"	
46	A&E	46	L. Remini "Thetans in Young Bodies"		Remini: Scientology		Remini: Scientology		Remini: Scientology		Murder of Laci P "The Trial Begins" (N)		(:05) Remini: Scientology	
47	TLC	47	Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	OutDaughtered		OutDaughtered: Life with Quints (N)		Daughter "Mother's Day Getaway" (N)		(:05) Rattled "Back in the Ring" (N)		(:05) Daughter "Mother's Day Getaway"	
48	DISC	48	Deadly Catch "Five-Year Storm, Part 2"		Deadliest Catch: On Deck "Heartache on the Bearing Sea"				Deadliest Catch (N)		Manhunt: Unabomber "Lincoln" (N)		(:05) Manhunt: Unabomber "Lincoln"	
49	NGEO	49	CIA Secret Experiments		Area 51: The CIA's Secret		JFK: The Lost Bullet		The Lost JFK Tapes The anniversary of JFK's assassination on Nov 22, 1963.				JFK: The Lost Bullet	
50	TNT	50	★★ Tammy (2014, Comedy) Susan Sarandon, Sarah Baker, Melissa McCarthy.				★★★ The Help (2011, Drama) Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, Emma Stone.						The Help (2011, Drama) Emma Stone.	
51	AMC	51	(5:30) ★★★ Rocky II (1979, Drama) Talia Shire, Burt Young, Sylvester Stallone.				★★★ Rocky III (1982, Drama) Talia Shire, Carl Weathers, Sylvester Stallone.					★★★ Rocky IV (1985, Drama) Talia Shire, Sylvester Stallone.		
52	USA	52	Modern Family	Modern Family	Modern Family	Modern Family	WWE Super Smackdown				Shooter "That'll Be The Day" (SF) (N)		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Scorched Earth"	
53	FOOD	53	Chopped "All-Stars: Judge Remix"		Chopped "All-Stars: Grand Finale"		Chopped "Cheap Eats"		Chopped "Greater Tater"		Chopped "Food Truck Luck" (N)		Chopped After (N)	Chopped After
54	HGTV	54	Renovation "Reno Written In The Stars"		Fixer Upper		Fixer Upper		Fixer Upper "Space in the Suburbs"		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters
56	FX	56	(4:30) ★★★★ Captain America: The Winter Soldier			★★★★ Guardians of the Galaxy (2014, Adventure) Zoe Saldana, Lee Pace, Chris Pratt.					Cult "Election Night" (SP) (N)		Cult "Election Night"	
57	CNN	57	Anderson Cooper 360		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		Anderson Cooper 360		Anderson Cooper 360		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	
58	FNC	58	The Five		Hannity		Tucker Carlson Tonight		The Five		Hannity		Tucker Carlson Tonight	
61	CNBC	61	Shark Tank		Filthy Rich Guide	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Filthy Rich Guide	Paid Program	
63	BRAV	63	Below Deck "Bemily"		B.Deck "Waking the Resting Bitch Face"		Below Deck "50 Shades of Ben"		Below Deck (SP) (N)		A Night With (N)	Vander-JaxBritt	WatchWhat (N)	Below Deck
64	TCM	64	(5:00) ★★★★ The Song of Bernadette ('43) William Eythe, Jennifer Jones.				★★ Love Letters (1945, Drama) Joseph Cotten, Anita Louise, Jennifer Jones.				★★★ Cluny Brown (1946, Drama) Jennifer Jones, Peter Lawford, Charles Boyer.			
65	SYFY	65	Movie	★★★ Charlie and the Chocolate Factory ('05, Adventure) Freddie Highmore, David Kelly, Johnny Depp.			Game Face "Things Get Harry"				Horns (2014, Drama) Daniel Radcliffe, Heather Graham, Juno Temple.			
162	RFD	162	(5:30) Cattlemen	Chasing-Madison	Horse. "Get the Right Start with Foals"		Chris Cox	Rural Eve. News	Ag PhD	Cattlemen to Cattlemen		Chasing-Madison	Product Showcase	