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**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY UNVEILS NEWEST GEOTOURISM MAPGUIDE
SHOWCASING PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S CENTRAL CASCADES**

*MapGuide Encourages Authentic and Sustainable Travel
In Cascades Region of Washington and Oregon*

WASHINGTON (Jan. 19, 2010)—The National Geographic Society today unveiled its latest Geotourism MapGuide, which highlights the sustainable places and attractions in the Central Cascades region of the Pacific Northwest. Based on recommendations of local residents and business owners, the MapGuide showcases authentic and sustainable ways to experience the dynamic landscape, pioneering culture and recreational treasures of the Central Cascades areas of Washington and Oregon.

The Central Cascades MapGuide will be available in the West Coast edition of the May/June issue of National Geographic Traveler magazine, as well as through a new Web site, www.TheCentralCascades.com.

“We are thrilled that Oregon and Washington have seen this challenging, multi-year project through to its successful completion,” remarked John Francis, National Geographic’s vice president for Research, Conservation and Exploration. “In defining this region by what its residents most treasure, you have made great strides toward ensuring its geographical character for future generations.”

The MapGuide features more than 200 geotourism sites selected by the National Geographic Society and regional committees, based on more than 1,200 nominations from local residents. Points of interest include cultural, recreational, agricultural, natural and geological attractions and activities that promote sustainable travel throughout the Central Cascades. The MapGuide also features full-color photography from Northwest photographers and famed National Geographic cartography.

“It is much more than a map,” said Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon. “Reading the MapGuide, a visitor gains a sense of the Central Cascades area as unique to any other place on Earth. Not only does it inspire travel, but it also instills a desire to celebrate and preserve our singular landscape, culture and regional identity.”

“The Central Cascades area is filled with unparalleled natural beauty and authentic travel experiences, from hiking Mount Rainier to windsurfing in the Columbia River Gorge,” said Marsha Massey, executive director of Washington State Tourism. “This MapGuide truly captures the spirit of the region, and we are honored to partner with the National Geographic Society in promoting sustainable tourism in Washington and Oregon.”

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The double-sided, large-format-print MapGuide measures 25" x 37" and features such famed landmarks as Mount Rainier's Paradise Lodge and Oregon's Timberline Lodge, as well as many lesser-known "hidden gems" like Pigman's Organic Produce Patch and Joe's Donuts, a local icon for extra-large fritters. Also highlighted are scenic byways; birding, hiking and biking trails; public markets; shops; galleries; festivals; and events. The Central Cascades, as designated by the National Geographic Society, stretches from Mount Rainier National Park in Washington to Crater Lake National Park in Oregon and is loosely bounded by Highway 97 to the east and Interstate 5 to the west.

"Having grown up in the Northwest, I am proud to have my restaurant included on the National Geographic MapGuide," said Karen Lasher, Chef/Owner, Around the Table, Camas, Wash. "Sustainable tourism is an important part of my business and my community, and I hope this MapGuide will inspire travelers to visit our beautiful region."

More information about the Central Cascades MapGuide, including ordering information and details on the National Geographic Society's geotourism program, can be found at www.TheCentralCascades.com and www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable.

MapGuide Background

The National Geographic Society's Center for Sustainable Destinations provided project direction under Jonathan Tourtellot, the center's director, and James Dion, associate director. National Geographic Maps, led by chief cartographer Allen Carroll, handled the cartography.

Lead project partners include Travel Oregon, Washington State Tourism and the Central Cascades Geotourism Stewardship Council, with regional coordination provided by Sustainable Travel International, Sustainable Northwest and Rural Development Initiatives.

Significant funding and technical support were provided by Travel Oregon, Washington State Tourism, U.S. Forest Service-Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Land Management Oregon State Office, Oregon Cultural Trust, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Central Oregon Visitors Association, Southern Oregon Visitors Association, Greater Portland Regional Partners, Travel Lane County and the Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association.

The National Geographic Society has worked with community-based alliances to develop similar geotourism MapGuides in several other regions around the world. MapGuide projects have been completed or are ongoing in Greater Yellowstone, the Crown of the Continent (Alberta, British Columbia, Montana), Guatemala, Sonoran Desert (Arizona, Sonora), Romania, Norway, Honduras, Peru, Baja California, Rhode Island, Vermont and Appalachia.

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About National Geographic

The National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," the Society works to inspire people to care about the planet. It reaches more than 375 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, National Geographic, and other magazines; National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; music; radio; films; books; DVDs; maps; exhibitions; live events; school publishing programs; interactive media; and merchandise. National Geographic has funded more than 9,200 scientific research, conservation and exploration projects and supports an education program combating geographic illiteracy. For more information, visit nationalgeographic.com.

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