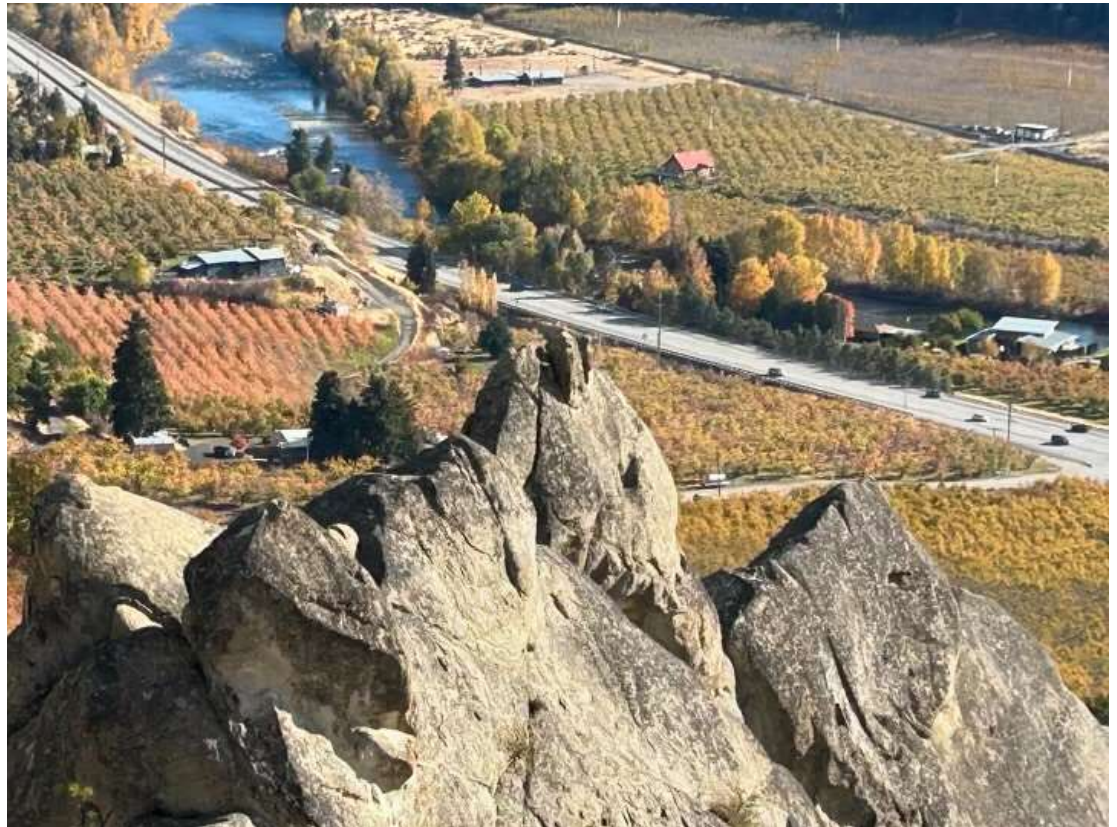


Originally, I chose Peshastin Pinnacles as my field study site because it is within 5 minutes of our home and I'd been there numerous times before and loved the topography of the area as well as the many hiking trails and fabulous

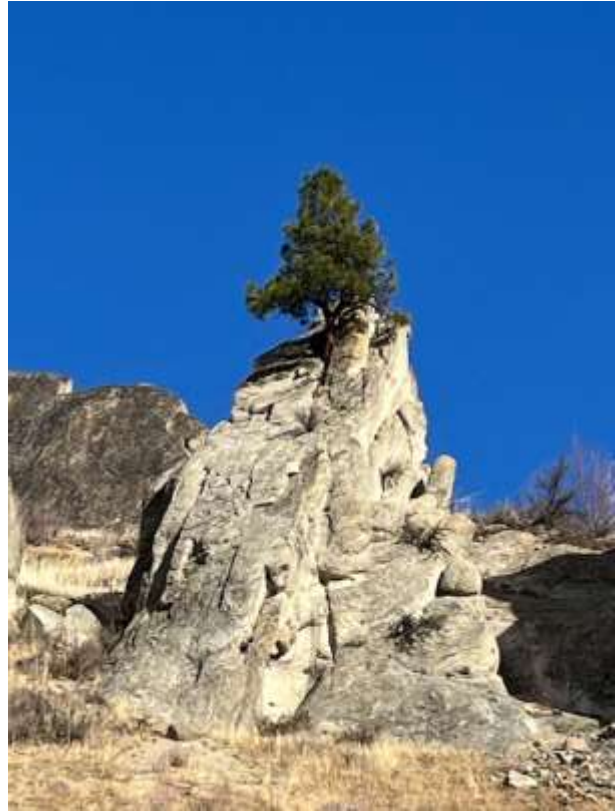


views. However, by the second week of going there, I realized how special the site was and why I loved it that much more. As I sat there working on my journal entries, with the warm sun on me and enjoying the gorgeous views, I felt a serene calmness come over me. It truly turned into a magical like spiritual experience. I consider myself a woman with a strong faith and my Maker met me in the special space like something I haven't experienced too many other places.

The first time I felt it was when I saw a praying mantis land within inches of my foot. And he did NOT move. I watched him sit there in his praying pose, which is of course how the insect got his name, and I expected him to quickly fly away. But he kept sitting there as I nudged him gently and he did not move even when I finished my entry and left that day. Google says praying mantis are believed to bring good fortune, blessings and divine protection. I agree with that wholeheartedly!



With each subsequent visit to the site, I felt the same strong spiritual pull. Small butterflies like the silver spotted skipper would flit and fly by and land on the plants I was studying as I walked along the hiking paths. The week we were to focus on our study on conifers I could only find one variety at the site, the Ponderosa pine. At first that frustrated me because we were supposed to study 2-3 different kinds, and I am a bit of a rule follower. But then I felt my Lord



tell me that ONE was enough, like He/She tells me I am enough. The Ponderosa pine is a tall stately tree that can withstand fire due to its thick bark. Well, I've had a few fires in my years on this earth and they've made me a stronger person overall. My favorite verse from the Bible is from 2nd Corinthians 12:9 that says "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness..."

The week we were to focus on deciduous trees the same thing happened. The only one I could locate was the Big Leaf maple, a beautiful grove of golden leafed trees toward the back of the site. Again, I got frustrated briefly because the instructions given were to study 2-3 kinds. But again, the Lord nudged me, and I felt that was enough. And I was shown I could use 1 of the different kinds of deciduous trees that were clearly planted at the base of the



site, around the picnic area when they made it into a park years ago, including a lovely Silver birch tree.

There were numerous weeks we were to observe plants and shrubs, and I found many native varieties of those, but I was continuously drawn to the Saskatoon serviceberry shrub. It was around that time that my sister Judy had sent me the podcast episode called "The antidote to



not enoughness," where Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer was interviewed about her new book called "Serviceberry." DR Kimmerer noted that the serviceberry shrub is the epitome of abundance in nature, providing for pollinators, birds, soil and people. She says it's "a living metaphor for nature because it's such a provider." The name serviceberry in her native Potawatomi language means "best of the best," and was a big part of the indigenous trading economy.

The week I went to study the presence of mammals was right after a heavy rainstorm and so I was happy to see lots of mule deer prints that led around to the back of the park. I followed the prints and saw the deer have many of their own special trails around the park and I imagined them making their way along those trails in the wee hours of the morning or after dusk.

On our field trip on November 9th, I was fascinated to find out so much about the geology of our area from the geologist Brent Cunderla. At our stop at the Pinnacles, he explained the sandstone was dropped in the flood "droppings" of the Ice Age and then the "uplift" of the Cascade Mountains happened to form the Pinnacles. I loved reading about the Indigenous legend that ends with the sisters being turned into stone and was reminded of this picture that sister Judy had send me previously that a friend of hers has taken that shows the rocks really



look like salmon at the top! And I also learned that the Indigenous people consider the site very spiritual and sacred.

My field study after that we were to focus on the geology of our site and I was walking along and noticed a Ponderosa pine growing out of a smaller pinnacle, seemingly without any dirt for the seed to have landed in. It reminded me of the parable from the Bible about the man



who built his home on a rock, as well as how strong we can be when needed in life.

One of the last times I went to The Pinnacles, I sat in a different spot, just a few feet off the path and sat on a rock. As I was getting my journal out, I noticed a distinct strong smell. I looked down and about a foot to my left was a dead deer carcass in the grass, mostly eaten away, only the hooves and some fur was lying there. As I realized that a cougar or coyote probably got it, I got a shiver down my spine and thought of the circle of life and realized that was part of how God provided for all living creatures. I did not stay long at that spot!

The last week we were to observe bird species, and the weather was nasty the only day I had availability, so instead of going to the site, I felt called to stay in my nice warm home and draw a picture in my journal of one of the few birds I saw on my many visits, a Black billed magpie, as well as a Hairy woodpecker I had seen in my backyard that morning. And then I used the extra moments I had to say a prayer and thank God for encouraging me to take this Wenatchee Naturalist course



and for guiding me through this magnificent journey of experiencing the Peshastin Pinnacles in a new and spiritual way.

