

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



Volume 24
Number 1
Spring 2016



Elwha, Fitzhenry, Snow Clouds. Photo by Bob Kaune.

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Wild Olympics Bill Gets U.S. Senate Hearing

by Tim McNulty, Vice President, OPA

The Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act cleared a major hurdle on April 21 when the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee heard testimony on the bill for the first time.

The Wild Olympics bill was reintroduced by Senator Murray and Representative Derek Kilmer last spring. It would permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as Wilderness and 19 rivers and their major tributaries, a total of 464 river miles, as Wild and Scenic Rivers. If enacted, the legislation would designate the first new wilderness in Olympic National Forest in three decades and the first-ever protected wild and scenic rivers on the Olympic Peninsula.

"This step is great news for anyone who enjoys our prized wild spaces, and wants to protect them for generations to come. I am going to keep pushing to move this bill forward," said Senator Patty Murray.

Both the Forest Service, in oral testimony, and the Park Service in written testimony

Continued on P. 3, wild Olympics Bill

OPA Meetings

Next: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Place: Kingston Yacht Club

Regular Meetings Schedule: 4th Tuesday of odd-numbered months, except the 3rd Tuesday in November and no meeting in July.

OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings. Please join us.

Your Legislators

WA State: http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/

U.S. Congress: 202) 224-3121 to reach any member of Congress

US Senate, Washington, DC 20510 www.senate.gov

Senator Patty Murray

DC: 202-224-2621 FAX 202-224-0238

Seattle: 206-553-5545 .

www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme

Senator Maria Cantwell

DC: 202-224-3441 FAX 202-228-0514

Seattle: 206-220-6400

www.cantwell.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-maria

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1 Rep. Suzan DelBene (D)

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3 Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R)

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4 Representative Doc Hastings (R)

1203 Longworth HOB
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5 Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers

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6 Rep. Derek Kilmer (D)

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7 Rep. Jim McDermott (D)

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1127 Longworth HOB
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Wild Olympics Bill Gets Senate Hearing

Continued from P. 1.

supported the bill. The Park Service requested one important addition to the bill: that Wild and Scenic River protection be extended downstream on the Elwha River to include the reach formerly inundated beneath the Glines Canyon dam and Lake Mills reservoir and out the free-flowing river to the park boundary.

Shortly before the hearing, the Wild Olympics Co-

alition announced over 100 new endorsements by local Olympic Peninsula business and elected officials. The new additions bring the total number of local businesses, elected officials, faith leaders & sportsmen, conservation and outdoor recreation groups to more than 550 endorsers.

Elwha Fitzhenry, Clouds. Photo by Bob Kaune.

For updates and future developments, check the Wild Olympics website at wildolympics.org and the OPA website, olympicparkassociates.org.

Thank Senator Murray and Congressman Kilmer for keeping this important legislation moving forward.

This step is great news for anyone who enjoys our prized wild spaces, and wants to protect them for generations to come. I am going to keep pushing to move this bill forward."

Senator Patty Murray



New Membership Recruitment Brochure

by Paul Robisch, Membership Chair

As a grassroots organization, we know that there is strength in numbers: the political clout of OPA is directly proportional to the size of its membership.

OPA is actively working to stop the U.S. military's proposals to use large parts of the Olympic Peninsula as a new training area for Navy jet fighter and Army helicopter pilots. (Please read the story, P. 5 of this issue of the ***Voice***.)

For many years this necessary training has occurred over the relatively isolated desert areas of Idaho and Nevada. OPA sees no reason these activities should occur over Olympic Peninsula residents, national park, national forest, Olympic ocean beaches, and congressionally designated Wilderness.

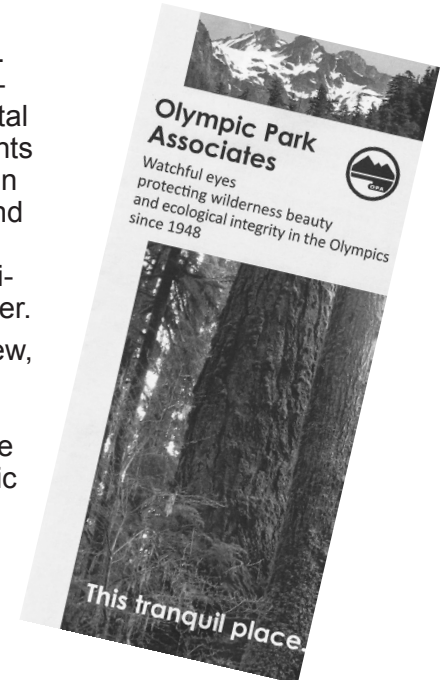
In an effort to magnify OPA's effectiveness, we just published a new membership brochure that discusses these issues, and we hope new OPA members will raise their voices once they learn of this serious potential threat to their mental and physical well-being and that of the wilderness they cherish.

For the benefit of new members, the brochure also provides a brief summary of OPA's seven decades of serving as the conservation watchdogs for Olympic National Park and surrounding public lands.

This new membership and information brochure will be available from individual OPA members and officers: we will soon ask you to please reach out to

friends and neighbors. You may also see brochures at environmental and conservation events throughout Washington State, and in shops and other public locations where sympathetic citizens are likely to gather.

You can find our new, broader membership dues schedule on the back page of this issue of the ***Voice***. The basic membership dues for student, low income, individuals and associate organizations are unchanged. Family membership is raised by \$5. Life membership is raised from \$250 to \$500 (25 times the annual dues), and two new categories have been added: \$100 for Sustaining Member, and \$250 for Patron.



Update on Northwest Forest Plan Revision Process

By Shelley Spalding, OPA Board, and Leader of the Polly Dyer Cascadia Broadband, Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

The Northwest Forest Plan is being revised by both the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management during their management plan revision process (see **Voice** Volume 23, Numbers 1 and 2). A coalition of conservation groups has formed in order to strategize and discuss how best to be prepared for the upcoming revisions, to ensure that public is aware of the process, and to develop a strategy to prevent weakening of the ecosystem protections found in the NWFP.

In March the NWFP Coalition held a second meeting, a working meeting, in Eugene to further discuss the coalition's campaign/public outreach plan, a coalition member agreement, and a goals statement.

At the meeting there was general agreement that we need to mobilize the public and help them to see the "values" in public lands management – especially those non-monetary ecosystem values such as clean air and water, fish and wildlife, the opportunity to recreate and/or seek solitude, and the role of intact ecosystems as a buffer against the impacts from our changing climate.

Impacts from climate change, and subsequent management strategies to address anticipated changes, will play a key role in plan revisions. We need to help frame that discussion especially with regard to fire suppression and carbon sequestration.

A hotter drier climate is expected to lead to more frequent and/or intense fires. The agencies are very focused on fire suppression but are largely overlooking the ecological role of fire in the creation and maintenance of natural western forests.

There is no question that intact ecosystems are huge carbon stores and we need to "keep carbon in the trees." The 2012 Forest Service Planning rule acknowledges this by stating that carbon sequestration is to be considered one of the "multiple uses" in development of management plans.

After meetings with Forest Service officials last year, it became apparent that there is uncertainty over the rigor of the

peer review standard that will be used for the Science Synthesis which, in turn, will be used to justify the plan revisions related to the Northwest Forest Plan and Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS). In November of 2015, the coalition sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget and the Forest Service Chief stating:

A science synthesis is of great importance and this Science Synthesis will have major implications for forest planning decisions affecting aquatic conservation, Riparian and Late Successional Reserves and other land allocations, climate change planning, and imperiled species conservation within the Northwest Forest Plan area. Such decisions are, by their very nature, highly controversial and of extremely high interagency interest. These issues, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of the science involved, and because the Science Syntheses will cover nearly 25 million acres of federal lands within the Northwest Forest Plan, all require the Forest Service to treat the synthesis as a "Highly Influential" scientific assessment. Moreover, the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan was built on best available science through partnering with the scientific community via the Forest Ecosystem Assessment Management Team (FEMAT).

The Northwest Forest Plan revision process is complex, convoluted, and definitely controversial. It will take an informed citizenry with stamina to follow and engage in this process. The health of our forests for now, for the future, for our children, and for all the critters depends upon this engagement.



Militarism of Public and Private Lands

By Donna Osseward, President, OPA.

Do you want to hear Navy jets and Army helicopters on your trips into the wilds, or meet up with a Navy SEAL or an Air Force training mission?

Would you like to live in or visit a place where jet formations repeatedly fly search patterns over your head most days of the week?

It appears that the Defense Department has decided it can save budget money by doing its training in and over the public and private land of this country. Areas of the Northwest are now being targeted for use by the military to train our troops.

The Navy is planning to establish a permanent electromagnetic warfare training range covering the western part of the Olympic Peninsula.

The Navy is asking the Forest Service for a permanent permit to use National Forest roads and airspace, over which Growler jets from Whidbey Island will conduct search pattern fly-overs for 12-16 hours a day, for up to 260 days a year. They will be searching for mobile electronic emitters, moving around on trucks, in the Olympic National Forest. In doing so, they will also use the airspace over Olympic National Park; Washington State Department of Natural Resources land; Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary; the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuges; Washington Islands Wilderness; Quinault, Quileute, and Hoh Reservations; and thousands of acres of private land, including the towns of Forks and Amanda Park.

This training has been done for years in Idaho and Nevada. If the Forest Service gives this permit, the Navy is free to overwhelm the sounds of nature in wilderness everywhere. It sets a precedent that refutes the purpose of the Wilderness Act of 1964. (See inset.)

This proposal by the Navy poses a threat and an assault on wilderness, probably unintended because of a lack of understanding, by the military, of the value of wilderness.

Emboldened by the Navy's request to use our public lands, the Army out of Joint Base Lewis McCord (JBLM) wants to conduct helicopter training in the south Olympic Peninsula as well as in the North Cascades. Some of this training is currently being done in Colorado. Why must JBLM, one of the largest military installations on the west coast, extend its reach into our private and public protected Northwest lands?

More recently the Navy announced its intention

to have SEALs train on Puget Sound beaches. The Navy would use public beaches and state parks to land at night, to hone their skills. Hopefully, they would not scare locals and risk being shot by citizens concerned they might be ISIS invaders.



The Air Force wants to use natural areas on the western Olympic Peninsula as part of their survival training for pilots. Their Environmental Assessment states for "coastal, open ocean, and tropical survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) training near Forks.... Training activities will consist mainly of land navigation, camping, and natural materials gathering, and does not include use of live-fire weapons or tracked vehicles. The Proposed Action also includes ground and helicopter transport to and between training areas, and raft launches on the Calawah, Sol Duc, and Hoh rivers in the Forks, WA area." [USAF EA]. This is proposed for two 5-day exercises per year.

Wilderness brings many gifts into our lives. We receive the gift of cleaner air and water; a place for animals far better than a zoo; a place where nature works mostly according to its creator's rules; and the diversity of plants, fish, and animals that comes from a creation not weeded by humans. Wilderness becomes a library and laboratory for us to learn from the processes that the creator produced to provide for our survival. In the unique biology of complete ecosystems we have found the majority of our medicines. Wildlife habitat shrinks as we spread our human activities into the wild lands of this country.

OPA supports the efforts of our armed forces to defend our national security. However, OPA believes it will not harm our national defense

to leave the training where it is now being done.

Olympic Park Associates is concerned about this rapidly accelerating military use of otherwise designated public and private lands of this country. It dangerously mixes military personnel training with public use by citizens. It suggests that areas used by troops will have to be made off limits to citizens to prevent injuries. Jets flying over wilderness and national parks vastly reduces the ability of these lands to provide much-needed solitude and recreational enjoyment for citizens. And all of these proposals challenge the very nature of our private and protected public lands.

A Quarry Above the Elwha on MacDonald Mountain

by Donna Osseward, OPA President.



See related story,
Page 7.

Several years ago the owners of 40 acres of land on Mt. MacDonald, above the Elwha River and just outside Olympic National Park, tried to persuade Clallam County to give them a permit to build a road and open a rock quarry named Little River Rock Quarry. At that time OPA contributed \$1,000 to UERCC, a local citizen group, to help oppose developing a quarry on Mt. MacDonald. OPA argues that the road and mining operation would cause dirt and debris through runoff to go into the river, harming the salmon restoration efforts. Millions of dollars have gone into dam removal and revegetation to restore salmon runs in the Elwha River. Clallam County denied the petition to build a road and open a quarry.

Last fall, the owners of the property again submitted a variance application to build an access road this spring/summer to the top of Mt. MacDonald. The road would include culvert crossings of a stream in two places --a stream that flows into the Elwha. Culverts are impediments to salmon survival because they often only allow downstream movement of the salmon. Roads and culverts speed water movement and increase runoff erosion. While not so stated, the road would be an access road to the denied quarry site.

OPA wrote the following comments to the Clallam County Department of Community Development on March 15, 2016.

Clallam County Department of Community Development

Dear Director & Senior Planner,

Olympic Park Associates (OPA) appreciates this opportunity to comment on a variance application to the Department of Community Development (DCD) for building an access road this spring/summer to the top of Mt. MacDonald.

OPA was founded in 1948, and for 68 years the citizen volunteer members of OPA have worked "to protect the wilderness and ecological integrity of Olympic National Park." Many of our members reside on the Olympic Peninsula.

Believing that the road application is NOT a road to nowhere, OPA asks that the application be denied because of its attempt to provide access to a quarry site that has been previously denied, and that the road itself creates a hazard to the maintenance of the hillside.

Erosion and potential landslides from this area present a real danger to the quality of the waters of the Elwha River and the maintenance of the ecological integrity of Olympic National Park and the surrounding area. The Elwha provides spawning areas for many species of salmon, among them the threatened Chinook salmon. This proposed road and quarry are a major threat to the salmon spawning in the Elwha. It would negate many of the efforts made to remove the two Elwha dams and restore the much needed salmon habitat.

Olympic Park Associates ask that the variance application for the road be denied.

Best Regards,
Donna Osseward, President
Olympic Park Associates

The Elwha River Reclaims Its Historic Floodplain

by Tim McNulty, OPA Vice President

The undammed Elwha River reclaimed its former floodplain this past winter -- and it destroyed one campground, buried another, and washed out the (Elwha) Hot Springs Road in the process.

A series of winter storms brought the fourth highest rainfall measured in 75 years to the Elwha. As the swollen river reclaimed historic flood channels, it buried the Elwha Campground beneath thousands of yards of sediments and woody debris. Farther upstream, the streamside campsites at scenic Altaire Campground were washed away, along with most the road that accessed them.

As a flood channel combined with Sanders Creek and left the lower campground it washed out 90 feet of the Hot Springs Road. The road now remains closed to vehicle traffic at the Madison Falls trailhead just inside the Olympic National Park boundary.

As of April, the Elwha road remained open to hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. A temporary bridge over the washout provides non-motorized access to the Glines Canyon overlook and upper valley trailheads. Seldom visited lower valley trails such as West Elwha, Cascade Rock and Griff Creek trails are being rediscovered. And most spring days find a full parking lot and hikers enjoying quiet strolls along the newly greening valley.

Longtime OPA member and former Olympic Park ranger Bob Kaune has an intimate perspective on the Elwha Valley. (Note his photo accompanying this story, as well as on the front cover.) Bob began running on the Elwha road 1992, then walking it regularly in 2000. Since 2003, he has walked the Hot Springs Road road every day.

“With the road closed, walking the Elwha Valley has become hugely popular,” he told me. “I see people of all ages and kinds walking the valley. I talk to a lot of them, and they are clearly enjoying the experience.”

Park spokesperson Barbara Maynes reports that crews plan to have a more substantial bridge over the washout in place by summer, allowing motorized access to the upper valley during prime visitor season. But a permanent solution to road access in the free-flowing Elwha Valley will require long-term planning. OPA will follow the process closely.

Winter floods took a toll on other peninsula roads as well. The Undie Road, accessing the Bogachiel River trail in Olympic National Forest, experienced a slope failure and is closed to non-residential use. And once again, the six-mile Graves Creek Road took a serious hit and is open to motorized vehicles only for its first four miles. Hikers heading up the East Fork Quinault trail will have an extra two miles of walking before reaching the former trailhead and campground. The Park predicts that road won't be repaired until low water later in the summer.

With climate-driven increase in the frequency and intensity of winter storms in our area, nature continues to “bat last” on floodplain roads.



*Elwha Road Washout.
Photo by Bob Kaune.*



*Chinook Salmon.
USFWS.*



Voice of the Wild Olympics

Sally W. Soest, Editor

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