

# VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948

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Winter  
2010



## Olympic Park Associates' Conservation Vision for a Wild Olympics



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Story by Tim McNulty

Photo by Dave Sheffler. South Fork, Hoh River, candidate Wild & Scenic River.

The twenty-first century has brought new conservation challenges to the Olympic ecosystem. The long-term ecological integrity of Olympic National Park, Olympic National Forest, and the peninsula's watersheds, fish, and wildlife is not insured. Global warming's impacts are being felt throughout the Olympics, from dwindling snowpacks and unraveling rivers to stressed coastal communities. Olympic National Park now hosts eight wildlife species on the federal endangered species list, including five stocks of wild salmon. An additional 22 species are classified "species of concern."

The future effects of climate change, unsustainable resource use, and an increasing population on the Olympics' forest, fish, and wildlife communities are unknown. But scientists and conservationists agree that the best conservation strategy is to protect those parts of the ecosystem that are healthy and functioning, and restore critical pieces that have been lost.

Protecting natural watershed processes is key, and numerous salmon and watershed restoration projects have made important strides in this direction. The Elwha River restoration, set to begin next year, will set a new world benchmark in salmon restoration. Government and private collaborations have begun the important work of removing destructive logging roads on national forest and industry lands with the goal of restoring salmon habitat.

Building on these and other protective measures, Olympic Park Associates promotes a conservation vision for the 21st century that would:

- Add four key salmon and low-elevation wildlife habitat areas to Olympic National Park,
- Protect additional Olympic National Forest roadless lands as designated Wilderness, and
- Designate a number of Wild and Scenic Rivers in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park.

*Continued on P. 3, Wild Olympics*

## OPA Board Meetings:

**Next:** March 24  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m..  
**Place:** Kingston Community Center  
**Please join us.** OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings.  
**The regular OPA Board meetings** are in the Kingston Community Center on the 4th Wednesday of odd-numbered months, except the 3rd Weds in November to avoid Thanksgiving, and no meeting in July.

## How to Reach Your Members of Congress

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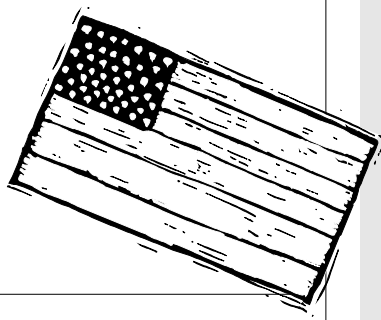
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# OPA's Conservation Vision for Wild Olympics

*Continued from P. 1.*

This is an ambitious agenda for the future of Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest, but the future health of the lands we love depends upon bold and visionary action today.

## Park Additions

The biggest challenge facing Olympic National Park is preserving its wealth of wild salmon stocks. Intensive logging of sensitive watersheds outside park boundaries, residential and recreational development of lowland rivers, and over-fishing at sea have landed five Olympic salmon and steel-head stocks on the endangered species list. Another challenge is protecting key, low-elevation calving and wintering areas for the park's majestic Roosevelt elk.

The park's 2008 general management plan recommended three areas of willing-seller park additions. An earlier resource protection alternative in the draft plan recommended five larger areas. OPA is recommending four areas for potential future park expansion, all with adequate upper watershed protections to insure critical fisheries and wildlife habitats remain in tact. They are: the Lyre River area north of Lake Crescent; the Ozette Lake addition; the South Fork Hoh River; and the north slope of the Queets corridor. These areas go beyond the park's recommendations but are closer to areas identified by scientists as crucial for the long-term protection of park resources.

The willing-seller restriction means that none of these areas will be added to the park until landowners agree to sell them. Inclusion of these lands as willing-seller park additions would not restrict current use of these lands by landowners (U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, private timber companies and individual land owners), and would place them under no obligation to sell. But should parcels within these areas be offered for sale, it would give the Park Service the opportunity to buy them should funds be available, an option it does not now have. This is the best bet for securing long-term protections for future parklands into the twenty-first century.

## Wilderness

The 1984 Washington Wilderness Act protected many of the outstanding wild areas of Olympic National Forest. But key, lower elevation roadless wildlands containing magnificent ancient forests, wildlife habitats, and prime recreation lands remain unprotected. Inventoried and non-inventoried roadless areas as well as critical areas reclaimed from past logging abuses are recommended for wilderness designation as part of this proposal. These include: the lower Dungeness and Gray Wolf rivers; the northern slopes of Mount Townsend and Dirty Face Ridge; rugged Jupiter Ridge between the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers; scenic Lena Lake; the deep forest valley of the South Fork Skokomish River; and the splendid old-growth stands of Moonlight Dome and South Quinault Ridge. Additional areas, where

former logging roads have been decommissioned and restoration is underway, will help knit together fragmented watersheds, insure clean water, and guarantee year-round, non-motorized recreational opportunities.

## Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Olympic Peninsula is a land of rivers. They offer fountains of clean snowmelt water and productive habitats for wild salmon and other wildlife. Our rivers also provide opportunities for recreation, inspiration, education, and solitude. But none of the peninsula's rivers have received federal Wild and Scenic River protection. Wild and Scenic designation will insure the free-flowing character of our rivers — no dams or water development are allowed on Wild and Scenic rivers. Designation of rivers will protect water quality and insure that ecological and recreational values are preserved. Designation also requires managing agencies and landowners to work together to protect the rivers' outstanding values.

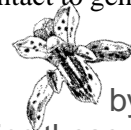
Among the 14 rivers recommended for Wild and Scenic protection are: the Elwha, Gray Wolf-Dungeness, Big Quilcene, Dosewallips, Duckabush, Hamma Hamma, South Fork Skokomish, Humptulips, Quinault, Queets, Hoh and South Fork Hoh, Bogachiel, and Sol Duc. Protection is proposed for river reaches flowing primarily through federal and some state lands.

## Wild Olympics Campaign

Taken together, these proposals represent a positive, visionary approach to public lands protection for the 21st century. Our goal is to protect what we have and restore what has been lost for the wellbeing and enjoyment of future generations.

For the past two years, OPA has been working with a coalition of conservation organizations who are also committed to securing long-term protection for Olympic Wildlands. Details of areas proposed for various protections are still being determined. But our goal of "protecting the wild forests and rivers we love for clean water and salmon we need" unites us all.

The great ecologist Aldo Leopold advised us that the first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the cogs and wheels. We're most fortunate that here on the Olympic Peninsula that, by the hard work of generations before us, so much of this diverse and dynamic ecosystem has been preserved. Now is the time to make sure that that gift is passed on intact to generations still to come.



You can help in this effort by writing your U.S. and senators supporting these areas for permanent protection.

See addresses and emails on Page 2.

# Quarry Owners Win a Round in Ongoing Elwha Protection Struggle

By Toby Thaler, Olympic Forest Coalition board member and attorney representing the Upper Elwha River Conservation Committee.

The owners of 40 acres of mountainside land in Clallam County recently won a procedural skirmish in an ongoing battle that pits the integrity of the Elwha River and its riparian ecosystem against their “right” to mine gravel. For a number of years, the owners (Mike Shaw and Gerry Lane) of 40 acres of mountainside along the Elwha River just north of the Olympic National Forest and Park have been trying to obtain permits to operate a gravel mine. Their proposed Little River Mine would remove the entire mountainside to below the level of the river. The impacts on the Elwha River and the surrounding area, as the mine operates over the better part of a century, are incalculable.

Clallam County told Shaw and Lane 12 years ago that they needed to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) under Washington State environmental protection regulations before they could proceed. After spending considerable time and money, Shaw and Lane abandoned the EIS process and started building the mine access road under a state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forest practices permit. That activity

to flow into the Elwha River. When challenged by the Upper Elwha River Conservation Committee, the state DNR withdrew the permit for the road.

Shaw and Lane then went to Clallam County, asking for a ruling that the mine site was improperly designated as a steep slope and erosion hazard critical area. With this designation removed, Shaw and Lane think they can avoid the cost and requirement of an EIS, and proceed with their mine.

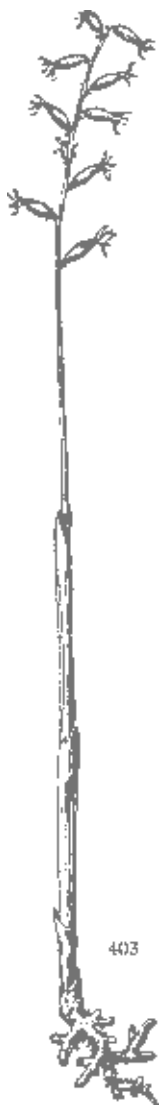
Clallam County has so far resisted Shaw and Lane’s attempts to remove critical area status for the Little River Mine site. The hearing examiner ruled that the site is in fact an erosion hazard because it is not all hard rock; the soils on the steep slope will come down — including into the Elwha River, among other locations — when disturbed. (The common response to this ruling from those who know the site is, “duh.”) The County Commissioners refused to hear Shaw and Lane’s appeal of the hearing examiner’s ruling on technical legal grounds.

So late last year, Shaw and Lane appealed to Superior Court, which ruled at a hearing on January 8 that the commissioners were wrong to dismiss the appeal. The next steps are not yet determined, but could include a hearing and decision “on the record” by the commissioners, or a reopening of the matter to new evidence by the commissioners or the hearing examiner.

In the meantime, Upper Elwha River Conservation Committee and Olympic Forest Coalition are hopeful that a conservation-minded purchaser can be found for the land, and that Shaw and Lane will sell out before there is any further disturbance of the mountainside.



Runoff from Little River Quarry, 2007.  
Photo by Toby Thaler.



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# State Wolf Management Plan Offers Slim Hope for Wolves in Olympics

In October, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife released its draft Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington, <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. Wolves are finding their way into our state from Idaho and British Columbia, and state wildlife officials want a plan in place to manage wolves once they have been removed from state and federal endangered species protections. One of the plan's goals is to establish viable populations of wolves in their former habitats across the state. This of course includes the Olympic Peninsula and Olympic National Park.

Unfortunately, the draft plan creates significant roadblocks to returning wolves to the Olympics.

Reintroducing wolves from outside the area, which was so successful for Yellowstone and central Idaho, is prohibited in the draft plan. Translocation of naturally migrating wolves to the peninsula from parts of the state where recovery targets have been met is allowed, but another shortcoming of the draft plan makes that unlikely. The plan's preferred alternative combines Pacific Coast recovery region with the South Cascades recovery region. This means state wildlife managers could determine that wolves are fully recovered in Washington, and remove them from endangered species protections, with wolves present in the South Cascades but with no wolves in the Olympics. Since the Interstate 5 population corridor would effectively block the natural migration of wolves to the Olympic Peninsula, the current draft plan could halt wolf recovery in the Olympics.

Another flaw in the plan is determination that only 15 wolf pairs in the state would constitute recovery. This number does not reflect current scientific research and is far too low to insure survival of a viable population of wolves in Washington.

Olympic Park Associates and other conservation organizations, along with a large number of individuals (including OPA mem-

bers responding to our alert), raised these and other issues in letters and emails to the agency.

OPA's letter can be viewed on our web site [olympicparkassociates.org](http://olympicparkassociates.org).

The National Park Service also wrote a strong letter supporting wolf recovery in all three national parks in Washington. The comment period ended January 8. A final plan will be released later this year.

Olympic National Park offers the best habitat, the largest unmanaged elk population, and the lowest chances for wolf-human conflicts in the state. Returning the park's keystone predator — the *only* species missing from Olympic — would benefit the entire ecosystem, from endemic Olympic marmots to Roosevelt elk. And the presence of wolves would bring lasting economic benefits to surrounding Olympic Peninsula communities long after romantic werewolves have gone the way of hula hoops.

OPA is hopeful that the final wolf management plan will reflect a more balanced and scientifically based approach to wolf recovery, and that it will offer full support for returning wolves to Olympic National Park.



*Pend Oreille County wolf pack.  
WA Department of Natural Resources.*



## Boulder Creek Road to be Restored to a Trail

In the early 1980s the Boulder Creek Road, which accessed Olympic Hot Springs and the Appleton Pass and Boulder Lake trails, washed out for the last time. Olympic National Park (ONP) closed it to vehicle traffic 2.2 miles below the hot springs and campground. A new trailhead was established. Since then the old road has been maintained as a foot and stock trail — although one with a blacktop surface.

Over the years since, culverts have washed out, steep cutbanks have collapsed, and fill slopes have eroded into creeks. With a \$308 million restoration of the Elwha watershed coming due, it was time to restore and stabilize the Boulder Creek trail. Stimulus money provided the funds, and this winter ONP released a plan to finally convert the old road to a hiking and stock trail and to restore and revegetate the Boulder Creek campground.

Blacktop will be removed, remaining culverts pulled, raveling slopes stabilized, and stream crossing bridged. The old campground will also have culverts removed; it will be revegetated, and several sites will be delineated. The trailhead parking area will be enlarged to accommodate additional parking and a turnaround for stock trailers.

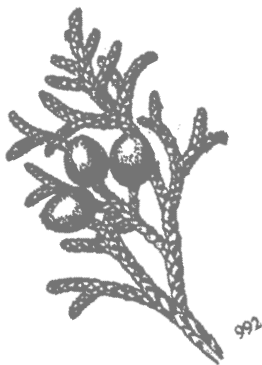
OPA strongly supports this restoration. The 1988 wilderness legislation identified the campground as a potential wilderness addition in. And stabilizing eroding

slopes is good idea in preparation for the Elwha restoration, set to begin next year. We endorse the use of heavy equipment and limited helicopter use to accomplish this major restoration.

But the plan could be strengthened. In our response to ONP's environmental analysis, we questioned the need for steel-span stock bridges at two stream crossings (we suggested simple footlog bridges and stock fords). We also questioned the scale of the trailhead development and additional paved parking spaces. With ONP's general management plan encouraging public transport inside the park, we thought this would provide an opportunity to scale down additional excavation and paving. And we questioned the need for a stock camp at the old hot springs parking area. We know of no other stock camps within two miles of a trailhead, and this seems an unnecessary development.

OPA also encouraged the Park Service to ban campfires at the often crowded campground and establish use limits. Both measures would assist the natural recovery of the area.

OPA continues to support this important restoration project. Boulder Creek can become a model of wilderness restoration and road-to-trail conversion. We are grateful to Congress for the stimulus funds provided to the park, and we are pleased that the Park Service is willing to embark on this major effort.



## Decision on Dosewallips Road Relocation Delayed

A decision on the controversial Dosewallips road relocation project has been delayed until late spring or early summer.

NOAA has asked the Forest Service to look at the whole road and watershed.

Olympic National Forest is developing amendments to the Northwest Forest Plan and will submit them to the Regional Office by end of January. Although the Northwest Forest Plan requires review of amendments, it does not require an approval process, just a 30 day review. Olympic National Forest Superintendent Dale Hom has final approval au-

thority.

The following proposed activities associated with Dosewallips road project require amendment in order to meet Northwest Forest Plan:

1. Not doing Marbled murrelet surveys.
2. Not protecting ½ mile around Marbled murrelet habitat.
3. Late successional reserve activities do not meet the criteria for being beneficial or neutral.
4. Impacting wetlands that are within Riparian Reserve.

# Rockfish Need Marine No-Fishing Areas

by John Woolley, Vice President, OPA

Washingtonian's favorite fishing spots now constitute the 1% that remains of what was once a bountiful industry. No wonder there is concern among Olympic Park Associates (OPA) and Ocean Coast Alliance (OCA) members. There is increasing need for and interest in creating marine preserves with no-fishing zones. We must set up gene pool reserves as soon as possible.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) recently accepted comments on managing the diverse populations of rockfish. Rockfish live off the coast of the Olympic Peninsula, including Olympic National Park. Puget Sound is high on the list of Threatened Marine Areas, the second most unstable complement of fish stocks in North America.

In no-fishing marine preserves, fish density doubles and total biomass nearly triples within five years, resulting in a 30% increase in biodiversity. Areas outside the marine preserves are replenished by the survival of 3 to 5 times as many juveniles.

No-fishing preserves also provide protection from genetic drift, as well as making larger fish available for reproduction. This results in more big fish outside the protection areas. Rockfish species have highly varied recovery rates; some require as little as 7 years, while another species requires more than 50 years to recover. Recovery of fish populations supports both trophy and recreational fishing.

We must take the step toward no-fishing zones if we are to once again see older and larger fish.



Quillback Rockfish



Brown rockfish



Tiger rockfish



Copper rockfish

## Third and Final Year of Fisher Releases

Press release, Olympic National Park, 18 December 2009. Excerpts..

Thanks to a strong team of government and non-government partners, more native fishers were reintroduced at remote sites within Olympic National Park, kicking off the third and final winter of releases.

As in previous years, each released animal wears a small radio transmitter, allowing biologists to track and monitor its movements. Biologists continue to monitor 22 fishers that were released during the past two winters. Also, with the discovery of three fisher birthing dens last summer, biologists determined that three females gave birth to at least seven kits. Other females may also have had young, but locating and verifying fisher dens is extremely difficult and time-consuming in the Olympic wilderness.

Fishers are about the size of a cat and are members of the weasel family, related to minks, otters and martens. They are native to Washington, but vanished from the state because of over-trapping in the late 1800s and early 1900s and habitat loss and fragmentation. Fishers were listed as a state-endangered

species in 1998 by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and were designated as a candidate for federal listing in 2004 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.

Fisher reintroduction to Olympic National Park is made possible through a partnership of agencies and organizations: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Olympic National Park, the U.S. Geological Survey, British Columbia Ministry of Environment, and nonprofit partners including Conservation Northwest, the Doris Duke Foundation and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The goal of the three-year project is to release approximately 100 fishers to the Olympic Peninsula to re-establish a self-sustaining population. During the first two winters, 49 fishers were released. Since then, biologists have maintained frequent monitoring of the fisher's radio collar signals.



More information,  
including  
monthly monitoring updates  
available at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/diversty/soc/fisher/reintro.htm>

Book Review:

## *Wilderness in National Parks: Playground or Preserve*

By John C Miles, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 2009.

Reviewed by Phil Zalesky,  
Secretary, OPA.

The beautiful Burns PBS series on National Parks tells only part of the history of the National Park System. A crucial part of the history is about wilderness, the debates and conflicts within the Park Service and in public view.

Two major sources of resistance to the concept of wilderness have been the Organic Act that created the National Park System, and the Stephen Mather approach to wilderness. Nowhere in the Organic Act is the term “wilderness” used. Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, had the opinion that whatever was left over after roads and development could serve visitors for scenic viewing — until such time as further development became desirable. With this philosophy, undeveloped lands could be developed any moment, whenever the Service saw a “need”.

In this book Miles meticulously recounts the internal struggles within the National Park Service just to come up with a definition of wilderness, and to deal with issues of zoning and whether to establish zones of wilderness. In some cases rangers in field positions, including some park superintendents, wanted wilderness but management in Washington D.C. rejected the idea.

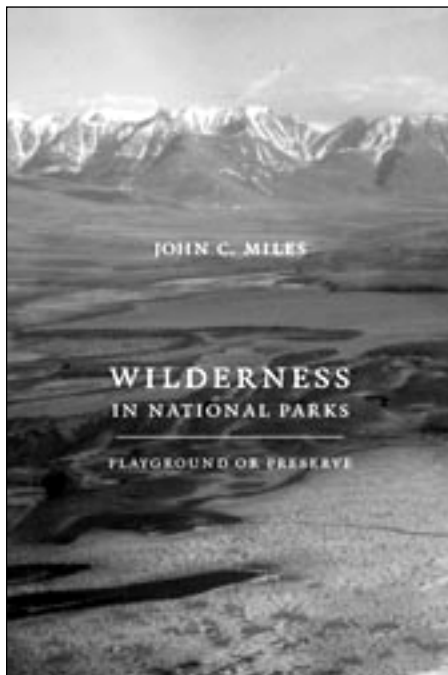
Conservationists and the public’s wilderness advocates became frustrated because wilderness reviews were inadequate and would drag on and on. The struggle to establish wilderness in national parks would culminate in 1970 with the Wilderness Act. But Miles shows that even today the Park Service still has an antipathy toward wilderness, and still finesses developing wilderness management plans, which are called for in the national

park regulations. Only fourteen of 58 national parks supporting areas of wilderness have developed wilderness management plans.

Among those still lacking a wilderness management plan are such gems as Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Glacier, Yellowstone, and our own Olympic National Park, to the consternation of local conservation organizations.

Olympic and North Cascades National Parks illustrate the differences in how management fulfills its mandates toward wilderness. North Cascades National Park is managed almost exclusively for its wilderness, under a wilderness management plan adopted in 1974. Olympic National Park still has developed only general management plans, with wilderness as secondary to development. This is in spite of both parks having been established to preserve their wilderness. Of the establishment of Olympic National Park, Secretary of Interior Ickes said in a speech quoted in a front page headline in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, “Olympic is a Wilderness Park!”

I recommend John Miles’ book especially to conservationists who wish to gain a greater depth of understanding for their role as advocates for wilderness on all public lands, both national parks as well as national forests.





## Book Review:

*Breaking Ground: The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and the Unearthing of Tse-whit-zen Village*

by Lynda Mapes. A Capell Family Book, 2009, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Tom Bihn and Dan Lieberman, Board of Trustees, OPA

Five years ago and five miles from the Elwha Klallam Reservation, the largest and, by many accounts, most significant archeological site in the Pacific Northwest was unearthed. Welcome to Tse-whit-zen village, also known as Port Angeles, Washington.

In *Breaking Ground*, Seattle Times correspondent Lynda Mapes relates the compelling story of the inadvertent “rediscovery” of the Tse-whit-zen village site and cemetery by the Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT), in its efforts to build a graving yard for the construction of new components for the failing Hood Canal Bridge. A year and a half and \$90 million later, the DOT walked away from the graving yard site in Port Angeles — perhaps a blow to the local economy but a clear victory for native rights. Through interviews with tribal elders, state and local officials, and others, Mapes paints a complex and even-handed picture of the historic and often heartbreaking events surrounding the unearthing of the remains of more than 300 people and 10,000 artifacts.

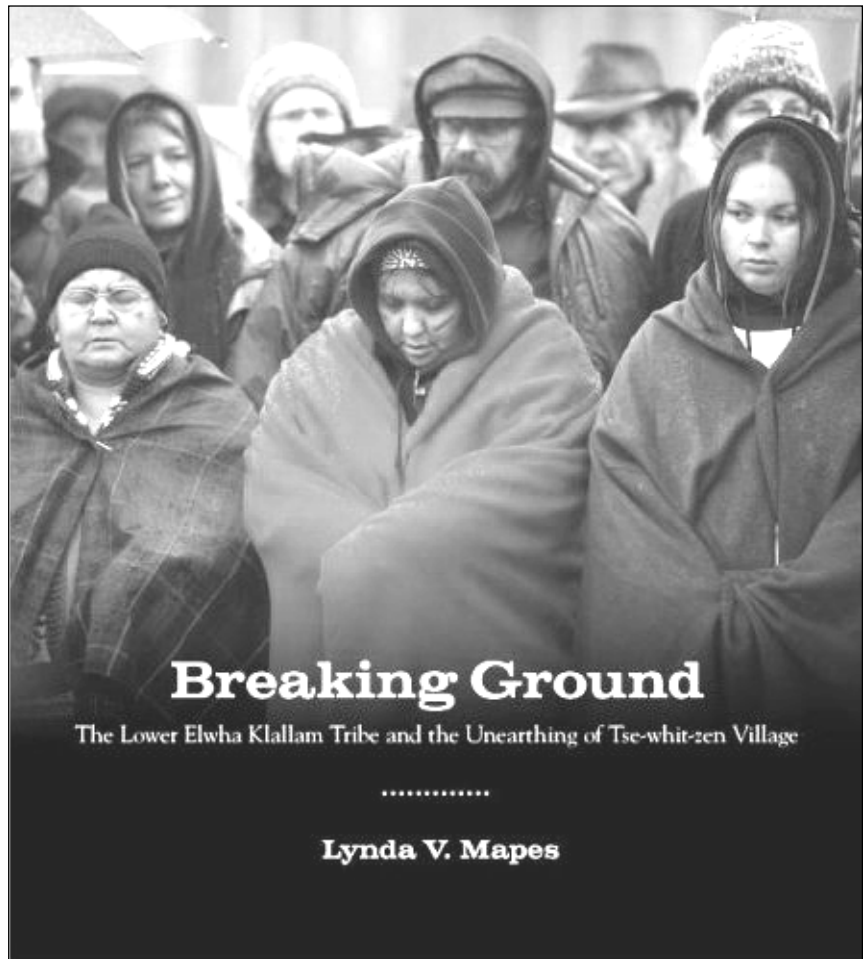
The close proximity, in time and space, of the places, events, and people in *Breaking Ground* is fascinating, and motivates the reader to be a real-life hero in this developing story. Mapes introduces us to many such heroes, like Frances Charles, chair of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, and Washington Secretary of Transportation Doug MacDonald who, despite their differences, build a deep mutual respect and trust.

If the reader is searching for villains, (s)he will not find people but instead old attitudes and prejudices: the scars of history itself. Mapes reminds us of the decades of mistrust and ill-will between the tribe and the city; she explains the “collective amnesia” that allowed the City of Port Angeles and the State of Washington to proceed with the project with-

out consulting tribal elders as to whether the site of the graving yard might have cultural significance.

Ultimately, *Breaking Ground* is an unfinished story. It will be up to all of us who call the Olympic Peninsula and Salish Sea home to follow the example of the heroes of this story: to reexamine our own prejudices, to listen to and learn from our shared histories, and perhaps for the first time to trust our neighbors. Contained in this book is a lot of hope, hope that conflicts over the Tse-whit-zen Village and inevitable conflicts in the future can be discussed openly and potentially resolved.

Read it.





# VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Sally W. Soest, Editor

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*The value of an organization endeavoring to promote the protection and integrity of a World Heritage Site and its wilderness is infinite.*

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Please mail to:

Laura Zalesky, Membership Chair  
2433 Del Campo Drive, Everett, WA 98208

## Rockfish Protections Needed

Story on page 7.

