

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948

Vol. 18, Number 2
Summer
2010



The Case for Olympic Park Additions



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Story by Tim McNulty

Queets River addition to park. Photo by Thomas O'Keefe.

In 2008, Olympic National Park completed its General Management Plan. As part of the lengthy planning process, OPA and numerous regional and national environmental organizations — and hundreds of individuals — wrote the park service urging watershed protections for five potential park additions. These were largely low-elevation commercial forest lands adjoining the park that still provided critical habitats for sensitive — and in some cases threatened — fish and wildlife. In all, some 87,000 acres in the Lake Crescent, Ozette Lake, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault watersheds received broad conservationist support.

The resulting Olympic National Park General Management Plan (GMP) appeared during George W. Bush's second term in office, and natural resource protection took a back seat to public access and development. Still the GMP recommended 16,000 acres of willing-seller park additions in the Lake Crescent/

Lyre, Ozette, and Queets watersheds. "Willing-seller" is a new approach to park expansions and means that no boundary changes would be made in these areas until such time as individual parcels are sold by landowners to the National Park Service. Landowners would have no obligation to sell, or may sell to another party. This measure, added to the final plan at the request of timber companies, allows companies to continue to log their lands without the need to submit to Class 4 Special forest practice permits or survey for sensitive species before logging. Even with legislation, timber management on these lands would not change until such time as individual owners elect to sell to the National Park Service.

In the years since the plan, Olympic Park Associates and a coalition of environmental organizations have been meeting with individuals, community leaders, tribes, timber companies, and interest groups on the peninsula and refining a conservation

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OPA Board Meetings:

Next: September Please refer to OPA Web Site, www.olympicparkassociates.org for information on date, time, and location.

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

U.S. Congress Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

From this number you can reach any member of the US Senate or House of Representatives.

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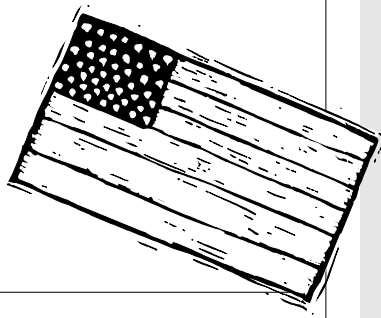
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The Case for Olympic National Park Additions

Continued from P. 1.

proposal for the peninsula’s public lands. As major salmon and watershed restoration efforts are taking place across the Olympic Peninsula, the Wild Olympics campaign seeks to conserve the last critical pieces of intact habitat “to protect the wild forests and rivers we love for clean water and salmon we need,” (see *OPA’s Conservation Vision for a Wild Olympics*, *Voice*, Winter, 2010).

Our vision is far-ranging. By proposing Wilderness for National Forest headwater forests, Wild and Scenic River designations for free-flowing streams on public lands, and willing-seller park additions for critical unprotected habitats, we hope to insure the ecological future of Olympic National Park, Forest, and the Olympic ecosystem into to the 21st century and beyond.

As OPA members know well, global warming, growing population pressure, urbanization, incompatible lands uses on adjoining lands, and increasing recreational demands have placed the ecological health of Olympic National Park and surrounding National Forest lands at risk. As of this writing, eight species inhabiting the park and forest are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act, including five species of salmon. An additional 22 species of Olympic wildlife are federally classified as “species of concern.” Protecting watersheds and key habitats under these conditions is imperative.

Proposed Park Additions

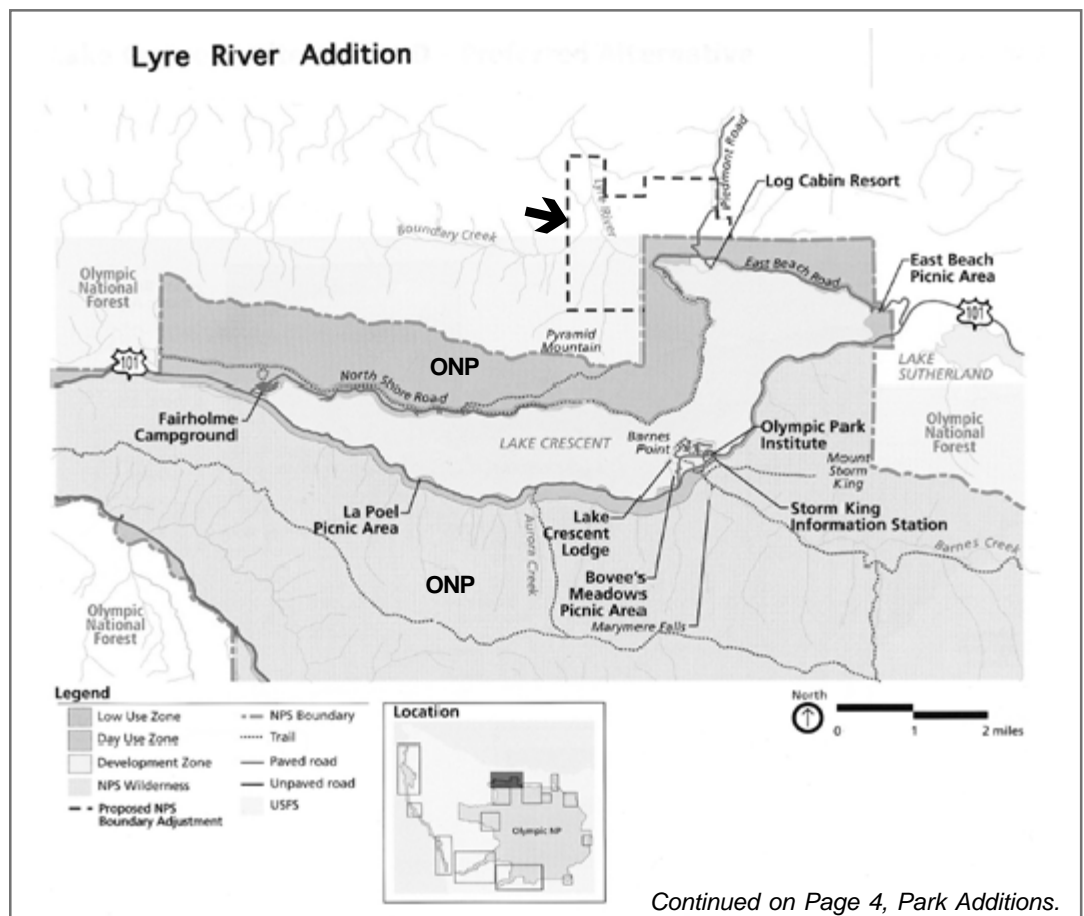
As a result of ongoing public outreach efforts and some tough compromises, OPA and the Wild Olympics Coalition are proposing four areas for willing-seller park additions: Lyre River, Ozette Basin, South Fork Hoh River and Queets River corridor. These areas total approximately 36,000 acres and are currently owned and managed by the Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and private timber companies primarily for timber production. These areas go beyond the park’s GMP recommendations but more closely resemble areas identified by scientists as crucial for the long-term protection of park resources. Park Service acquisition of these lands on a willing-seller basis over time would remove them from short-rotation logging, repair or remove roads and, most importantly, restore streams and habitats. Wildlife would have increased protections, and forests would eventually return to natural conditions. Additionally, unmanageable boundaries like the 250-foot-wide park strip around Lake Ozette and a narrow, two-mile corridor along the Queets Rive would be corrected.

1. Lake Crescent, Lyre River (1,640 acres)

The scenic Lyre River flows north out of Lake Crescent, where it provides critical spawning habitat for unique *crenenti* trout, which are endemic to the lake. *Beardslee* trout, also unique to the lake, spawn at the river’s outlet. A past logging road failure in nearby Boundary Creek had a devastating impact on *crenenti* spawning habitat, and recent clearcutting in this area has marred the scenic landscape.

Inclusion in the park would protect this sensitive area and forestall home building on stripped-off hill-sides.

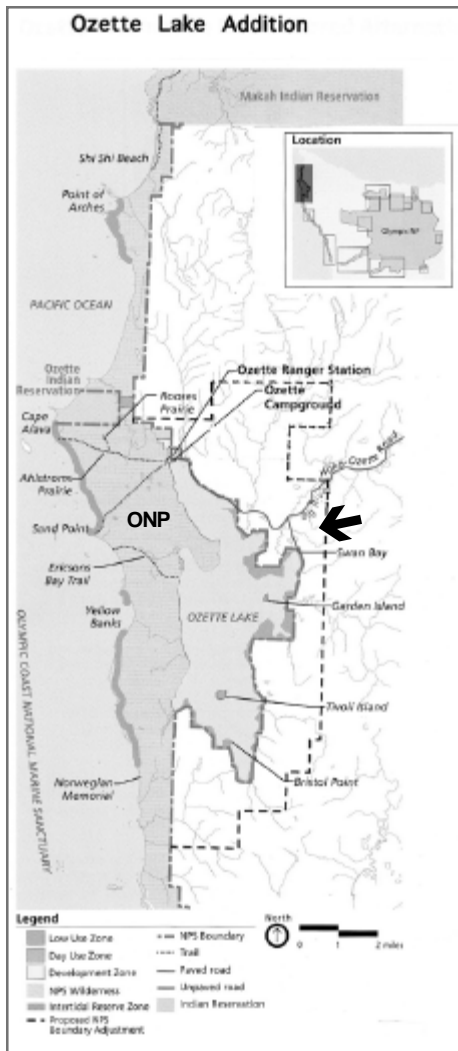
Though not in the current Wild Olympics proposal, OPA also supports the inclusion of the 3,820-acre Boundary Creek tributary drainage in this proposed addition.



Continued on Page 4, Park Additions.

The Case for Olympic National Park Additions

Continued from Page 3.



2. Ozette Lake (15,418 acres)

Scenic Ozette Lake is a wilderness jewel of the Olympic Coast, home to three elk herds and the greatest diversity of salmon stocks of any of the park's watersheds. Yet along much of the lake, the national park boundary extends less than 250 feet from the lakeshore. All of Ozette's salmon stocks are currently at risk, a result of intensive logging practices in the watershed. Lake Ozette sockeye are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Park expansion would provide greater protections for the lake and its wildlife and salmon resources. Critical sockeye habitat along Umbrella and Big Creeks would be included, greatly assisting the multi-agency sockeye recovery effort. OPA supports also including the upper watershed of Umbrella Creek to restore this priority sockeye stream in its entirety.

To learn more about the Wild Olympics Coalition's proposals for

- willing-seller park additions,
- National Forest Wilderness areas, and
- Wild and Scenic River protections

on the Olympic Peninsula, visit WOC's web site at

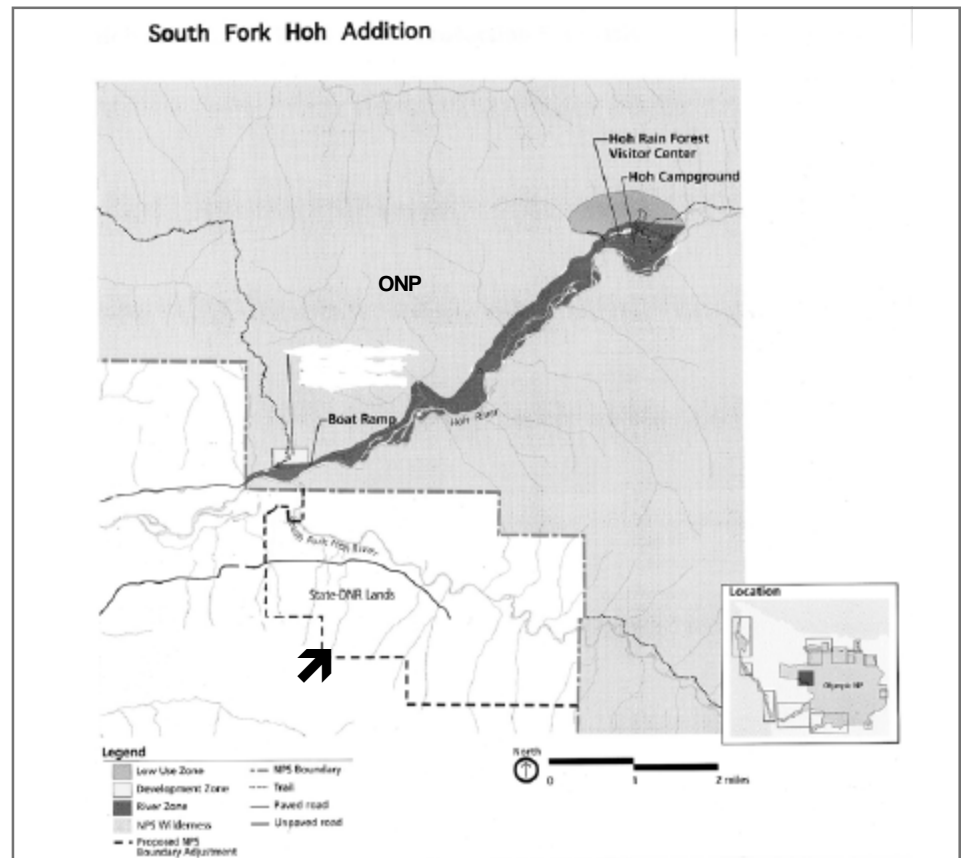
www.wildolympics.org.

For updates on this and other OPA efforts, check OPA's web site at

www.olympicparkassociates.org.

3. South Fork Hoh River (5,085 acres)

Including the lower three miles of the South Fork Hoh River in the park would protect critical winter elk habitat. Upland protection would benefit salmon stocks using the river for spawning (steelhead) and migration to upriver spawning areas (chinook, coho and threatened bull trout). This addition would consolidate nearly the entire South Fork watershed into the park, a priceless addition to the park's most popular river. The area is currently managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources for timber production.



Continued on Page 5.

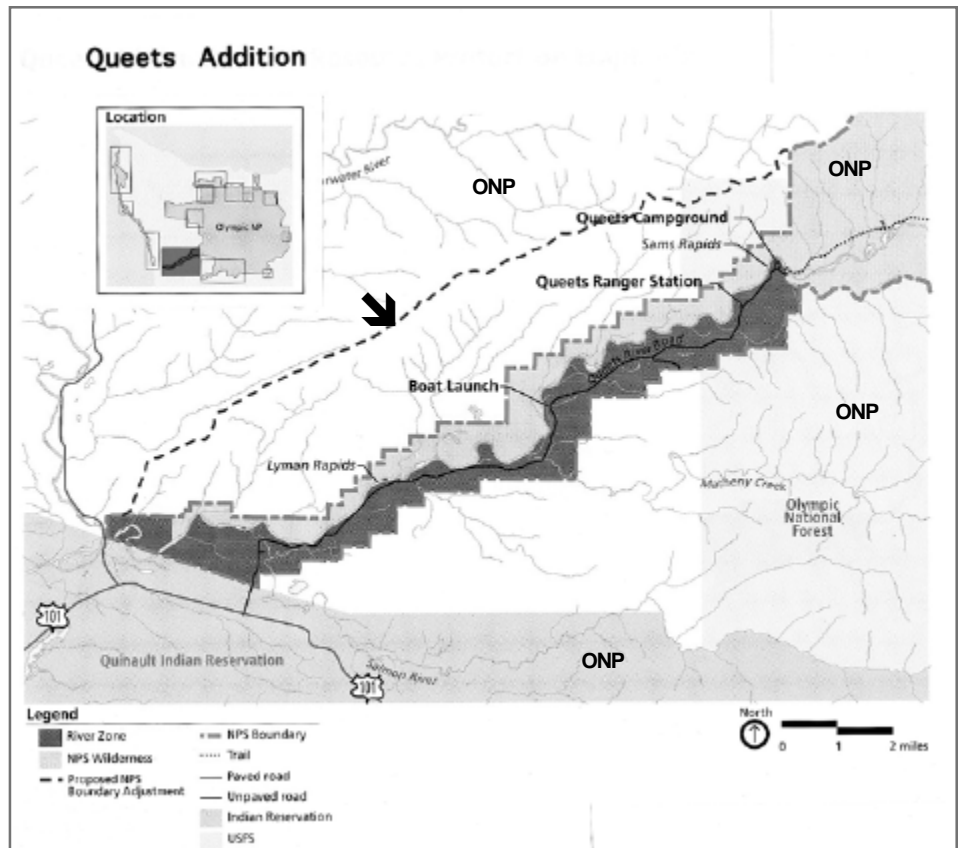
The Case for Olympic National Park Additions

Continued from Page 4.

4. Queets River Corridor

(15,287 acres)

The narrow Queets river corridor has been a management problem for the park and has encouraged hunting, both legal and illegal, in critical winter elk habitat. Park inclusion of this area would protect the McKinnon and Hibbart Creek tributaries, spawning and rearing habitat for coho. The entire upper south-facing slope above the Queets River corridor would be protected. The area is currently managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources for timber production.



What you can do:

Contact your Congressman and Senators (see contact information on page 2) and urge them to support

- strong protections for Olympic National Park additions,
- additional National Forest Wilderness areas, and
- Wild and Scenic River designation for Olympic Rivers.



Lake Ozette. Photo by Ed Beebe.

Park Additions Invest In the Future

It's important to keep in mind that this is a long-term proposal for the future of Olympic National Park. Even after these areas are included in legislation, it may take decades before they are purchased and included in the park. But without legislation, many of these lands can be sold — and are being sold — for residential and recreational development. Willing-seller legislation gives the public an opportunity to purchase the most critical pieces of lowland forest habitat. Let's take the long view and invest in one of the earth's great ecological preserves.

ONP and Congressman Dicks Propose Park Land Transfer to Quileute Tribe

In March, staff from Congressman Dicks' office met with representatives from OPA and other environmental organizations to discuss a proposed land transfer from Olympic National Park to the Quileute Tribe. The transfer is intended to resolve a historic tribal claim to eight acres of Rialto Beach at the mouth of the Quillayute River (including the NPS parking area and trail head), and respond to the tribe's need for buildable land outside the tsunami hazard zone.

Congressman Dicks proposes to transfer 772 acres of Olympic National Park lands to tribe. The land is in two parcels bordering the Quileute Reservation. The first is 280 acres of coastal upland immediately south of the reservation (of which 222 acres are designated Wilderness). The second is 492 acres east of the reservation and bordering the Quillayute River. In exchange, the tribe would relinquish its claim to Rialto Beach and grant the Park Service a permanent easement to the Second Beach trail and trailhead parking area. The proposed bill would also place into trust 233 acres that the tribe already owns.

The bill would also designate 4,000 acres north of Lake Crescent in the park as Wilderness.

OPA has supported a bill that would transfer 37 acres of park land to the Hoh Tribe to connect the Hoh Reservation with private lands the tribe purchased outside the tsunami hazard zone. But the scale of the proposed Quileute transfer is far more than OPA — or other conservation organizations — can support.



South Bank, Quillayute River

No legislation has been introduced as this time. OPA will continue to monitor this situation, and we will keep our membership informed as the issue develops.

On March 12, 2010, OPA wrote Congressman Dicks supporting the Quileute Tribe's desire for development lands outside the tsunami zone, but firmly opposing the scale of the transfer as proposed.

Excerpts from OPA's letter to Dicks:

- ◆ A transfer of national park lands of this size requires public review. We request an environmental assessment or "Subject EA" be completed prior to legislation. We also request permission to review the National Park Service's initial biological analysis of the area to be transferred to the tribe.
- ◆ While we support the Pyramid Mountain ridge wilderness addition to the park, such a designation is inadequate as mitigation for the amount of acreage to be removed from the park.
- ◆ We request that an economic appraisal of lands being deleted from the park be completed, and an equivalent addition be included, for willing-seller purchase of [lands identified for willing-seller park additions in the ONP General Management Plan], to Olympic National Park. An economic appraisal of these additions would further future appropriations for acquiring the additions.

Concerns with the proposed transfer along the Quillayute River (492 acres):

- ◆ How would this transfer affect Olympic National Park visitors on the north side of the Quillayute River? For instance, if tribal hunting is allowed, mitigation to insure the safety of park users at Mora Campground, or using riverbank fishing trails and the Mora Road, should be put in place.
- ◆ The northern boundary of this section should not extend north of the Quillayute River. The north river bank and flood plain should remain in the park for hiking, fishing, river access, and day use by visitors to Mora Campground and road access to Rialto Beach. All lands north of the river should remain in the park.
- ◆ Concerns regarding the southern parcel of parklands south of the Quileute Reservation boundary (280 acres). This area, which lies immediately above Second Beach, should have adequate development standards to preserve visitors' wilderness experience of the immensely popular Second Beach and Second Beach trail. Light, noise, and visual impacts from use and any developments should be imperceptible from Second Beach wilderness.

Why Umbrella Creek Matters

In February, Olympic National Park announced it was considering acquiring a 240-acre parcel along Umbrella Creek at Lake Ozette. The parcel adjoins the park boundary at the north end of the lake. It lies wholly within the Ozette park addition identified in Olympic's 2008 General Management Plan (GMP). And Umbrella Creek has been identified as critical habitat for threatened Ozette Lake sockeye. The land was purchased from a timber company last year by the Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC) to save it from residential development (it is subdividable into six lots).

Although the addition had gone through full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review as part of the GMP, the Park Service held two additional public meetings on the proposal. Opposition to the addition was voiced at both meetings. Local landowners were concerned with park expansion, and area tribes expressed concern over the loss of hunting areas. OPA and other conservation groups voiced strong support for the addition.

Meanwhile, rather than purchasing the land as a park addition, the Park Service is considering acquiring a conservation easement, leaving the land in private ownership. A final decision is pending.

Several factors make this an important acquisition for the park.

- ◆ Umbrella Creek was identified as a top priority stream for Endangered Species Act-listed Ozette sockeye in the Lake Ozette Sockeye Recover Plan released by NOAA.
- ◆ The parcel was purchased by the CLC to save it from residential/recreational development with the understanding that it would be transferred to Olympic National Park when funds became available.
- ◆ This acquisition would be an important step toward recovery of Threatened Lake Ozette Lake sockeye. (The Ozette watershed has the highest fish diversity in Olympic National Park. Currently, all salmon populations are in decline.)

Public Overwhelmingly Supports

Umbrella Creek Park Addition

As of the April deadline for written comments, the Park Service received 93 email comments; 90 strongly favored acquisition. Two of the opposed were from area tribes and one was from an individual concerned over government expenditures. Few public processes at Olympic have received such popular support.

- ◆ Protected elk habitat would be a net plus for tribal and non-tribal hunters on adjoining non-park lands.
- ◆ Umbrella Creek exemplifies a willing-seller acquisition as defined in the park's General Management Plan. Failure to follow through on this acquisition would be a major step backward in ecosystem protection.

A conservation easement, while appropriate for small parcels of private land, is wholly inadequate as a substitute for national park protection.

Since the Umbrella Creek parcel is the first of some 16,000 acres of potential willing-seller park additions identified in the GMP — as well as critical habitat for one of the park's most threatened fish stocks — it is important that the agency make the right decision.

What you can do:

E-mail Olympic National Park Superintendent Karen Gustin at Karen_Gustin@nps.gov.

Request that Olympic National Park step up to its responsibilities and acquire the Umbrella Creek parcel. This is an important step toward insuring the future ecological integrity of the Lake Ozette basin and the park.

Elwha River Restoration Moves Closer: 2 Construction Projects Done

On Friday, April 2, Olympic National Park and the City of Port Angeles dedicated the Port Angeles Water Treatment Plant and the Elwha Water Facilities.

U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks, City of Port Angeles Mayor Dan Di Giulio, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Chairwoman Frances Charles, National Park Service Pacific West Acting Regional Director Rory Westberg, and Olympic National Park Superintendent Karen Gustin welcomed a large crowd to the Port Angeles facility.

The state-of-the-art \$27.6 million Port Angeles Water Treatment Plant delivers up to 10.6 million gallons of treated water daily for Port Angeles that meets all State and Federal requirements.

The \$79 million, Elwha Water Facilities includes a water treatment plant that will protect the City of Port Angeles' industrial water supply during Elwha dam removals, the

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's fish rearing channel and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe's fish hatchery. The old surface water diversion and intake structure was replaced by a new fish-friendly system.

The Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration project is our nation's largest dam removal to date and one of the largest construction projects in the history of the National Park Service. Removing two aging dams on the Elwha River will restore the river to its natural free-flowing state and allow all five species of Pacific salmon and other anadromous fish to once again reach over 70 miles of near-pristine freshwater habitat. In turn, the salmon will restore vital nutrients to the watershed, replenishing the entire ecosystem, from insects to black bears to eagles.

Deconstruction of the two Elwha dams is scheduled to begin in 2011.

Olympic National Park Wildlife Update

By Bruce Moorhead, National Park Service Biologist, Retired

Fisher Reintroduction Status

During the past three years, 90 fishers have been captured in British Columbia (B.C.) and released into Olympic National Park (ONP) in a cooperative, multi-year program by the National Park Service (NPS) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).



Fisher kits. Photo by Cathrine Raley, USFS.

The animals were captured by trappers across a huge area in north-central British Columbia, Canada, known as the Cariboo-Chilcotin region.

Release of the fishers has occurred now in a number of the major areas and watersheds of ONP, including Hurricane Ridge, Deer Park, the Elwha, Sol Duc, Hoh, Queets and Skokomish Rivers. In early 2010, sixteen animals were also released for the first time in the upper Quinault River valley.

In B.C., trappers were paid \$500 for each animal they live-captured. A large number of capture sites were prebaited and checked daily by these trappers, who with experience could eventually predict rather accurately when and where animals were most likely to be caught.

The population in the park is now estimated at about 70 animals, and 52 of those animals known to be alive are actively being radio-tracked. In 2009, for the first time, at least seven fisher kits, or new young of the year, were also known to have been born into the monitored population.

Funding is available for continued monitoring of the fishers through 2010 and halfway into 2011. Radio transmitters on the 52 animals being monitored are expected to operate through 2012. Beyond that, camera and hair-snaring surveys are planned as a follow-up effort through 2017, although funding is not yet available.

For the latest progress reports on cooperative NPS-WDFW monitoring of this new population, check the following website:

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

Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington State

Public and professional peer-reviews of the WDFW's draft Wolf Conservation and Management Plan have been completed, and a Final plan is expected to be submitted to the Washington State Legislature by the end of 2010.

It's important to note that three of four independent, professional peer-reviewers of the

draft plan agreed that the wolf population recommendations (i.e., number and distribution of breeding pairs) proposed in the plan would not ensure wolf recovery in Washington, although they found the plan generally well-prepared and were hopeful that sufficient adjustments could be made.

For the full record of these reviews on the gray wolf, check the following website: http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildlife/management/gray_wolf/draft_plan/march2010_wolf_deis_peer_review.pdf.



Introduced Mountain Goats

It's no longer certain if only 300 or so mountain goats remain in the ONP interior, since a growing number of goat sightings have been reported at Seven Lakes Basin, Hurricane Ridge and other locations in recent years.

The last aerial census of the population was in 2004. Funding requests in the last three years for another aerial census to assess any current changes in the distribution and abundance of the population have not been approved.

ONP Wildlife Update

Continued from Page 8.



Roosevelt elk. Photo by Marcy Peters.

Roosevelt Elk Research

Research is underway in ONP to develop “sightability-correction” factors that will improve the accuracy of longterm helicopter monitoring of trends in the park’s elk population.

In 2009, 18 elk in the park interior were fitted with GPS radio-collars. Ten of these radios failed, however, so the U.S. Geological Survey and ONP researchers are waiting for new radios from Germany to arrive and be placed on another 10 animals hopefully this year.

Olympic Marmot

Park volunteers will begin efforts to monitor marmots this year in the ONP high country, using new methods developed by Dr. Susan Cox



Griffin and others in a recent five-year study of the population’s dynamics and dispersal ability across the scattered “islands” of suitable, subalpine habitat for them in the park.

Dosewallips Road Washout Update

by Donna Osseward, President, Olympic Park Associates

We still wait for Olympic National Forest to issue a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) on the Dosewallips Road Washout. Forest Supervisor, Dale Hom, has recently said he hoped it would be issued before the end of this calendar year.

OPA continues to feel nature has provided a reason to reassess recreational opportunities in the Dosewallips valley above and below the washout. A comprehensive recreation plan involving potential trailhead facilities, campgrounds, accessible trails, and land acquisition planning should have been included as an alternative. All while preserving the fish and wildlife habitat of the Dosewallips. OPA feels the washout is an opportunity:

- To turn the road beyond the washout into a lower elevation trail for hiking, biking, and horses.
- To provide camping and access to trailheads and streams for climbing, fishing, and other recreational pursuits.
- To convert the Forest Service & Olympic National Park campgrounds into backcountry facilities. Both the Forest Service and Park Service are experienced in operating such camping areas. Both camping areas would be good camping sites for families and youth groups – camping areas without cars and RV’s moving through them. These Backcountry camping areas would at a lower elevation and easily reached. The Forest Service Elkhorn Campground, only a mile beyond the washout, is easily accessible.
- To improve the bypass trail for hikers, bicycles, and horse use. Develop a place incoming to the washout for parking, recreational vehicle turn around, horse loading/unloading, and camping (as is now done informally at the current road end). The rescue helicopter could continue to operate out of the current site at the Bailey Ranch. A long-term agreement could be negotiated for this purpose.
- To decrease the noise in the Buckhorn Wilderness by closing the road, thereby increasing suitability for both humans and wildlife and reduces our carbon footprint by reducing motor use in the valley and leaving acres of trees that absorb carbon dioxide.
- To develop a comprehensive recreational plan for small all-accessible loop trails for longer season, lower elevation recreation opportunities requiring less cost to maintain.



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Sally W. Soest, Editor

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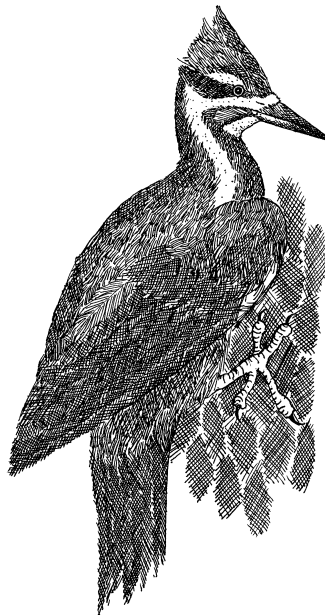
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Please mail to:

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Mill Creek, WA 98012



Public Overwhelmingly Supports Umbrella Creek Park Addition

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See story, Page 7.