

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



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Fall
2011

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Dam Busters: Elwha restoration advocates Joe Mentor, Tim McNulty, Donna Osseward (all OPA), Bill Robinson (Trout Unlimited), David Ortman (Friends of the Earth), Shawn Cantrell (Seattle Audubon), Eric Broman, and Polly Dyer (OPA). Photo by Joe Mentor.

Hundreds Gather in the Elwha Valley to Celebrate Dam Removal

By Tim McNulty

On a sunny afternoon in September, 2011, 400 Elwha restoration enthusiasts, tribal members, elected officials, agency representatives, Park Service folks, dignitaries and conservationists gathered at the Elwha Dam to witness the first official excavator-swipe of dam removal. The celebration launched a two- to three-year removal project that will lead to the return of salmon and full recovery of the Elwha River ecosystem.

The event marked the culmination of what was for Olympic Park Associates a quarter-century-long effort to remove two salmon-blocking dams on the Elwha. In 1996 trustee Rick Rutz led OPA and three other organizations in an intervention challenging dam relicensing on the Elwha and demanding dam removal.

But for the elders, tribal leaders and young

people of the Elwha Klallam Tribe who attended, the event culminated a painful 100-year journey to restore the tribe's home river. Tribal elder Ben Charles, Sr., delivered a heartfelt invocation for the event. He said his ancestors were looking down on the celebration. "I can see them standing up there, and they're smiling," he said. "There were so many prayers, but the Creator was watching.... Now, our prayers have been answered." The hope and persistence of the Elwha people was reflected in the pool below the dam itself where 70 Elwha chinook salmon circled restlessly as if waiting to reclaim their ancestral river.

National Park Service director Jon Jarvis, Congressman Norm Dicks, U.S. Senators

Continued on P. 4, Elwha Celebration

OPA Meetings:

Next: January 25

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 Member of Congress

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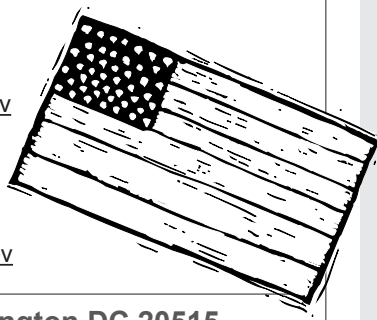
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Wild Olympics Campaign Takes Giant Step Forward

by Tim McNulty

The Wild Olympics Campaign – our popular, grass-roots movement to designate more wilderness in Olympic National Forest, new Wild and Scenic Rivers and additional critical habitat lands to Olympic National Park – has taken a giant step forward. Congressman Norm Dicks and Senator Patty Murray released a draft proposal in November for land and watershed protections in the Olympics, and they invite public comment.

This is a huge development in the campaign, and Congressman Dicks and Senator Murray deserve our thanks for their vision and commitment.

“Future generations will benefit from the increased protection of the watersheds and forests that make the Peninsula a magnificent place,” Dicks said. Murray added, “I look forward to hearing from constituents in the coming months as we put together a proposal that works for our families, communities and state.”

Dicks’s and Murray’s staffs spent more than a year talking to constituents on the Peninsula, and their draft proposal reflects opinions from a wide spectrum of Peninsula interests, including elected officials, tribes, timber companies, sportsmen, and recreationists. Their “discussion draft proposal” released on November 15 <<http://tinyurl.com/pdnwild>> took its lead from the Wild Olympics Campaign proposal, but it makes some significant changes.

The congressman’s and senator’s draft proposal adheres fairly closely to the Wild Olympics’ proposals, identifying slightly less acreage for National Forest wilderness and identical Wild and Scenic River designations. But it differs markedly from our National Park/ Preserve proposals (see “The Case for Olympic Park Additions,” in the Summer, 2010 Voice of the Wild Olympics).

Wild Olympics-proposed additions in the Lyre River area of Lake Crescent remain unchanged, but additions around Lake Ozette and Queets Ridge were significantly reduced, and the 5,000-acre South Fork Hoh addition was dropped. The Congressional draft proposal is for up to 20,000 acres of willing-seller additions; the Wild Olympics’ proposal is for 37,397 acres.

Congressman Dicks’s and Senator Murray’s offices held a series of public information meetings around the Peninsula in early December.

Future meetings will be scheduled around the state for these national-interest lands.

Opposition to these and any land protections on the Peninsula continues, loud and unabated.

- Check OPA’s website for dates for these meetings: <olympicparkassociates.org>
- Join more than 4,500 Peninsula citizens and 200 local organizations and businesses in showing your support for this important proposal.

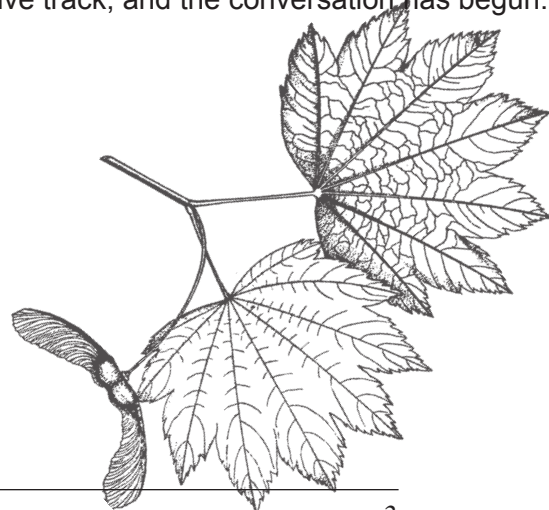
A large part of these reductions were the result of Peninsula-based opposition to including Washington State (Department of Natural Resources) trust lands in the proposal. This led to the dropping of the South

Fork Hoh and much of the Queets corridor. Other deletions reflect timber company opposition, such as the elimination of Lake Ozette’s Umbrella Creek lands, which are critical spawning waters for threatened Ozette Sockeye. The congressional proposals adhere more closely to the recommendations in Olympic National Park’s 2008 general management plan.

Based on conversations we had with Olympic Peninsula tribes and area sportsmen, it was clear that Olympic National Park expansion

would limit tribal treaty rights and adversely affect subsistence hunting in areas that might someday be acquired by the Park. Therefore the coalition supports “National Preserve” designation in place of Park additions. National Preserves are a widely used designation in Alaska and many states in the lower 48. They are administered by the Park Service and are managed in similar ways as a National Park, but they would allow tribal and non-tribal hunting to continue while providing for old-growth forest recovery, restoration and protecting critical salmon and wildlife habitats from development.

Most importantly, our proposal is now on a legislative track, and the conversation has begun.



Elwha Celebration

Continued from P. 1



Left: Elwha Dam.
Photo by *New York Times*.



Right: Dam removal underway.
Photo by Dan Lieberman.



Congressman Norm Dicks and OPA trustee Joe Mentor.

Murray and Cantwell, Governor Chris Gregoire, and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar were among the dignitaries sharing the stage. Elwha tribal chairwoman Frances Charles asked “our tribal community members, our veterans and our youth” to stand. “This event . . . is something our children will never forget.” She recognized tribal members past and present “who dreamed of this day,” and she thanked the assembled crowd for helping to make it happen. Gesturing past us, she acknowledged the birthplace of her tribe, inundated beneath the adjacent waters of Lake Aldwell. “The creation site is behind you,” she reminded everyone, “and the Lady of the Mountain is waiting to be free.”

Past OPA president and Elwha restoration champion Polly Dyer traveled from Seattle to attend the ceremony: “I wouldn’t have missed it!” OPA president Donna Osseward and trustees Tim McNulty and Joe Mentor were also on hand. Joe guided the political process through a critical rough patch by facilitating the Elwha Citizens Advisory Council at a time when local opposition threatened dam removal. The late OPA trustees Glen Gallison, Harry Lydiard and Ed Tisch, who also worked for Elwha restoration, were no longer with us to celebrate, but they were there in spirit.

At a gathering at Olympic Park Institute following the event, Park Superintendent Karen Gustin presented Polly with a commemorative piece of the Glines Canyon Dam in acknowledgement of OPA’s role in the restoration. Other conservation organizations, tribal leaders, and government staffers were also honored. It was a long-awaited day – and a new beginning for the Elwha River and ecosystem.

Protect the Elwha Entrance to Olympic National Park: Maintain Critical Areas Designation

Elwha Quarry developers want to transfer jurisdiction from Clallam County to Department of Natural Resources to enable mining at the entrance to Olympic National Park.

- **Clallam County Commissioners need to hear from you now!**
 - Steve Tharinger <stharinger@co.clallam.wa.us>
 - Mike Chapman <mchapman@co.clallam.wa.us>
 - Mike Doherty <mdoherty@co.clallam.wa.us>
- Tell them: Keep the Elwha Quarry proposal lands under County control.
- Oppose a 40-acre mine site at the entrance to Olympic National Park.



An Engineering Assessment of the Proposed Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Dosewallips Washout By-Pass Road

Ed Henderson, P.E.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has two proposals for a by-pass road to restore motor vehicle access beyond the washout, which is now more than 600 feet wide.

The bypass will be a new 4,398-foot road, single lane, with grades up to 10%, across the face of a steep and unstable hillside. The FEIS also proposes moving a segment of the route 100 feet to the north, away from the river and closer to the Buckhorn Wilderness boundary.

The FEIS states that vegetated slopes are only stable up to 38° to 45°. Yet the proposed road will cut slopes between 52° to 63°. Segment 2 of the proposed route crosses 14 identified watercourses and one landslide.

The only soil investigation done was seven hand-dug pits. The plan for the new road will require clear-cutting and denuding seven acres of old growth (Late Successional Reserve Forest) before any more soil investigation will be done to even determine the feasibility of the route or its final design.

With the denuding and excavating on these steep slopes, landslides and erosion are a certainty. The cut slopes will erode and slide to the north as the hillside attempts to achieve natural stability. This erosion possibly will continue uphill until it goes to or beyond the Buckhorn Wilderness boundary.

Alternative B is standard cut-and-fill construction requiring the excavation and disposal of 850 truckloads (20 cubic yards each). The estimated cost of Alternative B is \$2.68 million

Alternative C uses MSE blocks for retaining walls to reduce the width of the route and requires the importation of 1690 truckloads (20 cubic yards each). The estimated cost of Alternative C is \$3.96 million.

Because the subsurface conditions are uncertain, the preliminary cost esti-

mates can be expected to increase. By how much, no one knows.

Both Alternatives are ill considered, incomplete, and overly optimistic, ignoring obvious engineering problems.

The Dosewallips river meander will continue to migrate to the north and could eventually undermine the planned road.

Olympic Park Associates propose that:

- the road stop at the washout and
- a recreation plan be developed to facilitate the ways people are now using the Dosewallips valley.

Since the washout occurred, people camp, fish, hike, bike, ski, and horseback ride beyond the washout.

With a recreational plan, the Dosewallips could serve people, fish, and wildlife well.

Dosewallips road washout.



Dungeness Watershed Plan, Olympic National Forest: Will Recreation Stall Restoration?

The U. S. Forest Service has the task of putting our public watersheds on a “trajectory of recovery.” The objectives are to identify aquatic and road decommission projects that best enhance water quality and wildlife habitat. In addition, projects identified must be able to compete for funding.

The Dungeness River watershed is the drinking water source for the city of Sequim, as well as for the rest of the Dungeness lowlands. The Dungeness River Management Team is working in concert with Olympic National Forest and the Jamestown Tribe. Representatives of interest groups have attended public meetings and phone conferences, and participated in two field trips with the Forest Service.

Restoration is the primary focus of the Forest Service study. However, many of us use public lands for outdoor recreation. Examples include hiking, horse riding, mountain biking, off-highway vehicles (OHVs), naturalist activity, gathering and hunting. There is some concern that distractions from recreation user groups may interfere with restoration projects. The Forest Service is obligated to determine suitable levels of recreation to avoid disrupting identified restoration projects.

Presently, there are no OHV routes on Olympic National Forest, as all vehicles must be street legal. Of course, traditional abusive routes exist, and they are in dire need of restoration to control erosion, much of which is running into salmon streams. Yet Olympic National Forest feels obligated to offer a potential ATV route. The steepness of the Dungeness River watershed has made it difficult to find a suitable site. An area to the northeast of Ned Hill has been selected for potential ATV loop trails. Public funding will not be available, and an eventual serious study of the site likely will not encourage non-profit funding.

The Sierra Club North Olympic Group does not support motorized recreation on public watershed lands – a classic example of multiple abuse. Furthermore, an OHV plan has been developed for Burnt Hill, which is only three miles

away. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has long struggled to control dumping, shooting, and OHV abuse of logging lands on Burnt Hill.

Conclusion: There is no recreational need for Olympic National Forest to enable OHV loop trail system when one nearer to town exists three miles away.

Conclusion:

There is no recreational need for Olympic National Forest to enable an OHV loop trail system when one nearer to town exists three miles away.



The 2006 DNR Burnt Hill Recreational Trail Plan is at:
<www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/amp_rec_burnthill_plan.pdf>

Read the goals and objectives of the Dungeness Watershed Action Plan at:
http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5322177.pdf

A public meeting will be held sometime in November 2011 for a viewing of a draft Dungeness Watershed Action Plan.

Send questions and comments to:
Susan Piper <spiper@fs.fed.us> and Dean Yoshina <dyoshina@fs.fed.us>

Logging *On* Lake Crescent -- *In* Olympic National Park -- Due to Lack of a Policy

By John Woolley

Early July 2011, arriving at their vacation home on the calm waters of Lake Crescent, Gordon and Pam Simpson were devastated to find a clear-cut next door. Their photo on the front page of the *Peninsula Daily News* still lingers in my mind (<http://peninsuladailynews.com/article/20110710/news/307109995>).

Driving along Lake Crescent, I have often wondered how development on private inholdings has been kept to an apparent minimum. The answer seems to be a gentleman's agreement between Park and inholder that has been effective to maintain lakeshore quality. Of course, a gentleman's agreement is informal, and most private land owners have respected it out of concern that violations of regulations would be enforced by Park rangers. But it now seems that there are no regulations to enforce. Ben Skerbeck logged his small undeveloped parcel right down to the lake shore where he intends to build a structure, while Park Service employees stood by, and neighbors watched, horrified. Skerbeck even used his neighbor's driveway to remove the logs, despite their protests and concern for heavy traffic driving over their septic lines.

What is Olympic National Park doing? Well, they are still observing and analyzing the situation. Chief Ranger Colin Smith has had experience with similar situations, as a ranger at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area up-river from Grand Coulee Dam. There, the narrow strip of public land that runs along the lakeshore has been violated regularly by adjacent property owners bulldozing roads through Park land to the lakeshore.

I asked Ranger Smith about progress on the Lake Crescent situation and he replied that they are developing a range of options, and that there are some jurisdictional challenges. Not only are Park regulations unclear about private property owner restrictions, but Olympic National Park lacks a co-agency shoreline management agreement with Clallam County. Though many National Parks have co-agency coordination, currently Olympic has no clear



Skerbeck's work, seen from Simpson property. Photos by John Woolley.

co-agency shoreline development rules. So I asked about the next step, and Smith replied that, due to the Elwha Dam removal activities, Park staff was overwhelmed. At the completion of Elwha events, Chief Ranger Colin Smith took a deserved vacation to New Zealand. One hopes that his return the week of November 7 will be followed by some progress.

In the meantime, the Simpsons and their neighbors have had a dismaying summer and autumn.

OPA will continue to monitor this unfortunate situation.
To stay tuned, contact Chief Ranger Colin Smith:
<colin_smith@nps.gov>.



Roadless Rule Upheld

by Tim McNulty



The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, established during the Clinton administration, protected 58 million acres of national forest roadless lands from road-building and commercial logging. A bane to “wise use” resource industries and their pals in western state legislatures, the “Roadless Rule” has been subject to attacks and legal challenges almost since its establishment.

In 2010, the 9th Circuit Court dismissed a last major challenge to the rule, but an injunction against the rule filed by Wyoming Judge Clarence Brimmer still held. Finally, in November, 2011, the 10th Circuit dismissed Brimmer’s injunction. In what appellant Earthjustice called “a sweeping victory,” the Roadless Rule now

remains the law of the land.

Unfortunately, the rule does not put a stop to all the threats facing our national forest roadless lands. It fails to address off-road vehicle (ORV) use, which has become one of the major threats to national forest roadless areas over the past decade. The State of Alaska has appealed the application of the rule to the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. And Idaho has established its own much more permissive roadless rule for its national forests under a Bush-era dispensation. But for the considerable roadless wildlands in Olympic and other national forests in the West, the bulldozers have been silenced.

Park Plans for Spruce Railroad Trail Expansion

In September, Olympic National Park released a plan to upgrade two sections of the historic Spruce Railroad trail at Lake Crescent and the lower Sol Duc valley into new sections of the Olympic Discovery Trail. The ODT, as its locally known, is a popular, non-motorized, multi-use trail that will eventually extend 140 miles from Port Townsend to La Push on the Olympic coast. The Park plan calls for major construction, reopening two historic railroad tunnels, restoring the original 11-foot railroad bed, and paving a 6-foot trail surface to accommodate handicapped users and bicyclists. A 4-foot gravel trail will be maintained alongside the blacktop for hikers, joggers, and equestrians.

Olympic Park Associates supports the Park’s plan (alternative 3 in the Spruce Railroad Trail Expansion and Improvement Environmental Assessment) with some important modifications. In our October 12 response to the assessment, we asked the Park Service:

- To mitigate a quarter-mile of bank armoring along the lakeshore with wood structures and plantings to restore natural shoreline functions;
- To construct the expanded East Beach Road parking area with a gravel or another permeable surface to prevent oil and automotive fluids from being flushed into the lake’s out-

let, the sole spawning area for endemic Beardslee trout;

- To reserve the two existing tunnel-bypass trails for hikers only, allowing places for quiet enjoyment of the lake and its natural setting free of wheeled and hooped traffic.

The Olympic Discovery Trail is an important and widely used recreational trail on the peninsula. Its extension through Olympic National Park will bring new visitors to ONP who will be able to experience the park’s beauty and surrounding wilderness in ways not currently available at Olympic.

At the same time OPA strongly opposes a Clallam County proposal (alternative 4 in the EA) that would expand the paved trail surface to 8 feet, widen the trail shoulders, and increase the cleared width of the trail corridor to 14 feet. This proposal would also construct a new handicapped-accessible approach trail along the eastern portion that would necessitate logging and bulldozing a minimum 20-foot corridor (expandable up to 50 feet) through mature second-growth forest above the lakeshore. We agree with park planners that this type of heavy-handed development is inappropriate for a national park, particularly in an unspoiled scenic area like Lake Crescent.

The deadline for comments was October 21. A final decision on the trail will be made later this year.

You can review the park’s environmental assessment at <<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/srrt>>.

OPA’s letter to the Park Service is on our website, <www.olympicparkassociates.org>.

Olympic Visionary: A Tribute

by Tim McNulty

November 7, 2011. Twenty-five years ago today Public Law 99-635, an act with the unassuming description “to revise the boundaries of Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest” was signed into law by President Reagan. In hindsight, it is amazing what this two-and-a-half-page law accomplished. The act realigned the boundaries of the Park and Forest to conform with watershed and ridge-top divides. In doing so, it expanded the Park by 6,286 acres. It added the waters and submerged lands of Lake Ozette to the Park (they were then managed by the State of Washington). It also added to the Park the entire coastal intertidal area, from mean high to “lowest low” tides, along with offshore sea stacks and islands from the Makah Reservation in the North to the Quinault Reservation to the south.

It accomplished this largely without fanfare or controversy.

For this – and for much more – visitors to the Olympics today owe a deep debt of gratitude to Daniel J. Evans. As Governor of Washington and later as U.S. Senator, Evans brought to government a passion for the Olympics, a dedication to conservation, and a long-term vision for this place. The result is a conservation legacy that is stunning.

As governor, Dan worked out the agreement with timber companies that paved the way for the 1976 legislation that added Shi Shi Beach, Point of the Arches, and the east shore of Lake Ozette to Olympic National Park. Eight years later, as U.S. Senator, Dan was instrumental in passing the 1984 Washington Wilderness Bill. Wilderness designations in the Gray Wolf, Dosewallips, lower Duckabush and Skokomish watershed were enhanced greatly by Dan’s advocacy. His personal intimacy with these areas, gained through a lifetime of hiking, made him an effective advocate within the delegation.

Dan guided the boundary legislation expertly through committees to passage by both houses of Congress. Today the

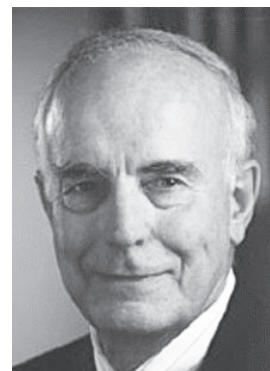
Park’s boundaries along Rugged Ridge, the Queets, Skokomish and Royal Creek ensure the protection of complete drainages rather than following erratic section lines willy-nilly across ridge-tops and watersheds. No longer can DNR clearcuts “slop over” into Park watersheds. And scenic jewels like Lake of the Angels in the upper Hamma Hamma are now part of the Park because Dan knew them well – and knew they deserved to be.

Perhaps among his most visionary proposals, Evans wrote language into the bill that would allow the National Park Service to purchase the two dams on the Elwha River. It was blocked in committee, but this was six years before passage of the Elwha legislation – and 14 years before the dams were actually purchased by the government.

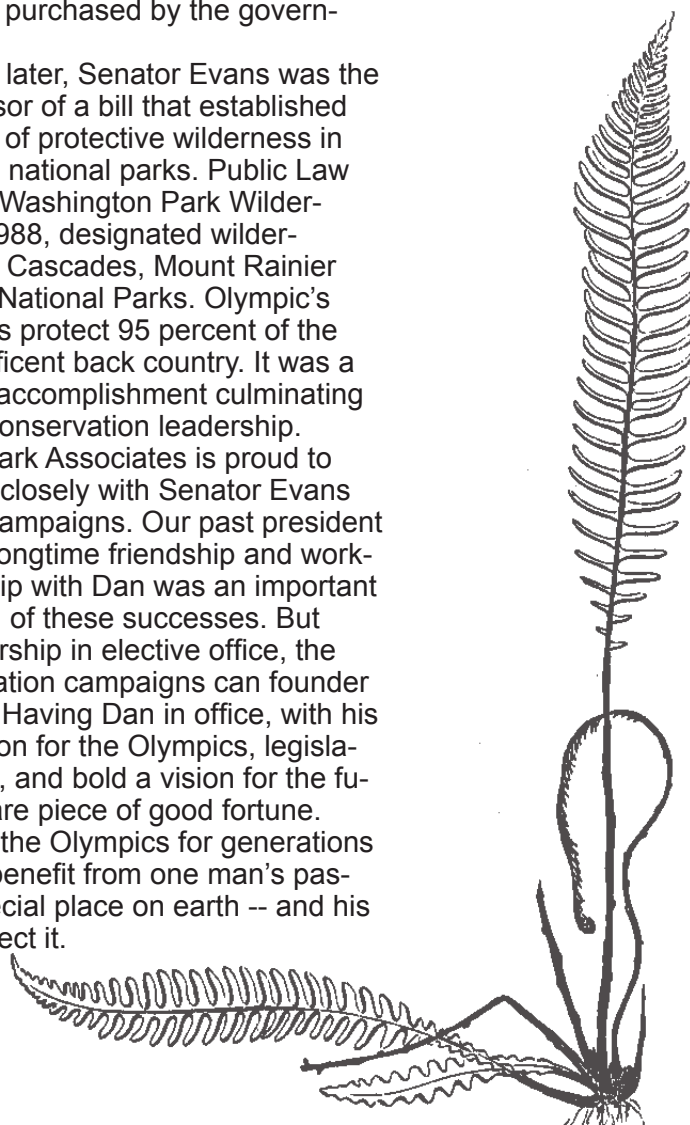
Two years later, Senator Evans was the guiding sponsor of a bill that established a vast sweep of protective wilderness in Washington’s national parks. Public Law 100-668, the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988, designated wilderness in North Cascades, Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks. Olympic’s 876,669 acres protect 95 percent of the Park’s magnificent back country. It was a breathtaking accomplishment culminating a lifetime of conservation leadership.

Olympic Park Associates is proud to have worked closely with Senator Evans on all these campaigns. Our past president Polly Dyer’s longtime friendship and working relationship with Dan was an important factor in each of these successes. But without leadership in elective office, the best conservation campaigns can founder on the rocks. Having Dan in office, with his lifelong passion for the Olympics, legislative expertise, and bold a vision for the future, was a rare piece of good fortune.

Visitors to the Olympics for generations to come will benefit from one man’s passion for a special place on earth -- and his desire to protect it.



Governor Dan Evans



STUDENT ESSAY

Elwha Science Symposium Through a Student's Eyes

by Kayla McLaughlin, Student

North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center Natural Resources 2

A college is a well-known place of learning, but recently a different event was housed at our very own Peninsula College (PC). I was one of the Port Angeles High School students lucky enough to attend this event, the Elwha River Restoration Science Symposium.

I arrived at PC early in the morning eager to learn and excited at the prospect of meeting scientists from all around the western United States. Never having been to Peninsula College before, I was a little confused on where exactly to go, but there were many helpers to point me in the right direction. After obtaining my name tag, I headed over to the gymnasium for the introduction.

The first day of the symposium offered a series of sessions for participants to attend. I went to all the biology sessions, but there were also many other sessions on other aspects of the river health that I was unable to attend. There were some amazing speakers on day one. All were very entertaining, and all had something interesting to teach. Presenters had gathered all the data from the years of research, and their studies varied greatly. One presenter did a study on birds and the role that they can play in reforestation; another dealt

with the genetics of the local pink salmon population.

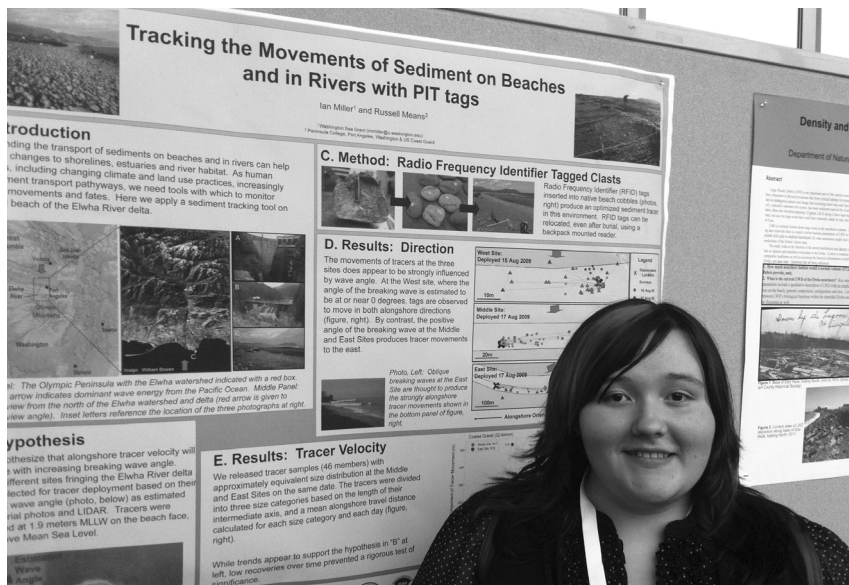
Most of the focus during the biology sessions was dedicated to the return of the salmon to the Elwha River. I learned the extreme importance of these fish not only to the river, but to the ecosystem as a whole. Salmon are an invaluable food source to a plethora of animals, big and small, from bears to other fish to insects. Salmon die and their bodies put nutrients into the soil, which benefits the plants as well.

I also attended the second day of the Science Symposium, and once again there were wonderful speakers. There were very touching moments, like when a man named Dick Goin told his story. He had been walking that river since 1938, and remembered when the salmon runs still had their legendary status. [Dick Goin is an Olympic Park Associates advisory trustee and former board member. Ed.] But the majority of the day was spent talking about the importance of the dam removal as a whole. Elwha restoration involves the biggest dam removal in the history of our country and will hopefully spark more environmental projects and dam removals.

Being a high school student at the symposium offered a unique opportunity. I was able to see firsthand the scientific community coming together to complete a project 20 years in the making. I met and listened to brilliant minds from around the world, and learned so much about the dams. I'm so grateful that I was fortunate enough to attend such a superb event, and I want to thank all the people that made that possible, including Dan Lieberman, Tara Morrow, and Ranger Dean Butterworth.



Scientific poster presentation at the Elwha River Restoration Science Symposium.



State Wolf Plan Closes Door on Wolves in Olympics

by Tim McNulty

In July, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife released its Final EIS for the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington, <<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00001/wdfw00001.pdf>>. Olympic Park Associates has been involved throughout the planning process urging WDFW to create a plan that is scientifically credible, would insure a self-sustaining wolf population in Washington, and would foster wolf recovery for Olympic National Park and the Olympic Peninsula. The Park is by far the most promising area for wolf restoration in the state. In 2008 WDFW and Olympic National Park successfully returned fishers to the Peninsula's forests. The wolf plan could have set the stage for returning the top predator to the Olympics as well.

Unfortunately the final plan goes out of its way to erect roadblocks to wolf recovery in the Olympics.

Reintroducing wolves from outside the area, which was so successful for Yellowstone and central Idaho, is prohibited in the final plan. Translocation of naturally migrating wolves

to the peninsula from parts of the state where recovery targets have been met is recommended for the Southern Cascades but all but blocked for the Olympics. The plan sets further impediments of additional public analysis and hearings to translocate wolves from one recovery zone to another. Further, the plan combines Pacific Coast recovery area with the South Cascades recovery area. This means that wolves could be determined to be fully recovered in Washington, and removed from endangered species protections, with wolves present in the South Cascades but with no wolves in the Olympics. Since the Interstate 5 population corridor blocks the natural migration of wolves into the Olympic Peninsula, the plan effectively cuts off wolf recovery in the Olympics. This fatal flaw was pointed out by conservationists and scientists reviewing the draft plan -- and it

may well be in violation of the state endangered species act. But it remains in the final plan.

The plan also stubbornly sticks to its determination that only 15 breeding wolf pairs distributed among three areas constitutes recovery. This number does not reflect current scientific research and was roundly criticized by independent scientists who reviewed the draft plan. Two of three scientists in a blind peer review stated that the number was inadequate and "fell below current scientific standards for sustainability and genetic viability." But this too remains in the plan.

Olympic National Park offers the best habitat, the largest unmanaged elk population,

and the lowest chances for wolf-human conflicts in the state, as the plan readily admits. Returning the Park's keystone predator -- the only species missing from Olympic -- would benefit the entire ecosystem, from endemic Olympic mar-

mots to Roosevelt elk. And the presence of wolves would bring lasting economic benefits to surrounding Olympic Peninsula communities.

The National Park Service also wrote a strong letter supporting wolf recovery in all three of Washington's national parks including Olympic. But a political calculus, driven by hunting and ranching interests and hewn to by state wildlife managers, has trumped science, conservation and common sense. The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will adopt the plan in its present -- or possibly a far worse -- form in December. OPA and conservationists determined to see wolves restored to Olympic National Park will once more focus our efforts on federal reintroduction strategies. The state process has made it clear: the Washington Wolf Conservation and Management Plan offers no hope for wolves in the Olympics.



Photo by Tracy Brooks .

A political calculus, driven by hunting and ranching interests and hewn to by state wildlife managers, has trumped science, conservation, and common sense.



VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

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PENINSULA LOOKBACK:

From the *Peninsula Daily News*, November 4, 2011.

1986 (25 years ago): Olympic National Park officials are considering what to do with mountain goats that were introduced to the mountains in 1825 – before the national park was created.

Goat numbers are thriving on the Peninsula...[from] the original dozen animals released January 1, 1925, to 1,200 today.

Ed Schreiner, park botanist and plant ecologist, said some impacted plant species in the area are unique in the world, survivors of the last ice age.

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