

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



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Mt. Deception and Deception Basin. Photo by John Bridge.

2016: National Park Service Centennial A Critical Year for Olympic National Park

For nearly 70 years, Olympic Park Associates has worked to protect the stunning natural beauty, biological richness, and untrammeled wilderness of Olympic National Park. With your help, we've achieved some remarkable successes. Our ongoing efforts continue to be inspired by this extraordinary planetary preserve -- and supported by our members' active engagement.

The centennial year of the National Park Service, 2016, will prove to be a watershed year for continuing protection of Olympic National Park. Monumental decisions affecting the future ecological integrity and wilderness character of the park are about to be made. A long-awaited Wilderness Stewardship Plan will determine how park managers will

protect the wilderness quality that defines the heart of the Olympic Mountains. A Mountain Goat Management Plan, on hold since the mid-1990s, will finally address the presence of non-native mountain goats and their impacts on fragile alpine environments in the park. And funding decisions in the coming year will allocate limited, reduced funds across a growing gulf between management and maintenance needs and dramatically reduced staffing.

OPA is actively involved in all these processes. As park managers roll out their preferred courses of action, they -- and the congressional representatives who fund them -- will need both our support and our strong advocacy in making decisions that put protection of park resources foremost.

Continued on P. 3, Critical Year

OPA Meetings

Next: Tuesday, January 26, 2016

Place: Kingston Community Center.

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.

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A Critical Year for Olympic National Park

Continued from P. 1.

Here are OPA's positions on some key issues -- and why we advocate for them.

Wilderness Plan

Olympic is one of America's foremost wilderness parks. Presently, 10 million people live within a five-hour drive of Olympic. Last year saw 95,000 visitor nights in the Olympic Wilderness. Regulating this number of backpackers is imperative: educating them regarding minimum impacts, guiding where they can camp and build fires, and determining the level of development of trails, bridges, structures, and privies needed to serve them. OPA favors vigorous protection of Olympic's wilderness character and placing resource protection at the forefront in all cases. As urban populations increase, more and more people will want to experience what Olympic has to offer. A strong wilderness stewardship plan is the best insurance for preserving the park's outstanding wildness.



Photo by Llyn De Daanan

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Mountain Goat Management Plan

The proliferation of non-native mountain goats is the largest threat to Olympic's alpine areas, particularly during a time of global warming. The goats' feeding, trampling, and wallowing behavior is causing acute destructive impacts on sensitive alpine and subalpine environments.



Olympic's rare and endemic plants are affected. Impacts to alpine wildlife, including the endemic Olympic marmots, are unstudied and unknown. OPA

strongly advocates removal of all non-native goats from the Olympics.

Funding

Government sequesters and draconian budget cuts to national parks have eviscerated visitor services, maintenance, and staff at Olympic. ONP was underfunded by \$7.7 million, or 42 percent, in 2014. Visitor center hours and interpretive programs have been reduced significantly. Permanent and seasonal ranger positions have been eliminated. This past summer, rangers were nearly impossible to find in many areas the Olympic Wilderness, leading to group camping in closed areas, fecal contamination of camp areas, trampling of



Olympic National Park was underfunded by \$7.7 million, or 42 percent, in 2014.

heather and sensitive vegetation in alpine areas, illegal fires, firearm use, and other destructive activities. OPA continues to pressure Congress to restore full funding, and to lobby park managers for judicious use of

limited funds -- with resource protection paramount.

Meanwhile -- Other Issues

- OPA continues to work for passage of the **Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act** currently before Congress.
- We are actively involved in fighting a **Navy proposal to turn the airspace over Olympic National Park and Forest into a warfare training area.**
- We are participating in **Congressman Kilmer's Olympic Collaborative** that seeks to promote sustainable ecological management of Olympic National Forest.

OPA needs your support, more now than ever.

For more information on all of these issues, and to get involved in planning processes, visit our website,

olympicparkassociates.com.

Quiet Area, Bioacoustic Preserve? A Visionary Proposal for Olympic National Park

by Tim McNulty, Vice President, OPA



Gordon Hempton is an acoustic ecologist, an internationally recognized and Emmy-Award-winning natural sounds recorder, and an eloquent advocate for natural quiet. He is well known for his "One Square Inch of Silence," a place in the heart of Olympic National Park's Hoh Rain Forest that he has shown to be one of the most quiet places on earth.

Hempton considers Olympic one of the least noise-polluted national parks in the U.S., pointing out that it has the greatest diversity of natural soundscapes with the longest noise-free intervals of any park outside Alaska.

And he has a revolutionary idea for Olympic National Park: designating it a "Quiet Area and Bioacoustic Preserve." It would be the first such acoustic preserve in the world.

Currently there is a "Quiet Zone" in Muir Woods National Monument where the National Park Service asks visitors to voluntarily keep their voices down, turn off their cell phones, and control children.

But Hempton has something larger in mind. He envisions an extensive ecological preserve free of man-made noise. He believes that federal legislation would be required to create a no-fly zone over the park. Further, he thinks it would be a popular cause among visitors to Olympic, where air traffic has tripled over the past ten years.

With the threat of a Navy Electronic Warfare Range hanging over the park (see P. 3), this might be the time to give Gordon's proposal serious consideration.

For more information about Gordon Hempton and One Square Inch of Silence, visit www.soundtracker.com

Watch a video at <http://www.soundtrackerthemovie.com/ST/Home.html>

New Life at Elwha Estuary

Source, *Peninsula Daily News* 11/8/15

With the Elwha dams removed and some 60 percent of the reservoir sediments now flushed down to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, nearly 100 acres of new land have developed at the Elwha River mouth, including both beaches and sub-tidal lands.

With new lands have come a plethora of ecological changes that have exceeded scientific expectations.

The two Elwha dams held back an estimated 34 million cubic yards of sediments in their reservoirs. Before dam removal, the shoreline at the river mouth, including most of the Elwha tribal beach, had degraded into steep, sterile cobbles. Now, beaches, pools, and sandbars have returned to the estuary.

And with these new habitats, a variety of fish species and an abundance of seabirds have moved into the nutrient-rich area.

Marine biologist Anne Shaffer, director of the Coastal Watershed Institute, has been studying the effects of dam removal on the nearshore and offshore marine

ecosystems.

"It's such a treasure," she recently told reporters from the *Peninsula Daily News*, "just a gift."

Shaffer reported that birds and fish that have been rare or absent from the river's estuary for decades have reappeared. Fish include eulachon, long-fin smelt and red-sided shiners. These in turn are feeding salmon, seals, and seabirds.

Surveys also revealed large numbers of juvenile Steelhead, Coho and Chinook salmon, which have attracted a variety of waterbirds. Shaffer found adult salmon using the estuary as well, and these have attracted Bald eagles.

Shaffer told reporters that the dramatic revitalization of the river mouth is an example of what can happen when nature is set free.

"All we had to do," she said, "was get out of the way."

For more information about the ecological renewal of the Elwha nearshore area, visit the Coastal Watershed Institute's website at www.coastalwatershedinstitute.org

Don't Let the "Sound of Freedom" Swamp the Sound of Wilderness

by Donna Osseward, Chair, OPA

Will you be hearing babbling brooks and birdsong or the "sound of freedom" in our Olympic Peninsula wilderness areas? The "sound of freedom" is what the Navy calls the roar from its jet planes. In a few weeks, we will know the decision the Forest Service will make on this question, and whether Olympic Park Associates (OPA) and other conservation organizations will be forced to go to court to fight this issue.

The Navy has requested a permit from the Forest Service to use Olympic National Forest land on the western portion of the Olympic Peninsula for an electromagnetic warfare training range. This plan would require jet planes flying over private and public lands, including Olympic National Park, Olympic National Forest wilderness areas, and the Washington Islands Wilderness. They would also use the airspace over Quinault, Quileute, and Hoh Reservations; Washington State Department of Natural Resources land; Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary; the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuges; thousands of acres of private land, including the towns of Forks and Amanda Park.

Nearly 3.6 million people visit Olympic National Park yearly to enjoy this World Heritage Park. That does not count the people who come to use the Olympic National Forest and other Peninsula tourist attractions. OPA argues that the savings the Navy claims they will enjoy will be negated by the damage to the Olympic Peninsula economy and the quality of life of those living and visiting there.

This training has been happening for many years elsewhere – in Idaho and Nevada. OPA supports the brave people who fight to preserve our freedom but argues that this training is much better done in the other areas already being used for that purpose.

The Army out of Joint Base Lewis McCord (JBLM) has also started a NEPA process to expand their helicopter training into the Cascades and in areas just south of Olympic National Park. The Army "proposes to establish three off-base helicopter training areas (HTAs) (on the Olympic Peninsula) and one mountain

training area (MTA)" (in the Cascades). [SCOPING DOCUMENT, Northwest Aviation Operations, Off-base Helicopter Training Areas, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, June 2015].

If the Navy and Army get permission to conduct warfare training activities on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Cascades, it will set precedent that will endanger wilderness everywhere. Solitude is one of the most valuable qualities of wilderness. OPA argues that the shock and awe of modern warfare should not be a part of the wilderness experience.

*The military proposals:
Navy fighter jet noise 260 days a year, 12-16 hours a day,
Army helicopters for "24/7, 365 days
except for federal holidays".*

*Olympic Park Associates argue that
the savings the Navy claims they will enjoy
will be negated by
the damage to the Olympic Peninsula economy
and the quality of life of residents and visitors.*

Mapped boundary lines do not prevent sound from traveling through our national parks and wilderness areas. The noise of all of these military flights will not

be confined to the areas on their maps but will also expose everyone along the flight path from Whidbey Island or JBLM to the training sites.

The good people in the American military don't seem to understand that the "sound of freedom" should not be heard everywhere. It's great to watch and hear for a few days, for a few hours, at SeaFair. But the military propose exposing the people living and visiting the Olympic Peninsula to Navy fighter jet noise 260 days a year, 12-16 hours a day, or to Army helicopters for "24/7, 365 days except for federal holidays".

Studies have shown direct links between noise and health: high blood pressure, hearing loss, sleep disruption, stress related illnesses, and reduced productivity. Other studies have demonstrated similar effects in wildlife. Wilderness areas provide relief from the noise of civilization. The militarization of the Olympics is a recipe for excessive stress for the people living and visiting the Olympic Peninsula.

The 95% of Olympic National Park that the U.S. Congress designated as Wilderness is meant to provide these benefits to all who visit the park.

Olympic Park Associates is vigorously opposing the military's proposed intrusions into our wilderness.



Historical Perspective:

From the May, 1995, *Voice of the Wild Olympics*

Editor's note: As Olympic National Park prepares to release its Mountain Management Plan Draft EIS, we thought it appropriate to publish excerpts from former OPA president Polly Dyer's article on the park's excellent 1995 Mountain Goat Draft EIS. Thirty years later the issues surrounding non-native goats remain distressingly constant. At 95, Polly still serves on OPA's board of trustees. She remains ever hopeful that the coming plan will resolve this issue one and for all. The rest of the board concurs.

The Mountain Goat Issue in Olympic National Park

By Polly Dyer

Olympic National Park's Draft EIS for Mountain Goat Management culminates more than fifteen years of research into the damage non-native goats are inflicting on the Park's fragile alpine plant communities. The plan proposes to solve this long-standing problem by removing the goats. The report demonstrates that non-native goats (which were introduced by hunting interests in the 1920's) are doing significant damage to alpine and sub-alpine plant communities. Wallowing, trampling, and grazing by introduced goats is changing the ecology of the Olympic high country. By preferring certain plant species over others, goats disrupt stable alpine plant communities and encourage the growth and of disturbance-related species. Among the plants impacted are a number of endemic species - plants that occur nowhere else in the world.

The Park's preferred alternative is to remove the destructive goats by aerial shooting by Park personnel. OPA and a number of other conservation organizations believe that the preferred action is the only cost-effective, safe, and thorough solution to this ongoing problem.

Those favoring "no action" or keeping the goats need only turn to adjacent alpine areas in Olympic National Forest to observe the results; bureaucratic foot-dragging has allowed exotic goats to continue unchecked with their destruction of sensitive alpine meadows in Olympic National Forest wilderness.

Everyone wishing to preserve the ecological integrity of Olympic National Park should write the Park Service. Urge the superintendent to adopt the preferred alternative: removal of all non-native goats. Sport hunting interests and vocal animal rights activists will be pressuring the Park Service to do otherwise.

The father of the modern conservation movement, Aldo Leopold, said it best: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Following are excerpts from the statement presented by Polly Dyer at Olympic National Park's Mountain Goat DEIS hearing in Seattle, May 3, 1995.

Some twenty-eight years ago [1967] members of Olympic Park Associates and the Klahhane Club,

were the first to observe and bring to the attention of the National Park Service the extreme damage to endemic Olympic plants and fragile alpine soils being caused by the expanded numbers of the non-native mountain goats.

OPA supported the Park's subsequent years of research and its laudable efforts to remove these exotic goats by trapping and helicopter transport. The research, analyses, and conclusions in the Draft EIS and the scientific monograph, *Mountain Goats in Olympic National Park: Biology and Management of an Introduced Species* (Houston, Schreiner, and Moorhead, NPS, 1994), leave no viable alternative to the use of lethal means.

OPA endorses the plan to eliminate exotic mountain goats from Olympic National Park. This should be done by national park personnel and not by members of the public. We would prefer that all of the exotic mountain goats on the Olympic Peninsula be removed. Otherwise, we foresee the need for continued vigilance between Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest.

Lethal removal of the exotic mountain goats is essential to provide that Olympic National Park can "conserve [not only] the scenery" but "the natural... objects and wildlife therein...by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (National Park Act of 1916). We point out that "future generations" should include indigenous wildlife and plants in Olympic National Park. It should extend, for example, to those Olympic marmots, whose habitat is lessened by competition from exotic mountain goats.

So, thank you, Olympic National Park, for your research and analyses... We strongly recommend the Preferred Alternative as the only way to assure the restoration of the Olympic National Park ecosystem so that it can

evolve naturally through the eons -- for itself, for its indigenous creatures and plants (microscopic to large), for its soils and rocks, for its streams and lakes, for its air.

And thank you, Polly!

Conservation Groups Strategize How to Preserve the Northwest Forest Plan

by Shelley Spalding, OPA Board

In October more than 40 individuals, representing nearly 30 different conservation organizations, met in Portland to discuss and strategize how best to be prepared for the Forest Service's Northwest Forest Plan revision process and its potential weakening of the landmark Plan. In fact, long before the visionary and controversial Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) had been drafted, many of these folks were already actively committed to protecting and restoring old-growth habitat. The combined knowledge, experience, and dedication of people in the room was almost overwhelming!



Northern Spotted Owl.
Photo by Shane Jeffries

The original Northwest Forest Plan, adopted in 1994, was designed as a blueprint for restoring badly overcut federal forests within the range of the spotted owl (northern California, Oregon, and Washington). The Plan is unique in scope and magnitude: it was the first truly science-based, landscape-scale approach to managing our public lands, and it provided a clear set of consistent guidelines across the region. The Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS), using

the best available science on aquatic ecosystems, was developed as a foundational element of the NWFP. Standards and guidelines are the glue that holds the ACS together.

The purposes of this pro-active strategy meeting, co-hosted by The Wilderness Society and Western Environmental Law Center, were to:

- Discuss how the 2012 Planning Rule will impact the future of the NWFP;
- Identify areas of agreement regarding principles, policy, and messaging for engaging in the NWFP revision process; and
- Develop a coordinated strategy to defend the bedrock principles of the NWFP and advocate for the retention of a regional framework in forest plan revisions.

To this end, after a briefing on changes to the planning process resulting from the 2012 Planning Rule, attendees broke into smaller groups to discuss what is different about issues, organizing, economics, agency relations, and the legal and political landscape.

Although the Plan was designed to be a 100-year restoration plan, it's been 20 years since its adoption and a lot has changed. Perhaps the most dramatic of those changes is climate change, with dire predictions of hotter drier conditions, increased frequency and intensity of fire, and more precipitation falling as rain with less snowpack. On the positive side, recent analysis has revealed that our high biomass northwest forests sequester more carbon than nearly any other forested ecosystem on the planet, and by protecting all remaining mature forests in fixed reserves we could create a forest carbon trust on a regional scale.

Other changes since the adoption of the NWFP identified at the meeting included the growth of the recreation interests/industry, a shrinking timber industry in terms of number/size of mills but not in terms of its appetite (for more timber); high agency turnover and low morale; falling Forest Service budgets; Barred owls occupying Spotted owl habitat; more collaborative processes that take up time and resources with questionable results; and litigation that is costlier and harder to win.

There was significant agreement in the meeting regarding overarching goals for the future of the NWFP. These goals included:

- retaining the regional framework of the NWFP in an enforceable way (with measurable standards and not just "desired future conditions" as described in the 2012 Planning Rule);
- eliminating salvage logging;
- upholding the ACS and riparian reserves;
- incorporating climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- reducing the roads system mileage;
- and improving protections for mature forests.

In moving forward, the need for strategic communication with the public and media was discussed, including a massive ACS campaign focusing on the need for standards and guidelines.

The Forest Service has begun the process of crafting its replacement for the existing plan. They expect to finish that work by 2019. We all know that we need more resilient forests with improved habitat connectivity to ensure for future generations the benefits of our public lands, including quality drinking water, diversity of wildlife, and mature and old-growth trees. And we all know that it will take a village – many, many voices – to achieve that outcome.

OPA Helps Fund Glacier Research at Olympic

by Tim McNulty, Vice President, OPA

Olympic National Park's glaciers are not only beautiful and iconic, they are a critical reservoir of cold, fresh water for domestic and agricultural uses as well as aquatic habitat for salmon and trout. Due to cyclical weather patterns and pronounced human-caused global warming, Olympic glaciers are thinning and shrinking at an accelerating and alarming rate.

Over the last century, the Olympic Mountains have lost half of their glacier-covered area. Blue Glacier on Mt. Olympus lost 20 percent of its mass in just the last 30 years; Anderson Glacier on Mt. Anderson lost 77 percent. (See *Vanishing Glaciers in the Olympics*, **Voice**, Winter, 2013.)

Under the direction of Dr. John Riedel, glaciologist at North Cascades National Park, ONP scientists began an intensive three-year study measuring the mass-balance (gain and loss) of the Blue and Eel glaciers in response to climate change. With next year's funding uncertain, OPA contributed

through Washington's National Park Fund, to help complete the study. With our -- and your -- contribution, the funding goal was reached. In April scientists will visit both glaciers to measure the winter's snow depth and density and place ablation stakes along their centerlines. Researchers will then hike to the glaciers in mid-summer to take balance measurements and then again in late September to make final measurements.

As ONP researcher Bill Baccus explained, "A third year of funding will allow us to document the glaciers' annual mass balance for three consecutive years and help us to better understand why Olympic glaciers are declining more rapidly than others in this region... By having multiple years of mass balance data, we capture glacier responses and streamflow contributions from different climatic conditions, strengthening our ability to model future responses under climate change."

OPA is proud to partner with Washington's National Park Fund and Olympic National Park on this important research.

Marmot



Anderson Glacier, 1936. Courtesy of National Park Service.



Anderson Glacier, 2015. Courtesy of National Park Service.

Book Review:

Washington's Pacific Coast: A Guide to Hiking, Camping, Fishing and Other Adventures

By Greg Johnston. Published by Mountaineers Books, \$24.95

Reviewed by Paul Robisch, Membership Chair, OPA.

Chapter 1 of the book begins: *It can feel like you're touching the pulse of the earth when you walk the Washington Coast... You hear the coast, smell it, see it, taste it; here nature is insistent and must be met on its own terms.*

After this brilliant description of Washington's outstanding Pacific coast, Johnston provides all the necessary information for anyone seeking enjoyment through a myriad of outdoor adventures.

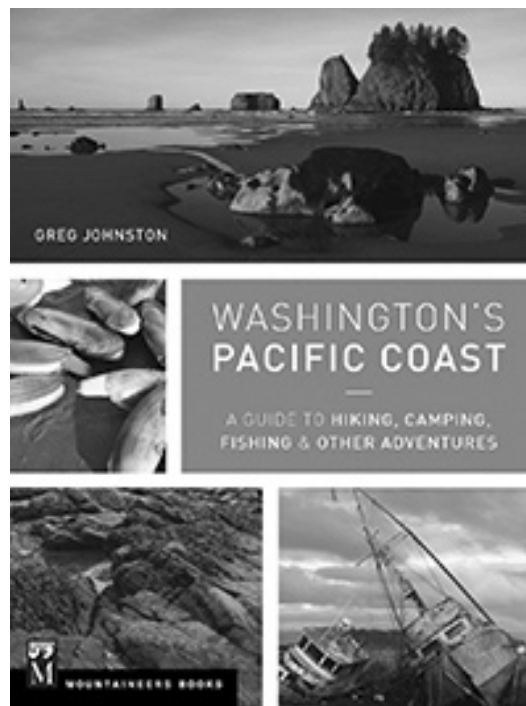
Beginning with Cape Flattery in the north, at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and ending with Cape Disappointment in the south, at the mouth of the Columbia River, readers can find all the necessary, pertinent information for an enjoyable outdoor adventure. This includes directions to get there, difficulty of the hiking, condition of the trails, what to expect, recommended gear, available camping, required permits, and nearby commercial amenities.

In addition, Johnston provides interesting information on the geology, wildlife, and human history—both pre- and post-European—of the coastal areas.

Overall this will be an extremely valuable book for anyone interested in exploring Washington's magnificent Pacific Coast.

However, there are some potential storm clouds on the horizon. If the Navy succeeds in turning the Olympic coastal areas into an ongoing training facility for low flying jet fighter planes, outdoor adventure seekers will not only be unable to hear the coast, they most likely will not be able to hear much of anything else over the intense roar of the low flying jets, and will definitely not be meeting nature on its own terms.

Johnston's excellent guidebook illustrates, for this reader, why the Navy must not be allowed to destroy the magnificent quiet of the relatively wild north Washington coastal areas with jet engine noise levels high enough to result in hearing impairments for both humans and wildlife.



Marbled murrelet





Voice of the Wild Olympics

Sally W. Soest, Editor

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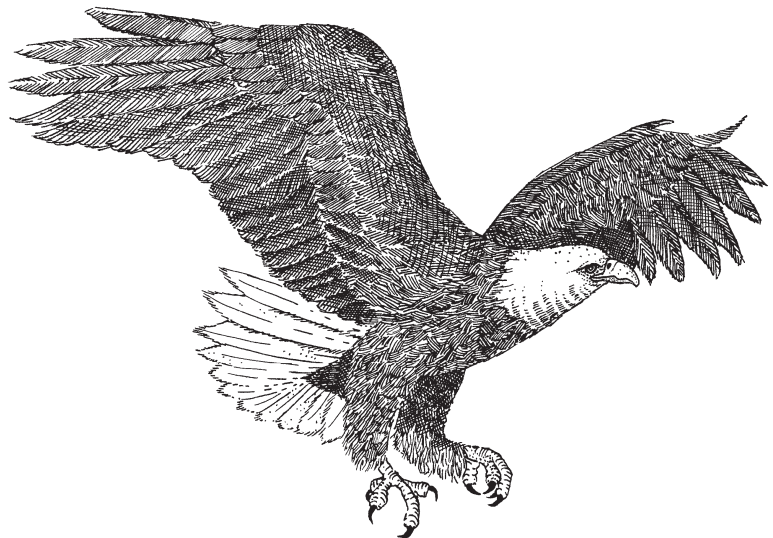
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The Sound of Wilderness