

VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



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Number 2
Spring 2019



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Enchanted_Valley_Chalet_2018.jpg

Last Call for the Enchanted Valley Chalet: Your Voices Are Needed

by *Tim McNulty*

Two years after soliciting comments on the future of Enchanted Valley Chalet, Olympic National Park is poised to release its final plan for the disposition of the three-story log hotel.

At this point, any effort to rescue the chalet from the natural processes of the wild Quinault River is doomed to fail. OPA has asked the Park Service to remove the chalet and put an end to years of futile and costly efforts.

Fueled by winter storms and rapidly melting glaciers, the East Fork Quinault River has carved away at the floodplain terrace of Enchanted Valley relentlessly. Along with the loss of numerous campsites in this stunningly scenic valley, the chalet was undermined and at risk of being washed away. In 2014, the Park

Service acquiesced in an ill-advised effort to move the chalet away from the river. The action involved numerous helicopter trips up and down the valley and the use of gas-powered machinery, at estimated cost of \$300,000 to \$400,000. The effort proved futile. Within two years, the river was once more poised to sweep the chalet away.

At last, the Park Service is preparing to pull the plug. Draft alternatives released in 2016 offered a range of options for the chalet, including (1) removing it, and (b) once more moving it away from the river. OPA strongly opposes the second option. Only one solution remains for the chalet: Take it down and let scarce park funds be invested in more pressing needs and visitor services.

But the National and Washington

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OPA Meetings

Next: Sunday, October 20, at 10am, Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim, WA

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

OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings.

Your Legislators

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

US Congress: 202-224-3121 to reach any member of Congress

Senate: www.senate.gov

US House of Representatives: www.house.gov

US Senate, Washington DC 20510

Sen. Maria Cantwell (D)
511 Hart SOB
DC 202-224-3441
Seattle 206-220-6400
www.cantwell.senate.gov

Sen. Patty Murray (D)
154 Russell SOB
DC 202-224-2621
Seattle 206-553-5545
www.murray.senate.gov

US House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515

1 Suzan K. DelBene
Rayburn HOB
202-225-6311
Bothell 425-485-0085
Mt. Vernon 360-415-7879
www.delbene.house.gov

6 Derek Kilmer (D)
1410 Longworth HOB
202-225-5916
Tacoma 253-272-3515
Bremerton 360-373-9725
Port Angeles 360-797-3623
www.kilmer.house.gov

2 Rick Larsen (D)
2113 Rayburn HOB
202-225-2605
Everett 425-252-3188
Bellingham 360-733-4500
www.larsen.house.gov

7 Pramila Jayapal (D)
1510 Longworth HOB
202-225-3106
Seattle 206-674-0040
www.jayapal.house.gov

3 Jaime Herrera Beutler (R)
2352 Rayburn HOB
202-225-3536
Vancouver 360-695-6292
www.herrerabeutler.house.gov

8 Kim Schrier (D)
1123 Longworth HOB
202-225-7761
Issaquah 425-677-7414
Wenatchee 509-885-6615
www.schrier.house.gov

4 Dan Newhouse (R)
1414 Longworth HOB
202-225-5816
Yakima 509-452-3243
www.newhouse.house.gov

9 Adam Smith (D)
2264 Rayburn HOB
202-225-8901
Renton 425-793-5180
www.adamsmith.gov

5 Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R)
1035 Longworth HOB
202-225-2006
Colville 509-684-3481
Spokane 509-353-2374
Walla Walla 509-529-9358
www.mcmorrisrodgers.house.gov

10 Denny Heck (D)
2452 Rayburn HOB
202-225-9740
Tacoma 253-459-8514
Lacey 360-459-8514
www.dennyheck.house.gov

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The Navy Is Also in the Olympic Coast Marine Sanctuary, and Wants to Expand Even More

The Navy wishes to couple the electronic warfare training activity “with training and testing activities (which) include new activities at sea, as well as activities that are currently ongoing and have historically occurred in the Study Area.” (shown on map). The historical training was much more benign than what is being asked in this EIS. This EIS will include asking for extension of a NOAA permit for “incidental takes of marine mammals...and incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine species.” “Incidental takes” means they were killed or harassed but we didn’t mean to do it.

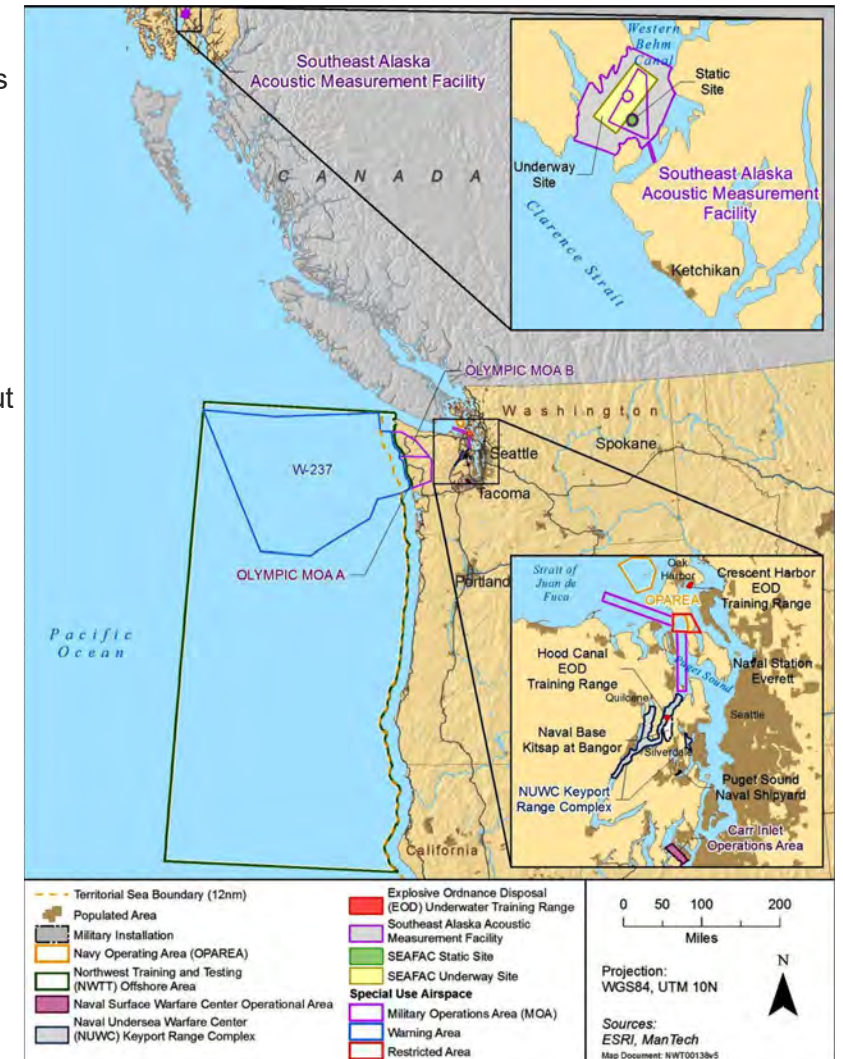
The NOAA website for the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary states, “Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary represents one of North America’s most productive marine ecosystems and spectacular undeveloped coastlines.

“The Olympic Coast is an example of the temperate Northeast Pacific Ocean ecosystem. The ocean environment is influenced by global patterns of ocean currents and climate that interact with the unique geology of the Olympic Mountains, continental shelf and deep-sea floor. The sanctuary is large enough to observe both variety and stability in the ocean processes - important qualities for studying short- and long-term changes.

“Marine life, ranging from humpback whales to minute ocean drifters called plankton, thrive here. Twenty-nine species of marine mammals and scores of seabird species spend parts of their lives here; gray whales visit as part of the longest mammal migration on earth and albatross gather food here to return to nestling on mid-Pacific islands and atolls. Sea otters munch on macro-invertebrates such as urchins, which in turn graze on majestic kelp forests. Fishes occupy myriad niches from the deepest ocean canyons to the shallowest tide pools.

“The sanctuary includes habitats as varied as broad sandy beaches, tide pools, rocky reefs, the open ocean surface and deep-sea canyons. These habitats provide for shelter, feeding, nesting and other basic needs to sustain diverse and abundant marine wildlife populations.”

Because of its closeness to a wilderness park,



the Sanctuary has a unique position to be a scientific test tube for understanding the natural interaction of sea and land. Preserved untrammelled, it provides a library and laboratory of scientific information valuable to this and future generations.

The Navy’s activities requiring permits for “incidental takes of marine mammals...and incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine species” would seem to nullify this resource.

While the Navy’s activities are not intended to kill or disturb marine life, they will. We argue that a less sensitive ocean environment would be a better place to conduct this training.

Since 1907, these critical areas of the Olympic Peninsula have been set aside to protect the Peninsula's wildlife. Beginning with Theodore Roosevelt and a series of congressional acts, this

Continued on P. 4, Navy



Letter to the Editor, *The Olympian*, Sunday, May 5, 2019, with permission from *The Olympian*:

Better bring earplugs for that hike into the rainforest, or along Olympic coast

People come from around the world to visit this astonishingly beautiful, temperate rainforest and the spectacular undeveloped coastline of the Olympic Peninsula. The opportunity to enjoy the peninsula as a place for solitude and quiet may soon come to an end.

The Navy, in their spring 2019 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), has proposed to increase the number of Growler Fighter jets flying over the Olympic National Park and Marine Sanctuary to 5,000 per year, an average of 19 flights per day! Noise levels will range from 80 to 100 decibels, a level that with continued exposure can cause hearing loss. Unfortunately, marine mammals, elk and other animals in the park don't have earplugs.

Additionally, the Navy requests a continuation of "incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine mammals and marine species." What does that even mean?

The Olympics are an environmentally sensitive area set aside in 1907 for the enjoyment of its citizens and unique wildlife. The Olympic National Park is a World Heritage Site. Let's not sacrifice this special region to the Navy.

More detailed information is available at www.olympicparkassociates.org.
Annie Cubberly, Olympia OPA Board Member

Navy

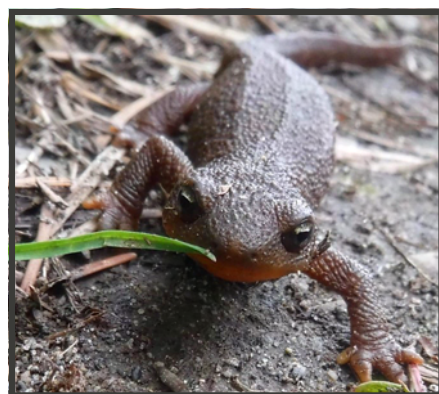
Continued from P. 3
protection has resulted in the creation of wildlife refuges, a national park for the enjoyment of its citizens, other unique wildlife, wilderness areas to protect natural resources from human damage, and a national marine sanctuary. The desire to protect the Roosevelt Elk, the largest subspecies of elk in North America, was one of the primary forces behind the establishment of the Mount Olympus National Monument (later Olympic National Park) in 1909. The area, the Navy wishes to convert into an electronic warfare training area (Olympic MOA), has been designated as an environmentally sensitive area for 112 years.

Olympic Park Associates doesn't want the seven years under this EIS to be an experiment on what Growler jet noise will do to humans and wildlife, or what electronic noise, explosions, high-energy lasers, and chemicals will do to marine life. Writing the Navy, your Senators Murray and Cantwell, your Congressional Representative, Governor Jay Inslee, and Attorney General Bob Ferguson will let them know how you feel about our environment.

See olympicparkassociates.org for more information and addresses.

Sighted in the Park!

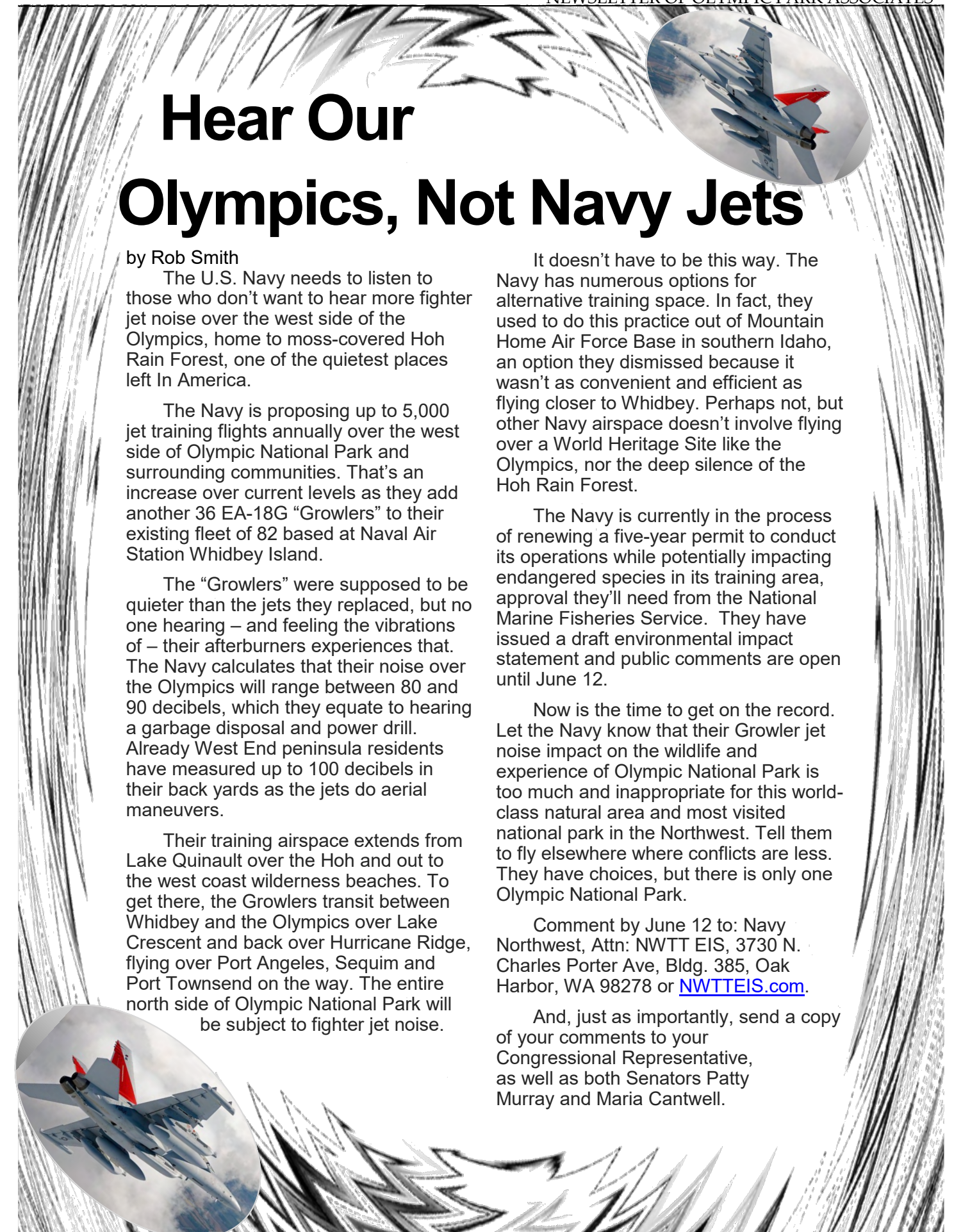
Our own John Bridge captured photos of these park denizens, along with dazzling spring blooms. See more on page 7.



Rough-skinned newt



Trillium, with a bee



Hear Our Olympics, Not Navy Jets

by Rob Smith

The U.S. Navy needs to listen to those who don't want to hear more fighter jet noise over the west side of the Olympics, home to moss-covered Hoh Rain Forest, one of the quietest places left in America.

The Navy is proposing up to 5,000 jet training flights annually over the west side of Olympic National Park and surrounding communities. That's an increase over current levels as they add another 36 EA-18G "Growlers" to their existing fleet of 82 based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

The "Growlers" were supposed to be quieter than the jets they replaced, but no one hearing – and feeling the vibrations of – their afterburners experiences that. The Navy calculates that their noise over the Olympics will range between 80 and 90 decibels, which they equate to hearing a garbage disposal and power drill. Already West End peninsula residents have measured up to 100 decibels in their back yards as the jets do aerial maneuvers.

Their training airspace extends from Lake Quinault over the Hoh and out to the west coast wilderness beaches. To get there, the Growlers transit between Whidbey and the Olympics over Lake Crescent and back over Hurricane Ridge, flying over Port Angeles, Sequim and Port Townsend on the way. The entire north side of Olympic National Park will be subject to fighter jet noise.

It doesn't have to be this way. The Navy has numerous options for alternative training space. In fact, they used to do this practice out of Mountain Home Air Force Base in southern Idaho, an option they dismissed because it wasn't as convenient and efficient as flying closer to Whidbey. Perhaps not, but other Navy airspace doesn't involve flying over a World Heritage Site like the Olympics, nor the deep silence of the Hoh Rain Forest.

The Navy is currently in the process of renewing a five-year permit to conduct its operations while potentially impacting endangered species in its training area, approval they'll need from the National Marine Fisheries Service. They have issued a draft environmental impact statement and public comments are open until June 12.

Now is the time to get on the record. Let the Navy know that their Growler jet noise impact on the wildlife and experience of Olympic National Park is too much and inappropriate for this world-class natural area and most visited national park in the Northwest. Tell them to fly elsewhere where conflicts are less. They have choices, but there is only one Olympic National Park.

Comment by June 12 to: Navy Northwest, Attn: NWTT EIS, 3730 N. Charles Porter Ave, Bldg. 385, Oak Harbor, WA 98278 or NWTTTEIS.com.

And, just as importantly, send a copy of your comments to your Congressional Representative, as well as both Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

Wild Olympics Bill Reintroduced in U.S. House and Senate

On May 9 Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Derek Kilmer reintroduced the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers bill. The measure will protect more than 126,000 acres of wilderness in Olympic National Forest and designate 19 new Wild and Scenic Rivers, the first ever on the peninsula. It will protect ancient forests, watersheds, salmon habitat, and recreation, while benefiting local jobs and the economy.

Sen. Murray and Rep. Kilmer acknowledged over 100 new endorsements for the bill from local Olympic Peninsula Tribes, elected officials and businesses. These join more than 800 businesses, farms, CEOs, public officials, sportsmen, and conservation and outdoor recreation groups as well as some 12,000 local residents supporting the bill.

"I'm proud to introduce this important legislation that will protect our priceless wild spaces for generations to come," said Sen. Murray. "This proposal is the product of years of collaboration with local stakeholders and a shared commitment to preserving the precious natural features and resources of our prized Olympic Peninsula."

Rep. Kilmer said, "I'm proud to support this practical, balanced strategy, that will protect the wildest and most pristine places on the Peninsula while ensuring we can keep and grow jobs in our natural resource industries and other sectors."

In April, Wild Olympics supporters gathered in Port Hadlock with Sen. Murray and Rep. Kilmer to



Senator Patty Murray, right, with Wild Olympics chair Connie Gallant and Rep. Derek Kilmer. Photo by John Gussman

acknowledge new supporters of Wild Olympics and rededicate themselves to passage of the bill.

"This is not going to be easy," Sen. Murray told an enthusiastic crowd, "nothing ever is in Congress. But what energizes me is, I've spent so much time fighting against stuff back there; we're fighting for this. And that feels really awesome!"

To follow progress on the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild Rivers bill and to lend your support, go to: <http://www.wildolympics.org>. Updates will also be posted at olympicparkassociates.com.

Wilderness Reservations Now Online

by Jason Bausher

Wilderness reservations in Olympic National Park can now be made online. A permit is required for backpacking anywhere in the park, but the wilderness character of the most popular locations is protected by quotas requiring reservations. Permits must still be picked up in person at an open Wilderness Information Center (WIC), but the reservations can be made online. This will reduce both staff time processing permits and visitors' time in lines while permits are issued.

Convenience is great, but not the greatest good: Around 50,000 people backpack into Olympic every year, and many of them require assistance for their own safety and the protection of wilderness character. While those lines are frustrating for all involved, the bottleneck is necessary to make sure those tens of thousands of visitors are prepared for their trips.

Experienced backpackers often are shocked at the basic knowledge

lacked by many visitors just moments before their trips begin. The opportunity for rangers to share some one-on-one information – such as showing topographic maps to prospective visitors -- brings most visitors around to realistic routes.

Everyone wants a loop, for example. With Olympic's rivers radiating like the spokes of a wheel called the Olympic Peninsula, most loops require elevation gain and loss in and out of river valleys. Many visitors do not know the ups and downs in the all-arounds if they're using maps without contour lines, or flat maps on flat phones. They find out in the WIC and change plans accordingly. With their lives thus saved from unforeseen passes and canyons, they also have an opportunity to hear about Leave No Trace, so they might not camp on fragile heather-huckleberry in the subalpine areas, or contribute another pile to the hundreds of other unburied feces piles along the coastal strip.

Removing bureaucracy with online reservations allows park staff to focus efforts on visitor and staff safety along with wilderness travel rules.

Kilmer Recognized as National Park Champion

In April, Rep. Derek Kilmer, whose 6th congressional district includes the Olympic Peninsula, received the 2019 National Park Heritage Award from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). The award recognizes Rep. Kilmer's leadership on the landmark John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, a bipartisan public lands package that consisted of more than one hundred public lands, natural resources, and water bills.

"I was lucky to grow up with Olympic National Park in my backyard," said Rep. Kilmer. "This legislation delivered on our region's longstanding priorities to protect our environment and support continued access to our public lands for generations to come. From the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to the creation of Washington's first two National Heritage Areas, this represents a huge win for our region's uniqueness, our economy, and our public lands."

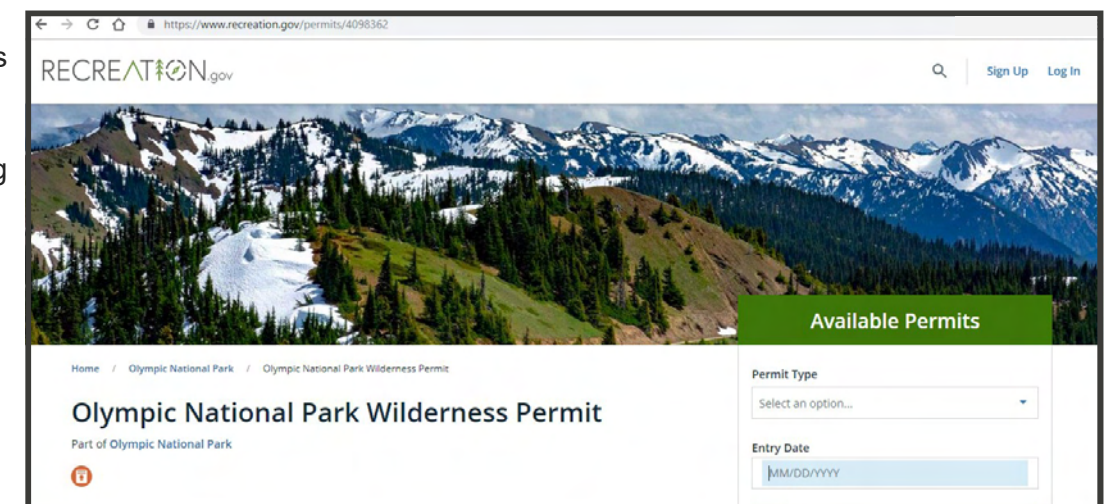
The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act permanently reauthorizes the Land and



Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to ensure that the program can continue supporting conservation and recreation in communities across the country. Since its creation, LWCF has supported more than 600 projects for parks, trails and other outdoor spaces in Washington, including popular sites like Olympic National Park, Lake Chelan, Gas Works Park, and Riverside State Park. In that time, the LWCF has invested \$675 million in Washington's economy.

Additionally, Rep. Kilmer serves as the lead Democrat sponsor of the bipartisan Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 1225), which would take existing government revenue and allocate it to the National Park Service (NPS) to address a \$12 billion maintenance backlog, which has delayed the upkeep of visitor centers, rest stops, trails, campgrounds and transportation infrastructure operated by NPS in Washington state and across the country.

OPA congratulates Rep. Kilmer and commends him on his outstanding efforts on behalf of our national parks.



nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/wilderness-permits.htm

Elwha Road Planning Pushes Ahead

by Tim McNulty

In March, conservationists met with Olympic National Park and Federal Highways Administration staff to discuss planning for Elwha (Olympic Hot Springs) road reconstruction. A succession of winter floods washed out the Elwha River road not far from the park boundary. Motorized access is now shut off to the Elwha Ranger Station, trailheads maintenance area, historic CCC Camp, mule corral, and interpretive exhibits at the Glines Canyon Dam spillway.

Earlier, in December, the National Park Service requested public comment on three preliminary alternatives for restoring road access to the Elwha Valley: (1) no action, (2) elevating and bridging the existing road 10 feet, and (3) building a one-mile bypass road.

Representatives from OPA, National Park Conservation Association, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, Olympic Forest Coalition, and North Cascades Conservation Council visited the site of the washout on the Elwha River and were briefed on road reconstruction concept and design. The new one-mile road would be located along the forested toe-slope east of the floodplain and existing road.

While supporting restored access to the Elwha Valley, OPA and other groups expressed concern over fast-tracking this major project with a brief environmental assessment (EA). (See "Fast-track Elwha Road Project Shortcuts Public Participation and Environmental Review" in the Winter, 2019 *Voice*.) New road construction will cut a one-mile corridor through mature and old-growth forest. A park survey identified some 42 large-diameter trees (2.5 to 6-foot) potentially suitable for federally threatened marbled murrelet nesting that stand along the potential road corridor.

We requested the park conduct a comprehensive study and public review through an environmental impact statement (EIS) before undertaking this project. This is particularly necessary under draconian Trump-administration restraints on National Park Service environmental planning and review.

In a March 10 letter to the Olympic National Park, OPA wrote:

"OPA considers an environmental assessment



South end of Pioneer Road. Photo by Russell Dalton

(EA) with its limited six-month timeframe and 75-page limit (as specified by the deregulatory Secretarial Order 3355) inadequate to review and assess the environmental impacts of a project of this size and scope... Information regarding the nature of the clay soils involved, the number of old-growth and potential marbled murrelet habitat trees in the possible clearing corridor, and the scale of structures such as the retaining wall at Sanders Fork... require full analysis and consideration in an EIS."

As of this writing, there is no indication the park service will accede to our request. A draft EA is due soon.

OPA will continue to engage in the planning process. We will make a case for a modest, scaled-down, low-speed bypass road consistent with the existing Olympic Hot Springs Road. Particularly, we ask that planners:

- reduce the paved surface width from 26 feet to 20-22 feet;
- conform the road as close to natural slope contours as possible;
- reduce cuts and fills and incorporate structures to preserve as much of the surrounding forest as possible; and take other measures to lessen impacts to park resources.

To review our comment letter and stay informed on this important planning process, check OPA's website at olympicparkassociates.org.

Spring Flowers: Learning the Names

by John Bridge
Secretary, Olympic Park Associates

Spring is the best time to start learning to identify wild flowers because there are not as many at first. You can learn the first one that blooms and then a week later there's another one and then another and it keeps going like that all year long. It is much easier than going to an alpine meadow in the summer and being overwhelmed with dozens to identify and remember all at once.

In my Sequim neighborhood, Spring starts in February with the bright green leaves and the dangling, sweet smelling white flowers of Indian Plum. I think it smells sweet, but some books describe the smell as something between watermelon rind and cat urine. Maybe it smells good to me because I equate the smell as the end of winter and the beginning of Spring.

This is when I start looking for Fawn Lily leaves, Trilliums and Coltsfoot and know that their flowers will be followed by Yellow Violets, Calypso Orchids and then many others throughout the flowering year.

In his 1987 book, *The Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin writes about an Australian Aboriginal creation myth that tells of a legendary totemic being who wandered over the continent and sang out the names of plants and animals as he went. As he said their names, they were created. I think that naming flowers when you see them creates them because now you know that one is not just "the little yellow one," but a specific one that is different from all the other little yellow ones.

Learning the names of flowers enables you to understand the world at a richer level. Once you can identify and name a flower, then you can tell where



Mountain boxwood



Oregon grape

These flowers were in bloom in April at mile fifteen on the Dungeness River:

- **Calypso Orchid** *Calypso bulbosa*
- **Red-flowering Currant** *Ribes sanguineum*
- **Indian Plum** *Oemleria cerasiformis*
- **Western Trillium** *Trillium ovatum*
- **Salmonberry** *Rubus spectabilis*
- **Scouler's Valerian** *Valerian a scouleri*
- **Palmate Coltsfoot** *Petasites frigidus*
- **Oregon Boxwood** *Paxistima myrsinites*
- **Beaked Hazelnut** (had catkins) *Corylus cornuta*
- **Thimbleberry** *Rubus parviflorus*
- **Trailing Evergreen Violet** *Viola sempervirens*
- **Chocolate Lily** *Fritillaria biflora*
- **Seablush** *Plectritis congesta*
- **Desert Parsley** *Lomatium utriculatum*
- **Oregon Grape** *Mahonia aquifolium*
- **Small-flowered Blue-eyed Mary** *Collinsia parviflora*

it fits in with other flowers, which ones it blooms before and after, and which ones grow nearby, which ones grow in river bottoms and which ones grow on Rocky Mountain ridges. How it was used by native people. What are the special things about it – things like, as Daniel Matthews writes in his natural history books, there are male and female Indian Plum plants and that you can tell the difference because the males have 15 stamens and the females have none.

The books that I use most often to identify flowers are *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast* by Polar and MacKinnon and *Natural History of the Pacific Northwest Mountains* by Daniel Matthews. Both of these books are organized by flower families. I also use *Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest* by Turner and Gustafson, which is organized by flower color.

Fallout From The Shutdown

by Jason Bauscher

Overflowing trash cans. Joshua trees chopped down. Emergencies with no National Park Service first responders. New stories of these incidents in national parks during this shutdown were reported daily.

Thankfully, this was not the picture in Olympic National Park during the federal shutdown. Damage was inflicted more on what did **not** happen, both in the protection of winter wilderness and in the stoking of local economies. The financial numbers are still being counted to quantify economic damages to the United States, but personal stories show how all those numbers point to real people in real jobs where the real customers did not show up because they could not safely access places like Hurricane Ridge.

Olympic Park Associates made a brief survey of the accessible trailheads in the northern section of the park in mid-January. People had left uncovered piles



of feces around some privies, some garbage receptacles were full, and most wilderness permit boxes were empty. Most parking lots were over half full, and vehicles bore license plates from states in every region of the United States.

Wilderness is the relationship of wilder-people and wildest places. Information links those people to places, and that link was broken by the shutdown. The National Park Service was able to provide some of this information on the NPS website and on the winter conditions phone recording, as well as by rangers sharing information while on patrol. This keeps people safer, saves time and money, and protects the wildness of wilderness.

Administrative connections like these protect Olympic National Park, in the words of the Wilderness Act of 1964, "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character."



Chalet

Continued from P. 1

Trusts for Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Olympians of Aberdeen, and other preservation devotees are doggedly arguing for another move, this time to a lovely undisturbed camping area among a grove of trees, four times farther away than the previous move. They claim this would save the building "indefinitely." That's an unlikely prospect. A geological study completed by the Park Service found the remaining river terrace will be washed away by the river in 10 to 20 years.

OPA is convinced that another attempt to move the chalet an imprudent, costly, and destructive proposal. It would require motorized use, tree-

cutting, grading, and disruption of one the Enchanted Valley's most scenic camping areas. All are unacceptable in wilderness. The National Historic Preservation Act requires only that agencies document historic structures before removing them.

It's time to let the Enchanted Valley return to its untrammelled wilderness condition.

Please contact the Park Service and your political representatives. Ask that the chalet be removed as quickly and expediently as possible.

The plan could be released in June. To comment on the plan, go to Olympic National Park's planning page; click on "The Final Disposition of the Enchanted Valley Chalet." Check our web page, olympicparkassociates.org, for links and updates.

Olympic Forest Collaborative Seeks Ecological Solutions to Forest Management

The Olympic Forest Collaborative, a partnership between timber and conservation interests initiated by Rep. Derek Kilmer, is helping to increase both timber harvest and aquatic restoration projects on Olympic National Forest through a consensus-based approach. OPA is a sponsoring organization for the collaborative.



olympicforestcollaborative.org

Over the last three years, the collaborative has worked across the Olympic Peninsula assisting Olympic National Forest with preparing commercial thinning timber sales to help meet their timber targets, fund habitat and aquatic restoration objectives, and host public meetings around the peninsula. OPA participated in a recent public meeting in Forks.

The collaborative has successfully developed two pilot Habitat Restoration Thinning Stewardship projects (H to Z and Big Stewardship). These provided a unique opportunity to design restoration thinning sales that yielded timber volume while restoring fish and wildlife habitat on the forest. An added benefit is that stewardship sale receipts stay on the Olympic National Forest to fund restoration

projects, such as replacement of a large failing culvert on Vance Creek in the Skokomish watershed.

"This process has created a pathway for forest management that will improve habitat conditions in the forests and streams on the Olympic Peninsula for a range of species," said Olympic Forest Coalition Board Member and Collaborative member Jill Silver. "Currently, there are thousands of acres of dense, structurally simple forest on the Olympic National Forest that

provide poor habitat. Increasing the amount of carefully designed, habitat restoration thinning treatments in these types of forests will improve diversity and accelerate the development of more complex, older forest conditions."

Over the past year, the Olympic Collaborative has worked closely with the University of Washington's Olympic Natural Resources Center (ONRC) based in Forks to improve their public outreach on the Olympic Peninsula. The ONRC has also contributed significantly to the collaborative's efforts to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation protocol for collaborative projects on the Olympic National Forest.

ONP Fire Management Plan: Recognizing Wildfire's Role in the Ecosystem

Olympic National Park's draft Fire Management Plan was released in March. Its preferred alternative (B) is a comprehensive and well-reasoned approach to fire management and will restore the ecological role wildfire has historically played in park ecosystems. When finalized, the plan should set a standard for the Park Service nationwide.

The new plan is necessary and timely. The 2005 fire plan failed to adequately address issues such as the onset of global warming, changes in natural fire regimes leading to more frequent and extensive fires over the past decade, and changes in NPS wildland fire policy.

OPA supports the plan's stated goals of public and firefighter safety; restoring the role of natural fire to forest ecosystems; protecting

resources; managing fire "to preserve the tangible and intangible qualities of wilderness character"; and reducing fuel near non-wilderness structures.

We applaud the plan's designation of wilderness and non-wilderness fire management units. These are major improvements over the earlier plan.

We disagree, however, with a provision in the draft plan that would allow preemptive clearing -- including cutting trees up to 16 inches in diameter to a distance of up to 30



Olympic NP firefighters in LaGrande, OR. NPS photo

feet -- around structures in wilderness. Decisions like these, that would degrade wilderness character, must be made in a comprehensive Wilderness Management Plan and be subject to public review. Until that plan is complete, this provision should be dropped from the final plan.

To review the draft fire plan, go to: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=73763>.

Comments closed April 24.

To read OPA's comment letter on the plan, go to olympiparkassociates.org.



Voice of the Wild Olympics

Amy Youngblood, **Editor**

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