# VOICE of the WILD OLYMPICS

Olympic Park Associates

Founded in 1948



Volume 28 Number 1 Winter 2020



Unprotected forest, Dungeness River trail, included in Wild Olympics bill.

# Wild Olympics Bill is Passed out of Key House Committee

The Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act took another important step toward passage last December. H.R. 2642 was voted out of the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee.

As readers know, OPA and a broad coalition have been organizing for this important legislation for more than a decade. The current version of the bill was reintroduced by Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Derek Kilmer in May. It would permanently protect more than 126,500 acres of Olympic National Forest as wilderness and designate 19 rivers and their major tributaries -- a total of 464 river miles -- as Wild and Scenic Rivers, the first in the Olympics.

The Wild Olympics Campaign released a brief new video featuring prominent local champions to celebrate this milestone. OPA vice president Tim McNulty is featured along with stunning videography by OPA trustee John Gussman. To view it go to https://vimeo.com/374404086 or visit olympicparkassociates.org.

The Wild Olympics Campaign worked with Sen. Murray and Rep. Kilmer to gather extensive community input on the Olympic Peninsula and craft the carefully balanced legislation. It would permanently protect ancient and mature forests, critical salmon habitat, and sources of clean drinking water for

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OPA Meetings

Next: January 28 at 6:00pm (conference call)

Upcoming: March 24 at 6:00pm, Kingston Cove Yacht Club, 25815

Washington Blvd NE, Kingston 98346

May 26 at 6:00pm, Kingston Cove Yacht Club

September 20 at 10:00am, Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151

West Hendrickson Road, Sequim 98382

November 18 at 6:00pm Kingston Cove Yacht Club

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

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

#### Seattle 206-553-5545 www.murray.senate.gov

154 Russell SOB

DC 202-224-2621

Sen. Patty Murray (D)

### US House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515

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2 Rick Larsen (D)

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### VOICE OF THE WILD **OLYMPICS**

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# Olympic National Park and Its Sea Partner Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary

The waters of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary lap, or roar, upon the shores of Olympic National Park's ocean strip. Marbled Murrelets fly from their nests to feed their young with fish from the offshore waters of the Olympic Marine

Sanctuary. Nearly year around, salmon come from the Pacific Ocean to spawn by returning to the rivers in the Park from which they emerged. Birds that breed in the Arctic fly the Pacific Flyway, spring and fall, along the Olympic coast.

As we increasingly understand how nature functions on earth, our interest in the Olympic National Park's ecosystem necessarily must expand. OPA's purpose is

"To protect the wilderness and ecological integrity of

Olympic National Park and the Olympic ecosystem." We've come to understand that to protect the ecological integrity of the Park, we must also be vigilant about what happens around it in an ever-expanding sphere. Olympic National Forest, the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuges, and even the Alaskan Arctic provide significant natural influences on the Park.

In the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, 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." The historical training was much more benign than what is being asked in this EIS. Now it includes "asking for extension of a NOAA permit for 'incidental takes of marine mammals ... and incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine species."

As stated in NOAA's website, "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 shortand long-term changes." Because of its closeness to a wilderness Park, OPA argues the Sanctuary has a unique position to be a scientific test tube for understanding the natural interaction of sea and

Photos by John Gussman land. Preserved untrammeled,

it provides a laboratory for gathering scientific information valuable to this and future generations. However, activities requiring permits for "incidental takes of marine mammals ... and incidental takes of threatened and endangered marine species," would seem to nullify this ability.

OPA argues extra effort should be used to protect these places for future generations. Olympic Park Associates doesn't want the 7 years under this Navy plan 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.

Current weather-breaking records and the acidification of the sea is telling us that our knowledge of natural process will be important to us and our future generations.

OPA will be asking for your help as the Navy's plans progress and permits are required from NOAA.

## 1949-2019: Olympic Park Associates

## 2020 and beyond: Olympic Park Advocates

Olympic Park Associates' Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution at the 2019 Annual Meeting to change the corporation's name to "Olympic Park Advocates." The change will take effect later in 2020. The trustees believe this name change will better represent the organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

Olympic Park Associates was formed in 1948 by Irving Clark and "associates" of other environmental organizations. According to the Articles of Incorporation still on file with the Secretary of State, the corporation was created on January 3, 1949, to exist in perpetuity (may it be so!). The nine original trustees and signers of the Articles were (1) Gertrude G. Barr of the Seattle Federation of Women's Clubs; (2) Irving M. Clark of the Mountaineers; (3) Leo Gallagher of Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs; (4) J. Griswold of Washington Alpine Club; (5) H.W. Higman of Seattle Audubon Society; (6) Ellsworth D. Lumley of Emergency Conservation Committees of New York; (7) John Osseward of Northwest Conservation League; (8) Mary T. Pelly of Seattle Garden Club; and (9) Arthur R. Winder of Mountaineers.

All of these founding trustees have passed away, but their mission lives on through the current trustees listed on page 2 of this newsletter. In the words adopted by current trustees, OPA is a "citizens conservation organization working to protect the beauty, integrity and biological diversity of Olympic National Park and the Olympic ecosystem."

Unlike the founding trustees, current trustees share their talents from a variety of activist and non-activist backgrounds. Whereas those founders were associates from critical environmental organizations who converged upon Olympic National Park, current trustees emerge from a variety of backgrounds as advocates for Olympic National Park and the Olympic ecosystem. Trustee geography also differs: Whereas Seattle was the nucleus for the associates, the Olympic Peninsula and nearby cities outside of Seattle have emerged as the nucleus for advocates.

Trustees will plan the rollout of the name change alongside official administrative actions in 2020. Despite our new threats intensified by the exigency of climate change exemplified by the loss of Olympic glaciers, the mission of our organization now is the same as it was over 70 years ago.

## Olympic Park Associates Board of Trustees 2019 - 2020

OPA maintains a strong board of trustees representing a depth of knowledge and history of advocacy for Olympic National Park.

Donna Osseward continues as president of the board in partnership with John Bridge in a new position as Board Chair. Tim McNulty maintains his critical role as vice president and general sage on all things Olympics. Jason Bausher has accepted the position of secretary of the board, bringing on-the-ground knowledge of the park from his years working as a park ranger. Annie Cubberly will serve as treasurer. Annie brings with her experience in nonprofit management. We are grateful that Paul Robisch will continue in his role as membership chair.

Renewing trustees include David Friedman, John Gussman, Rob Smith, Tom Bihn, Dan Lieberman, and Gordon Hempton.

Many thanks to Sally Soest for her years of producing the *Voice* and welcome to Amy Youngblood who has ably taken on the job. Thanks to Tom Bihn for his years as treasurer and Llyn De Danaan for her savvy contributions to the board over the last few years.



John Bridge on the Glines Canyon Dam overlook . Photo by Brian Berg

**Board Chair John Bridge** has been a trustee for eight years and is the new board chair officer. He is an avid hiker who has lived in Sequim since 1972 while working at the Battelle Marine Research Laboratory and then as a fourth-grade teacher before retiring to hike in the Olympics full time. He is on the board of the Sequim Education Foundation, leads wildflower hikes for the Dungeness River Audubon Center and is excited about the future of OPA.

## **Attorney General Bob Ferguson Receives OPA Conservation Award**

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson is an outstanding and effective defender of our state's environment. His team has won more than a dozen convictions for crimes against the environment, and more than half of the 32 lawsuits he filed against the Trump administration involve defending environmental protections. He recently brought suit against the U.S. Navy for conducting its Whidbey Island EA-18G Growler jet operations in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.



Attorney General Bob Ferguson and OPA trustees Rob Smith, Sally Soest, Donna Osseward and Tim McNulty.

In August 2018, Ferguson led a three-day hike from Rialto Beach to Lake Ozette to protest the Trump administration's plans to lease areas off the Olympic Coast to oil exploration and drilling. Honoring the history of environmental activism in the Olympics, Ferguson scheduled the hike 60 years to the day after U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O.

"Passion for the outdoors is a tradition in Washington. We have a responsibility not only to honor that heritage, but to continue working to protect our wild places for future generations."

--Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson

Douglas led another epic hike along this same 22-mile section of coast. That earlier hike was to protest and draw attention to the federal government's plans to build a coastal highway. Past OPA president Polly Dyer organized that hike. Current OPA president Donna Osseward, who joined the hike as a teenager, consulted with Ferguson on the 2018 hike and was honored at the pre-hike celebration at Rialto Beach.

In October, OPA presented a special conservation award to Bob Ferguson in appreciation of his ongoing efforts to protect the Olympic Coast from offshore oil drilling. OPA President Donna Osseward, Vice President Tim McNulty, and Trustees Rob Smith and Sally Soest presented Ferguson with a framed print of a portrait of William O. Douglas, his craggy visage drawn as a topographical map.

Thank you again, Mr. Attorney General Ferguson, for championing this very special place.

## Where are the members of the Olympic Park Associates?

The objective of OPA is very specific: *To protect the wilderness and integrity of Olympic National Park and the Olympic ecosystem.* Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to expect the overwhelming majority of its membership to be from the Olympic Peninsula. However, the zip codes of its membership reveal a significantly wider geographic composition.

Less than a third (27.7% to be exact) of OPA's members have the 983xx zip code for the Olympic Peninsula, whereas almost 60% of OPA's members have a Puget Sound area zip code. Specifically, 38.8% are from Metro-Seattle (980xx and 981xx), and 16.9% are from the rest of the Puget Sound area (982xx, 984xx, and 985xx) for a total of 58.7%. The rest of Washington State (986xx, 988xx, and 992xx)

comes in at 1.5%. In total 84.9% of OPA's members have an address containing Washington State's zip codes.

The remaining 15.1% of OPA membership is widely spread among 11 states (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, and Wisconsin) plus 1 Canadian province (British Columbia).

In addition to the above areas, issues of *Voice of the Wild Olympics*, OPA's informative publication, are mailed to addresses in Michigan, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia. This wide geographic distribution of its membership and news publication means that OPA, instead of being solely a local Olympic Peninsula organization, actually touches three oceans: the Atlantic, the Arctic, and the Pacific.

## Goat removal can mean return of native flora

By John Bridge

I have been fortunate to climb many Olympic peaks -- fortunate to be able to do this physically and fortunate to be able to see the plants and animals that are only found there.

Piper's Bluebell and Flett's Violet, beautiful, fragile flowers found only in the Olympic Mountains, make you wonder how they survive in this harsh environment, blasted by fierce winds and freezing temperatures in winter and then exposed to blazing sunshine during the summer.

This is where you will also find mountain goats, magnificent animals that thrill visitors with their ability to climb around on near vertical rocks.

They are well adapted to the peaks, but the Olympic peaks are not adapted to them. They were introduced by some Port Angeles hunters a hundred years ago and they have flourished -



Photo by John Bridge

the goats, that is, not the plants. These introduced animals thrived and multiplied in an environment with few enemies and greatly impacted the native flora.

OPA has called for the removal of these nonnative animals since the mid-1970s. Olympic National Park just completed the second year of

a three-year program to do just that. In 2019, 122 goats were removed, which brought the total removed to 326. Almost all of them were relocated to good goat habitat in the Cascade Mountains.

This year we will see an additional number of goats removed. It will be interesting to see how the native alpine flora recovers. To read more about this and see a video of the goat capture operation go to our website at https:// olympicparkassociates.org/.



Piper's Bluebells are fragile alpine plants that goats damage. Photo by John Bridge



Removal has been a remarkable success. Photo by John Gussman

## Olympic Marmots whistle while they play

No alpine trip in the Olympic Mountains is complete without seeing or hearing an Olympic Marmot. Their distinctive piercing whistle signals your arrival in the high country and you immediately search for the whistler. Seeing them high up on the slope relaxes tired muscles as you are rewarded with what you came for.

Olympic National Park has organized a citizen scientist marmot

monitoring program since 2011. It has shown that the occupancy rate has remained relatively stable in that time. In 2018 there were 84 volunteers in 28 groups that spent from one to eight days in the field.

For more information on this program go to <a href="https://www.nps.gov/olym/learn/nature/2018-marmot-monitoring-results.htm">https://www.nps.gov/olym/learn/nature/2018-marmot-monitoring-results.htm</a>.



Photo by John Gussman

Endemic to the Olympics and adapted to year-round life in the high meadows, these creatures embody the beauty and uniqueness of this spectacular range. OPA trustee John Gussman captures the playful intensity of these bright, gregarious, and outspoken dwellers of the Olympic alpine in a short video, "Whistleblowers of the Alpine." Go to <a href="https://vimeo.com/">https://vimeo.com/</a> 367369676.

## OPA protests aquaculture project at mouth of Elwha

In October, OPA protested a plan submitted to the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife to allow commercial aquaculture of steelhead in pens to be located in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. One of these pen structures was planned near the mouth of the Elwha on the Strait.

OPA argues the risk to the environment by

Steelhead pens pose unexamined risks to the environment. Photo by John Gussman

these projects is significant. Therefore, OPA requested that a new environmental impact statement be prepared to further analyze the proposal made by Cooke Aquiculture. This EIS should be based on the years of knowledge gained in the last 30 years. Experience including net pen failures that allowed the escape of Atlantic salmon and large fines for Cooke

Aquaculture.

OPA argues that introducing biologically modified fish species would further endanger native species and add to disease and parasites, along with pollution of Puget Sound and adjoining waters. This is another project outside of Olympic National Park that OPA feels will harm our goal: "To protect the wilderness and ecological integrity of Olympic National Park and the Olympic ecosystem." Good fish depend on a healthy environment. One of the gifts of Olympic National Park is its protection of the natural environment.



Between a River and a Cliff Face: Proposed route for Elwha bypass road. Photo by John Gussman

## Elwha Road Plan Comes Up Short

By Tim McNulty

Olympic National Park released its Olympic Hot Springs (Elwha) Road Environmental Assessment (EA) in November. The plan addresses long-term access to the Elwha valley. Floodwaters shifted the river's course and washed out the existing road. Access to the valley, dam site and trailheads is now limited to hiking, biking, or horseback.

OPA supports the need to restore motorized access to the Elwha valley, but the preferred alternative, a newly constructed one-mile bypass road designed by the Federal Highway Administration, demands too high a price in environmental degradation.

The bypass road is potholed with problems:

- 1. It requires cutting 18 acres of mature and oldgrowth forest, including up to 50 potential marbled murrelet nesting trees. Federally threatened murrelets require large old-growth trees for nesting. The species is in steep decline in Washington due to habitat loss. Neither mitigation nor a current survey was offered.
- 2. The plan also calls for constructing 1,000 or more feet of retaining wall and rock riprap. Much of it will be in or adjacent to the existing river channel where it will take a serious toll on salmon habitat and downstream river dynamics.

OPA requested a complete environmental impact statement (EIS) that would look at long-term access

for the Elwha valley in the face of global warming and frequent floods. An EIS could consider a broader range of options, such as a scaled-down road or all-purpose trail, or some variation of elevated roadway. The largest salmon restoration project in the nation should not be put at risk by a hurried plan and accelerated road construction.

OPA's comment letter outlined four major areas of concern:

- 1. the likelihood of future road washouts downstream of the new bypass road,
- 2. the destructive impacts of up to 1,000 or more feet of retaining wall on recovering salmon habitat and natural river dynamics,
- 3. the lack of a current marbled murrelet survey of the area or mitigation for removal of 18 acres of prime low-elevation old-growth habitat, and
- the Park Service's own admission of a need for further geotechnical testing for slope stability while proceeding with planning and permitting.

The reality of ongoing climate change and increased flooding demands a more thoughtful, long-term look at future access for this valley. The next step should be a detailed environmental impact statement and public review.

You can read OPA's comment letter at olympicparkassociates.org.



Navy Jet Noise Challenged

By Rob Smith Washington

Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a lawsuit last

July against the U.S. Navy for bringing more jet noise to Whidbey Island, including Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, without adequate study of impacts to communities, historic sites, and wildlife. The Navy is planning to increase its fleet of 82 EA-18G "Growler" jets, among the loudest in the world, by at least 36 more. They are all now based near Oak Harbor and use the surrounding region for intensive training every weekday.

Many of the Growlers make a din on certain days over Whidbey, practicing touch-and-go landings in preparation for deployment on aircraft carriers. All of them engage in electronic warfare training over the west side of the Olympic Peninsula throughout the year. Even the Navy likens that noise to hearing a vacuum cleaner or power drill — not what is appropriate for the wilderness in Olympic National Park. Some ground observers record much higher noise levels than those.

The Growlers use transit routes out and back between their Whidbey base and the Olympic training area, passing over Crescent Lake or the North Fork of the Quinault River, and can be heard throughout most of the park, according to the

Navy's own numbers and onthe-ground reports by visitors.

Meanwhile, Sen. Maria Cantwell and Reps. Adam Smith and Rick Larsen have included a requirement in legislation for measuring Navy jet noise over Puget Sound and the Olympics, which the Navy has never done. This will verify what park visitors have experienced and reported: that Growler jet noise seriously degrades the natural experience of the Olympic National Park and many other places throughout the Puget Sound region.

OPA is urging the Navy to move Growler jet training to less noise-sensitive areas so that natural sounds can once again be the experience of special areas such as Olympic's Hoh Rain Forest, deemed one of the quietest places in America. Encourage Sen. Cantwell and Reps. Larsen and Smith to keep working to protect Olympic National Park's natural sounds for future generations.

## Wild Olympics Bill Continued from P. 1

local communities, while also protecting and expanding world-class outdoor recreation opportunities. Treasured roadless areas such as: Middle Dungeness, Lower Gray Wolf, Deer Ridge, Mount Townsend North, South Fork Skokomish, South Quinault Ridge, Rugged Ridge, and other areas will be permanently protected.

The committee vote rode a wave of support from over 100 new endorsements by Olympic Peninsula Tribes, local elected officials, sportsmen groups, and businesses, bringing the total of endorsing groups to more than 800.

Rep. Kilmer called the bill a win-win for our region. "In addition to protecting recreational access and

supporting our outdoor economy, this bill will also bolster our region's efforts to protect sources of clean drinking water, support critical salmon and steelhead habitat, and protect key waterways that are vital to the shellfish industry," he wrote to constituents following the committee vote. "Our region's future depends on building a strong and diversified economy. That's why this bill is so important."

The legislation now awaits a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and a hearing in the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

For more information go to olympicparkassociates.org or visit the Wild Olympics website at https://www.wildolympics.org.



## Voice of the Wild Olympics Amy Youngblood, Editor

Olympic Park Associates PO Box 27560 Seattle, WA 98165-2560

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