



Olympic National Park, Superintendent
600 East Park Ave.
Port Angeles, WA

September 7, 2022

Dear Superintendent Jacobs,

Welcome to Olympic! We hope you come to love this place as much as we all do. We're resending this letter which was sent to acting superintendent Taylor this spring as we're still very interested in working with the park to make progress on mitigating and adapting to climate change. We hope you'll be able to be a leader in this urgent need.

On behalf of Olympic Climate Action, Olympic Park Advocates and the National Parks Conservation Association we're writing to urge action and offer encouragement and assistance in whatever ways we can to move Olympic National Park's 2009 Climate Action Plan and subsequent NPS climate change goals forward. To become a Climate Friendly Park (CFP), over 140 parks did carbon inventories, held public workshops and developed greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction plans. Olympic completed those steps in 2009 and the CFP designation was advertised and touted in park interpretive programs and park publications until told to remove references to the program. We were glad to see that interpretive staff continued to address climate change and its impacts on park resources in staff training, exhibits and public programs straight through to the present.

The 2009 Olympic Climate Action plan's stated goal of decreasing the park's carbon emissions 30% below a 2006 baseline by 2016 was an admirable goal and similar to that of other CFP parks. In fact, Mount Rainier proudly notes accomplishing a similar goal on their website. The 2010 NPS Climate Change Response Strategy, 2011 Call to Action and NPS Green Parks Plan also had admirable goals to reduce most GHG emissions 35% from 2008 baselines by 2020, lining out emphasis areas like: greening the fleet, making buildings more efficient, prioritizing the use of renewable energy, etc. Now the Biden administration has set even more ambitious goals for federal agencies for Zero Emission Vehicles and a 65 percent reduction by 2030 for federal operations.

With no follow up GHG inventories it's difficult to assess progress, but it seems a safe assumption that most parks did not meet those early goals, including Olympic. We applaud any efforts to increase efficiency and reduce GHG emissions thus far. But given the ambitious Biden targets and the increasingly severe impacts of climate disruption on park resources and facilities, as well as visitor and staff safety and experiences, we're hoping more aggressive action and clear climate leadership internally and in partnership with Olympic Peninsula communities is coming.

Since transportation accounts for the majority of the park's emissions for both the visiting public and internal operations, the infrastructure plan and the Biden administration's stated goals should help with low-hanging fruit like acquiring or leasing more EV/hybrid fleet vehicles and installing charging stations

at outlying areas so frequent drivers like fees, trades, and protection staff can charge. We applaud the progress on an experimental shuttle partnership with Clallam Transit and movement to bring in a temporary transportation planner. The shuttle should help reduce congestion and vehicle miles traveled on the Hurricane corridor if it can be sustained.

We've had discussions about the relatively new practice of plowing the Obstruction Point and Hurricane Hill Roads in April with its peak snowpack and even new snow at times. Waiting until May or June, so the sun and season can do much of the work for free, as was done for decades, would save wear and tear on equipment, reduce carbon emissions and be safer for visitors and possibly operators. Plowing those roads early eliminates spring skiing opportunities for the growing backcountry skiing community, and invites summer visitors to trails that may still require winter travel and route-finding skills and, in the case of Badger Valley, ice-ax skills. Taking a more preventative SAR approach by moving plowing operations 4-6 weeks later would be a win-win for the atmosphere and safety.

We hope that facilities are being retrofitted to increase energy efficiency in lighting, space heating, hot water (heat pump water heaters or at least on-demand), insulation, etc. Simple things could include employee-requested clothes lines at park housing areas, or more widely installed motion-detecting lighting, especially in facilities with reduced off-season use like campground restrooms. And in the region's sunny summers, photovoltaic and solar hot water could help meet renewable energy goals where south-facing roofs like those at in the headquarters maintenance yard exist.

Regional communities, including Clallam County, Port Angeles, Port Townsend and Jefferson County are doing their own greenhouse gas emission inventories and developing or have developed climate action plans. All also identified transportation as their greatest emissions sector and thus hope to partner across the region and with the national park and forest on transportation planning and EV networks. Since DC fast chargers can charge EVs in a matter of minutes, traveling even on the remote Peninsula is increasingly doable. Currently the only chargers in park were installed years ago at concessions at Lake Crescent Lodge, Sol Duc, and Kalaloch. We hope that the park has shovel-ready plans to install internal and external EV charging infrastructure at grid-tied park sites.

Our three groups include thousands of enthusiastic and informed members who would love to help the NPS and Olympic make progress on mitigating the impacts of and adapting to the existential threat of climate change. Just like park professionals, we all treasure the amazing resources being impacted: the marine ecosystems suffering from ocean acidification and warming; the forests under attack from non-native pests and other stressors exacerbated by climate change; the disappearing iconic glaciers whose meltwater nurtures cold-water loving fish; the decreasing snowpack and summer water supply, etc. We also care about our neighbors and communities and hope we can work together to address the challenges facing us all.

Representatives of our groups would like to meet with you for brainstorming and any updates on this critical challenge.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ed Bowlby and Tony Billera, Co-chairs, Olympic Climate Action

/s/ Rob Smith, Northwest Regional Director, National Parks Conservation Association

/s/ John Bridge, President, Olympic Park Advocates