



Forest Service Roadless Area Proposal

Falls Short

by Tim McNulty

In May the Forest Service released its draft environmental impact statement for protecting 44 million acres of roadless areas nationwide. Announced with fanfare by President Clinton last October, the roadless area initiative promised long-term protection for "some of the last, best, unprotected wildland anywhere in our nation."

OPA and other environmental groups have sought protection for many of these areas for decades. National Forest roadless areas provide sources of clean water, and opportunities for recreation and solitude, as well as critical fish and wildlife habitat and refuges for threatened and endangered species. They form a network of biodiversity reserves and provide natural laboratories for scientific study.

But the Forest Service's proposed rule fails to offer the kind of protection Clinton promised last fall.

OPA and other environmental organizations requested a full ban on all environmentally damaging activities, including road construction, logging, mining, and off-road vehicle use on all roadless lands greater than 1000 acres. But the proposed rule prohibits only road building, and that with several exceptions. Logging by helicopter remains a permitted use, as do mining, grazing, and destructive off-road vehicle use. The draft plan leaves these important issues up to the local forests to decide during their next round of forest planning. (For Olympic National Forest, that will be in 2005.) Also, it puts off any decision regulating roadless areas in Alaska's Tongass National Forest until 2004.

A particular shortfall in the draft EIS is the omission of non-inventoried roadless areas. These are roadless lands that for a variety of reasons were not included in the Forest Service's RARE II review. In Olympic National Forest, the Pacific Biodiversity Institute has inventoried 157,705 acres of roadless lands not including designated Wilderness areas. This is nearly twice the 85,600 acres the Forest Service has identified. Management decisions on these uninventoried lands won't be addressed until the 2005 forest plan revision.

In Olympic, this presents less of an immediate threat than in other national forests. Most of Olympic's roadless lands received some level of protection through the 1990 Olympic Forest Plan and Clinton's 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. But in other national forests, particularly east of the Cascades, this is far from the case.

The period for public comment on the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Draft Environmental Impact Statement ends July 17, 2000. Let's help the Forest Service do the right thing.

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Old growth forest, Hamma Hamma Valley, Jefferson Ridge Roadless Area, Olympic National Forest. Photograph by Steve Johnson.

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Roadless

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The Forest Service admits that prohibiting logging from roadless areas is the most beneficial option for protecting fish habitat, water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and threatened and endangered species.

Let's make sure they follow through!

What you can do:

Please write, fax, or email the Forest Service today. Tell them why you value national forest roadless areas.

- Support the proposed ban on road building in inventoried roadless areas. 380,000 miles of roads on national forests (enough to reach to the moon and halfway back) is enough.
Request an immediate ban on logging, mining and off-road vehicle use in all national forest roadless areas greater than 1000 acres.
Make no exceptions for the rich temperate rain forests of Alaska's Tongass National Forest.

Mail your comments to... U.S.D.A. Forest Service—CAET Attention: Roadless Area Conservation Proposed Rule P.O. Box 221090 Salt Lake City, Utah 84122

Fax comments to... 877-703-2494

Email comments using the Forest Service website... <roadless.fs.fed.us>

For a copy of the Draft EIS or summary... Ward Hoffman 360-956-2375.

For additional information visit Washington Wilderness Coalition's website... <www.wawild.org>

Next OPA Board Meetings

Dates: September 27, 2000 October 25, 2000
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Kingston Community Center
A short walk up the hill from the ferry, white building on the right.
Please join us. OPA members are always welcome at Board meetings.
OPA Board meetings generally are in the Kingston Community Center on the 4th Wednesday of odd-numbered months, except no meeting in July.

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Old growth forest, Graywolf River, Olympic National Forest. Photograph by Steve Johnson.

Forest Practices Board Denies Trail Petition

by Polly Dyer

In August 1999 environmental groups petitioned the Forest Practices Board to adopt rules protecting public resources.

The Forest Practices Act of 1974 charges the Washington State Forest Practices Board (FPB) with protecting "forest soils, fisheries, wildlife, water quantity and quality, recreational and scenic beauty" on the 10 million acres of State and privately owned forest land. However, no rules have ever been adopted by the Board that specifically protect recreation and scenic beauty.

To address the failure of the rules to protect recreation and scenic beauty and fish and wildlife, a group of environmental organizations (Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, The Mountaineers, Alpine Lakes Protection Society, Pilchuck Audubon Society, Okanogan Highlands Alliance, and Whidbey Environmental Action Network) represented by Peter Goldman of the Washington Forest Law Center (WFLC) and Todd True of the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, sued the Forest Practices Board in November of 1998, in an effort to get the Court to order the Board to follow its statutory mandate. The court dismissed the case, instructing the petitioners to "exhaust administrative remedies" by presenting their requests directly to the FPB....

As instructed by the Court, two of the organizations, The Mountaineers and the Alpine Lakes Protection Society, filed a Petition for Rulemaking with the Forest Practices Board on August 18, 1999, asking the Board to consider and adopt rules protecting the public resources of recreation and scenic beauty from the harmful impacts of industrial clearcut logging....

(From a brief review, History of the Effort to Initiate Forest Practices Rulemaking Regarding Recreation and Aesthetics, Washington Forest Law Center)

Upon receiving this petition, a subcommittee of the Forest Practices Board (FPB) evaluated the petition. The petitioners furnished extensive analyses about "endangered hiking trails," testimony from respected experts, and a geographic information system (GIS) inventory and analyses of 125 public hiking trails negatively impacted by logging. On the Olympic Peninsula these include the South Fork Hoh River Trail and the Mount Molly Trail located near the Capitol State Forest, both affected by timber cutting on adjacent state land administered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Following a public hearing during its May 10, 2000, meeting, the FPB denied the petition, stating that "a majority of the Board feel that it is not necessary at this time to initiate rulemaking" because (1) the existing rules, coupled with voluntary and cooperative efforts of forest landowners, afford protection; and (2) the "primary focus" of the Board is on salmonid rulemaking.

On June 8, 2000, The Mountaineers and the Alpine Lakes Protection Society filed an appeal of the FPB denial with Governor Locke. The governor has 45 days to respond; i.e. **by July 18**. People concerned about the lack of sensitivity of the FPB to the public's loss of scenic outlooks and aesthetic experiences on public federal trails due to logging on nearby state and private lands may communicate their concerns to Governor Locke.

Since the earlier Court requirement to utilize all administrative avenues was to no avail, a Motion has been filed with the Court of Appeals on behalf of The Mountaineers and the Alpine Lakes Protection Society by the Washington Forest Law Center and Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund.



To express your opinions regarding the Forest Practices Board's lack of sensitivity to the public's loss of scenic outlooks and aesthetic experiences on public federal trails due to logging on nearby state and private lands, write:

Governor Gary Locke
P.O.Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Elwha River Restoration Begins

by Polly Dyer

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
 NOTICE OF TERMINATING PROCEEDINGS
 (March 10, 2000)

James River II, Inc. Project No. 588-000
 James River II, Inc. Project No. 2683-003

The above-captioned dockets involve licensing proceedings for the Glines Canyon Project No. 588 and the Elwha Project No. 2683, located on or near the Olympic National Park in Washington State. The Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act, Pub. L. No. 102-495, 106 Stat. 3173 (1992), removed the Commission's jurisdiction to process the applications in these dockets, but left a residual jurisdiction to preserve the status quo. Pursuant to appropriations legislation enacted by Congress in 1999, and a statutory warranty deed dated February 29, 2000, title to the two projects has been transferred to the U.S. Department of the Interior, which now owns and manages the projects. Accordingly, the Commission's jurisdiction over these projects having been fully extinguished, the above-captioned dockets are closed and the proceedings therein are terminated.

David P. Boergers
 Secretary

This gratifying document is the final step preventing licensing the dams on the Elwha River.

The Elwha Restoration Project Office of Olympic National Park is now open at 826 East Front St., Port Angeles, Washington. Heading up this office is Brian Winter, Project Manager. Brian knows the Elwha River well. Beginning in 1985 he was the fishery biologist for the Lower Klallam Elwha Tribe, whose Reservation is on the lower reaches of the Elwha River. Winter joined the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in 1988. His position involved the evaluation of hydropower licensing of dams, and he was immediately assigned to the Elwha, as well as the Lake Cushman, White River, and other projects up for relicensing. In connection with the Elwha River, FERC was in the process of both relicensing the Glines Canyon dam (within Olympic National Park) and the initial licensing of the Lower Elwha Dam (built in the early 1900s prior to licensing requirements). As a scientist Brian Winter played an important role as the environmental impact studies proceeded and as political support was sought for the implementation of the 1992 Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act. In 1994 Winter joined the staff of Olympic National Park.

In a recent interview with Brian Winter he shared information on the current status of the Elwha restoration and on what may be ahead. As directed by the Secretary of Interior, the Glines Canyon and Lower Elwha dams are currently operating to produce hydroelectric power, under the auspices of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). Leading the BOR's role is Rick Parker, a hydropower manager by training, with experience at Grand Coulee, who oversees the foreman, Ron Lien, at the hydro-power plants on the Elwha. Lien has a six-per-

son crew. Parker also coordinates BOR's activities as it helps with dam removal, water quality, and sediment management.

Winter said the dams will be operated for electric power production "until something breaks that is costly to fix, or until you start taking out the dams, or some other political decision comes down." Dam removal is anticipated to begin in four years.

The Elwha Restoration Project office is operating with an allocation of \$2,000,000 from the National Park Service's planning and construction budget. For planning towards river restoration, Congress appropriated \$22,000,000.

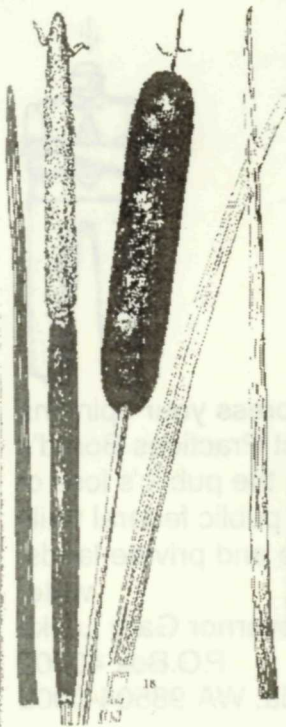
Protecting Port Angeles Water Supply

A major first step is to ensure that dam removal does not adversely affect water quality for the City of Port Angeles and others. Winter said the "biggest challenge is reaching agreement with the City of Port Angeles on how to protect the municipal and industrial water supplies from 'the potential adverse impact of dam removal'" (as required in Section 4 of the Elwha Act.). However, it is the Secretary of the Interior who will determine those actions that are 'reasonably necessary'.

In a separate concern, completely unrelated to dam removal, the Washington Department of Health has determined that the quality of the ground water used by the City of Port Angeles as its primary source is being affected by surface water. That is to say, the groundwater drawn from a depth of 50 to 60 feet and close to the Elwha River results in surface water mixing with the ground water. Thus, the Dept. of Health has advised Port Angeles that the criteria for treatment of surface water must also be applied to the mixture of the ground water with the surface water. The Health Department is requiring Port Angeles to develop a solution in eighteen months.

In addition to protecting Port Angeles' water quality, three broad based implementation groups will address issues consistent with the Environmental Assessment. The three parallel programs either are underway or soon will be. Each includes representatives from the federal, state, and tribal entities. According to Winter, "Their tasks are to review the current plans, update as necessary, and implement them within the existing budget" (after accounting

Continued on P. 5, Elwha.



Elwha, continued from P. 4.

for inflation since 1995). The National Park Service maintains overall control. The three groups are:

Fisheries: The Fisheries Group "is up and running." They are consulting with NMFS and following its procedures for complying with requirements for endangered species. The Elwha River Chinook Salmon are part of the South Puget Sound Chinook. Recently, Matt Longenbaugh, with NMFS, spoke to Olympic National Park, Bureau of Reclamation, the "water purveyors" (City of Port Angeles, Dry Creek Water Association), Elwha Homeowners Association, the Lower Elwha Tribe, and regulatory agencies. He outlined for them how his agency will interact with the restoration project.

Revegetation: When the reservoirs behind Glines Canyon and Elwha dams are drained, the newly exposed land will be replanted. The Revegetation Group will develop a timetable for raising plants from seed and cuttings in order that they will be ready in four years when dam removal is anticipated. As is the case with revegetation in all national parks, the plants will be indigenous to the area.

Cultural: This project is being developed, but not yet underway.

Olympic National Park Superintendent David Morris has written to the Washington Departments of Ecology and of Health, and to Clallam County, seeking information on how

and when these agencies should be involved in the Elwha Restoration Project.

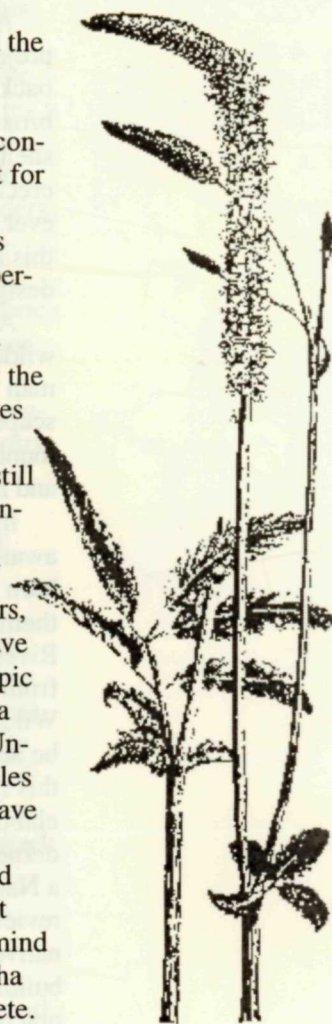
This reporter is confident regarding the good work being done by Brian Winter and the Elwha Restoration project.

The Companies Are Helping

The conservation community had been concerned about maintaining sufficient support for the future Congressional appropriations needed for completion of river and fisheries restoration, once the companies that had operated the dams had received their purchase price of \$29,500,000 as authorized by Congress for federal acquisition of the dams by the Department of Interior. Would the companies [James River II (now Fort James, after its merger with Fort Howard) and Daishowa] still be motivated to assist in securing the remaining Congressional appropriations?

However, thanks to Orville Campbell of Fort James, the companies with their officers, attorneys, and Washington, DC lobbyist, have been meeting with representatives of Olympic Park Associates, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, and Northwest Steelhead and Trout Unlimited, the Elwha Tribe, City of Port Angeles and Clallam County. It is encouraging to have the companies' support.

While it is gratifying that Fort James and Daishowa are working with us, that does not mean we can relax. We must continue to remind our Congressional representatives that Elwha River Restoration funding is not yet complete.



REVIEW: *Shattered Solitude/Eroded Habitat -- The Motorization of the Lands of Lewis and Clark.* By Mark Lawler. Sierra Club, June 2000. 35 pages.

This report is part of the Sierra Club's "campaign to promote, protect, and restore what remains of the wild America experienced nearly two hundred years ago by the Lewis and Clark expedition". It contrasts the 1804 wilderness of Lewis and Clark with what remains in 2000.

Mark Lawler, the author, explains why the study includes the Olympics, obviously not part of the Lewis and Clark route. "[T]he wildlife still remaining in the Olympics, such as the elk herds, salmon runs, etc., and the landscapes such as ancient forests and wild rivers, are similar to what Lewis and Clark saw along their route and are some of the best of what we have left. Hence what we are calling "the lands of Lewis and Clark" is an entire 8-state region.

The back of the report contains tables of trail miles, road miles, and recreation visitor days for Olympic National Forest. Data were compiled primarily from Forest Service publications and offices. For Washington State, the source was *Washington State Trails Plan: Policy and Action Document*, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, Tumwater, WA, June, 1991.

For copies of the study:

Internet (pdf file): <http://www.sierraclub.org/wilderness/WildForest/ORV_report.pdf>
Paper:
Sierra Club NW/AK Office
180 Nickerson Street, Suite 103,
Seattle, WA 98109. Phone 206-378-0114.
E-mail (400 kb): mark.lawler@sierraclub.org

Examples of Data on Olympic National Forest:

Users Per Mile of Trail:
151 Non-motorized users per mile of non-motorized trail

11 Motorized users per mile of motorized trail

Fraction of trails and users that are motorized:

9.2% of trail miles open to motor vehicles,

0.8% of trail users riding motor vehicles



Building Boom Hits Olympic Wilderness

by Tim McNulty

A rash of building and reconstruction projects has hit the Olympic National Park backcountry over the past few years. Under the broad banner of cultural resource management, shelters have been reconstructed and buildings erected that haven't stood since the 70s—or ever. Most troubling is the fact that much of this activity is taking place in congressionally designated wilderness.

According to the 1964 Wilderness Act, “A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is . . . an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man.” More and more at Olympic, that ceases to be the case.

In 1996 Olympic Park Associates became aware of plans to move the Elkhorn shelter and barn 50 yards across a meadow to prevent them from being undermined by the Elwha River. Since Elkhorn is located eleven miles from the trailhead, deep within the Olympic Wilderness, we thought some questions should be addressed. We wondered what precedent this might establish, particularly regarding elaborate measures to save structures in wilderness from natural processes. We requested a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review that would consider a “no action” alternative. This would involve documenting the buildings and letting nature take its course, a practice permitted under the National Historic Preservation Act. Instead, the project was rushed through with an internal environmental assessment, and the buildings were relocated to an area where buildings had never stood.

The next year, a historic renovation of Olympus Guard Station on the Hoh River resulted in construction of a new wood shed. This structure was not a replacement of a historic building (it was modeled after the woodshed at Elkhorn Guard Station). There is strong evidence that such a shed never existed there at all. A 1947 photograph shows no such structure, but a shelter standing at that spot. In his project clearance form, cultural resources division chief Paul Gleeson admitted “[I]t is not clear whether there was a woodshed or fire catch at the station...” but postulated that ranger stations “appear to have storage sheds associated with them.” Again OPA protested, and again the building went up, this time on cement pier blocks and framed with chemically

treated 4x4 lumber.

Since then, “historic” reconstructions in park wilderness have included a new wood shed at Elkhorn Ranger Station (more than a foot taller than the original structure) and the reconstruction of a Quinalt bunk house with barn addition that was tacked on in the 1960s. Present user fee-funded projects include a “historic renovation” of Hays River Ranger Station on the Elwha, a poorly fashioned log building put up by a Student Conservation Corps crew in the late 1960s.

Among projects on the drawing boards are the reconstruction of 21-Mile Shelter on the Bogachiel, a moldering relic that was completely destroyed by snow in 1999, and reconstruction of the North Fork Sol Duc Shelter. This forgotten structure sits on an unused trail that had been abandoned for nearly a quarter century—until last year, that is. That’s when its reopening, through spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat, was carried out by volunteers who had contracted to do the shelter reconstruction.

With four major trail bridges out since the winter storms of 1998-99, including the Dosewallips and Enchanted Valley bridges, miles of trails still degraded, and cutbacks in seasonal ranger and interpretive positions, one has to ask: Why does the National Park Service seem intent on squandering thousands on helicopter-supported reconstructions of insignificant buildings? Clearly, the park’s historic preservation program is out of control. One park biologist admitted that no one in the natural resources division sees applications for historic reconstruction until after they have been sent to the state office of historic preservation and approved. This caused unforeseen problems with the 21-Mile Shelter reconstruction when a state-listed threatened plant species was identified at the site.

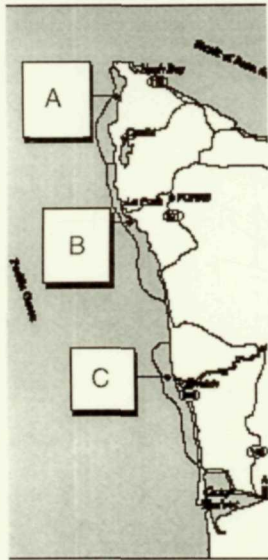
OPA, National Parks and Conservation Association, and Wilderness Watch have raised these issues with National Park Service officials, only to have our concerns dismissed out of hand. In correspondence with OPA, park officials cite the 1916 Organic Act, which directs the service to “preserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects...” in National Parks, the 1906 Antiquities Act, and National

Continued on P. 7, Boom.



Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Washington's Coastal National Wildlife Refuges

by Tim McNulty



- A. Flattery NWR
- B. Quillayute Needles NWR
- C. Copalis NWR

Theodore Roosevelt established the Flattery Rocks, Quillayute Needles, and Copalis National Wildlife Refuges in October, 1907.

They extend for more than 100 miles along the Olympic Peninsula's outer coast. These offshore rocks and islets provide habitat for millions of migratory seabirds. Approximately 80% of Washington's seabirds nest within the refuges. They support twelve species of breeding marine birds, which include storm petrels, cormorants, guillemots, auklets, puffins, and murre. The refuges also provide nesting areas for threatened bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Much of the refuge area is designated wilderness.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has begun the planning process for the coastal refuges. Scoping began this spring. A draft plan with various management alternatives should be released later this year.

Olympic Park Associates has had a long involvement with the Olympic coastal area, working to add the coast to Olympic National Park in the 1950s and to protect it from road building and development. (See related "Loop Road" story, P. 10.) We strongly support the refuges' 1907 mandate to manage the islands as "a preserve and breeding ground for native birds and animals." We also support the directives for management under the National Wilderness Act, which as of 1970 applies to much of the three refuges.

The recent increase in recreational use and ecotourism on the coast makes long-term planning more crucial than ever. OPA has notified the US Fish and Wildlife Service of the following concerns we hope will be addressed in the plan.

1. Overflights (and landings) by low-flying aircraft. With increasing overflights in the coastal area, and with the future development of the Quillayute Air Base for commercial use, low overflights will escalate the existing dis-

turbance and enforcement problems in the refuges. We urge the USFWS to do the following:

- a. Work closely with the FAA and other authorities to identify aircraft involved and to address violations.
- b. Work with Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, to educate the flying community and post regulations.
- c. Prohibit scenic helicopter tours of the refuges.

2. Commercial fishing. Monitor the incidental take of non-targeted species by commercial fishers operating in refuge waters. Birds and forage fish may be impacted by these activities.

3. Shellfish harvest. Work closely with staff of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and Olympic National Park staff to:

- a. Establish baseline data on intertidal communities.
- b. Establish "no take" zones, representative of the diversity of intertidal habitats.
- c. Monitor trampling in areas open to harvest. Close them if necessary

4. Recreational Boating.

- a. Enforce a minimum 200-yard boat closure around rocks and islands to minimize impact on nesting seabirds.
- b. Educate the recreational boating community, with particular attention to sea kayakers.
- c. Prohibit the use of personal watercraft or jet skis in refuge waters, as has been done in Dungeness NWR.

5. Oil spills. These are by far the greatest threat to our coastal ecosystems.

- a. Support a permanent rescue tug stationed on the coast.
- b. Press for a mandatory "area to be avoided" in the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

OPA will keep our members abreast of developments as the process continues.



Map and photo courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service

To become involved in the planning process, contact:
 Kevin Ryan
 Washington Maritime
 National Wildlife Refuge Complex
 33 South Barr Rd.
 Port Angeles, WA 98382
 360-457-8451

Lake Crescent's Beardslee Trout in Trouble

by Tim McNulty

The Lake Crescent fishing season opened for catch-and-release only in June this year, as concern mounts over the lake's unique Beardslee trout. A genetic study by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has confirmed that Beardslee trout are genetically distinct from any other salmonid. During five snorkel surveys between January and April, surveyors from Washington Trout found only 35 redds of the large fish. With one spawning female accounting for 1.6 to two redds, the group considers this number "critically low."

Beardslee trout, which are found only in Lake Crescent, are famous for their size and vigor. Port Angeles writer and conservationist E.B. Webster called them "the gamest fish in the world" in 1923. Landlocked since landslides created Lake Crescent thousands of years ago, the fish are believed to be a race of Elwha River steelhead that became trapped in the lake. The genetic study neither proved nor disproved that idea.

In a letter to Olympic National Park, Washington Trout recommended a total fishing ban on the lake to protect the remaining Beardslee and Crescenti trout populations. Park managers chose a catch-and-release approach. Fishery biologist John Meyer told the Peninsula

Daily News that the Park based its decision on its own spawning surveys. "We didn't feel [a closure] was necessary," he said. The Park will appoint an independent scientific review panel to examine the data and make further recommendations. A fishing closure on the lake seems likely.

Washington Trout supports the catch-and-release regulations put in place this year, which include a maximum two-ounce weight (to keep bait above spawning-sized Beardslees) and single barbless hooks. But the group believes any fishing can have a significant impact on native fish populations and stresses that more protection is needed.

The situation for Beardslee and Crescenti trout has been compounded in recent years by several factors: a disastrous landslide triggered by Forest Service and State clearcutting on Boundary Creek, which resulted in a \$50,000 habitat mitigation; logging siltation from Piedmont Creek; the Department of Transportation's clearing of trees and brush along the shoreline traversed by Highway 101; and possibly leaching of nitrates from residential developments.

Recommendations from the scientific review panel are due next year.

Volunteers Clear 10 Tons of Trash from Olympic Beaches

Energetic volunteers collected 10 tons of trash from 63 miles of Olympic beaches over the April 29 weekend. The project, conceived and organized by Jan Klippert, involved 359 volunteers, local, state and federal agencies, peninsula businesses and civic groups, Makah and Quileute tribes, and more than a dozen environmental organizations, including Olympic Park Associates.

Four tons of debris went directly to landfills.

Another 6 to 8 tons from more remote sites were cached and will be removed by boat this summer as tides and seas permit access.

Volunteers also recorded data on the kinds of debris they found. Naturalists and oceanographers are using those data to aid in the management of the marine sanctuary and the park.

Buoyed by the project's success, organizers and volunteers are already considering extending the effort to the most remote beaches next year.



University of Washington students at Beach 4.
Photo by Jan Klippert.



Bob Brooks with stash at Shi Shi Beach.
Photo by Carolyn Crockett



Jan Klippert at Ruby Beach.
Photo by Sharon Klippert.

Coastal "Loop Road" Proposal

by Randall Payne

"The three-day hike of August 19th to the 21st by Justice Douglas and his associates along the beach strip from Ozette to LaPush would appear to be the kiss of death as far as the wishes for an ocean front road...."

"... It is a beautiful stretch and should be given to the people for their pleasure, not just to the favored few but to all the people, and the way to do that is build the coastal road we have needed for so many years...."



"[W]e should remember that wilderness is more than interesting vacation land. It represents spiritual and aesthetic values measurable by the songs of birds, by an abundance of wildlife, by sunsets, and by the music of conifers...."

"Some of the unmarked faces of America's wilderness must be left as a refuge of man — as a place where he can escape the roar of machines and once more get on understanding terms with the universe."

Justice William O. Douglas
*This Is the American
Earth*
1960

So wrote L. V. Venable to the Port Angeles Evening News in August 18, 1958.

The voices are being raised once again to construct such a road on the Olympic Peninsula's West End. This spring, the Clallam Bay-Seki Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting to resurrect the possibility of building a 25-30 mile "Loop Road" from Neah Bay to the vicinity of Forks/LaPush. It would connect with SR 112 and US 101, giving tourists an opportunity to drive the loop, and leave some of their money behind in these resource-dependent communities.

The Makah Tribe have additional reasons to want this road: as alternative access from the Reservation when SR 112 is blocked following winter storms, and an opportunity to establish closer relations with their Quileute neighbors at LaPush.

The Clallam County Road Department conducted a pre-planning exercise this winter. They looked at land ownership in the area affected (the vast majority is owned by private timber companies), they looked at existing logging roads and, to their credit, they looked at alternatives that would meet the criteria of (a) safe access to/from the Makah Reservation and (b) a loop route, while avoiding close passage to Olympic National Park's boundary near Ozette.

But tourists are not going to drive half way across the country just so they can drive *near* the coast. They want to drive *to* the coast, and the Larry Venables of today made it abundantly clear at the meeting that a route that hugs the boundaries of the park (and inevitably penetrates it to the ocean) is the only viable alternative.

Is this road a viable alternative? The estimated, non-mitigated cost for construction is \$1 million per mile. Add in the cost of mitigation, rights-of-way, easements, and the inevitable cost overruns and we're well over \$50 million dollars for this 25-30 mile road segment.

Who will be the investors in this grand

scheme? Certainly not Clallam County: this price tag would eat up their entire road budget for 10 years. How about the state? Well, even the West End's own State Senator Jim Buck has serious reservations, especially in the wake of Initiative 695. So...what about the Feds: don't they have more money than they know what to do with? I guess that depends on convincing Representative Norm Dicks and Senator Slade Gorton.

If they build it, will *they* come? The county has yet to make that analysis. But considering this is an area that measures its rain by feet, not inches, the prospects of this being the newest tourist Mecca is a higher priced gamble than buying Internet stock.

The views from SR 112 and SR 113 are actually quite good, because clearcut logging is still the preferred method of forestry and there are LOTS of examples. There probably are more standing trees in Kansas than are left along these road corridors. While Robert Michael Pyle might find beauty in a clearcut, the traveling public may grow quickly tired of stump farms.

The appeal of this part of our state is what we *have* preserved — the Olympic National Park wilderness coastal strip and adjoining Lake Ozette. This is the longest stretch of wilderness coastline left in the lower 48. Home to a growing population of sea otters. Home to bald eagles, marbled murrelets, and the endemic Olympic mudminnow. Home to an outdoor experience that cannot be matched along Oregon's or Maine's or Florida's coastlines: the opportunity to hike for days in an environment of tide and surf and pool and headland and sea stacks and a rich assemblage of plants and animals to rejuvenate the mind and the spirit.

A single stretch of blacktop destroys all that, and with it the very entity that attracts people to come to this remote part of our state. A road is nothing more than a very long parking lot. Do we really want to spend \$50 million to destroy paradise for yet another parking lot? Existing alternatives allow Makah emergency access on private timber roads when the need arises. Other alternatives can help to draw tourists to visit and stay in the West End, and for far fewer taxpayer dollars, yet can continue to preserve the wildness of the area and the conservation of this national treasure.

Of Sockeye Salmon and Lake Ozette

by Philip Zalesky

"The Lake Ozette sockeye salmon population is in serious trouble...If this trend continues, this population will soon be extinct."

This was the unanimous conclusion reached by four sockeye salmon experts at a conference on the Lake Ozette fishery held at Port Angeles.

Superintendent David Morris of Olympic National Park, recognizing that the National Park Service has a mandate to protect its native wildlife, convened fishery biologists to analyze the condition of the sockeye. The conference published a technical report, **The Sockeye Salmon *Oncorhynchus nerka* Population in Lake Ozette, Washington** which concludes that action is needed. The superintendent is seeking congressional funding, within the General Management Plan budget, for a definitive scientific study of the status of the sockeye salmon in Lake Ozette. Recovery of the species would be a prime aspect of the plan.

Habitat destruction is the leading cause of decline in almost every case study of endangered species. According to a recent study of species considered imperiled in the United States, 85% are deemed due to man-related impairment, decimation, and devastation of their habitat. Evidence regarding the sockeye salmon of Lake Ozette also points in this direction, but further study is needed.

Olympic Park Associates has a history of interest in Lake Ozette. Our organization pressed for the addition of Point of the Arches into Olympic National Park while simultaneously encouraging Congress within the same park bill to add a small strip of a land around the lake. This narrow strip around the lake, averaging 1/4 mile wide, has never been considered sufficient by OPA. OPA has always maintained that to keep the lake in pristine condition, the whole Lake Ozette basin should be protected. Now more than ever, because of the recent sockeye salmon findings, we believe this to be true, and hope that the results of the scientific study will lead to the addition of the Ozette basin to the park.

The panel's conclusions suggested that logging, logging roads, and the resulting siltation into the lake may be the principal, but probably not the only, source of the species' decline.

The panel concluded that the population of sockeye salmon may have declined by as much as 90% to 98% over the last 45 years. Estimates over the years have varied widely, ranging from highs of 10,000 - 30,000 in the 1920s to 1950s (based on Makah Indian tribal fishery catches), to 2,000 - 3,000 (based on recent National Park Service figures), with lows of 350 - 500 spawners in the mid-1990s.

By the time most species are listed on the endangered species list, their numbers are so low that even short-term survival appears in doubt. In the case of the sockeye in Lake Ozette, a return of only 500 spawners could over time affect the genetic viability of the species.

The scientific panel indicated that "[t]he population is

almost certainly an evolutionary significant unit as defined under the Endangered Species Act." Lake Ozette sockeye salmon show genetically unique characteristics. They return from the ocean after two to three years but, unlike other sockeye species, they do not spawn in the Ozette River or its tributaries. They spawn along the gravelly lakeshore habitat along the edge of the lake. Attempts to increase the population through an Indian hatchery at Umbrella Creek have not produced spawners in the creek.

Swan Bay is one of the two largest offshore gravel areas for spawning. Fed by two of the largest creeks, Swan Bay also has greatest siltation, obviously the result of logging and road building. One estimate has 90% of the Ozette basin as having been previously logged. Dramatically increased logging has occurred since the 1950s and even the 1980s.

Ten percent of the basin is owned by the WA Department of Natural Resources. The lake itself and the strip of land around it are under jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Industrial forest interests privately own the remaining 67%. Highly erodible soils within the basin have produced high impact levels of fine sediments in the lake and mass wasting in areas of the watershed. Flash flooding of winter streams results in high turbidity levels that may reach three times the Washington State standards. The cause for the loss of spawning habitat seems obvious. Juvenile salmon cannot just go deeper because the turbidity levels also go deep. Although the zooplankton food sources are more than adequate, high turbidity levels interfere with juveniles' ability to see their prey.

Concerned that hatchery production could result in too much genetic alteration, the four scientists warned against attempting anything other than small scale, experimental hatchery production. Habitat restoration to stabilize the soils and minimize siltation will require time and thus becomes a long-term solution. No one knows yet how long the salmon can survive or exactly what conditions are needed to stave off extinction and allow the species to remain viable.

OPA's position is that the basin needs to be placed under National Park Service jurisdiction, for they have a mandate to save this native wild species. The first step should be to include funding for the sockeye salmon research in the ONP management plan budget. The General Management Plan, including its call for scientific research on the sockeye, is slated to be completed in three years. Olympic Park Associates feels that the solution is obvious; but scientific proof and evidence are needed when requests go to Congress for Land and Water Conservation Funds to purchase the problem lands in the basin.

Given the Park Service's mandate to preserve native species, it would be regrettable to allow this significant Ozette genetic strain of sockeye salmon to go the way of the extinct Lake Ozette Chinook.



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A New Edition of Carsten Lien's *Olympic Battleground, The Power Politics of Timber Preservation*

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Reviewed by Tim McNulty

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