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September 5, 2006

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National Park Service
Denver Service Center - Planning
P.O. Box 25287
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RE: Draft General Management Plan/ EIS dated May 2006

I have read your plan and would like to offer the following comments:

1. The maps in all of the Elwha Area Alternatives are inaccurate. All of these alternatives depict Lake Mills and the Glines Canyon Dam as existing features to be managed over the 20 year life of the proposed General Management Plan (GMP). Unfortunately, beginning in 2009, the Glines Canyon Dam as well as the Elwha Dam are to be removed. The reservoirs behind these dams, also known as Lake Mills and Lake Aldwell, respectively, will disappear over a period of two years or so beginning in 2009 according to articles published in the local press. That being the case, exactly what are your management plans for the muddy expanse of lake bottom once known as Lake Mills?

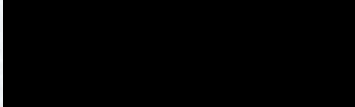
2. All of the Elwha Area Alternatives make reference to the "visitor constructed pools" at Olympic Hot Springs. Clearly, if NPS had not removed the old Olympic Hot Springs Resort pools, visitors would not have to construct their own pools. And NPS would not be fretting about pool removal and site restoration to a "natural state". For at least the last hundred years and perhaps longer, the natural state at this site is that people enjoy coming to this site to enjoy soaking in the natural hot springs in a magnificent outdoor setting. Rather than ignore history and the undeniable popularity of these Hot Springs, why don't you look at some alternatives that would allow people to safely soak in this beautiful setting? It could be done right with negligible impact to the environment. I believe that your plan to simply remove the existing pools and expect the soakers to go away will not be successful. Unless you are prepared to commit maintenance and law enforcement resources for an indefinite period of time and bear the bad press and public resentment that will ensue, you should reconsider this aspect of your plan.

3. The historic overview appearing in Chapter 3 starting on page 123 is very good. But sadly, it reminded me of how much has been lost under NPS stewardship. The legacy of the Forest Service system of trails and lookouts, the CCC trail shelters, the Enchanted Valley Lodge, The Olympic Hot Springs Resort which have been allowed to deteriorate or disappear altogether under NPS management is shameful. In view of your less than stellar past in the area of historic preservation within the Olympic National Park, I find it difficult to believe your claims in Chapter 3 of the GMP to value historic structures. Indeed you state that you are obliged under law to protect and preserve these structures. Appendix E of the GMP lists approximately 130 historic structures in the park. I found it interesting to find that all of the Glines Canyon Dam Project were designated to be added to the List of Classified Structures (LCS) since 1988. And properly so. Yet removal of the dam is to begin in 2009. Only in the wacky world of government is tearing down a historic structure preserving it. Photographs are no substitute for the real thing. But soon that's all there will be. At the very least, you could revise Appendix E.

4. The plan is long on narrative and graphic art and short on numbers. What's this going to cost and how is the money going to be spent? I did see a Question & Answer sheet dated June 6, 2006 that addressed this aspect of the GMP very superficially. The credibility of your plan would be greatly enhanced if you were to include in the appendix a line item budget of the capital improvement and operations and maintenance budgets for the Preferred Alternative. In the interest of full disclosure, the budget for preparation of the GMP itself should also appear in the appendix.

5. I am a fan of the wilderness. I just love to get out into the back country to hike and enjoy the unspoiled beauty of the outdoors. The incomparable beauty of the Olympic National Park (ONP) and its proximity to where I live have made it a favorite place to recreate for more than 40 years. However, with nearly a million acres of wilderness, I believe that ONP management has sufficient cushion to err on the side of historic preservation. Not only do we have a duty to future generations to preserve the flora and fauna, we also, I believe, must preserve that great cultural legacy that those who came before us left in our care.

Sincerely

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the author.