

PEPC 191171

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Cliff Hawkes  
Olympic National Park – GMP  
National Park Service  
Denver Service Center – Planning  
P O Box 25287  
Denver CO 80225

Dear Sir:

We live on the west end of the north Olympic Peninsula and have an IBP permit to operate a commercial horse/mule packing business in the Olympic National Park. Most of our work involves resupply for National Outdoor Leadership School groups, packing supplies and samples for biologists, and packing supplies for recreational fishermen, mountain climbers, and back packers. So, it is natural that we would be concerned about the future operation of the ONP and the management plan.

As citizens of the west end, we are surrounded by National Park and National Forest. It is our back yard and where we make part of our living as well. We moved to this part of the country so we could enjoy the beauty of these evergreen forests, the rich bounty of the Pacific Ocean and clear mountain rivers and streams, and breathe the clean, unpolluted mountain air of the Olympics. Our family lives to hunt, fish, hike, ride, camp, and ski on public lands. It is vital to us that as we age, we continue to be able to access these areas and to bring our grandchildren along with us.

We don't begin to understand all that is written in the 400 pages of the ONP Management Plan. One of our greatest concerns over the years is that the Park continues to accumulate land, but doesn't have funding to maintain the access and manage it. At one time there were 600 miles of "transportation" trails, a number of shelters, both in the mountains and on the ocean beaches, and cozy "destination cabins" for hikers and packers in the back country.

Now we have less than 200 miles of trails that are maintained for stock. Many of the trails have been reclassified to non-stock trails, simply because the ONP does not have the money or desire to maintain them. The historic shelters have been destroyed or are being allowed to fall into disrepair and only the wealthy and not many family people can afford to stay in the destination resorts that are left at Kalaloch, Quinault and Lk Crescent Lodge.

Many of the trails cannot be kept open without the use of pack animals to carry the tools, chain saws, etc. Every year we donate hundreds of hours doing skilled labor with our stock maintaining and clearing trails in the National Park and National Forest. There are so few designated stock camps that we often travel 12-15 miles a day to reach a designated stock camp, often cutting our way through the windfalls as we go. We would like to see more designated stock camps in the back country; especially for those who are there to do work. We want the ONP Management plan to include the use of horses on all the trails where stock historically were used.

There are some who believe that only the young and fit have a right to be in the back country. Many of the clients we work for these days are people with disabilities; especially baby boomers (like us), who have been avid hikers/climbers and now have disabilities that keep them from carrying heavy packs. Our pack animals enable these people to achieve their dream of hiking into their beloved mountain camp in spite of their disabilities. We want to see future generations, whether fit, or disabled have this choice. If pack stock are not allowed in certain areas of the Park, if the trails are not kept maintained to stock standards many, many disabled Americans will have no access to the Park.

It is our sincere hope that ONP maintain the trails that have historically supported stock. We hope the new ONP plan will not change trail classifications as a way of permanently closing trails to stock in order to reduce trail infrastructure requirements to a lesser and more financially management level. We hope that the ONP management plan will not exclude businesses such as ours and National Outdoor Leadership School whose operation brings considerable revenue back into the Park.

Sincerely,

*Sherry Baysinger*  
*Larry Baysinger*

Sherry & Larry Baysinger