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Olympic National Park General Management Plan
National Park Service
Denver Service Center
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

To Whom It Concerns,

In response to requests for public comment on the Draft Plan for Olympic National Park we would like to submit the following comments for consideration. As residents of the Olympic Peninsula we are familiar with park lands, uses, and most of all, very aware of the uniqueness of park ecosystems, especially the temperate rainforest. Any actions that would threaten or diminish the ecosystem of the park would be irreconcilable, whereas continuing to preserve and enhance these systems would be laudable and should be considered the mantra of park management in drafting a new management plan.

The highest priorities of Olympic National Park's management should be preserving its natural systems, restoring threatened wildlife, and protecting the integrity of its world-class wilderness. This was the intention of political and conservation forefathers when setting aside these park lands.

The park service has kept to the integrity of these intentions when it established an intertidal reserve on the Olympic Coast and recommended a wilderness study for Ozette Lake.

In this vein of management decision we urge the park service to expand park boundaries in five areas: Ozette Lake, Lake Crescent, and Hoh, Queets and Quinalt watersheds. This action, as proposed in alternative B, is necessary to protect critical habitats for salmon and wildlife.

Another urgent action would be to establish river protection zones to ensure critical salmon habitats and natural river processes, preserving them as proposed in alternative B. All 13 eligible rivers within the park should be recommended for federal Wild and Scenic river designation.

Restoration of extirpated species like the wolf and fisher have long been discussed for ONP and it seems with the writing of a new management plan the time has come to take appropriate action in this direction as a means to reestablishing the original ecosystem of the park.

As the human habitated areas surrounding the park grow, it becomes more critical to keep the developed areas within park boundaries at their current size, as described in alternative A. New recreational developments can, and should, be located outside the park.

We the writers of this letter each have a unique perspective on ONP, Mike having worked on the trails of the park, and Penney having worked for 8 years in the tourism industry of the Olympic Peninsula, as the manager of the Port Townsend Visitor Center. In conversations with people from all over the nation and the world we are well aware that the park is not only critical environmentally, but also to the economy of peninsula communities. People come here to experience the unique pristine environment of the Olympic National Park. Any action that would change or diminish this environment would not only damage the natural ecosystems of the park, but also have a negative impact on the surrounding communities who are dependent on the park's unique and enchanting attraction.

And finally, as citizens who support the preservation of ONP wilderness lands we request that all decisions relating to wilderness areas be deferred until a comprehensive wilderness management plan is completed and available for public review.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter and for being open to public comments on these public lands.

Quilcene, WA 98376