

ERRATA
December 2012

Camp Muir Rehabilitation Plan
Environmental Assessment
Mount Rainier National Park

This Errata (Part 1) documents changes to the text of the Camp Muir Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) made following public release of the EA in July 2012. These changes correct, clarify or modify original text based on public comments and/or actions that have changed. There are no modifications that would result in substantial alteration of determination of effects, nor which substantively amend proposed actions.

Part 2 documents substantive comments received during public review, and Park responses. There was no change in any determinations of environmental impact or any substantial modifications incorporated into the selected alternative as a result of any of the comments listed (nor in any contained in the administrative record).

This Errata must be attached to the original EA so as to comprise the full and complete record of the environmental impact analysis completed for this initiative.

Part 1: Edits and Corrections to the EA

1. On the second page of the Resource Protection Measures (RPM) table add the following under “Cultural Resources”, first column:

“Final design of structures would be compatible with the historic district and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer would continue throughout the design process.”

2. Also add to the RPM under “Cultural Resources”, second column the following:

“Historical Architect”

Part 2: EA Comments and Responses

1. Assumptions regarding helicopter flights erroneous (Individual).

NPS Response: We think that guide operations would be impacted if there were no hard-sided structures. Quantification of this impact is difficult, but we think it is not unreasonable to assume that loss of available hard-sided structures would add to the operational burden of guide operations. Operations related to toilet replacement, which would likely result in more flights because of added weight of waste, would also result in reduced handling by NPS staff – reducing the impact of waste management on NPS staff. Operational impacts of toilet design changes would have applied to all alternatives.

2. Human Waste analysis incomplete, should consider pack out policy (Individual).

A pack-it-out policy is in place on the climbing routes, above the high camps. We think toilets are essential at Camp Muir because of the high levels of day and overnight use at the site. It is the most heavily used backcountry camp within the park. Requiring large numbers of day users to use blue bags

on day hikes between Paradise and Camp Muir is not feasible.

3. No case has been made that permanent structures are better than modular tents (Individual).

The NPS view is that some hard sided shelters at Camp Muir are appropriate and necessary, particularly during winter operations. While we agree that modular tents may be appropriate in some situations, modular tents in this situation do not serve the Purpose and Need as well as the selected alternative. There is also concern that modular tents could not endure some of the wind and storm events that can and regularly do pound the ridge. . Modular tents would have to be removed during winter, and would therefore not be available to support winter operations or search and rescue activities.

4. No analysis of completely moving guides to glacier/adjacent wilderness (Individual).

The use of guide services and the extent of their operations were analyzed and determined through the NEPA process for the Commercial Services Plan (2005). It is not the purpose of this EA to assign space or relocate Guide Services; however the project does impact Guide operations and assignment of space at Camp Muir – so it is difficult to separate the issues related to location of Guide Services. Additionally, the Camp Muir location presents an opportunity to manage use and impacts outside of Wilderness. Commercial guides have used the structures at Camp Muir since 1916 (when the Historic Guide Shelter was constructed), and guiding mountaineering on Mount Rainier predates even that date.

5. No analysis performed on the benefits of removing gear and leaving Camp Muir pristine part of the year (Individual).

Structures will be designed and built to improve storage and reduce clutter. Gear is typically stored over winter in the Client Shelter. There should be less clutter during winter. That is our goal and one of the factors of the design that meet the purpose and need.

6. Use of modular tents on Muir ridge not an option due to potential for high winds (Concessioner).

Noted. We concur based on prior experience and observation. There are no viable sites within the Camp Muir Historic District and outside of Wilderness that could provide shelter from wind for modular tents

7. Kiosk/education comments/suggestions (A few respondents, tribal representative).

In general, most respondents were supportive of the kiosk - A purpose of the Kiosk is a location to provide basic orientation information on facility locations, site history and visitor safety.

8. Historic Public Shelter: prefer to leave cooking space in the shelter; separate cooking from sleeping for safety in public shelter. (Several respondents)

The selected alternative will leave the cooking space in the Public Shelter. Efforts will be made to minimize loss of sleeping area, while improving ventilation in the cooking space to meet safety objectives, which were identified as a need in the EA.

9. Leave Historic Men's CS as NPS storage. (Several respondents)

The selected alternative maintains the Men's comfort station as NPS storage.

10. Guide service storage – make sure there is enough; guides should have co-located sleeping and cooking in one structure; soundproof client shelter (Concessioners).

One reason that Alternative 3 was selected is that it does not increase the useable space for guided services. It replaces structures used for concessions at Camp Muir and decreases operations in wilderness. Interior design of new structures is important and intended to optimize operations and maintain flexibility for future changes. Interior design is flexible; there will be opportunity to discuss interior design options with the affected guide services. Note that the design of all structures will require SHPO consultation.

11. Maintain/improve public safety, do not reduce capacity at Muir - important for safety, support permanent structures; do not decrease public space (Several respondents).

Public space is not decreased under the selected alternative. Efforts will be made to minimize loss of sleeping area in the Public Shelter, while improving ventilation in the cooking space. We think Alternative 3 provides the same opportunity for safety while supporting other aspects of the purpose and need for the Plan.

12. Alternatives 3 and 4 have higher Carbon footprint. (Individual)

The NPS agrees that Alternatives 3 and 4 will require more resources in the shorter term; however implementation of the alternative is consistent with the GMP and the Purpose and Need for the action. We have dropped importation of gravel from the project, but will need to import rock for structures.

13. Historic Guide Shelter is at risk of being lost [This inevitability needs to be considered]. (Concessioner)

Thank you for sharing this concern. Our intent is to preserve the Historic Guide Shelter, including relocation of the structure, if necessary. A decision to relocate the Historic Guide Shelter would require field verification, then separate documentation and consultation with the SHPO because of the potential for adverse effect to the Camp Muir Historic District.

14. Do not import crushed rock. (A few individuals)

We agree. Crushed gravel will not be imported, which will reduce the required number of helicopter flights needed during the final phase of construction by approximately one-third to half.

15. Construction sequencing: construct client shelter in one season (Concessioners and an Individual)

We share concerns about construction sequencing and impacts to operations and public enjoyment of the resource. Planning for construction will be a collaborative effort, coordinated between the NPS and the climbing community, including guides.