

Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination

Olympic National Park conducted public scoping for the Spruce Railroad Trail Expansion and Improvement project from July 2, 2010 to August 6, 2010. An environmental assessment was prepared and released for public review and comment between September 21 and October 21, 2011. A public meeting to present the alternatives and answer questions was held in Port Angeles at the Vern Burton Community Center on September 21, 2011. Many questions and concerns were voiced, particularly related to accessibility for people with disabilities and trail design standards and guidelines. These issues were further emphasized by people who provided written comment on the NPS Preferred Alternative described in the 2011 SRRT EA. In response, the NPS revised the range of alternatives and prepared an updated 2012 SRRT EA.

Project information was posted on the park website and on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website. A news release and letter soliciting public comments and describing the proposed action was sent to individuals, interest groups, government agencies, and area tribes on the park's planning mailing list.

Scoping

Scoping is an effort to involve American Indian Tribes; federal, state and local agencies; adjacent landowners and the general public in identifying issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental assessment (EA). Scoping is also used to identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues that are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review, to allocate assignments for preparation of the EA, and to identify other environmental review and consultation requirements related to the EA which should be prepared concurrently with, and integrated with, the EA.

NPS staff began conducting internal scoping for the project in 2009 in response to a proposal for trail development that was submitted by Clallam County. This included defining the draft purpose and need and project objectives, identifying potential actions to address the need, and determining what park resources would potentially be affected.

A 30-day public scoping for the Spruce Railroad Trail EA was initiated July 2, 2010. A press release and letter soliciting public comments and describing the proposed action was sent to approximately 150 individuals, interest groups, government agencies, and area tribes on the park's mailing list. A news release was published in the July 8, 2010 Peninsula Daily News. Respondents had the opportunity to provide written comments, fax comments, or input comments into the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.

A public scoping meeting was held on July 20, 2010 at the Clallam County Courthouse in the Commissioners' Meeting Room. Public comments were taken during the workshop.

A public site visit was conducted on July 24, 2010 at the existing Spruce Railroad Trail. Park staff was on site to meet with park visitors to discuss the proposed trail development and answer questions.

The formal public scoping period ended on August 6, 2010. The park received over 140 responses from individuals, representatives of recreation organizations, and local agencies. Comments received during the scoping period are available for review on the park's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olym>.

An additional public meeting was held on October 4, 2010 to present the range of preliminary alternatives that were developed in response to feedback provided during public scoping. Park staff shared key details of each alternative, including proposed trail alignment, width, surface materials, access points, and associated visitor services. All comments were considered in the development of this environmental assessment.

As previously mentioned, the 2011 SRRT EA was made available for public review and comment between September 21 and October 21, 2011. A public meeting to present the alternatives and answer questions was held in Port Angeles at the Vern Burton Community Center on September 21, 2011. Many questions and concerns were voiced, particularly related to accessibility for people with disabilities and trail design standards and guidelines.

National Park Service (NPS) policy for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides the following guidance related to the analysis of public comment on an environmental assessment (EA): screen EA comments for:

- **Important new issues**

For the 2011 SRRT EA public comments, the primary issues of concern were:

- Universal accessibility (applicable laws, design standards, visitor opportunities, personal values)
- Safety (adherence to established design standards, safe access (Hwy 101, East Beach Road, Fairholme Hill, Sol Duc), conflicts among users (passing widths, safe/unsafe speeds, surface (impacts to hikers, walkers, runners from asphalt))
- Visitor Experience (people expressed a wide range of preferences associated with the SRRT, ranging from those who would prefer the park make no changes to those who would prefer even more development than what was considered in the SRRT EA).

- **Reasonable alternatives**

For the SRRT EA new alternatives brought up in public comments included:

- Consideration of a revised proposal by Clallam County (as compared to Alternative 4 included in the 2011 SRRT EA)
- Consideration of an alternative that would provide accessibility to the historic railroad grade by making improvements to the current railroad tunnel bypass trails (while retaining the same trail surface and general design)
- Alternatives that provide for variations of the paved and unpaved trail widths to better accommodate various user groups, including:

- 10 – 12 feet of paved trail width to meet AASHTO guidelines w/o exception to 8 feet minimum as considered in Alternative 4
 - Six feet asphalt with six feet of adjacent natural tread trail to provide passing width for horses, runners and mountain bikers the same as proposed for wheelchairs, pedestrians and road bicyclists.
 - Trail alignment as proposed in Alternative 3, but with asphalt width reduced to 36” as proposed in Alternative 2.
 - 8 feet asphalt with only 2 feet gravel for equestrian use, or eliminate equestrian use.
- Improve East Beach road to provide a safe bypass for cyclists around Lake Crescent for people arriving on Highway 101 corridor, not just for people arriving via Highway 112 via Water Line Road.
 - Work with adjacent landowners to acquire access on historic railroad grade to avoid steep sections of trail (Segment D and Sol Duc)
 - Develop a trail underpass to Highway 101 to avoid at-grade crossing proposed by Clallam County.
 - Designate tunnel bypass trails for use by pedestrians only to provide an opportunity for people to experience the SRRT without asphalt and in the absence of potentially conflicting trail uses (bicycles, stock use).
 - Develop alternative to rip rap for downslope bank stabilization along Lake Crescent shoreline to mitigate impacts to aquatic habitat, such as those developed in other areas of the park that incorporate large woody debris.

- **Mitigation measures**

In addition to alternatives/actions described above, there were comments related to trail surface that requested the park consider permeable alternatives to asphalt for the parking lot and trail surface to reduce impacts to trail runners, walkers, and hikers associated with asphalt paving.

- **Corrections or additions of information related to impact analysis and determination of significant impact**

- Several people provided information about trail design standards, primarily related to compliance with AASHTO guidelines to support safety for multiple use (shared use) trails.
- Multiple people commented about concerns related to visitor safety associated with trail width, trail grade, crossing of Highway 101 at Fairholme, presence of fast-moving bicycles on the trail with other users, trail surface, and trail access along East Beach Road.
- There were requests for additional information about current use of the SRRT, and also for more detailed information about the trail alignment on the east end (Lyre River/Segment D).
- There were several statements and questions regarding how the trail proposals are influenced by the features of the historic Spruce Railroad.
- Information was provided by some regarding the design standards of other segments of the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) outside of the park that are

different from what was considered in the SRRT EA (specifically related to the use on non-asphalt surface materials and variable trail widths and user groups).

After considering public comments the NPS decided to revise and reissue the SRRT EA. The 2012 SRRT EA considers alternatives that were modified in response to public comments described above. The 2012 SRRT EA also describes why some actions proposed during the public review period were considered, but dismissed. This is described in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Agencies and organizations contacted to assist in identifying issues and provide an opportunity to review or comment on this environmental assessment include, but are not limited to, the following:

U.S. Congressman Norm Dicks
U.S. Senator James Hargrove
U.S. Senator Patty Murray
U.S. Senator Tim Sheldon

Federal Agencies

Department of Agriculture
 U.S. Forest Service
 Olympic National Forest
 Forest Supervisor
 Recreation Manager
Department of Interior
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Western Washington Office
 Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge
 Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
 National Park Service
 Seattle Office
 Office of Public Affairs
Depart Of Commerce
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Department of Transportation
 Federal Highways Administration, Western Federal Lands Highway Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

State Agencies

State of Washington Representatives
Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Department of Ecology
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

Department of Parks and Recreation

Local Agencies

City of Forks
City of Port Angeles
Clallam Bay and Sekiu Chamber of Commerce
Clallam County Commissioners
Clallam County Economic Development Council
Forks Chamber of Commerce
Jefferson County Commissioners
Kitsap County Commissioners
Olympic Region Clean Air Agency
Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce
Port Angeles Department of Community Development
Port Angeles, Victoria Visitor Bureau
Port of Port Angeles
Port Townsend City Council
Seattle Parks and Recreation
Sequim Chamber of Commerce

American Indian Tribes

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
Quileute Indian Nation
Olympic Peninsula Intertribal Cultural Advisory Committee

Organizations and Businesses

Adventure Cycling Association
Adventure Treks, Inc.
All Points Charters and Tours
Americas Adventure, Inc.
Apogee Outdoor Adventures
ARAMARK Parks and Destinations
Backcountry Horseman of Washington, Peninsula Chapter
Bicycle Alliance of Washington
Camp Tawonga
Camp Thunderbird
Cascade Bicycle Club
Clallam County Economic Development Council
Clallam County Historical Society
Clallam Transit System
Country Walkers, Inc.
Conservation Northwest
Evergreen Escapes
Fairholme Store

Forks Forum
Friends of Lake Crescent

Organizations and Businesses, cont.

Friends of Miller Peninsula State Park
Friends of Olympic National Park
Friends of Port Townsend Trails
Gray Wolf Outfitters
Green Crow Timber LLC
Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club
Institute for Policy Research
Integrative Health Systems
Klahhane Club
Live Productions
KNOP Radio
Log Cabin Resort
Mike's Bikes
Monday Hikers
Mountain Hiking Holidays
National Audubon Society
National Coast Trail Association
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
New England Hiking Holidays
North Olympic Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau
Off the Beaten Path
Olympians Hiking Club
Olympic Forest Coalition
Olympic Park Associates & North Cascades Conservation Council
Olympic Park Institute
Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society
Olympic Peninsula Explorers
Olympic Raft and Kayak
Olympic Region Clean Air Agency
Overland Travel, Inc.
Pacific Coast Treks
Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Passages Northwest
Peninsula Daily News
Peninsula News Network
Peninsula Trails Coalition
Peninsula Wilderness Club
Port Townsend Leader
Protect the Peninsula's Future
Quilcene Conservation District
Rainier Evergreen, Inc.

Rainshadow Natural Science
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) Travel and Trip Planning
Seattle Post Intelligencer
Sequim Gazette
Sierra Club, Cascade Chapter
Sol Duc Hot Springs
Sol Duc Valley Packers
Soroptomist International of Port Townsend
Squeaky Wheels
Sunnydell Shooting Grounds
Survivor's Outdoor Experience
The Evergreen State College
The Wilderness Society
The World Outdoors
Timberline Adventures
University of Washington, Olympic Natural Resource Center
Victoria Express
Washington Environmental Council
Washington's National Park Fund
Washington Trails Association
Wilderness Inquiry Inc.
Wilderness Watch
Wirta Hospitality Worldwide

Area Libraries

Everett Public Library
Holland Library
King County Library System
Kitsap Regional Library
North Olympic Library System
Port Townsend Public Library
Renton Public Library
Seattle Public Library
Tacoma Public Library
University of Washington Libraries

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Chris Eckard, East District Interpretive Ranger
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