Dear Friends,

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Olympic National Park. Last spring we completed public scoping for the plan. We received 269 correspondences that contained a wide range of concerns, and suggestions for how the Olympic Wilderness should be managed in the future. In response, we developed a range of preliminary draft alternatives. The alternatives were designed to reflect the key topics raised by the public during the public scoping process.

We are asking for your assistance again. Please take a moment to read this letter, which provides a summary of the alternatives, and make sure to visit our planning website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild for a detailed description of each of the preliminary draft alternatives and zones. Your review and comment at this key stage of the planning process will ensure that we are developing the best possible future for the Olympic Wilderness. Moreover, we want to ensure that we have accurately heard and addressed your comments as we move forward in developing the plan.

You have a variety of options for providing us with your comments. You may submit your comment at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild, mail your comment to the address provided, or attend one of a series of public meetings in late March and early April. A complete schedule is below. We will be accepting comments through May 17, 2014.

Following this review, we will refine the alternatives, select or develop a preferred alternative, and complete the required environmental analysis, at which time additional opportunities will be provided for public involvement on the draft WSP/EIS.

We understand that your time is valuable and we appreciate your assistance. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions on these preliminary draft alternatives.

Sincerely,

M. Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent
Olympic National Park

Public Meetings Schedule

Tuesday, March 18, 2014	Wednesday, March 19, 2014	Monday, March 24, 2014
5:00-7:00pm Port Angeles Library 2210 S. Peabody Street Port Angeles, WA 98362 Phone: 360-417-8500	5:00-7:00pm Department of Natural Resources 411 Tillicum Lane Forks, WA 98331 Phone: 360-374-2800	5:00-7:00pm Cotton Building 607 Water Street Port Townsend, WA Phone: 360-379-4412
Wednesday, March 26, 2014	**Tuesday, April 1, 2014**	**Thursday, April 3, 2014**
5:00-7:00pm Quinault Lake School Amanda Park, WA 98526 Phone: 360-288-2260	5:00-7:00pm Civic Center (Meeting Room 1) 525 W. Cota Street Shelton, WA 98584 Phone: 360-426-4441	5:00-7:00pm Seattle Public Library Wright/Ketcham Room; Level 4, Room 2 1000 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA Phone: 206-386-4636

Purpose of the Plan
The purpose of the wilderness stewardship plan is to guide the preservation, management, and use of the park's wilderness area as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The overarching goal of the plan is to restore, protect, and enhance overall wilderness character of the Olympic Wilderness.

Need for the Plan
National Park Service policy directs wilderness stewardship plans to include "desired future conditions, as well as establish indicators, standards, conditions, and thresholds beyond which management actions will be taken to reduce human impacts to wilderness resources."

In 1980, Olympic National Park completed a Backcountry Management Plan for park wilderness and backcountry areas. This Backcountry Management Plan is now outdated and does not adequately address protection of the area's wilderness qualities that are essential to effective wilderness management. The Wilderness Stewardship Plan is needed to replace the Backcountry Management Plan, while ensuring consistency with the park's existing General Management Plan (2008).

Decision to be Made
When finished, the Wilderness Stewardship Plan will establish a vision for the Olympic Wilderness and guide long-term management and decision-making based on that vision. A Record of Decision, signed by the Regional Director (National Park Service Pacific West Region) will be published after the release of the Final Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

What is Wilderness Character?

Describing the wilderness character is central to meeting the goals and objectives of a Wilderness Stewardship Plan. The publication, "Keeping it Wild: An Interagency Strategy to Monitor Trends in Wilderness Character Across the National Wilderness Preservation System" defines wilderness character as "the combination of biophysical, experiential, and symbolic ideals that distinguishes wilderness from other lands." Furthermore, this publication identifies four distinct and necessary "qualities" of wilderness character. These qualities were selected to be tangible, to link conditions in the wilderness and its management directly to the statutory language of the Wilderness Act, and to apply throughout every wilderness regardless of size, location, agency administration, or other attribute. These qualities are described below, along with the fifth, National Park Service-defined quality.

Untrammeled	Natural
An "untrammeled" wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from the actions of modern human control or manipulation. Therefore, actions that intentionally manipulate or control ecological systems inside wilderness degrade the untrammeled quality of wilderness character.	The "natural" quality of wilderness is best represented when ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. This quality is degraded by the effects of modern people on the ecological systems within the wilderness area since the time the area was designated as wilderness.
Undeveloped	**Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Recreation**
The "undeveloped" quality is best represented when wilderness retains its primeval character and influence, and is essentially without permanent improvement or modern human occupation. The presence of structures, installations, habitations, and other evidence of modern human presence or occupation degrades this quality. Cultural resources (also known as heritage resources) within a wilderness also may be an important part of the undeveloped quality because they primarily represent human relationships with the land prior to modern wilderness designation.	This quality is degraded by settings that reduce opportunities for solitude (such as encounters with other wilderness visitors), opportunities for primitive recreation (such as signs of modern civilization adjacent to the wilderness), or by facilities provided by the agency or created by users that reduce people's self-reliance or manage visitor behavior.

Other Features of Value
The National Park Service has defined a fifth quality, "Other Features," based on Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act which states that a wilderness "may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value." This quality is used to capture elements of a park's wilderness area that aren't included in the other four qualities. Unlike the preceding four qualities, this quality is unique to an individual wilderness based on the specific features within that wilderness. This quality is preserved or improved by the preservation or restoration of such features, even when such management actions degrade other qualities of wilderness character. Loss or impacts to such features degrade this quality of wilderness character.

Preserving wilderness character is our mission, by law and policy.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Commenters brought forward a number of important issues. However, many are topics related to existing laws, regulations, and policies, or are actions that will be common across all alternatives. The following are examples of these topics:

- The protection of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, and critical habitat, will be addressed under each alternative.
- Education will be a component of all the alternatives. A wilderness-related educational theme was developed as part of the park's (2010) Long-Range Interpretive Plan. There are many components of interpretation and education that will have a role in the implementation of the WSP.
- Cultural resources, including archeological sites, historic structures, cultural landscapes, and ethnographic resources, will continue to be managed in accordance with law, including the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Cooperative management with adjoining U.S. Forest Service wilderness areas, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Sanctuary, will continue to occur.
- Existing regulations will remain in place (e.g., the prohibition of hunting, pets, bicycles, etc.).
- The WSP will support the continuation of scientific research in wilderness, using methods that preserve the qualities of wilderness character.
- The WSP will be linked to other ongoing or future planning efforts, such as the Goat Management Plan, Fire Management Plan, Non-native Plant Management Plan, Air Tour Management Plan, and a Wolf Reintroduction Plan/Study.

Commercial Services

Through the WSP, a specialized finding of the extent of commercial services necessary (Extent Necessary Determination) to meet the purposes of the wilderness will be completed. If commercial services are shown to be necessary, alternatives could include allowing existing commercial uses, reducing commercial uses, authorizing new types of commercial services, and restricting commercial services in certain zones or areas.

Preliminary Draft Alternatives

During 2013, our interdisciplinary planning team reviewed and considered the public comments received during initial scoping, collected and analyzed additional data about wilderness resources, and completed a visitor use study. This information was used to develop alternative concepts for managing the Olympic Wilderness.

As part of this process, we defined six management zones for the wilderness area, which generally identify how different areas could be managed to achieve resource preservation, provide for recreational access and use, and serve operational purposes. Once defined, the management zones were then applied to various areas of the wilderness according to guidelines offered by each alternative management concept.

We have four preliminary draft alternatives for you to consider. The no action alternative (Alternative A), is defined as the continuation of existing management practices. This "no action" alternative is required by law to be considered during the planning process. It sets a baseline of existing impacts continued into the future against which to compare impacts of the other alternatives.

Aside from the no action alternative, there are three preliminary draft action alternatives identified as Alternatives B, C, and D. The action alternatives must all be consistent with the various laws, regulations, and policies that guide management of Olympic National Park. In addition, all alternatives for management of wilderness lands would protect the four qualities of wilderness character as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

These alternative concepts, draft management zones, and specific topics are described further in this letter and we are seeking your review and comment. Following the public comment period, the planning team will refine the alternative concepts and management zones, and conduct a thorough analysis of the impacts each alternative would have on wilderness character, natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use and experience, and park operations. The refined draft alternatives will be presented for public comment as part of the draft Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement which is scheduled for release some time in 2015. A preferred alternative for the WSP will be presented at that time.

We encourage you to review the full description of the preliminary draft alternatives and zones located on the web at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild. If you are unable to access these materials electronically, a CD or printed version of the information is available by calling (360)565-3004.

Zoning

The Wilderness Act and NPS policies provide the foundation for the management of wilderness. Zoning is a management tool that can be used to make distinctions in desired conditions and management actions in wilderness, while upholding the mandates of law and policy. The following six zones would be considered for the WSP. The full zoning matrix is provided online at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild. See draft alternative zoning maps at the end of this letter.

Zone	Description
Zone 1	• The primary trails in this zone would be Nature Trails. This zone could also include minor segments of other maintained trail types (i.e., All Purpose, Secondary, Foot, and Primitive trails). Designated paths/routes, not part of the maintained trail system (e.g., way trails, social trails, routes, and coastal travelways) could be present. • Resources would be protected while providing access by trails and related facilities (i.e., bridges, boardwalks/puncheon) to park wilderness. • Camping at designated sites would be accommodated. • Many trails would be maintained for pack or riding stock, but stock would be prohibited on/in some trails and areas. • This zone has heavy use because it's more focused on day use, but there are through-hikers that utilize this zone. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection. • Examples include Sol Duc Falls, Marymere Falls, and the west side of Staircase Rapids.
Zone 2s (Stock) **Zone 2f (Foot)**	• The primary trails in this zone would be All Purpose and Foot Trails. This zone could also include minor segments of other maintained trail types (i.e., Secondary and Primitive Trails). Designated paths/routes, not part of the maintained trail system (e.g., way trails, social trails, routes, and coastal travelways) could be present. • Resources would be protected while providing access by trails and related facilities (i.e., bridges, boardwalks/puncheon) to park wilderness. • Camping at designated sites would be accommodated. • All Purpose (2s) Trails: Would be maintained for pack or riding stock. • Foot Trails (2f): Pack or riding stock would be prohibited, except occasional administrative use if determined to be the minimum tool in a minimum requirements analysis. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection. • An example includes the Hoh River Trail.
Zone 3s (Stock) **Zone 3f (Foot)**	• The primary trails in this zone would be Secondary and Foot Trails. This zone could also include minor segments of other maintained trail types (i.e., Primitive Trails). Designated paths/routes, not part of the maintained trail system (e.g., way trails, social trails, routes, and coastal travelways) could be present. • Resources would be protected while providing access by trails and related facilities (i.e., boardwalks/puncheon) to park wilderness. • Camping at designated sites would be accommodated. • Secondary (3s) Trails: Would be maintained for pack or riding stock. • Foot Trails (3f): Pack or riding stock would be prohibited, except occasional administrative use if determined to be the minimum tool in a minimum requirements analysis. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection. • An example includes the Bogachiel River Trail.
Zone 4	• The primary trails in this zone would be Primitive Trails. Designated paths/routes, not part of the maintained trail system (e.g., way trails, social trails, routes, and coastal travelways) could be present. • Resources would be protected and primitive recreational opportunities with fewer maintained trails provided than Zones 1-3. • Camping would be accommodated at designated sites or on durable surfaces. • Pack or riding stock would be prohibited. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection. • An example includes the Skyline Trail.

Zone 5	• The primary trails in this zone would be Way Trails. Other designated paths/routes, not part of the maintained trail system (e.g., social trails, routes, and coastal travelways) could be present. • <u>Way Trails</u>: Officially recognized paths open to hikers only. Previously established by ongoing use. In sections with no established path, routes may be marked for resource protection. Maintenance for resource protection only if/as determined by minimum requirements analysis. • <u>Routes</u>: Known travelways ranging from abandoned trails to mountain climbing routes. No visible signs of resource impact, except footprints, and no route marking. • Resources would be protected and primitive recreational opportunities with no maintained trails provided except where necessary for resource protection. • Camping would be accommodated at designated sites or on durable surfaces. • Pack or riding stock would be prohibited. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection. • An example includes the Bailey Range.
Zone 6	• There would be no trails and no established campsites in this zone. • Preserving wilderness resources and character would take precedence; large trail-less areas and opportunities for unconfined, primitive recreation would be preserved. • Camping on durable surfaces would be accommodated. • Pack or riding stock would be prohibited. • Access or use might be restricted or limited for resource protection.

Preliminary Draft Alternatives Overview

Each preliminary draft alternative concept is summarized below. The full preliminary draft alternatives matrix can be found at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild.

Alternative A: No Action

Under the no action alternative, the National Park Service would respond to future needs and conditions associated with wilderness management without major changes in current action, programs, and plans. Natural resources, cultural resources, visitor use and experience, operations, and partnerships would continue without a comprehensive approach to wilderness and wilderness character would be maintained at current conditions. Wilderness management would continue to be conducted in compliance with various federal and state laws, NPS Management Policies 2006, and the existing general management plan (2008) and backcountry management plan (1980).

Alternative B

Under alternative B, all the purposes of the Wilderness Act will be met, with an emphasis placed on the reduction of the human imprint.

Natural resources would be protected and those disturbed may be restored in a manner that reduces the presence of non-recreational structures and developments and the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport.

A determination would be made as to which historic structures and cultural landscapes would be protected, while complying with applicable cultural resources law. Cultural resources would remain largely undisturbed and where they are threatened by natural processes, natural processes would prevail.

This alternative would reduce the number and extent of developments provided within wilderness. There would be very few new facilities (such as bridges, trails, footlogs, etc.), installations or developments with the intent that the overall human imprint would be reduced. Bear cans would be required for all wilderness users. Human waste bags would be encouraged for all wilderness users, and required in areas above 3500 feet. With less infrastructure provided, visitors could have a more primitive wilderness experience. The majority of the wilderness would be managed for self-directed exploration and self-reliant travel and camping. This alternative would consider an in-person only overnight use permitting process, with an educational component. Self-registration stations within the wilderness area would no longer be provided. Quotas/use limits would be established for overnight use throughout the wilderness, as well as for day use in high use areas.

All management activities would be conducted in a manner that minimizes the imprint of modern humans within wilderness. Under this alternative, park operations would be more greatly reliant on non-mechanized equipment and transport with the goal to reduce the number of administrative structures, installations, and the use of mechanized equipment and transport than in no action alternative, and alternatives C and D.

Alternative C

Under alternative C, all the purposes of the Wilderness Act will be met, with an emphasis placed on the protection of natural resources.

Healthy ecosystems would be restored and maintained through the implementation of appropriate management actions (such as the removal of non-native species, reintroduction of extirpated species, restoration of natural fire regimes, and natural channel migration). Under this alternative, park management would seek to remove non-native fish species in wilderness rivers and lakes.

As with alternative C, a determination would be made as to which historic structures and cultural landscapes would be protected, while complying with applicable cultural resources law. Cultural resources would remain largely undisturbed and where they are threatened by natural processes, natural processes would prevail.

Alternative C would provide more opportunities for solitude due to the implementation of visitor use management strategies for resource protection. Bear cans would be required for all wilderness users. Facilities (such as bridges, trails, footlogs, etc.) may be provided mainly for the protection of, or mitigation of damage to, natural resources. Human waste bags would be required in the subalpine and above. This alternative would consider an in-person only overnight use permitting process, with an educational component. Self-registration stations within the wilderness area would no longer be provided. Quotas/use limits could be established for overnight and day use throughout the wilderness.

Under this alternative, park operations would be more reliant on non-mechanized equipment and transport with the goal to reduce the number of administrative structures, installations, and the use of mechanized equipment and transport than in alternative D.

Alternative D

Under alternative D, all the purposes of the Wilderness Act will be met, with an emphasis placed on managing visitor use and recreation to provide visitors with greater range of wilderness experiences.

Natural resources would be protected through the implementation of appropriate visitor use management tools such as reducing visitor numbers in heavily impacted areas, seasonally or temporally redistributing use, or area closures; as well as through the development of appropriate facilities and structures such as designated trails and camping areas, foot logs and small bridges, and signs. Under alternative D, park management would continue to promote sport-fishing consistent with other wilderness values of the high mountain lakes.
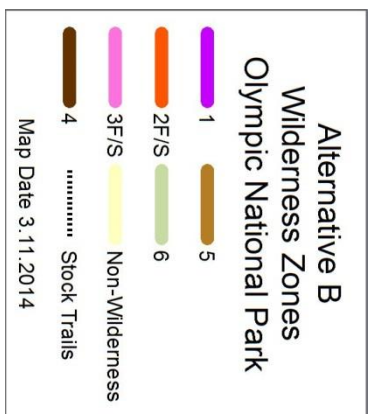
All cultural resources, including historic structures and cultural landscapes, would remain protected to the extent practicable and feasible.
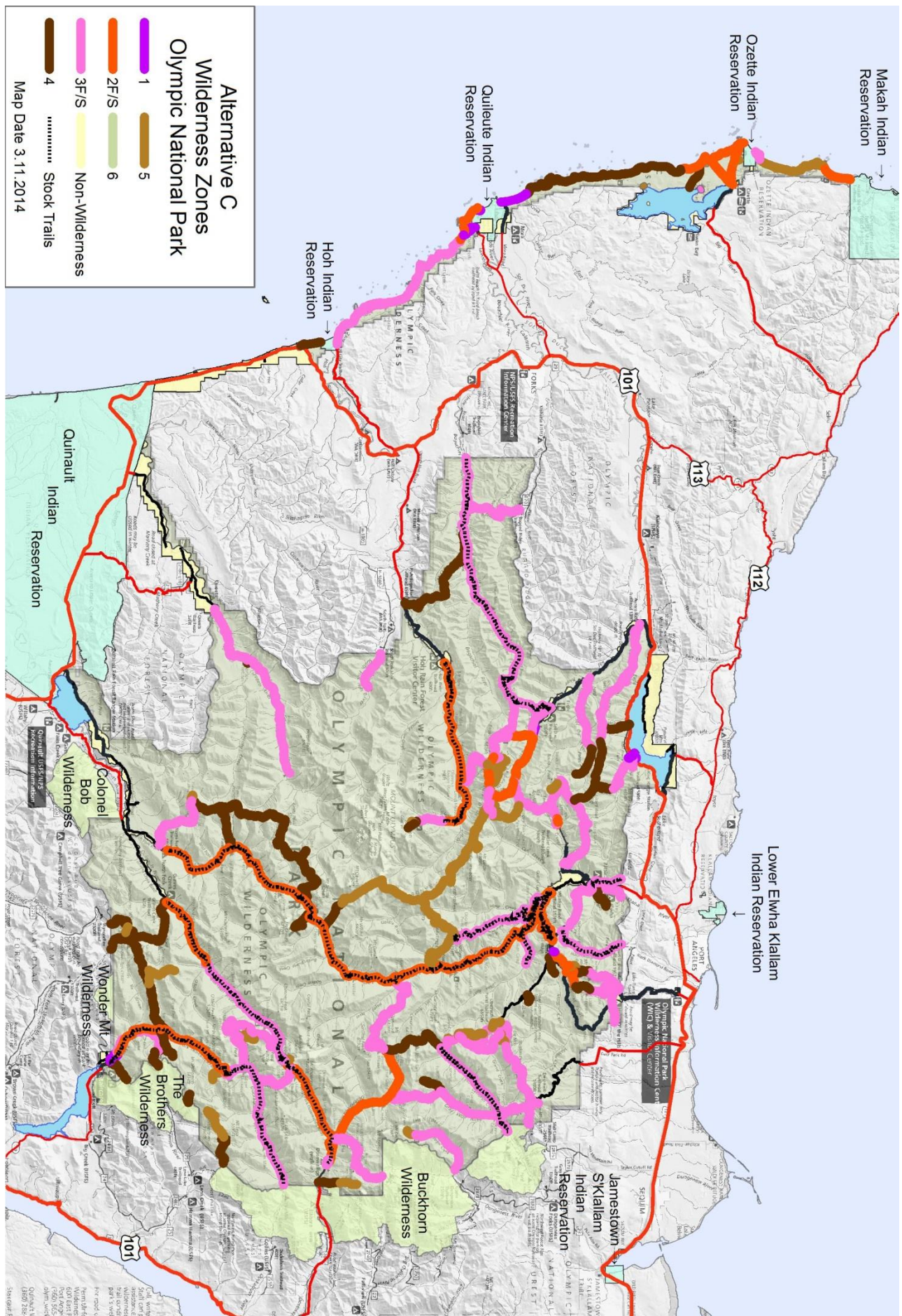
Visitor use and recreation activities would be managed to provide for a greater variety of wilderness experiences than in alternatives B and C, while also providing for resource protection. As in alternatives B and C, bear cans would be required for all wilderness users. Human waste bags would not be required. Current facilities such as designated campsites and camping areas, bridges, trails, and privies would continue to be provided. Very few new facilities would be provided, however, current facilities could be replaced if necessary. This alternative would consider an online only permitting process with an educational component for overnight use. Self-registration stations within the wilderness area would no longer be provided. This alternative would also consider the use of pack goats. Quotas/use limits would be established for overnight and day use throughout the wilderness.

Park operations would continue to utilize non-mechanized equipment and transport to the extent practicable and allowable under Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act.

Preliminary Draft Alternative Maps

The maps for preliminary draft alternatives B, C, and D follow. There is no map for the no action alternative as this alternative would continue current management and the zones developed through the wilderness stewardship planning process do not apply to current management.

Alternative B
Wilderness Zones
Olympic National Park

1
5
2F/S
6
3F/S
Non-Wilderness
4
Stock Trails

Map Date 3.11.2014

Makah Indian
Reservation

Ozette Indian
Reservation

Quileute Indian
Reservation

Hoh Indian
Reservation

Quinault
Indian
Reservation

Lower Elwha Klallam
Indian Reservation

Jamestown
S'Klallam
Indian
Reservation

Colonel
Bob
Wilderness

Wonder Mt.
Wilderness

The
Brothers
Wilderness

Buckhorn
Wilderness

Alternative C
Wilderness Zones
Olympic National Park

▬	1
▬	5
▬	2F/S
▬	6
▬	3F/S
▬	Non-Wilderness
▬	4
┈┈┈	Stock Trails

Map Date 3.11.2014

Makah Indian
Reservation

Ozette Indian
Reservation

Quileute Indian
Reservation

Hoh Indian
Reservation

Quinault
Indian
Reservation

Colonel
Bob
Wilderness

Wonder Mt.
Wilderness

The
Brothers
Wilderness

Buckhorn
Wilderness

Lower Elwha Klallam
Indian Reservation

Jamestown
S'Klallam
Indian
Reservation

Alternative D
Wilderness Zones
Olympic National Park

1	
5	
3F/S	
2F/S	
6	
4	Non-Wilderness
	Stock Trails

Map Date 3.11.2014

We want to hear your thoughts!

Questions to Consider:

1) Is this a sufficient range of alternatives? If not, please provide further suggestion(s).

2) What do you like about the alternatives?

3) Are there specific elements you feel should be changed? If yes, how would you change them?

How to Comment:

There are several ways to provide your comments:

- Access additional information and provide comments online at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild;

- Attend a public meeting; or

- Mail comments to:

  Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent
  ATTN: WSP Preliminary Draft Alternatives
  Olympic National Park
  600 E. Park Avenue
  Port Angeles, WA 98362

The comment period for the preliminary draft alternatives ends on May 17, 2014. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be publicly available at any time. Comments made by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.

Planning Phase	Tentative Timeframe	Opportunities for Public Input
Public Comment on Preliminary Draft Alternatives	Now (Spring 2014)	Review the information provided in this letter and on the planning website, attend a public meeting and/or submit your comments online.
Prepare Draft WSP/EIS	Summer/Fall 2014	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild
Public Comment on Draft WSP/EIS	Winter/Spring 2015	Review the draft WSP/EIS, attend a public meeting and/or submit your comments online.
Prepare Final WSP/EIS	Spring/Summer 2015	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymwild
Release of Final WSP/EIS	Summer/Fall 2015	
Record of Decision	Fall 2015	
Implementation of WSP	Fall/Winter 2015 Onward	