



WELCOME!

To the Olympic National Park Mountain Goat Management Plan/EIS Public Scoping Open House

Because of your interest in Olympic National Park, we are requesting your input in the development of a Mountain Goat Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) for Olympic National Park. Your participation is vital to our planning process.

Public Scoping Open House

5:00 to 7:00pm

Please Sign-in



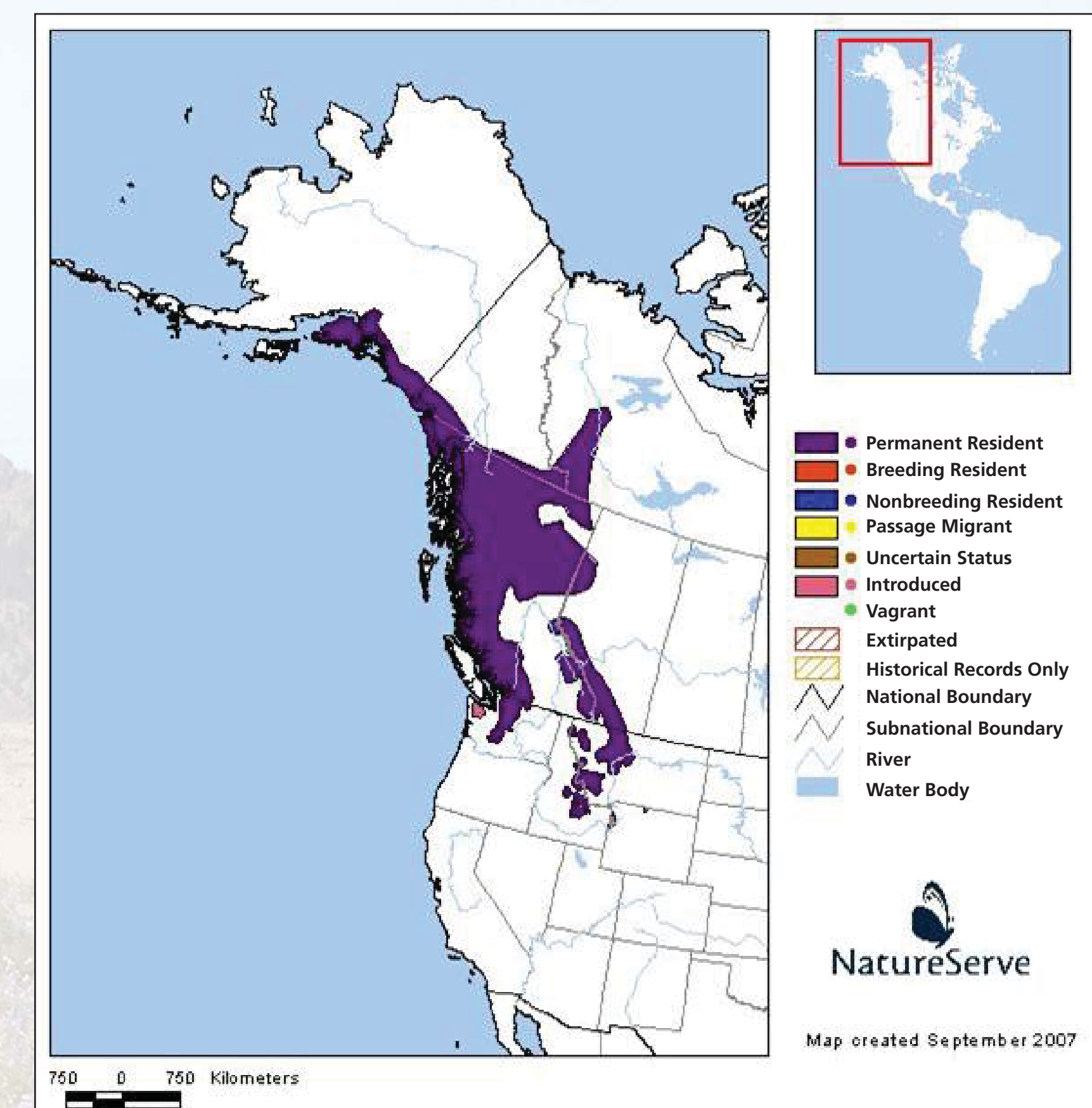
ABOUT MOUNTAIN GOATS

Habitat: The mountain goat inhabits the Rocky Mountains and Cascade Range and other mountain regions of the Western Cordillera of North America, from Washington, Idaho and Montana through British Columbia and Alberta, into the southern Yukon and southeastern Alaska. Mountain goats are primarily an alpine and subalpine species. The animals usually stay above the tree line throughout the year but will migrate seasonally to higher or lower elevations within that range. Winter migrations to low-elevation mineral licks can often take them several kilometers through forested areas.

Diet: Mountain goats are herbivores and spend most of their time grazing. Their diets include grasses, herbs, sedges, ferns, mosses, lichens, and twigs and leaves from the low-growing shrubs and conifers of their high-altitude habitat.

Salt Licks: The shift to succulent green vegetation each spring alters the mountain goats' mineral balance which may cause them to seek salt licks. Calcium, potassium, and magnesium plus lesser quantities of sodium and phosphorus found in the lick help replace the elements goats typically lose from their bones during the winter. Additional explanations for seeking salt licks include: an acquired taste for salts; a need for the minerals as a digestive aid; and more intensive social interactions.

Reproduction: Mountain goats reach sexual maturity at about 30 months. Breeding occurs in late October through early December, at which time billies (males) and nannies participate in a mating ritual. Mature billies will stare at nannies for long periods, dig rutting pits, and fight each other. After the breeding, males and females move away from each other, with the adult billies breaking up into small bands of two or three individuals. Nannies form loose-knit nursery groups of up to 50 animals. Kids (young goats) are born in the spring (late May or early June) after a six-month gestation period.





BACKGROUND

History of Mountain Goats in the Park:

- The mountain goat is not native to the Olympic Peninsula, having been introduced in the 1920s. By the early 1980s, the goat population in the park grew to over 1,000 individuals. Several hundred goats were removed during the 1980s, reducing the population to less than 400 by 1990. The population was stable at approximately 300 goats from 1994-2004, however it was observed to be increasing at a 5% annual rate in 2011.
- The original need to manage the goat population was driven by ecological concerns related to the impact of goats on the park's natural resources, particularly sensitive vegetation communities. New concerns were raised in 2010 when a visitor was fatally gored by a mountain goat while hiking on a park trail.
- The park has updated its Mountain Goat Action Plan (part of the Olympic National Park Nuisance and Hazardous Animal Management Plan) in 2011. This plan addresses mountain goat behavior and seeks to minimize the potential for hazardous goat-human encounters. Planning and compliance is needed to address overall management of the mountain goat population within the park.



What this plan/EIS will accomplish:

This effort will result in a plan that provides for overall management of mountain goats and considers the non-native goats' effects on natural processes and habitats, as well as visitor safety.

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) EIS process, the NPS will evaluate different approaches for managing mountain goats in Olympic National Park.



PROJECT AREA





PURPOSE & NEED

Purpose for Taking Action

The park's ***purpose*** in taking action is to develop a plan for managing the population of exotic mountain goats in Olympic National Park.

Need for Taking Action

Mountain goats were introduced to the Olympic Mountains prior to the formation of the park, and have since colonized the entire range with the majority of the population residing within the park.

Mountain goats have a high affinity for salts and natural salt licks within their native range. There are no natural salt licks in the Olympic Mountains and mountain goats have learned to seek salts from humans. In high use areas within the park, mountain goats have become habituated to the point that they are a nuisance and may be hazardous to park visitors.

Based on NPS policy, the park needs to manage exotic mountain goats to:

1. reduce their interference with natural processes, native species and natural habitats and
2. reduce the potential hazards mountain goats pose to public safety.



OBJECTIVES

Plan/EIS Objectives

- Develop a scientifically based method for the management of exotic mountain goat populations in an extensive alpine wilderness area.
- Protect the natural resources and environments that are unique to the park.
- Reduce the potential for visitor safety issues associated with mountain goats in the park.
- Further public understanding of Olympic's alpine ecosystems and native species and the ecology and conservation of mountain goats in their native range.
- Protect the biosphere reserve and natural heritage designations of Olympic National Park.
- Protect Olympic National Park's wilderness character.
- Work cooperatively with co-managers of mountain goats in Washington State (USFS, WDFW, and tribes).





ISSUES

Issues are environmental, social, and economic concerns or problems that may occur if current management continues (no action) or if the alternatives/alternative elements which are being considered in this plan/EIS are implemented.

Issues describe concerns or “obstacles” to achieving a plan’s purpose.

Possible issues which may be associated with this plan/EIS include:

Soils of alpine and subalpine areas are thin and fragile and are easily eroded if disturbed by mountain goats from wallows, trails or grazing areas.

As the goat population increases, risks of local extinction to rare and/or endemic (only found locally) plants could increase.

The mountain goats are a nuisance and safety hazard to park visitors and employees in backcountry areas where they try to get at sources of salt from park visitors.

Mountain goats in Olympic National Park continue to compromise wilderness, biosphere reserve and world heritage values and the scientific value of a relatively pristine ecosystem.

Issues will help to identify impact topics which will be evaluated in this plan/EIS.



IMPACT TOPICS

Impact topics are topics which will be considered and evaluated in detail in this plan/EIS.

Existing environmental conditions associated with each impact topic will be described.

Potential consequences to each impact topic which could occur from the continuation of current management (no action), or that could occur as a result of implementation of the alternatives/alternative elements being considered in this plan/EIS, will be analyzed.

Initial list of impact topics to be considered in this plan/EIS

- Soils and Geology
- Vegetation
- Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat
- Goat Biology
- Rare, Unique, Threatened, or Endangered Species
- Wilderness
- Topography
- Soundscapes
- Land Management Adjacent to the Park
- Cultural/Historic Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Visitor and Employee Safety
- Park Management and Operations

Please provide us with your thoughts about these initial lists of issues and impact topics, and offer any ideas you might have for additional issues and impact topics that the NPS should consider.



PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

NEPA requires federal agencies to:

- Consider a range of alternatives and;
- Fully evaluate all reasonable alternatives that address the purpose of and need for the action, including the No Action alternative.

The following is a list of preliminary concepts that have been developed so far by NPS staff.



Please provide us with your thoughts about this initial list, and offer any ideas you might have for additional alternatives for managing mountain goats.

No Action Alternative: The continuation of current management consisting primarily of monitoring, control and aversive conditioning of nuisance animals as staffing and resources allow.

Combination of Alternative Concepts: This would be a hybrid alternative combining two or more alternative concepts.

Increased Nuisance Control: Provide increased management/nuisance control (aversive conditioning or lethal removal) of habituated mountain goats and habituated bands of mountain goats in high visitor conflict areas.

Capture and Translocation: Capture and translocate mountain goats to the Washington Cascades and potentially to other appropriate receiving locations.

Removal: Remove all mountain goats through lethal means.



NEPA PROCESS & TIMELINE

When a federal agency prepares a plan like this one, it triggers the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of its proposed action, and alternatives to that proposal, before making a decision on what action to take.

In this case, the National Park Service has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared to complete the NEPA review for the mountain goat management plan/EIS.

NEPA also requires federal agencies to involve the public when making decisions with the potential for environmental impacts.

Public involvement opportunities are provided during scoping and upon release of the Draft Plan/EIS.

The current set of meetings is a part of initial scoping, which provides an early way for you to learn about and provide input into this plan/EIS process.

Steps in this plan/EIS process and anticipated timeline:	
Summer 2014	Public Scoping
Summer 2015	Draft Plan/EIS Release and Public Comment
Winter 2015 - 2016	Final Plan/EIS Release
Spring 2016	NPS Record of Decision

WE ARE
HERE



HOW TO COMMENT

Options for Public Commenting

1. Submit comments electronically (preferred method) at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olyngoat>
2. Submit comments in-person at this meeting.
3. Submit written comments at the park's offices in Port Angeles or by mail to:

Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362-6798

If you would like to stay informed about this project, please include your full name and address and/or email address with the comments, or visit the project website, so you can be added to the mailing list for future notices about this process.



All comments must be postmarked and all electronic comments must be submitted no later than 60 days from the date the Notice of Intent is published in the Federal Register. The deadline for submitting comments is September 19, 2014.

You should be aware that your entire comment – including personal identifying information, such as your address, phone number, and email address – may be made public at any time. While you can ask in your comment that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, the National Park Service cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.