



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 18 2014

## Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Pacific West Region

From: Acting Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

Subject: Request for Policy Waiver—Emergency Response, Enchanted Valley Chalet Environmental Assessment, Olympic National Park

This is in response to your request for a waiver from the provisions of the Director's Order 12 Handbook (Handbook) that impose requirements for an Environmental Assessment (EA) that go beyond the minimum requirements for EA content and public involvement found in the Department of the Interior (DOI) NEPA regulations at 43 CFR part 46 (specifically, 43 CFR 46.305 and 46.310). Since the Handbook provisions are not imposed by CEQ, the Departmental Manual, or some other higher authority, it is within the authority of the Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, to waive those provisions.

I understand that recent storms and high flows have resulted in the Quinault River's main channel shifting by at least 15 feet in the past several months, and that as a result, the river has undercut the historic Enchanted Valley Chalet by six to eight feet. I further understand that chalet is in danger of falling into the East Fork of the Quinault River, which could adversely impact the streambed, hydrology, water quality, fisheries, other associated natural resources, and local wilderness character, and that the increasing instability of the chalet poses safety concerns to both wilderness users and park staff.

I am aware that based on the need to take immediate action to mitigate harm to life, property, and important natural, cultural, and historic resources the park, through my office, consulted with the DOI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) in order to make alternative arrangements for NEPA compliance because there did not seem to be enough time to complete an EA prior to taking action to keep the chalet from falling into the river. I am also aware that because action would not be taken for several weeks, OEPC responded that the appropriate course of action would be to prepare a focused, concise EA pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality and DOI guidance.

Based on discussions between the park, your office, and my office, I understand that if an EA is to be prepared within the timeframe necessary to take action, the park will not be able to comply with many provisions found in the Handbook, including but not limited to the requirement to conduct public scoping and the requirement for a 30-day review of an EA. I understand that OEPC concurs with granting a waiver from the Handbook provisions that impose requirements beyond those found in the regulations, so that the EA can be prepared in a timely manner.

In light of the discussions that have occurred between the park, your office, and my office, it is clear to me that your request is justifiable and appropriate to the situation. I therefore approve your request and waive the Handbook provisions that impose requirements for the EA beyond those found in the DOI NEPA regulations.

This waiver is specific to the EA that is being prepared for the Enchanted Valley Chalet emergency response actions, and should not be construed as setting a precedent for similar waivers.