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Olympic National Park GMP
NPS Denver Service Center-Planning
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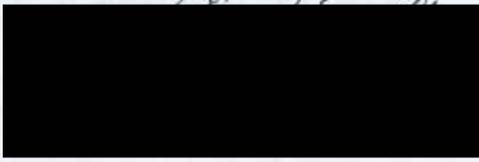
Sirs:

Enclosed are my comments on the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Olympic National Park.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft and be a part of the public participation process.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature]



Public Comments
Draft General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement
Olympic National Park

Overview –

It is obvious that considerable work went into the preparation of the Draft. It is a comprehensive document that I believe considers the significant factors required to make decisions on the future direction of the Park. It recognizes increased public demands on the Park and the obligation to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the area, when these needs often represent conflicting interests.

Plan –

The size and complexity of this Draft is intimidating, which may have discouraged some public participation and comment. It would have been beneficial to have an Executive Summary of the proposed major changes in direction from current management plans and practices. This is not accomplished by either the Summary or the "Guide to This Document". Some information that was included in Questions and Answers as a separate document should have been included in the Draft.

Open House –

I attended the open house held in Port Angeles on August 18. I had expected a panel discussion of the Draft followed by a questions and answers period with those attending. The "zone" approach to the open house had some advantages in that it enabled individuals to focus on their areas of interest, but did not allow the benefit of group discussion. It was a manageable approach, but one that in my opinion resulted in less meaningful exchange of information and public participation.

I was disappointed that the National Park Service representatives did not appear to be more knowledgeable of the Plan and specifically could not give me definitions of the use zones without referring to the Plan. I was aware the definitions were included in the Plan, but expected the representative to have an adequate working knowledge of the document to be able to describe the general differences in the zones. Other questions I had could only be answered by a different representative in the room, even though I considered the questions to be rather basic. In general, National Park Service representatives were service oriented, but not as knowledgeable as I expected. I planned to spend two hours at the Open House, but left after a half hour realizing that there was little to be gained by staying longer. I felt the Open House was more of a gesture to the public than a meaningful event.

Comments on the Alternatives –

Headquarters/Visitor Center:

Alternative D seems to be a reasonable approach recognizing increased public demands and the need to provide information on the Park.

Hurricane Ridge:

The preferred alternative is similar to the current management plan and seems to be a reasonable approach.

Elwha:

I believe this area has the potential for much higher use in the future. Alternative D seems to recognize this.

Lake Crescent:

I am skeptical of proposals to expand the external boundaries of the Park. There is a certain arrogance that assumes the government, and the National Park Service specifically, is better able to protect resources than is the private sector. In fact, both the public and private sectors historically have a poor record of protecting the environment. There definitely are adverse economic impacts to the acquisition of these private lands and questionable benefits. The State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is best able to work with the private landowners to protect the Beardslee and Crescenti trout spawning areas.

Sol Duc:

This is another area of potentially higher increased public use. Alternative D seems to adequately recognize those demands.

Ozette:

The very narrow boundary around Lake Ozette makes the area difficult to administer. I agree that acquisition of some private lands to improve the situation would be desirable, provided that any acquisitions are through purchase from willing sellers. I do not agree with the "take line" shown in Alternative D which would increase the size of the park for the stated reason of protecting the watershed and scenic values. A more modest and reasonable adjustment of the boundary should be considered.

Mora:

No comment.

Hoh:

The management plan outlined in Alternative D seems reasonable.

Kalaloch:

My questions regarding this management plan were not answered at the open house. I would like to know the areas proposed for relocating the visitor center and the Kalaloch Lodge and the estimated costs associated with this recommendation. It was explained to me that this information would be determined once the recommendation was approved. It seems to me that these are essential factors in making any relocation decisions. The expanded day use zone is appropriate.

Queets:

I disagree with the proposal to expand the Park boundaries for the stated purpose of protecting the watershed.

Quinault:

I agree with Alternative D.

Staircase:

No comment.

Dosewallips:

No comment.

Deer Park:

I agree with Alternative D.

Wilderness:

I agree with Alternative D.

Other –

I concur with the mitigative measures common to the alternatives.

There is the general statement that any proposed development will have a positive impact on the local economies. This is a broad pronouncement with no supporting data or rationale.

I did not find adequate recognition and consideration of a major seismic event during the life of the Plan. This is a definite possibility and should be a factor in the analysis of each of the alternatives.

I am opposed to proposals to expand the Olympic National Park boundaries for the purpose of protecting watersheds, wildlife, and scenic values. Management concerns outside of the existing Park boundaries are concerns similar to those faced by many of the nations' national parks. Increasing the size of the parks only pushes the problem on to another drainage. The focus of the General Management Plan should be on the management of those lands within the boundary of the Park. In this regard I saw nothing in the Draft that addressed private land holdings within the Park boundaries.

[Redacted]

Sequim, WA 98382

[Redacted]