

September 29, 2006

Carla McConnell
Olympic National Park-GMP
National Park Service
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO. 80225

Dear Ms. McConnell:

These comments are in reference to the General Management Plan and are the opinions from the Port Angeles Business Association. This group represents over one hundred of our major businesses in Port Angeles.

In the plan, there are four options that are being suggested. In each of the options there are good points and some that should be looked at further. Taking any one of the options and saying, "This is the one", is probably not the best way to go.

We suggest prioritizing things that have to be done by concentrating on spending. If funds are lacking, which is what we are hearing, priority should be given to the needs to keep the park running efficiently and for the benefit of the park visitors.

One of the problems that we have seen is that most of the Visitor Centers in the park are not in compliance with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards first issued in 1984. Priority should be given to making sure that the facilities do comply.

We believe that the budget should then concentrate on enhancing the visitors experience. Many of the attractions that were visitor favorites have been severely cut back or eliminated completely. Some of these are campfire talks by the rangers, walking and informational tours for visitors and evening programs, to name a few.

Campgrounds, buildings and back country amenities have either been eliminated or are in terrible disarray. We believe that this is part of the visitors experience and should be high on the priority list for spending

rather than new construction projects. Reducing the maintenance backlog should be a major priority.

Having quality concessionaires for the various visitor centers and lodges should be a priority but we believe that it should go a step further by putting priority on locally made souvenirs and gifts in the gift shops. If I was a visitor from outside our area, it would frustrate me to buy a sweatshirt that says "Hurricane Ridge" then look inside and see that it was made in China. We believe that the local economies could benefit from purchasing locally.

We feel that spending money for additional park property should be the least of all priorities. Why expand when we don't have the funds to maintain what we have.

There are far reaching considerations on land acquisitions as well. In our area, most of our property is in park property. We have an obligation to the private industry in our area to keep "Living Wage Jobs". Local loggers and forestry related jobs could suffer considerably by the expansion of the park in our area. Great care should be taken when expanding.

To summarize. Spend money on taking care of what we currently have and improving the visitors experience by making our park more accessible and attractive. Lets spend our tax dollars on these priorities before spending money to expand.

We hope our comments will assist in you decisions.

Sincerely;

Orville Campbell
President