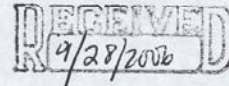


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MERRILL & RING
Timber & Land Management



Carla McConnell
Olympic National Park – GMP
National Park Service
Denver Service Center - Planning
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225

September 7, 2006

Dear Miss McConnell,

Thank you for an opportunity to comment on the Draft General Management Plan for Olympic National Park.

I recently attended an open house sponsored by the Park. The Park staff was on hand to inform the public of their plans. Comments were accepted in writing and by taped recordings. It was unfortunate that an open public forum at which local citizens could speak was not allowed, because the passion of an individual's position was lost to the Park as well as to the other participants.

I spoke briefly to Park Superintendent Bill Laitner about Merrill & Ring lands east of Lake Ozette. His position was that "the lands east of Lake Ozette are cut over anyway. So what does it matter?"

Here's why it matters. Those lands are managed for all their resources, with the forest managed for a sustained yield of forest products on an even flow. The lands provide an income for the owners, employment and recreation for the community, taxes for the layers of government, and habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species. Merrill & Ring has been practicing responsible, long-term stewardship since 1888, when the Merrill and Ring families began management of their lands on the Olympic Peninsula.

Some real-life examples may further the Park's understanding of why these lands matter. Within the past year, crews have worked on silvicultural projects including brushing and weeding, as well as juvenile spacing of conifer trees. Additional crews are working to eradicate exotic species like knotweed and reforest riparian areas with native forest species. Commercial thinning crews have harvested portions of stands, leaving other trees to grow into older age classes. Road maintenance crews have been caring for the roads to allow for continued use with minimal impact to aquatic resources. Road construction crews are bettering roads to comply

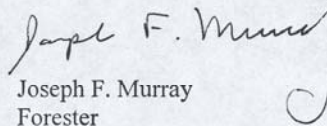
Merrill & Ring Tree Farm • 11 Pysht River Road
Clallam Bay, Washington 98326
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with the new Road Maintenance and Abandonment standards established by Forest Practices regulations. The supplemental bear feeding program employs people who feed the bears in the spring to reduce damage to the forest. All of this work is monitored by foresters and biologists who plan and lay out the various activities, while surveying the streams and forest to insure protection of fish and terrestrial habitat. In addition, there are crews who cultivate and harvest minor forest products.

Merrill & Ring has worked for years with other landowners, tribes, all layers of government and local citizens to develop and implement a recovery plan for the Lake Ozette Sockeye while trying to maintain a viable economic base for the community.

Perhaps these comments will inspire the Park to reassess their beliefs about the commercial forest and develop an understanding of forests where people live and work. The Park provides numerous public presentations, solicits written and taped comments, and goes to great lengths to include this input in publications to document the public process. It is unclear; however, to what extent this solicited input influences Park policies. I would recommend that the Park take a less imperial approach and talk with the people, not at them. We will share with the Park the names and contact information of some of the families whose livelihood will be taken away if the lands east of Lake Ozette are removed from the commercial forest land base. Olympic National Park should develop a plan around 'Alternative A' which allows for the maintenance of existing park lands, roads and developed areas.

Sincerely,


Joseph F. Murray
Forester