



**North
Olympic
Peninsula**

Visitor & Convention Bureau

PEPC 191176

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 North Olympic Peninsula Visitor & Convention Bureau. We promote our area to visitors and advocate for the tourism industry on the greater North Olympic Peninsula region.

Each of the four options put forth in the plan have positive and negative impacts on the people and businesses of the region. Our perspective is to keep Olympic Park intact, expand visitor services whenever and wherever possible, upgrade facilities and even add facilities as appropriate. However, we strongly feel that staying within the current park boundaries and parameters is acceptable. Expansion of the park is not necessary. ONP is a jewel, but the vast majority of the park is accessible to only a few. Let's interpret it more, thru signage, in centers and in person. We want people who visit our park to understand and celebrate its diversity and richness, not just stand at the viewpoint and check it off their list.

Campgrounds, buildings and back country amenities have either been eliminated or are in disrepair. We believe that this is part of the visitors experience and should be high on the priority list for spending. Reducing the maintenance backlog throughout the park should be a major priority.

We feel that spending money for additional park property should not be on the 20 year plan and should be the least of all priorities. Expansion is irresponsible considering the reality of the constant struggle to keep funding levels adequate, and it often turns park neighbors into adversaries. With nearly a million acres of park to explore and enjoy, energy is better spent on taking care of what we have.

Following are some area-specific comments:

Headquarters, ONP Vist Ctr & Heart of Hills

We would suggest you focus on Option D. We receive many requests for better public transportation to and within the park. This option seems to help in this area. However we suggest you not only keep Heart of the Hills Campground but expand it to make it more user friendly for larger RVs, and also offer RV hook ups with water and power. (No generator use & no longer than seven day stay)

Hurricane Ridge & Obstruction Point

Having Hurricane Ridge is a universally popular tourist destination, one which is relatively easy for the motorized tourist to access and see the broad vistas of the Park. If the road were to be open more often and more consistently it would be a big plus to our business community. With that in mind we would like to see better snow removal for the ridge road with the opportunity for alternative transportation access. Also allow for significant upgrades of ski area facilities. Recommend putting ski area operations out to bid for a private developer and allow them to enlarge facility.

-We also encourage you to allow Hurricane Ridge Road to be used for Bicycle special events. This ride would be very popular as a hill climb, or part of an organized tour event. Putting a limit on the use to no more than three times per year would be acceptable.

Elwha

-This section is going to be going through major changes in the years to come, as the dams are removed. We like your approach to the growth with the comments in option D

Lake Crescent

-Improving the trail on the North shore of the lake is an important step. We need to have another option for cyclists and get them off 101. Of the options we agree most with option C. Lake Crescent is known as a unique tourism destination and better access would benefit the visitor. Improvement of facilities and the trail system is important, however we do not agree with increasing the boundaries of the park.

Sol Duc

-The Sol Duc area is very popular and definitely would be used more if it were open for a longer season. Therefore we agree with option C

Ozette

-We agree with option D but only with these adjustments:

*improve Ozette Campground to handle larger RVs with power and water. *Allow non-motorized and motorized boating.

However, we suggest that no wake zones be established to help separate the users, which would allow for a better experience for all, and promote safety.

*Park boundaries stay at current levels

Explore partnerships to acquire land easements to protect fisheries and the water quality of the lake

Mora

-We like Option C except we would like the Park to take it a step further. We encourage ONP to do a land swap to allow Quileute Tribe to have access to some higher land, and ONP have an official trailhead and defined access to second beach. This would make a much better trailhead and also allow the tribe to have a safe haven during severe storms.

Hoh

-We agree with the ideas proposed in option D

Kalaloch

-This area definitely needs upgrading. It has much more potential if the facilities were improved. Therefore we agree with option D

Queets

We would like the Park to pursue option C.

Quinault

-The improved trail and biking opportunities in C would be very welcome. This option would increase the visitor access and make the area more of a destination. We encourage option C.

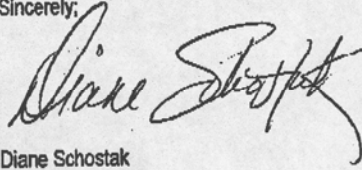
Staircase

-We agree with option C with the following suggestion.

-Access to the park would be improved for year-round use, if feasible, with the U. S. Forest Service.

We hope our comments will assist in you making decisions that will serve the public and the park for the next 20 years.

Sincerely,



Diane Schostak
Executive Director