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QUILEUTE TRIBAL COUNCIL

POST OFFICE BOX 279
LA PUSH, WASHINGTON 98350-0279
TELEPHONE (360) 374-6163
FAX (360) 374-6311

QUILEUTE

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September 19, 2006

Ms. Carla McConnell
Olympic National Park General Management Plan
National Park Service
Denver Service Center -- Planning
PO Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

RE: Quileute Tribe's Comments on the Draft General Management Plan for Olympic National Park.

Dear Ms. McConnell,

The Quileute Tribe submits these comments in response to the Draft General Management Plan for Olympic National Park. For thousands of years, the Quileute have made the Olympic Peninsula our home. Our lands once covered most of what is now occupied by the Olympic National Park while the Tribe finds itself confined to a small reservation. Save for the ocean to our west, on all sides we are surrounded by Park lands.

As a result, we are one of the communities most affected by the proposed General Management Plan. In a letter dated August 30, 2006, the Quileute Department of Natural Resource set out many of the Tribe's concerns, including the Park's obligation to respect our treaty rights. In this letter we confine our comments to the Park's plan to significantly expand its land base and adjust its boundaries. This aspect of the proposed Management Plan is of paramount concern to the Tribe. At the moment, the Tribe cannot support those parts of the plan.

For many decades now the Park has been encroaching on our reservation, using portions of those lands granted to us by President Cleveland without our permission and without offering any compensation. Meanwhile, the Tribe finds itself literally with its back against the ocean in dire need of more land. We have family homes, our school and key administrative buildings sitting in the tsunami zone. We need to move our people up onto safer and higher ground. We also need land to house our people for now and for generations to come. A recent housing survey showed that approximately 14% of those living in La Push are homeless today. We also know that many tribal members would like to return to La Push but cannot do so because of the lack of housing. For a tribal community this is significant problem.

We appreciate that the Park has recently entered in to negotiations to try and resolve our long-standing dispute. However, before the Park asks the public and Congress to adjust its own boundaries to increase its land base, it needs to finally resolve all of its boundary disputes with

its neighbors, including the Tribe. From a management perspective it only makes sense to look at making all of the necessary adjustments to the Park's boundary in one package. From a fairness perspective, it only seems just that the Park be required to resolve claims that it is encroaching on small land holdings of the Tribe and other Park neighbors before it is allowed to expand its domain.

The Quileute Tribe will remain an active opponent of the Park's expansion efforts until the Park reaches a fair settlement with the Tribe. We look forward to working with the Park to make that happen soon.

Sincerely,

Russell Woodruff, Sr.
Chairman
Quileute Tribal Council