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U.S. Department of the Interior
Olympic National Park

# Wildland Fire Management Plan: Public Scoping Meeting

Welcome! Please sign in and help yourself to the handouts available.

The meeting will begin with a short presentation on wildland fire management at the park followed by an “open house” where park staff will be available to discuss the fire management plan and answer your questions.

Olympic Complex 2008. Over 30 fires were ignited by lightning in August 2008. Several of the fires were suppressed due to close proximity to the park boundary and values at risk while others were monitored. Several of the fires reached an estimated at 5 acres before rain put them out.

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# Purpose and Need:

- The park's purpose in taking action is to update the FMP in order to meet the most current NPS and federal wildland fire policies.

- The need for taking action is to have a plan that provides park managers the most current direction and guidance to assist when making decisions related to wildland fire activities.

Griff Fire, 2003

# Managing Wildland Fires in National Parks

**The National Park Service has evolved from *suppressing* fire to *managing* fire.**
All fires are different. Fire managers evaluate each one and determine the safest, most effective, and cost efficient strategies to manage it. Firefighter and public safety is always the top priority. Fires will always be suppressed where they threaten life or property. In other areas fires may be managed to burn as naturally as possible.

**All fires are closely monitored, and a variety of strategies may be used on different areas of a fire as needed.**

Depending on location, fires may be monitored on the ground or by air.

Firefighters will build a fireline (an area free of burnable vegetation) and use water or retardant to help suppress the fire perimeter in areas where it is threatening life or property.

In some areas, firefighters may confine a portion of the fire's spread by clearing a fireline or burning out (igniting a backfire along the inner edge of a fireline) to starve the fire of fuel.

Helicopters and airtankers may be used to drop water to cool some areas of the fire.

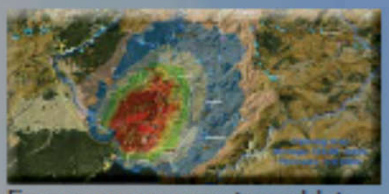
Firefighters use minimum impact tactics like using existing trails, roads, rivers, or rocky outcroppings as firelines when possible to reduce impacts on park resources.

Firefighters may protect sensitive resources like historic cabins with protective wrapping or sprinklers and by thinning fuels in the area.

Sometimes fire managers use prescribed fire to mimic the natural role of lightning fires. These fires are used to meet specific objectives and are only ignited when favorable weather exists.

Chainsaws or mechanical equipment may be used to thin vegetation in areas. This helps prevent large, intense wildfires. Sometimes vegetation is piled and burned when conditions are favorable.

Fire size and activity vary with changes in weather, topography, and vegetation.



Fire managers use computer models to help predict fire behavior and spread based on current and historic information.

Hot spots within the fire's perimeter may burn until put out by rain or snow.

After a fire, the forest is reborn in the nutrient rich ash that fertilizes the soil. Many plants are fire-adapted and some depend on fire for reproduction.

Many animals like to forage along the edges of burned areas and find cover in unburned areas. Standing dead trees provide habitat for cavity-nesting birds.


You may see smoke during your visit to the park. Intermittent travel delays and trail closures may be possible. Please slow down, turn your lights on, and watch for firefighters working along the road. For your safety, please do not stop along the road in the vicinity of the fire.

Fire managers work with state and local agencies to montor smoke impacts. Smoke may settle when air temperatures cool at night and in the early morning hours. Smoke usually lifts during the day. Breathing smoke is not healthy for anyone, but some people are at greater risk, including people with heart or lung disease, children, and the elderly. If it looks smoky, you may want to limit or eliminate exercise or other outdoor activities.

**www.nps.gov/fire**

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# Federal Wildland Fire Policy - Guiding Principles and Policy Statements

The following guiding principles and policy statements are excerpted from the Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001). These remain the foundational principles for Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (2009).

1. Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in every fire management activity.

2. The role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent will be incorporated into the planning process. Federal agency land and resource management plans set the objectives for the use and desired future condition of the various public lands.

3. Fire Management Plans, programs, and activities support land and resource management plans and their implementation.

4. Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities. Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost of either doing or not doing an activity. Net gains to the public benefit will be an important component of decisions.

5. Fire management programs and activities are economically viable, based upon values to be protected, costs, and land and resource management objectives. Federal agency administrators are adjusting and reorganizing programs to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. As part of this process, investments in fire management activities must be evaluated against other agency programs in order to effectively accomplish the overall mission, set short- and long-term priorities, and clarify management accountability.

6. Fire Management Plans and activities are based upon the best available science. Knowledge and experience are developed among all federal wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make these tools available to all fire managers.

7. Fire Management Plans and activities incorporate public health and environmental quality considerations.

8. Federal, State, tribal, local, interagency, and international coordination and cooperation are essential. Increasing costs and smaller work forces require that public agencies pool their human resources to successfully deal with the ever-increasing and more complex fire management tasks. Full collaboration among federal wildland fire management agencies and between the federal wildland fire management agencies and international, State, tribal, and local governments and private entities result in a mobile fire management work force available for the full range of public needs.

9. Standardization of policies and procedures among federal wildland fire management agencies is an ongoing objective. Consistency of plans and operations provides the fundamental platform upon which federal wildland fire management agencies can cooperate, integrate fire activities across agency boundaries, and provide leadership for cooperation with State, tribal, and local fire management organizations.

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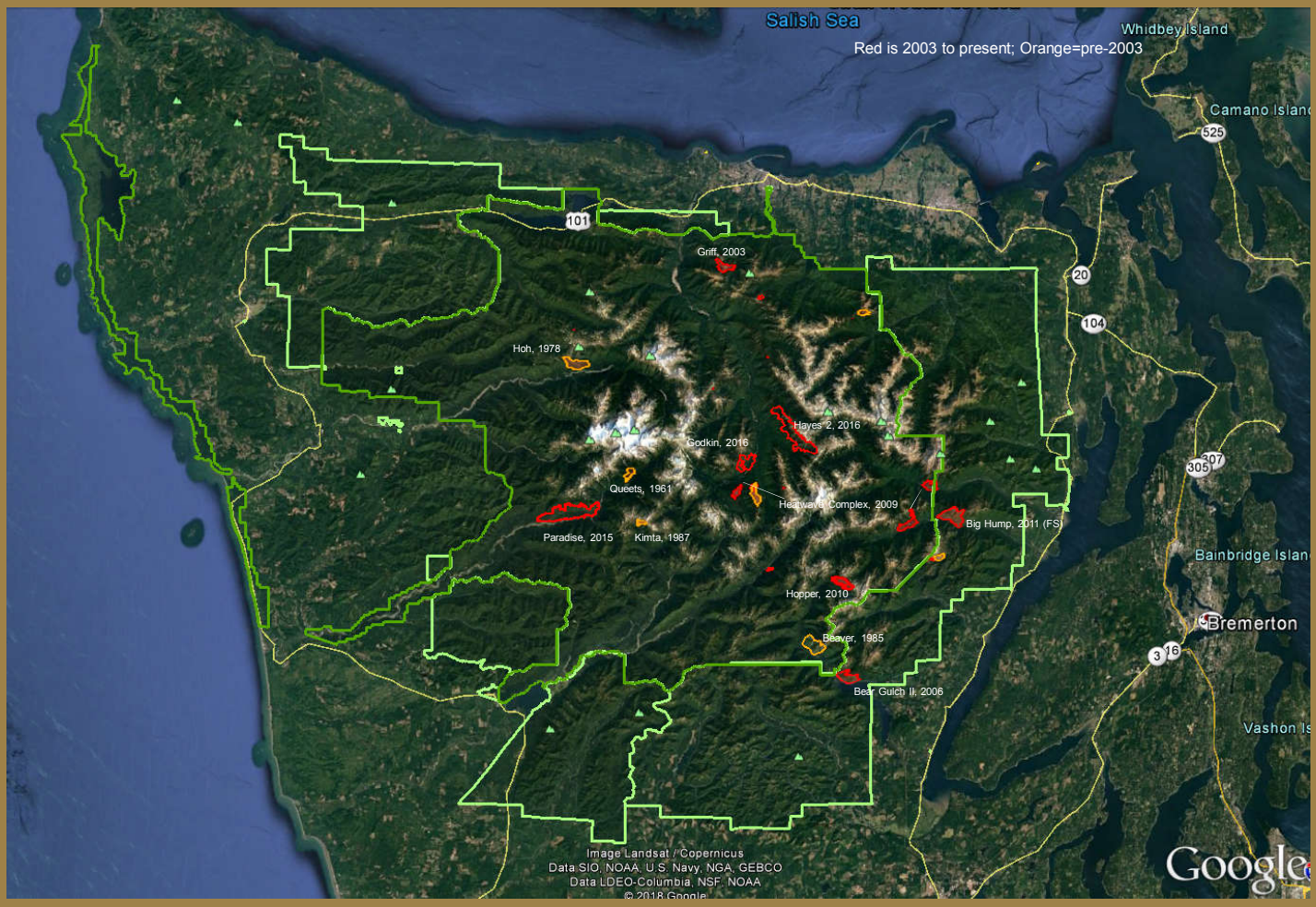
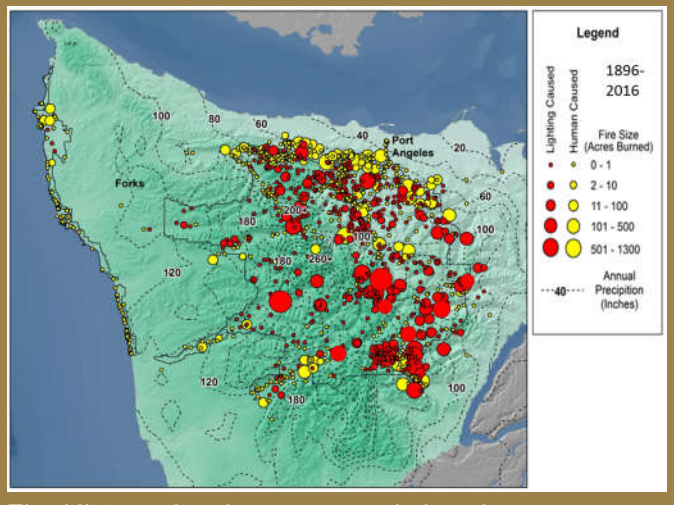
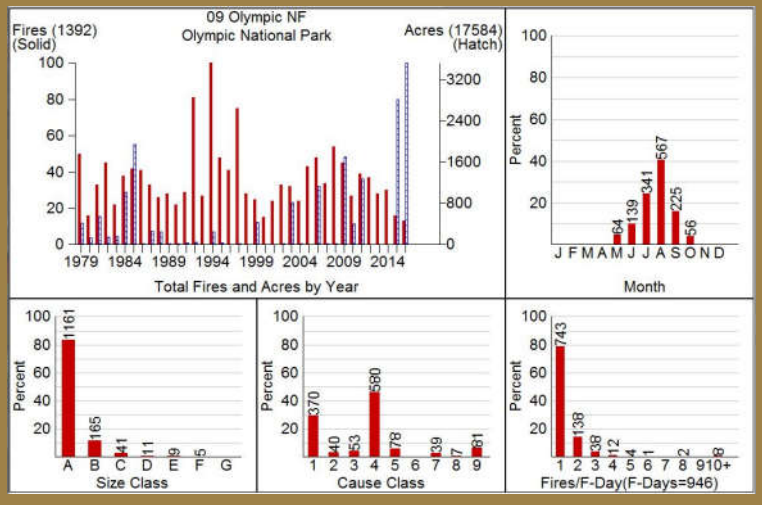
# Area Map with Large Fire History (1961-2017)




Fire History showing cause and size class over precipitation gradient map. Note the significant rain shadow effect.




Fire Occurrence Data, 1979 – 2016. (Including Olympic National Forest)

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# Fire Behavior


Green Fire, 2008


Paradise Fire, 2015


Constance Fire, 2009


Green Fire, 2008

In the Olympic Mountains, fire behavior can vary from smoldering/creeping fires to active crown fires. Fire behavior is dependent on a combination of fuels, topography, and weather. Critical fire weather patterns are the primary influence for active fire behavior. Fuel conditions also need to be dry enough to allow fire to burn and actively spread. Although recent wildfires have burned for weeks and even months, there are relatively few active fire growth days.


Griff Fire, 2003


10 Mile Fire, 2009


Hopper Fire, 2010


Cox Valley Fire, 2016


Paradise Fire, 2015

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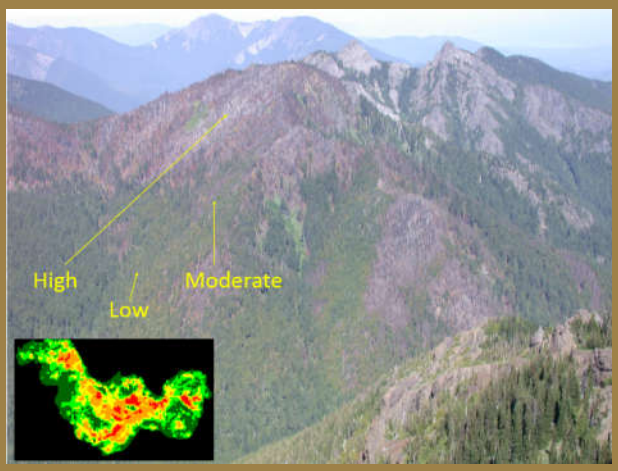
# Ecological Benefits Of Wildfires

- Forest ecosystems are dynamic and in continuous succession.
- Natural Disturbances provide for patches and gaps on the landscape.




Mixed severity fire pattern with areas low, moderate , and high severity areas provide various fire effects and create openings in forest canopies. Inset map is severity map showing Low (Green) to high (red) severity areas. (Griff Fire, 2003; photo taken 2004)

This picture shows the Chimney fire (1981) in foreground, with the Buckinghorse fire (2009) in background. Note open meadows and shrub fields with conifer reproduction in the 30 year old burn area, This shows forest succession. (Photo taken 2010)

- Heterogeneous landscapes increase biological diversity and can enhance wildlife habitat.
- Fires recycle nutrients and promote herbaceous and shrub growth.
- Fires maintain fire dependent species such as Douglas fir.

Low to moderate intensity fires leave a mosaic of burned and unburned and benefit Doug fir forests (10 Mile Fire, 2009)

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# Preliminary Alternatives

| Main Program Elements | Alternative A (No Action) | Alternative B |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Management Units | Three units: Exclusion, Conditional, Fire Use | Two units: Non-Wilderness, Wilderness |
| Wildfire Management to protect listed species habitat | • Maximum of 200 acres/year in northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat, and 600 acres once per five years in combined Conditional and Exclusion FMU<br>• Maximum of 500 acres/5 years outside northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet habitat in combined Conditional and Exclusion FMUs<br>• Conduct additional consultation with USFWS and environmental analysis if wildfires exceed the acreage limits | The NPS anticipates an average of 1200 acres of wildfire/year based on current conditions and recent fire history. This strategy allows for naturally caused wildfires to be managed as a natural process within designated wilderness areas in collaboration with interagency cooperators. This action would promote a more resilient landscape and reduce the potential for a catastrophic wildfire that could severely alter the habitat of federally-listed species. |
| Manual and Mechanical Treatment | Maximum of 200 acres/year | Maximum of 100 acres/year |
| Prescribed Fire (pile burning, debris disposal by fire, broadcast burning) | • 200 acres/year of pile burning<br>• Maximum of 75 acres over 5 years of debris disposal by fire<br>• Maximum of 125 acres over 5 years, with no more than 65 acres in any one year | • Maximum of 20 acres/year of pile burning and/or debris disposal by fire<br>• Broadcast burning would require further compliance and consultation<br>• Prescribed fire in wilderness would be dependent on the decisions made in the WSP/EIS and may require additional compliance |
| Wildland Decision Support Process | Wildland Fire Decision Support System | Same as Alternative A |
| Prevention | Public education | Same as Alternative A |
| Wilderness Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) | Programmatic compliance for initial response to wildfires and individual MRAs for each mechanical or prescribed treatment | Same as Alternative A |
| Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics | Tactics would continue to be used on all fire management activities | Same as Alternative A |
| Resource Advisors | Consider for all fires over 10 acres | As determined in WFDSS Decision |

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# NEPA and Where We Are in the Process?

| Steps of the Planning Process | Tentative Timeline | How you can be involved |
|---|---|---|
| Conduct internal scoping, define purpose and need, and develop preliminary alternatives | Summer/Fall 2017 | |
| *Conduct external scoping | Winter 2018 | Attend public meetings and provide your comments and ideas about the preliminary alternatives. |
| Analysis of public comment | Early Spring 2018 | |
| Refine alternatives | Spring 2018 | |
| Identify environmental impacts and select/develop preferred alternative | Spring/Summer 2018 | |
| Prepare draft plan/environmental document | Summer/Fall 2018 | |
| Public review of draft plan/environmental document | Fall 2018 | Attend public meetings and provide your comments about the Draft EA. |
| Analysis of public comment | Fall 2018 | |
| Prepare final plan/decision document | Fall 2018/Winter 2019 | |
| Release final plan/decision document to the public | Winter 2019 | |

*Current step in the planning process.

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## How to Comment

1. Submit comments electronically at:
   http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FMPscoping

2. Submit comments in-person at one of the public meetings.

3. Submit written comments by mail:
   Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum
   Olympic National Park – FMP Scoping
   600 East Park Avenue
   Port Angeles, WA 98362

Comments submitted by phone or email will not be accepted. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations also will not be accepted.

You should be aware that your entire comment – including personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and email address – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.