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For Immediate Release

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Final Mountain Goat Management Plan for Olympic National Park Released

PORT ANGELES, Wash. -- The National Park Service (NPS), the USDA Forest Service (USFS), and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) have released the Mountain Goat Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for managing non-native mountain goats in the Olympic Mountains. The NPS preferred alternative involves the relocation of the majority of mountain goats to USFS lands in the North Cascades forests and the lethal removal of the remaining mountain goats in the park.

The FEIS is available for public viewing at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OLYMgoat>. The plan's purpose is to allow Olympic National Park to reduce or eliminate the environmental damage created by non-native mountain goats and the public safety risks associated with their presence in the park.

“We are very pleased to collaborate with our partners the USDA Forest Service and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop the FEIS,” said Olympic National Park Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum. “Federal and state agencies are poised to begin the effort that will help grow a depleted population of mountain goats in the Cascades and eliminate their impact on the Olympic Peninsula.”

A 2016 population survey of mountain goats in the Olympic Mountains showed that the population increased an average of eight percent annually from 2004-2016. It has more than doubled since 2004 to about 625. The population is expected to grow by another 100 in just 2018. By 2023, the population could be nearly 1,000 goats. At the same time, mountain goats are native to the North Cascades Mountains, but exist in low numbers in many areas. Both the USFS and the WDFW have long been interested in restoring mountain goats to these depleted areas.

Public meetings to review the draft EIS were held in August 2017.

Approximately 2,300 comments were received on the DEIS and were used to develop the FEIS, which includes modified versions of alternatives C and D (the preferred alternative), other minor revisions, and the agencies' responses to public comments.

For the NPS, publication of the FEIS begins a 30-day wait period which is required before making a final decision on a proposed action. After the wait period, the NPS will sign a Record of Decision (ROD) documenting the final decision and course of action. At that time, the NPS will move forward to coordinate implementation of the plan and the selected alternative for summer 2018.

Following the publication of the FEIS, the USFS will issue a draft decision document (ROD), subject to the Agency's objection process, before making a final decision. Legal notices to initiate the objection period will be published in the newspapers of record for the three national forests involved in the plan: Olympic National Forest, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

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