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National Park Service Releases Record of Decision for Mountain Goat Management Plan for Olympic National Park

PORT ANGELES, Wash. - The National Park Service (NPS) has released its Record of Decision (ROD) for the Mountain Goat Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The selected action authorizes the park to proceed with this effort to relocate the majority of mountain goats to USDA Forest Service (USFS) lands in the North Cascades national forests and the lethal removal of the remaining mountain goats in the park. Approval of the ROD and EIS culminates an extensive public engagement and environmental impact analysis effort that began in 2014.

“We are very pleased to collaborate with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Forest Service to relocate mountain goats from the Olympic Peninsula,” said Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum. “In turn, we support the state, the U.S. Forest Service, and area tribes to re-establish sustainable populations of goats in the Washington Cascades, where goats are native, and populations have been depleted.”

A 2016 population survey of mountain goats in the Olympic Mountains showed that the population increased an average of eight percent annually from 2004 to 2016. It has more than doubled since 2004 to about 625. The population is expected to grow by another 100 this year. By 2023, the population could be nearly 1,000 goats. 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 (DEIS) were held in August 2017. Approximately 2,300 comments were received on the DEIS and were used to develop the final EIS, which includes modified versions of alternatives C and D (the preferred alternative), other minor revisions, and the agencies’ responses to public comments. The EIS was published on May 4, 2018.

The NPS will now begin coordinating strategies and logistics for capture and relocation operations that will begin in summer 2018.

The EIS, ROD, and other reference documents can be found on the NPS Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OLYMgoat>.

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