

Olympic National Park  
600 E. Park Avenue  
Port Angeles, WA 98362  
July 2, 2020

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Dear Friends,

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the final disposition of the Enchanted Valley Chalet (EVC or “chalet”) for Olympic National Park (ONP or “park”). The EA is available for public review and comment starting today through August 2, 2020. Your participation is important to our planning process. We hope you will attend the virtual public meeting and submit your electronic or written comments.

## Virtual Public Meeting

Given the current circumstances under the global coronavirus pandemic, ONP will be hosting a virtual public meeting on **July 15, 2020, from 5-6:30 PM PDT**. A presentation will be provided, beginning promptly at 5 PM, followed by a question and answer session. Details and instructions for accessing the virtual meeting are provided at the end of this newsletter.

## Background

The Enchanted Valley Chalet is located 13 miles up the Quinault River from the Graves Creek Trailhead, at approximately 2030 feet (619 meters) elevation, within the Congressionally-designated Daniel J. Evans Wilderness (designated in 1988). The two and a half story, 42’ x 28’ structure was built in 1930-31 by the Olympic Recreation Company, operated as a commercial business until 1943, and was used briefly as an Aircraft Warning Station during World War II. The chalet was purchased by the National Park Service in 1951 and had formerly been used for park administrative purposes. In 1953, the chalet reopened for public use, but limited maintenance and vandalism expedited the building’s deterioration and it was once again closed to public use. The chalet was used as a ranger station from 1954 to the end of the summer season in 2013, and a small portion of it (a small corner room on the first floor with an exterior door) was open to the public as only an emergency shelter from 1995 until the end of the summer season in 2013. The chalet was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a Category III (local significance) resource in 2007.

The chalet rests on the active floodplain of the Quinault River. The floodplain is comprised of unconsolidated sediment and channel migration across the floodplain is frequent and unpredictable. Over the decades since the park’s establishment, the river has been eroding away the terrace upon which the chalet was constructed. According to the Site Flood Hazards Survey report (available on the planning website), channel movement has been toward the eastern side of the valley since 1990 and the average rate of bank erosion is 5 meters per year. In early 2014, the bank had come to within 18 inches of the chalet. At that time, the park prepared a concise EA for the “Temporary Relocation of the Enchanted Valley Chalet for the Protection of the East Fork Quinault River,” which also included the development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). The MOA outlined several stipulations and states, “Once the chalet has been relocated, it will remain on temporary steel I-beams until a long-term decision can be reached through the NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] and NHPA [National Historic Preservation Act] processes. Both NEPA and NHPA will include participation with consulting and interested parties. The NEPA/NHPA processes shall begin within one year of execution of this MOA and will be complete before the expiration of this MOA which is five years after the signature date.”

The chalet was temporarily moved approximately 100 feet from the riverbank in September 2014. The chalet currently remains on the steel I-beams that were used to move it and also remains closed to public and administrative use. As of March 2019, the bank has once again eroded to within approximately 5 feet of the nearest corner of the chalet, and the nearest portion of the river channel is about 10 feet from the bank.

## **Purpose and Need for Taking Action**

The park's purpose in taking action is to determine the final disposition of the Enchanted Valley Chalet.

## **Overview of the Alternatives**

### **Alternative A - No Action**

The chalet would remain in its current location and on top of the steel I-beams that were used to move it in 2014. Also, it would remain closed to public and administrative use. No action would be taken to protect the chalet from the river, or the river from the chalet, and no maintenance activities would occur. Should damage occur to the chalet from natural hazards (such as, but not limited to, river encroachment, avalanche, lightning strike, flooding, tree fall, or fire), the damage would not be repaired. Additional compliance (NEPA and wilderness minimum requirements analysis) and consultation would be necessary if river encroachment causes the building to fall into the river. The building materials and I-beams would be removed only if it can be done safely.

The 2014 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) expired in August 2019. The park would continue to re-consult until a new MOA is completed. Remaining items of historic importance that were identified in the MOA may be packed out by staff or pack stock.

### **Alternative B - Dismantle and Remove the Chalet (Preferred Alternative)**

Under Alternative B, the chalet would be dismantled and removed. Large, heavy materials would be removed by helicopter such as the steel I-beams, cribbing, dimensional lumber, chimney, and stove, as well as painted and non-native materials. The 48-ton building was constructed primarily from native materials. Because of the large amount of these materials, some may be placed in small piles and burned onsite, and smaller portions would be removed by helicopter. The remainder of the materials would be left to decompose naturally. A Type 3 helicopter would be used to bring in tools and equipment and a Type 2 helicopter would be needed to fly out materials, the I-beams, and equipment. The Type 3 helicopter would be utilized during the summer (nesting) season to reduce potential effects on marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls. The larger, Type 2 helicopter would be utilized outside of murrelet and spotted owl nesting season to reduce the total number of flights that would otherwise occur. Overall, a maximum of 99 helicopter turns (approximately 11-12 days/80 hours of helicopter use) would be necessary. Equipment would include hydraulic jacks for lifting the chalet, various power tools (such as drills and reciprocating saws) for dismantling the internal temporary walls and shoring that provided rigidity in the chalet during the move in 2014, and a small suitcase generator would be required for power tool use, or to charge battery-operated tools. Other tools would include scaffolding, ladders, chainsaws, and rigging gear (such as a grip hoist, Lewis wrench and gas-powered wrenches).

Most of the chalet's important historic materials have already been removed from the building for safekeeping. Those that remain may be salvaged for the park's museum collections. The proposed action would be implemented over one year (approximately 24-26 weeks) by an NPS crew of 8 plus, intermittently, 1-2 packers and a string of 8 stock. Bunch Field, in the Quinault area, would be used as a helicopter staging area. Temporary closures would occur for trails and camp areas within the flight zone and Enchanted Valley during helicopter use. Work would not occur in the Quinault River.

### **Alternative C - Relocate the Chalet to another Location on the Terrace**

Under Alternative C, the chalet would be moved approximately 250 feet to another location on the surrounding terrace. The move would take place in two 125-foot increments over a 1- to 2-year period. The 2017 Site Flood Hazards Report (NPS 2017) suggests the site with the greatest chance for long term stability would be as close to the eastern valley-side terrace wall as is practical. The precise location would be selected to minimize damage to vegetation, particularly trees. This includes live, dead, fallen, and standing trees. At the new location the chalet would be placed on a new foundation and the chimney would be repaired. The foundation would be constructed of sustainable materials such as concrete and rock. Approximately 12 cubic yards of cement would be required and it may be possible to harvest some or all of the rock onsite. In this alternative, if hazards such as avalanche, fire, flooding, or treefall should damage or threaten the chalet, no action would be taken to relocate the structure again. If the river moves within 30 feet of the chalet's new location the building would be dismantled and removed as described in alternative B. This would be done only if park staff determine it is safe to do so.

The mechanism for moving the chalet would be similar to the process used to relocate the building in 2014. The relocation would be accomplished using hydraulic lifts, non-toxic soap, and the steel I-beams on which the chalet currently rests. The building would be moved in a direct line (it may be angled slightly to the right/east from its longest edge opposite the river toward the northeast) to the valley wall. The path the building would travel is located in the “area of interest” defined by the Site Flood Hazards survey (see figure 2 on page 16 in EA). Approximately 12 cottonwood or alder trees of up to 72” in diameter would be removed. Some minor leveling of the landscape would be done by hand.

A Type 3 helicopter would be used to fly support materials such as additional cribbing, hydraulic jacks for lifting the chalet, various power tools such as drills, and reciprocating saws and a small suitcase generator for power tool use, or to charge battery-operated tools. A maximum of 60 helicopter turns (approximately 7 days/50 hours of helicopter use) would transport these materials in and out of the work site. Between year one and year two, some of this equipment would be stored onsite in the chalet or in the Knaack boxes that are currently on location.

The move would take 2 to 3 days each year and require the support of a 3-person crew, one string of 8 stock, and a packer. Construction of the new foundation would require 7 NPS staff, one packer, and one string of 8 stock, for 6-8 weeks in one season. Temporary closures would occur for trail and camp areas within the flight zone and Enchanted Valley during helicopter use. Bunch Field would be used as a helicopter staging area. This action would occur over one summer season (6-8 weeks).

The chalet would require periodic maintenance that would be completed in accordance with the *Secretary’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and within all applicable wilderness and historic preservation laws. Maintenance activities would be completed with traditional hand tools and stock support. A portion of the chalet may be designated an emergency shelter. The chalet may also be used administratively.

## **Estimated Cost for Each Alternative**

The following cost estimates for each of the alternatives analyzed are estimates for NPS day labor (staff time on-site and related backcountry travel costs), with exception of the need to contract out the moving of the chalet under alternative C. Also included is the new, sustainable foundation, long-term (10 years and 20-50 years) maintenance costs; and contractor costs for two years under alt C; helicopter use; and tools, materials, equipment, and mule supply costs are included under all three alternatives. The costs to remove the chalet from the river (if it is safe and accessible to do so), are also included for alternatives A and C.

These estimates are minimum estimates as National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 mitigation costs are not yet included as a new MOA with new mitigations will need to be drafted and appropriate mitigations will need to be identified aside from those presented in the 2014 MOA. These estimates also do not include costs relative to the planning and compliance processes for either this or the 2014 EA.

- Alternative A (No Action): Approximately \$660,000 + NHPA mitigations and potential additional costs for removal from river
- Alternative B (Dismantle and remove): Approximately \$660,000 + NHPA mitigations
- Alternative C (Relocate to another location on the terrace): Approximately \$1,257,000 + NHPA mitigations and potential additional costs for removal from river
- The costs solely for moving the structure in 2014 were approximately \$171,000.

Alternative A would likely cost more than alternative B given the uncertainty of how the chalet would go into the river, if it would stay in one piece or fall into several pieces, and whether it would stay in place or float down the river.

## **Alternatives Considered but Dismissed**

The following alternatives were suggestions provided during either internal interdisciplinary team reviews and/or public scoping. These alternatives were considered but dismissed for various reasons. An explanation for the dismissal for each of these alternatives can be found in the EA (pages 17-18).

- Burn the chalet in place as is, or dismantle it, remove unburnable materials via pack or pack stock, and burn all burnable materials in place.

- Set the chalet in place in its current location on a new, natural foundation.
- Move the chalet to the forested low ridge surface upslope of the proposed location in alternative C.
- Move the chalet to another wilderness location outside the Enchanted Valley or dismantle the structure and rebuild it in another location within the Enchanted Valley, but not on the river terrace upon which it currently rests.
- Move the chalet to Kestner Homestead or to another historic district within the park.
- Dismantle and reconstruct the chalet in a frontcountry location in the park.
- River channel modification or bank stabilization.
- Use the chalet for recreational purposes.

## **Selection of the Preferred Alternative**

Alternative B was selected by the interdisciplinary team (IDT) as the preferred alternative to recommend to the NPS Regional Director, Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12 for approval and implementation. A preferred alternative workshop was held with the IDT and an NPS facilitator from another park. The IDT reviewed all applicable laws and policies, and the relative impacts by action and alternative. Impacts were reviewed and considered for each impact topic and were weighted by three overarching factors: impacts to the historic structure, impacts on wilderness character, and impacts on threatened and endangered species. Additional consideration was given to how best each alternative met the elements included in the Department of Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46.420(d)), and subsequently NPS Director's Order 12 and the 2015 NPS NEPA Handbook Supplemental Guidance for the selection of the preferred alternative. The following list provides a brief summary of the justification in the selection of alternative B as the preferred alternative.

- Alternative B would result in a final disposition of the chalet without additional future actions that would likely be required under the no action alternative and alternative C (such as, but not limited to, stabilization, preservation maintenance, etc.). Alternative B makes a final decision now for current and future park managers.
- Alternative B is the best option for the preservation and protection of natural resources (i.e., natural river processes, threatened and endangered fish species, tribal fisheries, water quality, terrace stabilization due to no tree removal, and wilderness character) by preventing the chalet from going into the river.
- The structure would be easier to remove while intact on the terrace than from the river where it may not be safe to remove it at all.
- Alternative B best balances short-term impacts (such as helicopter use) versus long-term gain (such as the preservation and protection of natural and wilderness resources and tribal fisheries without concern that the structure may erode into the river). Unlike alternative C which moves the chalet away from one hazard (river channel migration and subsequent bank erosion) to two other hazards (avalanches and tributary stream deposits), which would result in short-term impacts without much long-term gain.
- Alternative B provides opportunities to incorporate measures that may help reduce potential impacts that have been identified and analyzed. These measures could include, but are not limited to, the spreading out or burning of some native material onsite in order to further reduce flights; scheduling the timing of initial flights using a smaller, quieter helicopter during nesting season vs. timing later flights, using a larger helicopter after nesting season to reduce number of total flights in wilderness; and materials could be acquired by a museum or other local organizations or private citizens, etc.
- Alternative B allows the most responsible management and stewardship of cultural, natural, and wilderness resources.
- The cultural resources statutory requirements have been met. The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) has been completed and the most important pieces of historic fabric have been removed. Consultation with the SHPO, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) continues. A new MOA will be developed for this EA.
- Alternative B is also the most cost effective alternative.

## **Other Useful Information:**

- A Minimum Requirement Analysis (MRA), as required by the Wilderness Act, has been completed for this project and can be found in Appendix D of the EA.
- The following additional documents are available on the project website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/EVCscoping>):

- The Enchanted Valley Chalet’s NRHP listing documentation (2007)
- The 2014 Concise EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
- The 2014 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
- Materials related to public scoping (2016)
- The Final Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Report (2017)

## NEPA and Where We Are in the Process

Steps of the Planning Process	Tentative Timeline	How you can be involved
Internal scoping, define purpose and need, and develop preliminary alternatives	Summer 2015- Spring 2016	
Conduct external scoping	Summer 2016	Attend public meetings and provide your comments and ideas about the preliminary alternatives.
Analysis of public comment	Summer-Fall 2016	
Determine Data Needs (based on internal <i>and</i> external scoping)	Fall 2016	
Conduct Research (wetlands delineation, soil survey, lead-based paint testing, site flood hazards)	Summer 2017	
Final Site Flood Hazards Report	Spring 2018	
Refine alternatives	Spring-Summer 2018	
Identify environmental impacts and select preferred alternative	Summer-Fall 2018	
Prepare environmental document and minimum requirement analysis	Fall-Winter 2018/2019	
<b>*Public review of environmental document (public release will occur simultaneously with initiation of formal ESA consultation with the USFWS)</b>	<b>Summer 2020</b>	<b>Attend virtual public meeting. Provide your comments about the EA on the park’s planning website at <a href="http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ONPEVCEA2">http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ONPEVCEA2</a></b>
Analysis of public comments	Summer 2020	
Prepare MOA (with SHPO, ACHP, and consulting parties)	Summer-Fall 2020	
Prepare decision document	Fall-Winter 2020	
Release decision document to the public	Winter 2020/21	
Implementation	Summer 2021**	

\*Denotes current step in the planning process.

\*\*Implementation would occur as soon as technically and financially feasible.

## How to Comment

Submit your comments by 11:59 pm MST on August 2, 2020, via one of the following two methods.

1. Submit comments electronically at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ONPEVCEA2>
2. Submit written comments by mail to:  
 Superintendent Sarah Creachbaum  
 Olympic National Park – EVC EA2  
 600 East Park Avenue  
 Port Angeles, WA 98362

Comments will not be accepted by fax, email, phone, or in any way other than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hardcopy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others 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.

## Virtual Public Meeting Access and Information

### Instructions to attend the virtual public meeting are as follows:

WebEx connect time: 4:45 PM PDT  
Meeting START time: 5:00 PM PDT  
Meeting end time: 6:30 PM PDT

#### To join the webinar via computer and computer audio:

“Ctrl+click” on the following link or copy and paste the link into your internet browser:

<https://doilearn2.webex.com/doilearn2/onstage/g.php?MTID=e2ed0011d0909bb19dbb99f7674b10f53>

Event (ID) number (access code): 199 948 4882  
Event Password (if prompted): **Chal3t!**

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### Webinar Tips and Etiquette:

1. Please **log into WebEx early**, as there could be some software downloads, and so that our meeting can begin promptly. You have up to 30 minutes prior to the meeting's start time to make your WebEx Meeting and audio connections.
2. If you have difficulty accessing the WebEx Meeting, copy the link in the URL field and paste it in another search engine (Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari [MacOS] etc.).
3. When you dial into the audio portion of the presentation, you may not hear a 'beep' as you join the conference.
4. For the benefit of others, **avoid** using your phone's **speakerphone**.
5. **Do not** put your phone **line 'on hold'** while you are attending this call. If you need to answer another line, please hang up, attend to your other call, and then dial back in.
6. If you are an employee of a bureau of the Department of Interior, you do not have to be on the VPN to attend this WebEx.

If you require relay conference captioning (closed captioning) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or if you don't have internet access to attend the virtual public meeting, please notify us by 5pm on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. If you are needing other reasonable accommodations, please let us know as soon as possible so that we may attempt to meet your request. Email: [OLYM\\_Superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:OLYM_Superintendent@nps.gov); or leave a voice message at 360-565-3005, clearly stating your name, contact information, and briefly state the accommodation(s) you're requesting.