



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Olympic National Park

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Olympic National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Storm Damage Update from Olympic National Park; Public Comments Sought on Repairs to Quinault South Shore and Graves Creek Roads

Despite nearly two months of intensive work by park crews, damage from the record-breaking storm of December 3, 2007 continues to restrict public access to many Olympic National Park areas. An overview of damage follows, along with a request for public input regarding proposed repairs to the Quinault South Shore and Graves Creek Roads. Both roads were washed out and severely damaged at several locations during the heavy rain and flooding of early December.

Quinault Rain Forest

Portions of the North Shore and South Shore Roads remain open, but the Quinault Loop Road is inaccessible. To protect public safety and allow safe operation of heavy equipment, sections of the North Shore, South Shore, North Fork and Graves Creek Roads are closed to all public entry, including foot and bicycle access.

“Restoring access to the Quinault rain forest loop road is one of our top repair priorities,” said Olympic National Park Acting Superintendent Sue McGill. “Barring any future storms, we hope to reopen the loop road with temporary repairs by the end of March.”

The North Shore Road is currently open from Highway 101 approximately 11 miles to Clark Hill, giving area residents access to their homes. The road is closed to all public access east of the gate at Clark Hill to allow work crews and heavy equipment to make repairs.

The South Shore Road is open from Highway 101 to the park boundary but is closed to all public access beyond that point because of extensive damage. A 750-foot long section of road washed out during the December 3 flood and another 150-foot long section of road is covered by rock and debris. Other damage includes bank erosion and numerous trees blown down across the road. Although long term repairs will be necessary to maintain access, park crews are planning to make emergency repairs in order to restore public access by the end of March.

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The North Fork Road was covered by hundreds, if not thousands, of trees during the windstorm of December 3. While park crews have succeeded in clearing about half of

the road's length, more work is needed before the road can be opened. The campground sustained some flood damage and downed trees.

The Graves Creek Road was severely damaged in three locations along its 6.3 mile length from floodwaters of the Quinault River. The road was also damaged at six other locations by heavy rain, runoff and downed trees.

The park is developing alternatives to permanently repair the damaged roadway to provide more sustainable access along the South Shore Road and Graves Creek Road. Options may include the design and placement of engineered log jams and bank barbs along portions of the roadway to better protect the road while protecting and improving habitat for fish.

The public is asked to provide comments to help develop the alternatives, which will be presented in an environmental assessment to be released later this year. Comments will be accepted now through March 5, 2008 during the 30-day scoping period.

Comments should be submitted on-line by visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olymp>, the website for the National Park Service's Planning Environment and Public Comment system.

Comments may also be sent to the following address no later than March 5, 2008.

Superintendent – Graves Creek Road
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Fax: 360-565-3015

Website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>

Queets Valley

The Lower Queets Road is currently closed because of snow, but has been open as far as Matheny Creek. The road has been closed beyond that point since 2005 due to a landslide. Access to the Upper Queets Valley is expected to open by the end of March, although the campground will likely open later to allow crews time to repair storm damage.

Hoh Rain Forest

The Hoh Road is closed outside the park boundary because of flood damage. There is currently two feet of snow at the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center. Weather and snow conditions permitting, the road is expected to open by the end of February.

Coastal Destinations

The park's road-accessible coastal destinations (Kalaloch, Mora, Ozette) are open, including all roads, campgrounds and trailheads. Coastal trails and wilderness travel routes have not been fully assessed, so hikers should use caution and be prepared for washouts.

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Sol Duc Valley

The Sol Duc Road is closed because of snow and a mud and debris slide that crossed the road just above Salmon Cascades. Park crews anticipate opening the road by March 1 in time for spring opening of the Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort.

Lake Crescent

All roads in the Lake Crescent area are open, but visitors are urged to use caution when hiking as trails in the area have not yet been fully assessed.

Elwha Valley

Roads in the Elwha Valley are in generally good condition, but may close in the event of snow or ice. The Elwha Campground is open. The Altair Campground sustained some damage from flooding during the December 3 storm, but is scheduled to open over Memorial Day weekend for the summer season.

Hurricane Ridge Road

Weather and road conditions permitting, the Hurricane Ridge Road is open Friday through Sunday through March 30, along with Presidents Day, February 18. The road may close at any time because of heavy snow, high winds, high avalanche danger or a full parking lot. Visitors should call the park's road and weather hotline at (360) 565-3131 for current Hurricane Ridge Road conditions.

The road was damaged by rain and runoff during the December 3 storm, leading to three sites that are now only one lane in width. These sites will be repaired during the two-year repaving project set to begin this spring.

Deer Park Road

The Deer Park Road is closed for the season and is scheduled to open for the summer season on June 13, 2008.

Dosewallips Road

The Dosewallips Road remains closed because of a washout outside the park boundary.

Staircase

The Staircase Road is closed for the season. It sustained major damage during the December storm, both within and outside of the park boundary. Staff from Olympic National Park is working closely with Olympic National Forest personnel to develop a strategy for reopening the road by the summer season.

Five riverside sites in the Staircase Campground were lost to floodwaters along the North Fork Skokomish River, but the campground is expected to open for the summer season.

Park Trails

With over ten feet of snow at the park's higher elevations, little is known about many of the park's trail conditions. More information will be available once snow begins to melt later in the year.

Hikers are urged to use caution and to be prepared for numerous downed trees as well as damaged or washed out trails, along with changeable winter weather conditions. When available, current trail condition reports are posted at the Olympic National Park website, www.nps.gov/olym/.

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