

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Olympic National Park

Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, and Mason Counties, Washington

RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), has prepared this Record of Decision (ROD) on the *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (GMP/EIS) for Olympic National Park. This ROD includes a statement of the decision made, synopses of other alternatives considered, the basis for the decision, a description of the environmentally preferred alternative, a discussion of avoidance of impairment of resources or values, an overview of measures to minimize environmental harm, and a summary of public involvement in the decision-making process. Attached as an appendix are supplemental letters sent to the park by two area tribes in furtherance of the ongoing government-to-government relationships.

DECISION (SELECTED ACTION)

The NPS will implement a slight modification of the preferred alternative (Alternative D) as presented in the Final GMP/EIS issued in March 2008. Based on public and tribal comments, and changes desired by the planning team, several modifications were made to the preferred alternative. Editorial changes and additional explanatory text on topics of interest were also incorporated. These changes are shown in the Final GMP/EIS.

The selected alternative designates frontcountry zones and intertidal reserve zones. There were questions from the public related to wilderness zoning and management. In response to public comment, wilderness zoning has not been included in the selected alternative but will instead occur through the wilderness management plan process that will follow the completion of the GMP. Wilderness eligibility studies will be conducted for non-designated areas near Lake Crescent and Ozette Lake. In addition, all lands not evaluated yet for wilderness eligibility (those lands acquired after 1974) will be studied for wilderness eligibility.

The boundary adjustments in the Lake Crescent, Ozette, and Queets areas remains in the selected alternative, as described in the Final GMP/EIS. The boundary adjustment is necessary for the NPS to have as much flexibility as possible to fulfill the mandates of the Organic Act for the protection of park resources and in no way invalidates the complementary purposes of the Washington Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (FPHCP) to protect resources on private and state lands in Washington. The preferred alternative component to purchase 44,000 acres of timber lands outside the park boundary in the Ozette watershed for the purposes of exchange with the State of Washington for the mineral rights within the park has been modified. A number of public comments were received on this proposal. Many commenters were concerned about the potential adverse effects to the area economy from removing the land from timber production, even though the 44,000 acres would remain in timber production under state jurisdiction. Many commenters requested that additional acreage be considered in the boundary adjustment. The proposal was modified in the Final GMP/EIS to remove the specific reference to the 44,000 acres in the Ozette watershed. The NPS will continue to work with the State of Washington to seek opportunities for exchanging the state's mineral rights within the park.

The boundary adjustment includes acquiring private lands and interest in lands through donation, exchange, and/or from willing sellers only. In addition, partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and with Washington Department of Natural Resources for land exchanges is included in the selected alternative. Other resource stewardship opportunities will be explored with private and government entities, on a voluntary basis, to protect fisheries and area resources. Legislation would be required to authorize the boundary adjustments that would only occur after private lands are acquired from willing sellers.

The public expressed concerns related to existing access rights to private property within Olympic National Park related to wilderness studies and the proposed boundary adjustment areas. The selected alternative affirms that existing private property access rights remain in place.

Several public comments related to the management of cultural resources in wilderness. The selected alternative was clarified based on these comments. Where historic structures or cultural landscapes have been included within designated wilderness, they will be protected and maintained using methods that are consistent with preservation of wilderness character and values and cultural resource requirements. Structures and cultural landscapes listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be preserved and rehabilitated to retain a high degree of integrity and will be managed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Some historic structures in frontcountry areas might be adaptively reused to achieve preservation and/or administrative objectives. The park staff will develop a strategy for the maintenance and preservation of historic structures using the existing list of classified structures and ongoing cultural resource assessments of condition and history.

A commenter suggested instituting an overnight permit system for parking at Swan Bay so lake users, including private property owners, could park overnight at that location. Several commenters stressed the importance of keeping Rayonier Landing open for day use recreation and lake access. Both of these ideas are included in the selected alternative. Some agencies, tribes, and communities requested increased partnering to improve visitor education and opportunities and collaborative cultural and natural resources management. This suggestion has been included in the selected alternative.

Under the selected action, management emphasis will focus on protecting cultural and natural resources while improving visitor experiences. This will be accomplished by accommodating visitor use, providing sustainable access through mass transit, and concentrating improved educational and recreational opportunities in the developed areas of the park.

Management activities will use methods to minimize adverse effects on park resources to the extent possible. Natural processes will be promoted, and some previously disturbed areas, such as Olympic Hot Springs, will be restored. In addition, the selected alternative includes seeking partnership opportunities, where appropriate, with other federal, state, private, and tribal partners in the region, to address watershed issues and develop resource protection strategies.

Trails, campgrounds, and related facilities will be kept at approximately their current levels, but could be modified for resource protection, restoration, management of hazardous tree conditions, or enhancing visitor experience or to address increased visitation. Some frontcountry trails will be modified for universal accessibility.

Road access will be maintained to existing frontcountry areas, but roads might be modified or relocated for resource protection, river restoration, and/or to maintain vehicular access. Wilderness boundaries may be adjusted along roads to allow continued road access into the park; however, there will be no net loss of wilderness acreage. Seasonal transit systems will be studied for the Hurricane Ridge, Sol Duc, and the Hoh areas of the park.

A variety of educational opportunities will be provided in the park with facility-based contacts and personal guided activities. More web-based education will be provided. Education programs will be coordinated with partners and focus on improving understanding of the park's natural and cultural resources, biodiversity, research, wilderness, and recreational and visitor opportunities. Visitor education and interpretation facilities will be retained, but might be relocated, reconstructed, or moved to areas within or outside the park to protect resources and provide improved visitor opportunities. The NPS will partner with outside agencies and tribes to develop opportunities for regional education and interpretation.

Under the selected action, the NPS will implement the following specific elements:

Access

- Retain road access to existing developed areas using methods that minimize adverse effects on river processes and aquatic habitats, to the extent possible. The park will work with area partners, including tribes, federal, state, and county agencies, and others, to coordinate access, road relocations, and to develop restoration plans for at-risk river systems including, but not limited to, the Queets, Quinault, and Hoh rivers.
- Work directly with area partners, including tribes and federal, state, and county road management agencies when emergency situations occur to fully evaluate the potential impact of the proposal. Consider tribal views in the decision-making process.
- Provide year-round road access to Hurricane Ridge and Heart O' the Hills, as much as practicable; the winter operations schedule will be used to allow continued road access for private vehicles on weekends from late fall to early spring, depending upon weather conditions and safety. Alternative transit opportunities will be explored.
- Provide seasonal road access, adjusted depending on weather conditions, to Obstruction Point, Boulder Creek trailhead, Whiskey Bend, Sol Duc, Staircase, Dosewallips, and Deer Park.
- Retain year-round road access to Ozette. Retain and define the parking area at Ozette to prevent or reduce adjacent resource damage.
- Maintain existing access rights for private property owners at Lake Ozette.
- Retain the last half-mile of road to Rialto Beach unless it is lost to a catastrophic event, such as a tsunami, and reconstruction is infeasible due to topography, altered conditions, or an unacceptable cost of replacement. If that occurs, construct a new parking-trailhead area and restore access by a frontcountry accessible trail.
- Partner with the Quileute Tribe to provide boat or canoe service from Mora to La Push.
- Evaluate roads located within floodplains at Hoh, Queets, and Quinault and conduct river reach and other analyses to determine if roads or road segments can be relocated out of the floodplain and the floodplains restored to natural conditions. If such road relocations entail wilderness boundary adjustments, congressional legislation would be required (with a goal of no net loss of wilderness acreage parkwide, wilderness would need to be added elsewhere).
- Conduct a risk assessment study, in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation, for Highway 101 along the coastal portion of the park to identify at risk portions of the highway and determine suitable areas for reroutes or road relocations. Maintain visitor access to the coastal facilities and features. Provide opportunities for bicycling and pedestrian use in the developed area at Kalaloch.
- Develop a plan for the Queets area of the park to address long-term access options and options for facility removal or relocation.

- Seek options to redesign or relocate the Finley Creek Bridge, including moving and/or redesigning the North Shore Road. This may require the adjustment of the wilderness boundary (Congressional legislation with no net loss of wilderness acreage would be required), and added protective measures for the historic resources in the area.

Transit Systems

- Coordinate connections with regional multimodal transit providers to improve access. Determine through transportation studies if selected areas (Hurricane Ridge, Sol Duc, Hoh, and Kalaloch) can accommodate alternative transit opportunities.
- Explore options for connecting park transit to the regional visitor and transit center in Port Angeles, in cooperation with local agencies.

Park Facilities and Recreational Opportunities

- Retain park facilities, including visitor centers, campgrounds, and concessioner-operated facilities; some facilities and campgrounds may be modified or relocated to protect resources, minimize adverse effects on river processes and aquatic and riparian habitats to the extent possible, or for improved sustainability. Some facilities will be improved.
- Retain centralized administrative facilities and operation functions at park headquarters in Port Angeles and expand as necessary to meet the need.
- Improve and expand the visitor contact area at the existing park visitor center in Port Angeles.
- Retain the Heart O' the Hills campground.
- Redesign and improve existing visitor facilities at Hurricane Ridge to improve visitor services and accommodate alternative transit, improve circulation, and eliminate user conflicts.
- Encourage cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at Hurricane Ridge and allow grooming to continue at current levels.
- Explore opportunities for primitive camping within the Elwha drainage at the Lake Mills site after dam removal.
- Rehabilitate the campground at the Olympic Hot Springs area. Remove and rehabilitate some sites and retain some sites to continue to provide camping opportunities for backpackers.
- Rehabilitate the visitor constructed pools at the Olympic Hot Springs. Complete a site plan to restore the hot springs to a more natural condition and to prevent further environmental damage.
- Relocate and/ or expand slightly the current size and/or function of park facilities (e.g., campground and park operations area) at Sol Duc.
- Allow motorized and nonmotorized boating opportunities on Lake Crescent and Ozette Lake. On Ozette Lake, boating may be regulated or zoning implemented to provide a range of opportunities.

- Redesign and/or relocate the Ozette Campground as necessary to protect shoreline habitat. Close Swan Bay to camping and allow overnight parking through a permit system. Explore additional locations for a drive in campground. Encourage camping opportunities outside the park at Ozette. Continue to allow day use opportunities at Swan Bay and Rayonier Landing. No camping would be allowed at these locations.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine if the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor center should be retained and improved in place, or relocated.
- Retain the campground facilities at the Hoh at its current location, as feasible. Sites may be relocated or modified based on river movements.
- Improve the visitor information at Kalaloch and on the coastal portion of the park. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the options for the replacement and relocation of the visitor information station at Kalaloch.
- Retain the campground facilities at Kalaloch and South Beach, but sites or facilities could be moved outside the active coastal erosion zone.
- Provide opportunities and support facilities for sport fishing at the Queets.
- Retain existing visitor facilities at Quinalt. Expand and/or relocate visitor and administrative facilities. Retain frontcountry camping opportunities at Quinalt, but encourage partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, tribes, and the local communities to provide additional visitor orientation, education, camping, and other recreational opportunities outside the park.
- Retain the existing facilities at Staircase, with minor improvements as necessary. Work with other agencies, tribes, and other partners to develop additional camping opportunities outside the park boundary.
- Retain the existing facilities at Dosewallips and Deer Park and open the ranger station and campground seasonally at these locations.

Concession-operated facilities

- Retain the downhill ski facilities at Hurricane Ridge. Improvements to the facilities may be allowed, but no area expansion will be authorized, and use at the downhill ski facilities will not exceed the 2003/2004 average daily operating levels.
- Retain existing facilities at Lake Crescent at Barnes Point, Log Cabin, and Fairholme. Improve or modify these facilities as necessary to enhance shoreline protection. Encourage a longer lodging season.
- Retain existing facilities at Sol Duc. Adjust the season of operation depending on economic feasibility, weather conditions, and protection of the geothermal resource and adjacent natural resources.

- Conduct a feasibility study to consider potential sites for the relocation of Kalaloch Lodge, cabins, and related facilities. Relocate Kalaloch Lodge and related facilities in phases outside the active coastal erosion zone.

Trails

- Retain and improve existing frontcountry trails. Develop or improve existing frontcountry trails to universally accessible standards at Hurricane Ridge, Lake Crescent, Sol Duc, Ozette, Hoh, and Kalaloch. Improve frontcountry trails near the park visitor centers and connect trails to regional trail networks and the local community. Rehabilitate unwanted paths, social trails, and way trails.
- Improve or relocate trailhead parking at the Boulder Creek trailhead in the Elwha. Develop trailhead and wayside exhibits at the Elwha to provide visitors with information on the area's natural and cultural resources.
- Rehabilitate the Boulder Creek trail to provide access for hikers and horseback riders, using methods that minimize adverse effects on river processes and aquatic riparian habitats, to the extent possible.
- Explore opportunities for additional hiking trails within the Elwha drainage at the Lake Mills site.
- Retain parking and trail access to the Big Cedar tree.
- Retain the existing frontcountry trail system at Quinault, and maintain the accessible trail at the Kestner Homestead.
- Replace the bridge at the Staircase Rapids to complete the loop trail.
- Minimum requirement methods and tools are used for trails management in wilderness.

Partnerships and Coordination

- Develop partnerships with area agencies, tribes, local communities, and others to expand educational opportunities, visitor services, and to improve coordination and cooperation.

Lands

- After the completion of the dam removal phase of the Elwha River, determine the disposition of Elwha project lands outside the park boundary in accordance with the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act of October 24, 1992 (PL 102-495) to ensure the long-term protection of river and fisheries values.
- Update the park's land protection plan. This plan will address resource protection, shoreline use (at Lake Crescent, Ozette Lake, and Lake Quinault), visitor use, and operational needs within a priority context.

Boundary Adjustments

- Modify the park boundary in three areas -- Lake Crescent, Queets, and Ozette -- through a combination of acquisition through willing sellers, easements, and donations. Congressional authorizing legislation would be required to modify the boundaries of the park and to obtain funding to purchase lands from willing sellers and to facilitate land exchanges. The NPS will recommend that the legislation required to implement these boundary changes include a provision that the proposed boundary adjustments would not be formally established until after lands are acquired through the willing-seller, exchange, or donation process.
- Seek land exchanges, partnerships and develop protective strategies in coordination with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service for their lands within the adjusted boundaries. Work with the State of Washington and seek opportunities for exchanging its mineral rights within the park.

Management Zoning

- Overlay five management zones on the park, including three frontcountry zones: Development, Day-Use and Low-Use; one special zone: Intertidal Reserve zone; and the Wilderness zone. These zones are identified based on desired natural and cultural resource conditions or character, visitor opportunities, and appropriate facilities.

Wilderness Management

- Develop a wilderness management plan that would include designating wilderness subzones with a range of visitor experiences, including, but not limited to: Wilderness Trail, Primitive Wilderness, and Primeval Wilderness.
- As part of the wilderness management plan process, conduct wilderness eligibility studies for the area north of the Spruce Railroad Trail at Lake Crescent, Ozette Lake, and other areas not previously studied for wilderness eligibility.
- Retain existing wilderness trailheads.
- Ensure minimum requirement methods and tools are determined in advance for all programs and project work necessary to be undertaken for managing Olympic National Park wilderness.

Cultural Resources

- Adaptively reuse historic districts at Kestner, North Fork, and Graves Creek for visitor education and park operations.
- Protect and maintain cultural resources that have been included in wilderness in accordance with the pertinent laws and policies governing cultural resources using management methods that are consistent with the preservation of wilderness character and values.

Wildlife

- Seek partnerships to protect elk and fisher habitat and fisheries within and outside the park boundary.

In addition to the key elements that will be implemented under the selected action, the NPS will adopt the following park-specific "Desired Conditions" to protect Olympic National Park's natural, cultural, and wilderness resources, and to provide for visitor use and enjoyment.

Air Quality

- Park management and visitor service activities promote preservation of excellent air quality, including healthful indoor air quality in NPS and concession facilities.
- Views from park overlooks, integral vistas, and scenic stops are not obstructed or marred by air pollution for most of each year.
- Air quality monitoring within or near the park is able to verify whether trends are improving or deteriorating, and whether Class I air quality standards are met within the park.

Natural Soundscapes

- Park and concession facilities use best available technology and methods to minimize or mitigate artificial noises produced by equipment and management activities.
- Visitors have opportunities to experience and understand natural soundscapes.
- The park maintains an inventory of natural sounds and, as feasible, monitors key locations for maintaining natural quiet.
- Ecological interactions that depend upon or are affected by sound are protected.

Lightscape Management/ Night Sky

- The park's inventory of natural resources identifies ecological processes or components that uniquely depend upon or are affected by nighttime light.
- Artificial light sources in park developed areas are designed to prevent light pollution.
- Throughout a majority of the park, visitors have opportunities to experience dark night skies free of light pollution.

Ecosystem Management

- Through partnerships and cooperative agreements, work with other Olympic Peninsula land, marine, and tribal managers to accomplish mutual objectives for providing wildlife corridors, protecting biodiversity and key habitats, etc.
- In collaboration with landowners inside and outside the park, viewsheds within and adjacent to the park are protected.

- The park provides benchmarks or “control” conditions for studies of ecosystem processes in predominately unmanipulated landscapes, helping to determine the park’s own resource preservation goals and contribute to those of adjacent lands.
- Natural processes of ecosystem disturbance and change function unimpeded, and are altered only as needed to provide for visitor and staff safety and access, to protect park facilities in developed areas, and to maintain cultural landscapes.
- “Purification” services provided by park ecosystems are protected and maintained, thus helping to provide clean air and water for park resources and the surrounding area. Soil and water resources are free of contaminants.
- Ecosystems and habitats damaged by human activities or nonnative species are restored. Future development avoids sensitive habitats and dynamic areas prone to natural disturbances, if possible.

Fire Management

- The park’s Fire Management Plan (approved 12/01/2005) is affirmed.
- Natural fire regimes are restored and maintained, but will be modified to comply with air quality regulations, and/or to protect listed species, cultural resources, and the safety of life and property.
- The best available technology and scientific information are used to manage fire within the park, to conduct routine monitoring to determine if objectives are met, and to evaluate and improve the fire management program.
- Hazard fuel reduction efforts protect structures, wildland-urban interface areas, and cultural resources where appropriate and necessary.
- Recognizing fire as a natural process that does not acknowledge administrative boundaries, park managers develop a comprehensive cross-boundary fire management plan with adjacent land managers.
- Minimum requirement methods and tools are used to manage fires in wilderness.

Water Resources

- Water resources in the park meet or exceed all federal and state water quality standards for temperature, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, toxic substances, pH, and nutrients.
- Pollution prevention and protection of water quality to meet the needs of aquatic organisms are priorities.
- Almost all park water resources meet state criteria for outstanding resources waters.

Rivers and Floodplains

- The most current engineering methods and techniques that minimize adverse effects on natural river processes are used to protect park roads and facilities located in floodplains.

- Park visitors understand the dynamic nature of the park's river systems, and the variability and cycles of river flow, flooding, etc.
- The rivers eligible for designation as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers system under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will be managed so as to prevent any degradation of the resources and values that merit consideration for eligibility. Formal suitability studies related to wild and scenic rivers designations will be conducted in a separate formal planning process as funding is available.

Wetlands

- "Keystone" species (such as beavers) that sustain and depend upon wetland habitats occur in natural distribution and numbers.
- Park visitors have the opportunity to learn about and understand the unique services and functions provided by wetlands.
- Wetlands near developed areas remain unaffected by park or concession facilities or recreational activities.
- Wetlands adversely affected by prior human activity will be restored where feasible.

Marine Resources

- Natural shoreline physical and biological processes are unimpeded along most of the coastline of Olympic National Park, and where altered by human activities or structures, measures are taken to mitigate effects and restore natural conditions as much as possible.
- Areas of high biodiversity within the intertidal areas are protected as "seed banks" for adjacent habitats and communities.
- The park is an active participant and partner with coastal tribes, the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the Washington Department of Ecology, National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other marine resource managers in maintaining up-to-date oil spill response plans and preparedness skills.

Geologic and Soil Resources

- Monitoring and research programs assess conditions and trends in the park's geologic processes and resources, particularly those that are both important to the park's ecosystem and management, and subject to human influence (e.g., glaciers, sea level and shoreline position, groundwater chemistry, streamflow, stream channel morphology, sediment load, slope failures, and erosion).
- Surficial geology is mapped for priority areas and critical habitats

Native Species

- The park provides naturally evolving examples of plant and animal communities.
- The park animal and plant populations are managed to promote long-term viability, including maintaining age-structures, abundance, density and distributions within normal ranges, and a full range of natural genetic variability.
- Extirpated native species are restored when feasible and appropriate.
- Effects of native diseases and pests are within normal range of variation, and are not worsened by human-caused factors.

Exotic Species

- Park ecosystems are free of nonnative species where feasible, with the exception of noninvasive species that are documented as innocuous, and are a contributing element of a cultural landscape (as defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*).
- Particularly sensitive park habitats, including those containing endemic or rare species, are maintained free of nonnative species.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

- Threatened, endangered, or otherwise imperiled species in the park show increasing trends leading to improvement in the species' status and ultimately to recovery. State and federally listed wildlife populations are stable or increasing, as measured by monitored parameters such as survival of northern spotted owls, territory occupancy of bald eagles, and at-sea surveys of marbled murrelets and sea otters.
- Habitats that support or are suitable for sensitive, rare, endemic, or listed species are protected.
- Park visitors learn about species in the park that are listed under the Endangered Species Act, as well as actions that may assist their recovery.

Wilderness

- Natural processes, native components, and the interrelationships among them are protected, maintained, and/or restored to the extent possible, while providing opportunities for their enjoyment as wilderness.
- Present and future visitors enjoy the unique qualities offered in wilderness. These include the experiences of solitude, remoteness, risk, challenge, self-sufficiency, discovery, and observation of an untrammelled ecosystem.
- Wilderness management is based on the minimum requirement concept, allowing only those actions necessary and appropriate for administration of the area as wilderness and that do not cause an unacceptable impact to wilderness resources and character. Implementation of such

actions is done using techniques and types of equipment necessary to ensure that impacts on wilderness resources and character are minimized or avoided.

- The values of the Olympic wilderness are understood by the public and park staff through education in wilderness ethics, use, and using management skills and techniques to promote and preserve these values (e.g., "Leave No Trace").
- Essential park operations and wilderness functions are coordinated in the park to manage and protect natural and cultural resources and provide minimal visitor services, so as to preserve wilderness character. Management is coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service to provide consistency in regulations, standards, and guidelines to the extent feasible. The park will continue to work with other local and regional groups, communities, and agencies, and tribal governments to preserve wilderness values.

Archeological Resources

- Archeological site baseline data are available. Site conditions are monitored to record changes in resource conditions as a result of environmental conditions or visitor use impacts.
- To the extent feasible, archeological resources degrading from environmental conditions and visitor impacts are mitigated through data recovery or other preservation strategies, including site-hardening.
- To the extent feasible, archeological resources threatened by project development are mitigated first through avoidance or secondly through other preservation strategies such as data recovery

Historic Structures

- The historic character of historic buildings and structures, including shelters and buildings related to past U.S. Forest Service and NPS management of the park, recreational resorts and cabins, and homestead settlements, are managed in accordance with Section 5.3.5.4 of NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Historic and Prehistoric Structures. Historic structure inventories and reports are prepared, and existing reports are amended as needed. Actions identified in historic structure reports are implemented and a record of treatment added to the reports.
- Identified and evaluated historic structures are monitored, inspected and managed to enable the long-term preservation of a resource's historic features, qualities and materials.

Cultural Landscapes

- The cultural landscapes of the park retain a high degree of integrity. These include cultural landscapes, along with historic roads, trails, and sites that are related to past U. S. Forest Service and on-going NPS management, recreational resorts and cabins (Rosemary Inn, Lake Crescent Inn, and Wendell cabin) and homestead settlements (Roose, Kestner, and Humes).

- Cultural landscape inventories and reports are prepared, and existing reports are amended as needed.
- Identified and evaluated cultural landscapes are monitored, inspected, and managed to enable the long-term preservation of a resource's historic features, qualities, and materials.
- Actions identified in cultural landscape reports are implemented, and a record of treatment is added to the reports.

Ethnographic Resources

- Potentially sensitive natural and cultural resources and traditional cultural properties (ethnographic resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places) are identified, recorded, and evaluated through consultation with area tribes. The integrity of traditional cultural properties is preserved and protected.
- Positive and productive government-to-government relationships exist with each of the eight tribes that have traditional association with the Olympic Peninsula.

Museum Collections

- Research and development projects include plans for the curation of collected objects and specimens.
- The park's museum collections are housed in appropriate facilities that provide protection for current collections and allow for future collection expansion.
- Park museum collections provide documentation of park natural and cultural resources.

Visitor Use and Experience, Education, and Outreach

- For all zones or districts in the park, the types and levels of visitor use are consistent with the desired resource and visitor experience conditions prescribed for those areas.
- The park visitor is able to obtain visitor orientation and trip-planning information through a variety of media. Educational programs are available.
- Frontcountry day use visitation and overnight facilities are provided in some developed areas. Roads, trails, campgrounds, and related facilities are provided, but locations and numbers may be modified for resource protection, restoration, visitor experience, or increased visitation.
- The level and type of commercial guided activities would be managed to protect park resources and the visitor experience.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Three other alternatives were described in the Final GMP/EIS. Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, continues the current management or status quo of existing policies and programs. Alternative B emphasizes the preservation of cultural and natural resources. Alternative C emphasizes visitor use and

improved recreational opportunities. The implementation of all alternatives included the adoption of desired conditions to protect Olympic National Park natural and cultural resources, wilderness, and visitor use and enjoyment.

Alternative A

The no-action alternative, Alternative A, provides the baseline from which to compare other alternatives. Under this alternative current management practices would continue. The park would be managed in accordance with approved management documents. Park resources would continue to be protected while educational and recreational opportunities are provided in superlative natural settings. No changes in current management strategies would occur.

Natural resources would be managed in conformance with existing laws, policies, and resource management plans. Cultural resources would be managed according to existing laws, policies, and ongoing treatment programs. Structures or cultural landscapes listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places would be managed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, which set forth standards for the treatment of historic properties and contain standards for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction, in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Cultural resources such as archeological sites, historic trails, routes, cultural landscapes, and structures that have been included within wilderness would be protected and maintained according to the pertinent laws and policies governing cultural resources using management methods that are consistent with the preservation of wilderness character and values.

Wilderness would continue to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and NPS policies.

A variety of educational opportunities on a limited basis would continue to be provided in the park. There would also continue to be outreach programs for school and community groups to improve general understanding of park resources and research. Education and interpretive facilities would continue to be located at existing sites in the frontcountry.

Roads, trails, and park facilities would remain at approximately their current levels. No boundary adjustments were considered under this alternative. No zoning would be designated in the park.

Alternative B

Alternative B emphasizes cultural and natural resource protection. Natural processes would take priority over visitor access in certain areas of the park. In general, the park would be managed as a large

ecosystem preserve emphasizing wilderness management for resource conservation and protection, with a reduced number of facilities to support visitation.

Natural resources protection would receive increased emphasis, and some previously disturbed areas would undergo restoration. Greater emphasis would be placed on identifying, evaluating, and preserving historic properties. Structures or cultural landscapes listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places would be managed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Cultural resources that have been included within wilderness would be protected and maintained according to the pertinent laws and policies governing cultural resources using management methods that are consistent with the preservation of wilderness character and values.

Wilderness would continue to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and NPS policies. Wilderness zones would be established; however, on-ground designations would occur through the wilderness management plan process. Wilderness eligibility studies would be conducted for nonwilderness areas near Lake Crescent and Ozette Lake. In addition, all lands not evaluated yet for wilderness eligibility (those lands acquired after 1974) would be studied for wilderness eligibility.

A variety of educational opportunities would be provided in the park with more emphasis on personal guided activities, off-site programs, and web-based education. There would be increased outreach with the area communities, focusing on improving the general understanding of park resources, research, and the protection of resources and natural processes.

Some roads might be moved or closed to protect the natural processes. Some roads might be converted to trails. Some trails might be closed and rehabilitated to protect resources. Transit systems would be explored to provide access to some frontcountry areas. Facilities such as campgrounds and visitor centers might be modified, closed, or moved to protect natural processes. Visitor access and services in sensitive areas would be reduced.

Boundary adjustments for the purposes of resource protection would be considered adjacent to the park in the Ozette, Lake Crescent, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault areas. This alternative includes zoning for the frontcountry and wilderness areas of the park, river zones, and an intertidal reserve zone.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, increased visitor opportunities, recreation, and tourism would be emphasized. The natural, cultural, and recreational resources at Olympic National Park would be important regional attractions. Partnerships would be sought to improve park and regional facilities. Access would be

retained to all existing frontcountry areas, and increased access would be provided by improving park roads to extend the season of use.

Natural resources would be protected through management actions and resource education programs; however, maintaining access to existing facilities would be a priority in this alternative. Structures and cultural landscapes listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places would be managed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Some historic structures may be adaptively reused to achieve preservation and/or administrative objectives. Cultural resources that have been included within wilderness would be protected and maintained according to the pertinent laws and policies governing cultural resources using management methods consistent with the preservation of wilderness character and values.

This alternative would accommodate increases in frontcountry visitation and improve access to the wilderness. Wilderness would continue to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and NPS policies. Wilderness zones would be established; however, on-ground designations would occur through the wilderness management plan process. Wilderness eligibility studies would be conducted for nonwilderness areas at Ozette Lake. In addition, all lands not evaluated yet for wilderness eligibility (those lands acquired after 1974) would be studied for wilderness eligibility.

Educational opportunities would be expanded and could include regional learning centers. There would be increased outreach programs focusing on improving the general understanding and protection of park resources, research, and visitor opportunities. New or expanded interpretation and education facilities may be constructed within or outside the park. The NPS would partner with agencies, area communities, and tribes to develop these facilities.

Roads might be modified or relocated for resource protection, and seasonal transit systems would be studied to provide improved access to existing frontcountry areas. Trails, campgrounds, and related facilities would be improved and/or increased where appropriate and feasible. Some frontcountry trails would be modified for universal accessibility.

This alternative would include a boundary adjustment in the Ozette area. This alternative would include frontcountry and wilderness zoning, and intertidal reserve zones; there would be no river zone.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES AND ACTIONS DISMISSED

In the planning process, one action considered was a boundary modification to include land southeast of the Quinault River slightly beyond all potential river meander areas. This would enhance management of elk that occur in this area of the park by providing an easily defined park boundary. The current boundary

is the river, which frequently meanders. To accomplish this, several parcels of private land would have to be purchased in accordance with NPS policy. The difficulty of making such purchases and the controversy of such a boundary modification were reasons for not fully evaluating this action in preparing the general management plan.

BASIS FOR DECISION

The Organic Act established the NPS to “promote and regulate the use of parks....to conserve the scenery and natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The Organic Act provides overall guidance for the management of Olympic National Park.

In reaching its decision to select the preferred alternative, the NPS considered the purposes for which Olympic National Park was established, and other laws and policies that apply to lands in the Park, including the Organic Act, National Environmental Policy Act, the Wilderness Act of 1964, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the NPS *Management Policies 2006*. The NPS also sought and carefully considered public comments received during several phases of the planning process. Comments received during the period following the release of the Draft GMP/EIS, as well as consultation with government agencies and area tribes, have resulted in adjustments to the final selected alternative. Those comments, and the responses to them, are provided in Volume 2 of the Final GMP/EIS.

All of the alternatives were evaluated with a variety of criteria and considerations to determine which management alternative could provide the greatest advantages to the public and to the NPS. Alternatives were evaluated to determine how well they:

- Support the park's purpose, significance, and desired conditions;
- Address public concerns;
- Protect park natural and cultural resources;
- Protect park wilderness values;
- Provide a range of visitor opportunities and services;
- Provide a range of educational opportunities; and
- Maximize partnership opportunities

Each of the four alternatives in the Draft GMP/EIS presented a different approach for managing Olympic National Park, and each would have different impacts on park resources and visitors. The preferred alternative represents a synthesis of what the NPS considers to be the best elements of each of the original alternatives.

Compared to all of the alternatives considered for management of the park, it is the determination of the NPS that the modified preferred alternative (selected action) will best protect park natural, cultural, and wilderness resources while meeting the needs of diverse user groups. The selected alternative enhances existing programs and natural and cultural resource management, as well as administrative, maintenance and visitor services within the park. The selected alternative maintains access to the park, while maintaining essential elements of park and wilderness character, expanding education and outreach programs, and improving facilities, services, and transportation. The selected alternative will have both beneficial and adverse effects on the park's natural resources, but most of the adverse effects will be minor and localized. Cultural resources will benefit from continued preservation maintenance and protection, as well as from such actions as rehabilitation and adaptive use of some historic structures in the park frontcountry areas. The visitor experience will be enhanced by continued and improved opportunities for recreation, access to park facilities and services, and increased on-site and off-site educational opportunities.

Unlike the no-action alternative, the selected alternative addresses issues that have arisen since the 1976 Master Plan. Regional population growth has increased the potential for additional visitors and impacts on the park's natural and cultural resources and wilderness values. Patterns and types of visitor use have changed. One of the concerns in the park today is the impact created by the three million annual visits and the number of private vehicles in the existing developed areas. Roads and facilities built years ago were not designed to handle this volume of use. In November 1988 Congress designated 876,669 acres of wilderness in the park and about 378 acres of potential wilderness — 95% of the park. Each of these changes has major implications for how visitors access and use the park, the facilities needed to support those uses, how natural and cultural resources are managed, and how the NPS manages its operations. The no-action alternative, Alternative A, would provide for continued management and protection of resources, and for visitor use. The park would continue to be managed in accordance with approved management documents. However, ongoing changes and long-term issues would not be addressed. Compared to the no-action alternative, the new plan will provide for more protection and management of park resources and for improved visitor services and more sustainable access.

Alternative B would have resulted in somewhat greater protection of the natural resources than the preferred alternative. Visitors would have experienced reduced facilities and access, resulting in moderate to major adverse effects on the visitor experience and park access. This alternative would not have achieved the optimal balance between resource protection and visitor use and enjoyment.

Alternative C would have sought increased visitor opportunities in the park. This alternative would have increased the facilities and infrastructure in the park, and explored opportunities to develop partnerships and facilities outside the park. This alternative would have emphasized increased recreational

opportunities, improved facilities, increased or improved interpretive and educational programs, facilities, and media, and improved roads and facilities. This would have resulted in moderate to major beneficial effects on visitor use and experience, information, orientation, education, and visitor access and minor to moderate adverse effects on natural resources, cultural resources, and wilderness. This alternative would not have achieved the optimal balance between resource protection and visitor use and enjoyment.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Records of decision are required under the Council on Environmental Quality regulations to identify the environmentally preferred alternative. Environmentally preferred is defined as "the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in §101 of the National Environmental Policy Act. Section 101 states that "...it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to...

- (1) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- (2) Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- (3) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
- (4) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- (5) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
- (6) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

Expressed more succinctly, the "environmentally preferred" alternative is the course of action that results in the least damage to the physical and biological environment, or conversely is the alternative which best protects historic, cultural, and natural resources. The "environmentally preferred" alternative is the NPS Alternative D in the Final GMP/EIS.

Alternative A (no action), while accurately describing the current management direction of the park, fails to satisfy the requirements outlined above. The park would continue to be managed in accordance with approved plans and policies; however, under Alternative A, the park would respond to resource impacts and visitor demands as they occur rather than formulating a plan to address potential issues proactively. Access roads would remain in place, and facilities and trails would be maintained with only minimal improvements. This alternative is not the environmentally preferred alternative as it does not meet goals (1) and (2) above as it does not allow a long-term management outlook to increase opportunities while protecting park resources. Goals (3) and (4) are partially met, but Alternative A would result in no

upgrades or relocations of facilities or roads out of sensitive areas, and no additional universally accessible trails would be developed. Goal (5) seems likely to be unattainable due to population, development, visitor use, and economic pressures, and goal (6) is not met as this alternative continues some patterns of incompatible development.

Alternative B emphasizes cultural and natural resource protection, and results in a decreased number of roads and facilities to support visitors. This alternative would fully meet goals (1), (4), and (6) because it would achieve a high level of protection for cultural and natural resources. However, it would only partially meet goals (2), (3), and (5) because it would reduce the amount of visitor access and opportunities for enjoyment of some areas of the park and does not address the needs of diverse user groups.

Alternative C would focus on increasing visitor and recreational opportunities. Access would be retained to all existing frontcountry areas and could be improved. Although this alternative would fully meet goals (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) by providing greater access to and enjoyment of the park's resources, it would not best preserve and enhance cultural and natural resources. Alternative C would only partially meet goal (1) because most facilities would remain in place, even in more sensitive areas.

Alternative D was developed based on combining the advantages of the other alternatives. Visitor access and opportunities will remain, though they could be modified for resource protection or to provide more sustainable access and opportunities. Management emphasis will focus on protecting cultural and natural resources. This alternative would fully meet goals (1), (2), (4), and (6) by protecting the park resources by relocating facilities and access away from the most sensitive areas, restoring natural areas, expanding visitor services where appropriate, and providing increased educational opportunities. This alternative partially meets goals (3) and (5) by providing a wide variety of sustainable services, facilities, and transportation in the frontcountry, while preserving resource values, however, some relocation of roads and facilities could result in undesirable environmental consequences and some roads may remain in place if relocations are not feasible.

After careful review of potential resource and visitor impacts and assessment of mitigation for cultural and natural resources impacts, the environmentally preferred alternative is Alternative D. Alternative D clearly surpasses Alternative A in best realizing the six goals. While Alternative B and C are very similar in many respects, Alternative D overall provides a high level of protection of natural and cultural resources while attaining the widest range of neutral and beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, integrating a wider and appropriate range of visitor uses.

FINDINGS ON IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES AND VALUES

“The NPS cannot allow the impairment of park resources and values unless directly and specifically provided for by legislation or proclamation establishing the park. The relevant legislation or proclamation must provide explicitly (not by implication or inference) for the activity, in terms that keep the Service from having the authority to manage the activity so as to avoid the impairment (NPS 2006:1.4.4).”

The impairment that is prohibited by the Organic Act and the General Authorities Act is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. Whether an impact meets this definition depends on the particular resources and values that would be affected; the severity, duration, and timing of the impact; the direct and indirect effects of the impact; and the cumulative effects of the impact in question and other impacts.

An impact to any park resource or value may, but does not necessarily, constitute impairment. An impact would be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent that it affects a resource or value whose conservation is

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park, or
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park, or
- identified in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents as being of significance.

An impact would be less likely to constitute impairment if it is an unavoidable result of an action necessary to preserve or restore the integrity of park resources or values and it cannot be further mitigated. An impact that may, but would not necessarily, lead to impairment may result from visitor activities; NPS administrative activities; or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park (NPS 2006:1.4.5).

After analyzing the environmental impacts described in the Final GMP/EIS and public and agency comments received, the NPS has determined that implementation of the selected action will not constitute impairment to Olympic National Park resources and values. Provisions in the selected action are intended to protect and enhance the Park's cultural and natural resources, and provide for high-quality visitor experiences. Overall, the selected action will have beneficial effects on park resources, including wilderness, historic buildings and structures, archeological resources, cultural landscapes, vegetation, wildlife habitat and visitor experience.

There will be little potential for adverse impacts under the selected alternative because there will be no major new development —although there might be some new or renovated facilities. Some existing conditions have resulted in unavoidable adverse impacts. The location of park facilities and roads in floodplains, and the maintenance of these roads have resulted in adverse impacts to floodplains. The goal of the selected alternative will be the removal of at-risk roads, or portions of roads, and facilities from the floodplain. This will be accomplished only if subsequent planning determines it feasible, if wilderness boundaries are adjusted through legislation, and if future funding supports the relocations. Therefore it is unlikely that the removal of all roads or those at-risk portions within the floodplains will be accomplished, resulting in continued unavoidable adverse effects to rivers and floodplains at those locations.

This alternative will have little potential for unavoidable adverse impacts on cultural resources because historic structures will be adaptively reused throughout the park and will be protected by means of preservation maintenance and rehabilitation.

Irreversible commitments of resources are actions that result in the loss of resources that cannot be reversed. Irretrievable commitments are actions that result in the loss of resources but only for a limited period of time. No actions taken as a result of this alternative will result in more than a negligible consumption of nonrenewable natural resources or in the use of renewable resources that will preclude other uses. Thus, there will be no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources in the park by the NPS. No actions will be taken that will result in irreversible or irretrievable effects on historic structures. The park will continue to conduct appropriate cultural resource management in accordance with the *Secretary's Standards* and NPS policies.

None of the impacts of the selected alternative will adversely affect resources or values to a degree that will prevent the NPS from fulfilling the purposes of the park, threaten the natural integrity of the park, or eliminate current or future opportunities for people to enjoy the park.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

The NPS has investigated all practical measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts that could potentially result from implementing the selected action. Measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been identified and incorporated into the selected action as described in the Final GMP/EIS. Key measures to minimize environmental harm include, but are not limited to: timing projects so they occur outside of critical periods for listed bird species; timing projects adjacent to or in waterways to occur during the dry season; implementing noxious and invasive weed control programs; monitoring changes in the condition of natural, cultural, and wilderness resources; implementing best management practices for project work near waterways; and consulting with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries office, and associated American Indian Tribes when appropriate.

More detailed plans will be developed in the future to implement the actions needed to fulfill the Final GMP/EIS and will contain specific measures to minimize harm; appropriate environmental compliance with opportunity for public review will be completed.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Throughout the planning process the NPS has diligently engaged the public in the development of the general management plan. The notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4, 2001. This was followed by the first newsletter that introduced the planning effort and invited the public to initial open house "scoping" meetings. Public open houses held during September and October 2001 in Port Angeles, Forks, Clallam Bay, Quinault, Aberdeen, Silverdale, and Seattle, Washington, and were attended by 161 people.

The planning team received more than 500 individual comments in the meetings and in response to the first newsletter. The comments fell into the following categories: resource protection, wilderness management, visitor use and experience, access to park areas, and partnerships. These comments were considered/incorporated into the issues for the plan.

A second newsletter distributed in January 2002 presented the issue-related decisions to be made in the general management plan and invited the public to alternatives development workshops in Shelton, Clallam Bay, Silverdale, Port Angeles, Forks, Amanda Park, Brinnon, and Seattle, Washington. The workshops, held January 28-31, 2002, allowed participants to explore and present their ideas for park zoning and management alternatives. These workshops were attended by 187 people.

The draft alternative concepts for managing the park were delivered in a third newsletter that was distributed in May 2003. A fourth newsletter was mailed in November 2004, apprising the public of timeline adjustments and current status of the planning effort.

In March 2006 a R.S.V.P. card with a postage paid response was sent to the 1,200 names on the mailing list to announce the upcoming release of the draft plan and to determine who on the mailing list wanted a copy of the plan. Approximately 340 cards were returned with requests for a copy of the plan or for notification of its release.

In addition to the newsletters mailed to individuals and groups on the park's mailing list, news releases have been sent to approximately 80 media outlets and interested organizations to keep the general public informed. All newsletters and news releases are posted on the Olympic National Park website.

The public input process continued with the public review and comment on the draft plan. On June 6, 2006, the NPS mailed 352 copies of the Draft GMP/EIS to agencies, governmental representatives, tribes, organizations, and interested individuals. In addition, the draft plan was available from the park's website and was also available at the park offices and visitor centers, on the Internet, and at area libraries. The Environmental Protection Agency's notice of filing of the Draft GMP/EIS was published on June 15, 2006, officially initiating the public review period and establishing September 15, 2006 as the end of the comment period (the park's Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on July 14, 2006). The public comment period was extended another 15 days, closing on September 30, 2006. A revised notice of availability provided opportunity for public comment through September 30, 2006. All comments received or postmarked by September 30 were included in the official record.

Additional copies of the draft plan were available by request. Approximately 750 printed versions and 150 CD versions of the draft plan were distributed during the public review period.

The NPS prepared press releases announcing the public comment period and the locations, times and dates for public workshops. Information was published in several area papers throughout the public review period, including The Peninsula Daily News, Forks Forum, The Daily World (Aberdeen), The Seattle Times, Port Townsend and Jefferson County Leader, and the Kitsap Sun. Information and updates were also posted on the park website.

In August 2006, nine open house public workshops were held to summarize what the draft plan included, to provide information on what constituted substantive comments, and to encourage public comment. There were approximately 253 participants. Meetings were held in Sequim (16 participants), Seattle (45), Shelton (29), Silverdale (22), Port Angeles (70), Sekiu (26), Amanda Park (40), Port Townsend (21), and Forks (24).

The NPS received approximately 500 comments on the draft plan by mail, e-mail, fax, hand delivery, oral transcript, and through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website. A number of groups/people submitted duplicate comments by different means, and several people commented up to three times. Of the comments, 16 were received from agencies and elected officials, 8 from area tribes, 48 from organizations, and 13 from businesses. The remaining comments were from individuals. Approximately 637 additional individuals responded by using one of seven different form letters and approximately 827 individuals signed one of three petitions.

During the planning process, the NPS consulted with various tribal, federal, state, and local government agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Western Washington Office and the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuge), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(Fisheries Office and Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary), Federal Highways Administration, Washington State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington State Department of Transportation, and local, city, and county officials and agencies. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a LO evaluation (lack of objections) in the *Federal Register* on December 1, 2006. Formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded on June 18, 2008, with a biological opinion for the preferred alternative including coverage for ongoing and future maintenance activities on existing park roads, trails, and facilities expected to occur over a 5-year period in the park. However, additional site specific analysis would be required with the Fish and Wildlife Service and with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Fisheries Office) for the implementation of future developments contained within the selected alternative, including project work that could result in adverse effects to listed species, or in the removal or modification of critical habitat.

Consultations and informational meetings were held with area tribal governments. Tribal consultation meetings were held with all eight associated tribes in 2001, and follow-up meetings were held in 2004 and 2005 to provide an update on the status of the plan. During the summer of 2006, meetings were offered to all eight associated tribes, and six tribes requested formal meetings. Six tribes provided a wide range of comments on the Draft GMP/EIS. Several tribes brought forward issues that were outside the scope of the plan, such as jurisdiction, trust resources, treaty rights, gathering, and land issues. Tribes were also concerned about how boundary adjustments would affect their tribal treaty rights. The park integrated many tribal comments and suggested revisions into the final plan. At the request of the area tribes, a meeting was held July 20, 2007 to review the tribal comments and the park responses and changes to the final plan. Seven of the eight tribes attended the meeting, and three tribes requested individual meetings after the group session. While not all issues were addressed, many issues were resolved.

All written correspondence and notes from public meetings are maintained in the administrative record, for both the scoping phase and in response to the Draft GMP/EIS. Responses to comments are provided in the Final GMP/EIS.

The public expressed concerns related to the effects the alternatives would have on the socioeconomic resources in the region. The socioeconomic information in the affected environment and environmental consequences section has been updated based on the best available information and data provided by the public during the comment period.

Area Indian tribes provided comments and additional information for the final plan. Laws and policies governing use by Native Americans of park resources have been added to "Laws, Regulations,

Service-wide Mandates and Policies” and desired conditions and strategies under “Parkwide Policies and Service-wide Mandates” have been updated and/or clarified for several topics.

In response to public comment, visitation information has been updated with the most up-to-date statistics. Management zones have been rewritten in the Final GMP/EIS to clarify frontcountry zone descriptions. Wilderness zoning definitions remain within the plan but exact on-the-ground designations have been removed from the plan alternatives and will be delineated through the wilderness management plan process. Wilderness will continue to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988, and NPS *Director's Order 41*.

The wilderness and cultural resources sections have been updated in the Final GMP/EIS based on changes in NPS *Management Policies 2006*. Laws pertaining to historic preservation remain applicable within Wilderness but must generally be administered to preserve the area's wilderness character (16 USC 1133(a)(3)). The responsible decisionmaker will ensure appropriate consideration of the application of the provisions of the *Wilderness Act of 1964* and the *National Historic Preservation Act* in analyses and decision-making concerning cultural resources.

These changes, as well as substantive comments and responses on the Draft GMP/EIS, were incorporated in the Final GMP/EIS (March 2008). The EPA's notice of availability for the Final GMP/EIS was published in the March 14, 2008 *Federal Register* (the park's Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on March 13, 2008). The 30-day no-action period ended on April 14, 2008. During this period following the public release of the Final GMP/EIS, several letters were received which reiterated two primary topics that had been communicated previously during the formal public review and comment period: winter access at Hurricane Ridge and park boundary expansions.

There were several requests that the Hurricane Ridge Road remain open on both weekends and weekdays during the winter period. Several commenters on the Draft GMP/EIS requested improved and more consistent access, but there were no requests to change the alternatives in the plan until after the Final GMP/EIS was published. The selected alternative includes continued weekend access to Hurricane Ridge during the winter as is practicable. Operational and staffing requirements, along with unpredictable severe weather conditions, make a long-term commitment to consistently opening the road for seven days a week winter access infeasible.

The Washington Forest Protection Association, the North Olympic Timber Action Committee, and a combined letter from Green Crow Timber Company, Merrill and Ring, Inc., and Rayonier responded during the public comment period opposing the proposed boundary adjustments. After the release of the Final GMP/EIS, these companies reiterated concerns based upon their perceived mis-characterizations

by the NPS of the FCHCP and Forest and Fish Agreement and asked that the NPS reconsider the analysis pertaining to the FCHCP in finalizing the GMP.

The purpose of the FPHCP are to provide long-term conservation of 47 species (Covered Species) and their habitat (including native fish and aquatic species), support an economically viable timber industry, and create regulatory stability for landowners on 9.3 million acres of non-federal and non-tribal forest lands in Washington State. The FPHCP was developed as a state-wide programmatic plan designed to facilitate private and commercial forest landowners efforts to provide Endangered Species Act (ESA) coverage for forest landowners through the State's Forest-Practices program.

The FPHCP is a set of legal agreements, under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the State of Washington, and private forest landowners that sets out forest practices necessary to protect the survival and recovery of fish and aquatic species in the State of Washington. The FPHCP is based on the Forests and Fish Report, which was developed by county, state, and federal entities, certain Washington Native American Tribes, industry representatives, and representatives of non-industrial private forest land owners and professional forestry associations, and represents some five years of intensive negotiations among stakeholders to reach an agreement. NMFS' approval of the FPHCP includes an extensive record that describes how implementing the conservation measures in the FPHCP will likely contribute to the recovery of watershed processes that support salmon and trout statewide.

The FPHCP consists of two parts: a set of protection measures and an administrative framework. The protection measures are stated in the State forest practices laws, rules, and guidance designed to minimize and mitigate forestry-related impacts and incidental take and conserve habitat for species covered by the FPHCP. The two major sets of protective measures are presented as separate but interrelated conservation strategies: Riparian Conservation Strategy and Upland Conservation Strategy.

The Riparian Conservation Strategy includes protection measures implemented in and adjacent to surface waters and wetlands. The Riparian Conservation Strategy addresses practices affecting certain ecological functions that are important for creating, restoring, and maintaining aquatic and riparian habitats. The conservation objective of the riparian strategy is to protect riparian and wetlands habitat function on lands covered by the FPHCP and to enable improvements of those levels once they are attained. It includes protective measures such as large-wood recruitment and tree-retention, limitations on equipment use in and around waters, and streamside land and timber acquisitions for the long-term conservation of aquatic resources. The FPHCP also includes two voluntary programs that provide for the long-term conservation of riparian and aquatic habitats. The Forestry Riparian Easement Program and the Riparian Open Space Program were established to acquire, through purchase or easement, the most

ecologically important habitats for species covered under the FPHCP. These programs are designed to complement the mandatory requirements of the Washington Forest Practices Act and Rules.

The Upland Conservation Strategy includes measures that protect the habitats for Covered Species by minimizing and mitigating upslope forest practices impacts, for example, protection measure related to unstable slopes, road construction maintenance and abandonment, fish passage at road crossings, and rain-on-snow hydrology. These measures are intended to limit excess coarse and fine sediment delivery to surface waters and wetlands and to maintain hydrologic regimes. In cases where roads have altered hydrologic regimes, protection measures are designed to restore hydrologic flow paths. The roads program and planning efforts related to the FPHCP will result in improved maintenance and removal of some forest roads, thus decreasing sediment release in the long-term.

Another aspect of the FPHCP is the Adaptive Management Program (AMP), articulated in the Forest and Fish Report (FFR), and also known as the administrative framework process. The AMP is designed to apply emerging scientific knowledge and to better inform policy makers about the relationship of managed forests and ecosystem and riparian functions, and continually assess how well the rules are meeting performance goals. Participants including the general public and landowners have roles in developing, implementing, and/or refining the Forest Practices program, and work collaboratively on many aspects of forest health. Although the FFR thereby applies current research, it also acknowledges there remain at this time some scientific uncertainties about how forested ecosystems function within the context of managed forests, and how various ecosystem components relate to one another. An overall performance goal agreed to in FFR is that forest practices, either singly or cumulatively, will not significantly impact the capacity of aquatic habitat to: a) support harvestable levels of salmonids; b) support the long-term viability of other Covered Species; or c) meet or exceed water quality standards (protection of designated uses, narrative and numeric criteria, and antidegradation). The AMP assures dynamic refinements to the Forest and Fish Rules over time as additional scientific information is available.

The FPHCP is an agreement that permits a certain level of harm to ESA-listed species and potential future listed aquatic species ("incidental take," as it is called in the ESA), on the assumption that overall conditions will improve if the rules are followed. Forest practices activities covered under the FPHCP would result in incidental take of Covered Species. The FPHCP includes protection measures to minimize, mitigate, and monitor impacts and incidental take that are caused by the covered activities.

In the proposed recovery plan for Lake Ozette sockeye salmon, NMFS includes the FPHCP as part of the strategy to recover the species. The proposed recovery plan describes the protection measures in the FPHCP and the administrative framework to implement and adaptively manage them. It is expected that as these practices are implemented and monitored, watershed conditions will improve. Approximately

37,000 acres (75 percent of the forested watershed) of privately managed timberlands in the Lake Ozette watershed are to be managed according to the FPHCP.

The NPS did not intend in the Final GMP/EIS to overlook the long-term salutary effect of the Forest and Fish Rules in promoting habitat protection, improved forest road operations, and other forest-health benefits for private and state managed timber lands. In crafting the Final GMP/EIS, NPS planners and biologists from the park and the region reviewed information provided by commenters, and information contained in the FPHCP, Forest Practices FEIS, and the Forest and Fish Rules has been incorporated into the final plan. The NPS recognizes that under the existing forest practice rules, fisheries and aquatic resources in adjacent watersheds will receive greater protection over time than that provided by past rules. Also, private and state forest and riparian lands will continue to be actively managed to higher standards than historical forest management practices. In addition, information garnered from the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Committee (2006) and other recent scientific studies are being utilized for proposed updates to the Forest Practice Rules under the AMP. The refinement of the Forest Practices program over time should lead to beneficial future cumulative effects on the Covered Species and may contribute to their conservation in the long-term.

However, the NPS determined through its conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process that although current forest practices are well-suited for fulfilling State-wide goals for both sustainable harvest and habitat conservation on state and private lands, and have been accepted by the FWS and NMFS, they are not designed to fulfill the NPS Organic Act's mandate of preserving unimpaired the nationally significant resources for which Olympic National Park was established. NPS characterizations of the FCHCP in the GMP/EIS reflect the NPS view that the NPS Organic Act and the Wilderness Act mandates comprise a broader reach of cultural, natural, and bioregional resource protection goals than the state mandate for conserving forest resources on non-NPS lands. Through the GMP process, the NPS identified the most-at-risk areas within the park and identified adjacent lands and waters as being integral to continued success in safeguarding these key parklands. To provide for future stewardship options for responding to donation or exchange initiatives and willing seller inquiries, boundary adjustments and acquisitions through donation, exchange, and willing seller-willing buyer at Lake Crescent, Ozette, and Queets has been included in the selected alternative. The NPS believes this is consistent with the goals of the aforementioned Forestry Riparian Easement Program and the Riparian Open Space Program.

In addition, the three private timber companies had concerns about entering into entangling alliances which could potentially lead to management strategies that unduly impinge upon acceptable practices they utilize in managing their lands. The park would consider only voluntary partnerships with federal, state, tribal, and private partners in the region to collaborate on issues of mutual concern, including

improving education and visitor services, providing for river restoration as needed, protecting watersheds through enhanced forest-road management, and developing resource-protection strategies as may be suitable for conserving forest resources within park boundaries and on adjacent lands as appropriate. Olympic National Park affirms it has no jurisdiction and no regulatory or permitting authority outside park boundaries and thus will only partner and cooperate in the management of privately-owned timber lands through voluntary partnerships guided as appropriate by the aforementioned agreements and regulations. However, the NPS has the obligation and legal authority to comment on those actions that may affect park resources through the Forest Practices Application review process and other public processes.

Two tribes submitted additional comments through the government-to-government consultation process and requested that their letters be included in the decision document for the Final GMP/EIS. These letters are attached as appendix A. The concerns expressed in those letters included information that was previously included in the Final GMP/EIS, and additional information of concern to the tribes.

The Quileute Tribe brought forward the following topics:

- Park boundary adjustments and relationship to Tribal Treaty Rights;
- Costs associated with boundary adjustments and long-term management;
- Park entrance fee waiver for Tribal members and consistency and training of park staff.

The Quinault Indian Nation brought forward to following topics:

- Park's legal authority for fish and shellfish management;
- The importance of protection for fisheries and treaty resources;
- The co-development of watershed restoration plans for both the Quinault and Queets rivers;
- Park boundary adjustments and relationship to Tribal Treaty Rights

All of these topics, except for specifics related to the fee waiver for Tribal members, are addressed in the Final GMP/EIS. Olympic National Park is committed to continuing and improving its government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribes and will continue to work with Indian tribes to address issues concerning Indian tribal self-governance, trust resources, and Indian tribal treaty rights and other rights and concerns, including those related to tribal hunting and gathering on acquired lands. The park is committed to pursuing opportunities to improve natural resource management within the park and across administrative boundaries by pursuing cooperative conservation with American Indian tribes in accordance with Executive Order 13352 (Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation) and *Management Policies* 2006 (4.1.4). The park would collaborate with area tribes during the development of road relocation studies and river reach analysis and restoration plans, including collaboration with the Quinault Indian Nation for restoration planning for the Quinault and Queets rivers. The park continues to provide

training to our staff on tribal rights of entry into Olympic National Park and will continue to work with area tribes to provide training and information to park staff.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the eight tribes of the Olympic Peninsula was signed on July 10, 2008 to strengthen the park and tribal relationship, and additional site or subject-specific resource agreements are anticipated in the future.

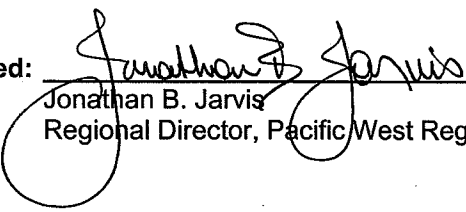
The overall effect of alternative D to natural and cultural resources will be beneficial. Alternative D safeguards a large portion of terrestrial habitat (except for potential road relocations), keeps developed areas at about the same levels, relocates portions of park roads away from fisheries habitat, allows for protection and restoration of rivers and floodplains, protects at least 95% of the park as wilderness, expands park boundaries to encompass and allow for the restoration of old growth habitat.

Throughout the planning process, the public's comments and recommendations have enhanced the foundation for the general management plan and many of the public's recommendations have been incorporated into the final selected action.

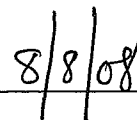
CONCLUSION

Among the alternatives considered, the selected alternative best protects Olympic National Park natural, cultural, and wilderness resources while also providing an optimal range of visitor opportunities. It meets NPS goals for managing the park overall the next 15 to 20 years and fulfills national environmental policy goals. The selected action will not result in the impairment of the park's resources and values, and the new plan affirms long-established stewardship goals. The official responsible for implementing the selected alternative is the Superintendent, Olympic National Park.

Approved: _____

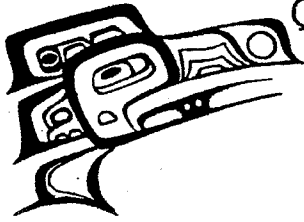

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Regional Director, Pacific West Region

Date: _____



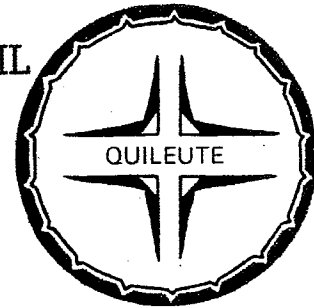
ATTACHMENT ONE

Following the release of the Final GMP/EIS and as part of the continuing government-to-government relationship, the park received letters from two area tribes reiterating their concerns with a number of issues. These letters are attached.



QUILEUTE TRIBAL COUNCIL

POST OFFICE BOX 279
LA PUSH, WASHINGTON 98350-0279
TELEPHONE (360) 374-6163
FAX (360) 374-6311



August 14, 2007

Mr. William Laitner, Superintendent
Olympic National Park
600 Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Re: Addendums to Record of Decision regarding ONP General Management Plan

Dear Mr. Laitner:

After our meetings of July 20, 2007 in Port Angeles (first with the Park and the eight affected treaty tribes and then with DOI staff and Quileute staff), it became apparent that significant changes can no longer be made directly to the Management Plan. However, tribal concerns can be attached as an addendum to the Record of Decision regarding this Plan.

While most of Quileute's concerns regarding the GMP have been resolved through redrafting by July 20th, we consider it important to preserve the following unresolved concern: that of ONP purchase of lands currently open to tribal hunting and gathering under the Treaty of Olympia. Such lands can include not only forests of Washington Department of Natural Resources, but also state parks not closed to hunting in general, large tracts of timber privately held (this land category is subject to *federal* judicial interpretation and the state and tribes differ on this particular matter), and smaller private tracts that are not clearly marked with indicia of private ownership. Much of the public and private land is "checkerboarded" without such indicia (fences, signs, etc.). We have particular concern in the regions of Lake Ozette and the Dickey River drainage.

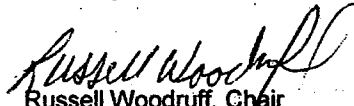
When the Park buys land open to hunting and gathering, it potentially forecloses the tribes to their treaty rights. Quileute does not agree that in 1855, such rights were "understood to be diminishing". Remember that the treaty was negotiated with a few hundred words of Chinook jargon (not even the language of the Quileute) and there was little communication at the time. Any diminishment of treaty land needs to have provisos to allow hunting and gathering in lands "excised by Park transaction" from ceded land boundaries.

As an additional issue, we questioned why the Park plans expansion of its territory in any locale, because it is admittedly strapped for funds to manage what it has. (Example: cut-backs in staffing of Hurricane Ridge and days it now is open to the public.) We are advised that Congress funds the expansion but not at the same time, the maintenance and staffing. We urge Congress to consider that when it funds moneys to buy lands, which the Park feels it must seize upon and act accordingly, it must likewise fund the staffing and maintenance for such lands.

Finally, we have on repeated occasions mentioned the harassment by entry booth personnel when tribal members try to enter the Park boundaries. Their rights are questioned and they are asked to produce various sets of identification in a manner many perceive as degrading. Training on recognition of tribal treaty rights does not seem to be sticking. It would seem simple for the Park to have a sign inside the booth advising regular and seasonal help and volunteers of the admission of treaty tribes when they show the BIA card.

We hope all of the above issues can be resolved and the spirit of the meetings in the summer of 2007 honored.

Sincerely,


Russell Woodruff, Chair
Quileute Tribal Council



Quinault Indian Nation

POST OFFICE BOX 189 • TAHOLAH, WASHINGTON 98587 • TELEPHONE (360) 276-8211

April 25, 2008

Susan K. McGill, Acting Supervisor
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Dear Ms. McGill:

The Quinault Indian Nation ("Nation") submits these comments regarding the Olympic National Park General Management Plan for inclusion in the Record of Decision for the Plan. The Olympic National Park is within the Nation's adjudicated usual and accustomed treaty fishing and shellfishing areas and historic hunting and gathering areas. Activities within the Park have impacted and continue to impact these federally-guaranteed treaty rights. Accordingly, the Nation relies on the National Park Service, pursuant to its trust responsibility to promote and protect the Nation's treaty rights, to ensure its treaty resources are safeguarded.

The Nation submitted two letters commenting on the draft General Management Plan (GMP), dated September 25, 2006, and September 29, 2006. Subsequently, the Nation met with Park representatives to discuss various concerns about the GMP on July 20, 2007. At that time, the Park agreed to make some of the changes in the GMP requested by the Nation. This letter highlights those changes either not agreed to by the Park or not reflected in the final GMP as requested by the Nation on July 20th.

First, the Nation maintains the Park does not have legal authority for fish or shellfish harvest management. Pursuant to the federal court decision in *U.S. v. Washington*, 384 F. Supp. 312 (W.D. Wash. 1974), aff'd, 520 F.2d 676 (9th Cir. 1975), Indian tribes and the state of Washington are co-managers of fisheries resources. This court decision does not recognize federal agencies as co-managers. In fact, as a trustee to the Nation, the Park's perceived role of co-manager creates an inherent conflict of interest. This is highlighted by the Park's no-harvest decisions. The Nation asserts the no-harvest decisions have no scientific basis. Further, by eliminating non-tribal harvest of various species, the Plan unnecessarily creates the perception by non-Indians that Indian harvest is improper or unfair and gives the Nation "special rights." This generates unwarranted prejudice against the Nation.

Second, the Nation asserts that the Park's Preferred Alternative D does not adequately protect fish habitat in the Park upon which the Nation relies to exercise its treaty fishing

rights. Though the Park stated at the July 20th meeting that Alternative D allows for restoration, the Nation reiterates that protection of treaty rights and fish habitat must weigh more heavily in the Park's balancing of habitat protection and other proposed activities, such as road repairs to maintain vehicular access. The Nation maintains that Preferred Alternative D will perpetuate practices in the Quinault River floodplain that contribute to habitat loss by disrupting and degrading natural habitat-forming processes. Protection of treaty rights should be paramount and Preferred Alternative D does not recognize or adequately allow such protection.

Third, at the July 20, 2007 meeting, Park staff committed to specifically identify Quinault and Queets River restoration as future implementation actions. The final draft does not specifically do so. The General Management Plan states that the Park is "committed to working with the federally recognized tribes, such as the Quinault Indian Nation, on a government-to-government basis to develop and implement restoration plans for at-risk rivers" (p. 50). The Nation believes both the Quinault and Queets Rivers to be at risk. It is our understanding that the Park agrees these rivers are at-risk and we look forward to working with the Park on development and implementation of management and restoration plans for these rivers. The Park agreed in principle that after the General Management Plan was adopted, development of specific management plans for the Quinault and Queets River watersheds as a viable option in order to meet the needs of habitat restoration and resource protection in those watersheds. This is not stated in the General Management Plan. The Nation considers the co-development and implementation of specific management plans for the Quinault and Queets Rivers a necessity in order for the NPS to execute its trust responsibility and protect the treaty rights of the Nation.

Fourth, the General Management Plan proposes a boundary addition in the Queets area without recognizing potential impacts to the Nation's treaty rights. The Nation stated at the July 20, 2007, meeting, and reiterates that such addition may negatively impact and limit the Nation's treaty hunting right. We anticipate future discussions with the Park in the event of boundary adjustment proposals prior to their finalization and believe the Park is committed to such consultation.

In summary, the Nation appreciates opportunities to provide input to the Plan. We see many opportunities in the future to work with the Park to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat and look forward to a cooperative relationship to that end.

Sincerely,


Fawn R. Sharp, President

cc: Nancy Hendricks, Environmental Protection Specialist

STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

FOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11988 FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

General Management Plan
Olympic National Park
Washington

Recommended: Duane K McPhee 2/14/08
Superintendent, Olympic National Park Date

Concurred: William J. Parker 2/19/08
Chief, Water Resources Division Date

Concurred: Larry Nolen 2/20/08
Regional Safety Officer, Pacific West Region Date

Approved: Samuel Z. Jones 8/8/88
Director, Pacific West Region Date

The above signatures certify that this document is technically adequate and consistent with NPS policy.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

Executive Order 11988 ("Floodplain Management") requires the National Park Service and other agencies to evaluate the likely impacts of actions in floodplains. This statement of findings (SOF) has been prepared to comply with EO 11988.

In managing floodplains on park lands, the National Park Service (NPS) policy is to (1) manage for the preservation of floodplain values; (2) minimize potentially hazardous conditions associated with flooding; and (3) comply with the NPS Organic Act and all other federal laws and Executive orders related to the management of activities in flood-prone areas. This SOF is considered an integral part of the conservation planning and environmental impact analysis which was completed to determine the potential impacts which may occur by implementing the *General Management Plan*.

SELECTED ACTION

The selected action is to implement Alternative D (presented as the preferred alternative in the *Olympic National Park Final Environmental Impact Statement*). Alternative D was determined by the NPS to be the "environmentally preferred" course of action.

The General Management Plan (GMP) is the National Park Service's primary planning document. A management plan performs two critical functions for NPS managers. First, by specifically describing desirable resource conditions and visitor experiences for national parks, the GMP establishes a clear direction for resource preservation and visitor use and suitable management strategies for achieving those goals. Second, in selecting Alternative D, the new management plan provides a framework to guide park management decision-making for the next 15 to 20 years. NPS management plans are developed in consultation with interested parties including Tribes, federal, state and local agencies, as well as the public.

The GMP provides overall direction for park management but certain specific actions needed to implement the plan will be provided in subsequent plans. Because the plan is general in nature, floodplain analysis is also general. Site-specific environmental analysis would be completed for individual actions prescribed in the GMP.

The selected alternative retains existing facilities in developed areas around the periphery of the park. Actions include relocating certain roads or at-risk portions of roads outside the floodplain where feasible and as funding and legislation allows. The Hoh Road could be relocated to a more sustainable location, outside the floodplain, if wilderness boundaries are adjusted through legislation. The Queets Road could be relocated as needed to respond to river movements. Relocation of the roads in the Quinault floodplain and watershed, including North Fork and Graves Creek roads and the North Shore Road at Finley Creek, could occur under the selected alternative if wilderness boundaries are adjusted, if determined feasible, and if funding is granted. Any adjustments to wilderness boundaries would entail no net loss of wilderness acreage (wilderness would be added elsewhere in the park). Most of the park development, including visitor facilities (e.g., campgrounds and trailheads) in the Hoh, Elwha, Staircase, and Dosewallips areas would remain in the river floodplains. There could be additional protective measures placed around structures in floodplains, and the Hoh Visitor Center could be modified to improve and protect the facility, or it could be relocated outside the floodplain if a feasible location is identified.

No additional structures or facilities would be constructed in known floodplains except as replacements or for the protection of existing facilities. Land use patterns and visitation levels would not change appreciably from current situations.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Olympic National Park is classified as a temperate rain forest. The majority of the precipitation is found in middle to upper elevations and comes in the form of snowfall. In lower elevations, precipitation typically comes in the form of rain. Often, extended storms are capable of dropping over eight inches of rain in a 24 to 48 hour period.

The rivers and streams within the boundaries of the park have associated floodplains. The upper reaches of these river courses are often steep and are in steep-sided valleys. As the rivers exit the higher mountains, their floodplains are often formed by the braided nature of the streambeds.

High water events have led to streambed movement across the valley bottoms, often putting park roads and facilities at risk from flooding or washout. Floods in 2003 and 2006 caused several roads in the park to washout into the streams. The streambeds of the west side rivers are extremely active and, in some places, the stream banks have been modified (e.g. armored with rip-rap) to prevent the undermining of roads and other facilities.

The park's developed areas include main roads, ranger stations, employee housing, campgrounds, etc. Development in the frontcountry portions of the Elwha, Sol Duc, Hoh, Quinault, Staircase, and Dosewallips is within the floodplain.

These facilities are determined to be in Action Class I according to the definitions in Director's Order 77-2.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUED USE OF THE FLOODPLAIN

Floodplains lie along the major rivers in the lower elevations of the park. Because of the mountainous terrain, some or all of the park development in the Hoh, Elwha, Quinault, Staircase, and Dosewallips areas are located in 100- year or 500- year floodplains. Development and public use in these areas has been in place for many years. The situations that lead up to flooding of the rivers, and the scope and duration of high water events are well known by park staff.

Actions proposed in the preferred alternative include relocating certain roads or at-risk portions of roads outside the floodplain where feasible and as funding allows. There could be additional protective measures placed around structures in floodplains, and the Hoh Visitor Center could be modified to improve and protect the facility or moved outside the floodplain. The retention of roads, parking, administrative, residential, camping, and maintenance facilities within 100- year floodplains are often functionally dependent on their locations to accommodate visitor or park operation needs.

In addition, moving entire developed areas out of the floodplains would be cost-prohibitive and in most cases, no practicable alternative sites exist where necessary visitor service and park operations facilities could be moved. Individual facilities may be moved when threatened by river movement on

a case- by- case basis. For example, if an individual campsite is threatened, the table, grill, etc., would be moved to another location within the campground.

Investigation of Alternative Sites

Under the selected actions, feasibility studies would be conducted to determine where roads or portions of roads could be relocated outside the floodplain. If feasible alternatives exist, the park would seek legislation to adjust wilderness boundaries to allow the relocation of all or portions of the roadways at the Hoh, Queets, and Quinault areas of the park. However, if wilderness boundary adjustments are not authorized, and funding is not granted for road relocation projects, then such relocations may not be feasible. Due to the narrow valleys encountered along these rivers and legal constraints such as designated wilderness, there may be no reasonable alternative sites on which to construct the needed facilities while keeping them in the vicinity where they are needed.

SPECIFIC FLOOD RISKS

Conditions associated with flooding in the locations discussed in this statement are not considered particularly hazardous. Flooding generally occurs in the park during winter months in periods of low visitation. Flooding is usually a result of prolonged rainfall or rainfall over snowfields, making warning and evacuation a practical option for protection of human life.

Park development existing in the floodplains has been in place for many years and the situations, scope, and duration of flooding of the rivers are well known by park staff. The timing, depth, and velocity of floodwaters vary by location and will be considered when preparing individual evacuation plans.

An evacuation plan for each area would be prepared to identify high ground safe areas and evacuation routes. In the event that it should become necessary to evacuate visitors and NPS personnel, it could be accomplished along paved, two- lane access roads unless the roads are damaged or portions destroyed due to flood events.

There would be no additional storage facilities for fuels or toxic materials, or museum collections in a floodplain as a result of implementing the new plan.

MITIGATION

An evacuation plan for each developed area in a floodplain would be prepared to identify high ground safe areas and evacuation strategies. Water levels would be monitored by park staff and, if flooding is eminent, visitors would be informed of evacuation procedures.

No major new construction in floodplains is prescribed in the new plan. If minor construction is needed, site- specific environmental analysis would be conducted and would address potential impacts to floodplains. In case- by- case instances, some small buildings or other facilities could be moved away from flood hazard areas when threatened by river movement.

SUMMARY

The National Park Service has determined that implementing the new plan (Alternative D) could result in additional disruption of floodplains if road relocations are not possible and protective measures are implemented (e.g., rip rap and engineered log jams) through time to maintain or reconstruct roads and facilities within the floodplain. Risk to life from flooding can be mitigated.

The NPS would allow existing structures to remain in their current locations unless there are reasonable alternative locations. No additional structures or facilities would be constructed in known floodplains except for the replacement or protection of existing facilities. Water levels would be monitored by park staff. Visitors would be informed of changes caused by heavy precipitation events through regular interpretation and local media.

Therefore, implementing the selected actions could have both long- term beneficial effects on floodplains where roads and facilities are removed and the floodplain is restored, and long- term adverse impacts on floodplains and their associated values where facilities and roads remain within the floodplain and additional protective measures are implemented.

The final environmental impact statement, this statement of findings for Executive Order 11988, and the signed "Record of Decision," fulfill the requirements for the National Environmental Policy Act for this general management plan.

References:

Executive Order 11988, "Floodplain Management" (May 28, 1980).

National Park Service, 2003. Director's Order 77- 2: Floodplain Management. Washington Office, Washington, D.C.

National Park Service, 2006. *Management Policies 2006*. National Park Service, Washington D.C.

