



ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley Overcrowding
PEPC Project Number: 122416
PMIS Number:
Project Type: Predominant Use Change (PUC)
Project Location:
County, State: Jefferson, Washington
Project Leader: Scott Jacobs

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Issue: In many of Olympic National Park's popular wilderness locations, overnight use is subject to an established limitation regarding the maximum number of daily permits issued. This is due to a variety of reasons to include, but not limited to, an area may be able to contain only a certain number of established camp areas based on the type of resources present; there may be sensitive natural or cultural resources within the area; or there may have been past damage to natural or cultural resources from overuse and quotas were issued to alleviate damage and allow these resources to recover naturally. The remaining park wilderness areas remain unrestricted, and some of these areas experience negative impacts to park resources, wilderness character, and visitor experience due to the frequent large number of permitted users.

These impacts include campsite overcrowding, trailhead congestion and limited parking, insufficient holding capacity for human waste in pit toilets, decreased opportunities for visitor solitude, and the expansion of current established, or the creation of new, camp areas by visitors. While bears are frequently in the Enchanted Valley area, to date there have been no issues with human-wildlife interactions and wildlife, in general, obtaining food rewards.

This project's primary focus is the loss of solitude along the East Fork Quinault River Trail and in the Enchanted Valley. Olympic National Park currently does not limit the number of overnight groups or people there, and the wilderness character, specifically opportunities for solitude, may be negatively impacted by the quantity of use that occurs.

Every person that uses the Daniel J. Evans Wilderness overnight is required to obtain a permit. Daily camper nights are tracked through the park's reservation system and indicates the total number of permitted users. Overnight use within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and in the Enchanted Valley has greatly increased in recent years. See table on page 2 of the MRA.

Daily camper nights for Enchanted Valley alone exceeded 300 people on one occasion in 2022, and twice in 2023. Camper nights in the valley, ranging between 100 and 299 people, occurred 31 times in 2022, and 34 times in 2023. This level of nightly use results in frequent overcrowding of campsites and a degradation of wilderness character. Parties are forced to camp close to, or within close sight of, numerous other campers. The crowding can be like that of a front-country campground. This contrasts wilderness values of: • "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable" • "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation"

Need: Although park management has been identifying many of these issues during the scoping process of a Wilderness Stewardship Plan, immediate changes may be necessary to reduce ongoing resource degradation and improve the wilderness experience in the East Fork Quinault River Trail and in the Enchanted Valley.

Preferred alternative (alternative 4 in the MRA): Establish limitations on the number of permits issued and overnight users.

o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party.

There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below:

o Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users o Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users o O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users o Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users o Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users

o Reservations for the 2024 summer season open on April 15, 2024; the action would start this calendar year (2024) and could be piloted for up to 3 years, at which point it would be revisited and determined whether the number of permits needs to be adjusted. o Monitoring of the action would take place during regular and routine foot patrols of the East Fork Quinault River Trail and the Enchanted Valley. Wilderness camping occurs by park rangers and wilderness information assistants as a regular part of their job duties. Rangers patrol this area independently or as a pair, and typically for 1-2 nights each trip. Rangers do not patrol with stock, therefore there would be no overnight stock use with ranger patrol staff.

C. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Air Air Quality	None	
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species <i>Nonnative plant species</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on native vegetation due to a reduction in visitor use which could reduce the potential for the introduction of nonnative plant species along the trail.</p>
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat <i>T&E Species</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30</p>

		<p>permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on T&E species due to a reduction in visitor use which could reduce the potential for levels of use and related noise that could otherwise disturb T&E species.</p>
Biological Vegetation <i>Native Vegetation</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on native vegetation due to a reduction in visitor use which could reduce the potential for the introduction of nonnative plant species along the trail.</p>
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species <i>Wildlife, All</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Disturbance, conflict</p> <p>Impact: Reducing the number of visitors will have a positive impact on wildlife species in the area.</p>
Cultural Archeological Resources	None	
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	None	
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	None	
Cultural Museum Collections	None	
Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	None	
Geological Geologic Features <i>Soils</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30</p>

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Geological Geologic Processes <i>flood plain erosion</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on flood plain erosion due to a reduction in visitor use which could reduce the potential for the removal of vegetation for campfires and/or the expansion of currently established camp areas or the development of new camp areas by visitors.</p>
Lightscaapes Lightscaapes	None	
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Human health and safety</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on human health and safety due to a reduction in visitor use which would reduce human waste issues such as wait times for privy access and subsequent toilet paper blooms, and the need to repeatedly dig new privies to accommodate the high volume of use.</p>
Paleontological Paleontological Resources	None	
Socioeconomic Land Use	None	

Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.	None	
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	None	
Soundscapes Soundscapes <i>Natural soundscapes</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on natural sounds due to a reduction in visitor use.</p>
Viewsheds Viewsheds <i>Viewsheds</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on viewshed due to a reduction in the number of users and volume of tents occupying the landscape at any one time.</p>
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources <i>Overnight use</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action would have a long-term adverse impact on overnight use in the project area due to a reduction in the number of overnight</p>

		use permits that would be allowed. Additionally, it is anticipated that overnight use would increase in other wilderness areas of the park.
Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use and Experience <i>Visitor Use and Experience</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action would have a long-term beneficial impact on visitor use and experience due to a reduction in overnight use in the project area. Additionally, there would also be long-term adverse impact on visitor use and experience due to the proposed use limits.</p>
Water Floodplains Floodplains <i>Floodplains</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: The proposed action could have a long-term beneficial impact on the floodplain due to a reduction in visitor use which could reduce the potential for the expansion of currently established camp areas or the development of new camp areas by visitors.</p>
Water Marine or Estuarine Resources	None	
Water Water Quality or Quantity	None	
Water Wetlands	None	
Wilderness Wilderness <i>Natural</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3</p>

		<p>permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: Positive Under this alternative, the number of permits would be limited to a maximum of 30 per night for up to 208 total overnight users per night along the East Fork Quinault River Trail and in the Enchanted Valley, whichever number is reached first. Compared to Alternative 1, this would decrease the number of overnight use and crowding and subsequently the widening of currently established camp areas (by visitors) and establishment of additional user-created camp areas along the East Fork Quinault River Trail and in the Enchanted Valley. Also, with limited permits there would be less opportunity for human-wildlife encounters. Negative None</p>
Wilderness Wilderness <i>Other Features of Value</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: Positive: Under this alternative, the number of overnight permits issued would be reduced and therefore would likely help protect previously known or unknown archeological resources as less overnight use would lead to less ground disturbance due to less widening of current camp areas and less user-created bare ground for new camp areas. Negative: None</p>
Wilderness Wilderness <i>Solitude/ Primitive/ Unconfined Recreation</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: Positive: This alternative would have positive impacts and solitude and primitive recreation due to a reduced number of overnight permits allowed within the trail corridor and in the Enchanted Valley. Negative: This alternative would have negative impacts on unconfined recreation as it would place a limit and the number of overnight use permits that would be allowed within the trail corridor and in the Enchanted Valley.</p>
Wilderness Wilderness <i>Undeveloped</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit.</p>

		<p>Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: Positive: There would be no construction/development, or use of motorized equipment, mechanical transport, or motorized vehicles used under this alternative. Additionally, with a decrease in the number of permits for overnight use, there would be less crowding and therefore less establishment of user-created camp areas or less users expanding currently established camp areas. Negative: None</p>
Wilderness Wilderness <i>Untrammeled</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: o This alternative would establish a limitation dependent upon the number of permits issued or overnight users within the East Fork Quinault River Trail and Enchanted Valley, whichever was first reached. Current ONP compendium limits party size in this area to no more than twelve individuals per permit. Overcrowding at these sites could occur if the maximum number of permits were issued with 12 people in each party. o There would be a maximum of 30 permits allowed and up to 208 overnight users per night, whichever number is reached first; however, each site is limited to the below: ▪ Pony Bridge = 3 permits or 18 overnight users ▪ Fire Creek = 2 permits or 12 overnight users ▪ O'Neil = 6 permits or 36 overnight users ▪ Pyrites = 7 permits or 42 overnight users ▪ Enchanted Valley = 12 permits or 100 overnight users</p> <p>Impact: Positive: None Negative: None</p>

D. ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS:

Question	Answer	Notes
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Reviewers:

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Chase Lewine

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 Sula Jacobs