Digging Deeper

Scientists are drawn to Olympic National Park by the lure of the unknown and the thrill of discovery. In addition to its many hidden plant and animal treasures, the park also conceals a surprising number of researchers. Like the mysteries they study, researchers keep a low profile. Therefore, visitors might be unaware that nearly one hundred scientific studies take place in the Olympics each year, from soil microbes to satellite images of forest change.

If you’re camped in the Seven Lakes Basin and wake before dawn, you might see two silent figures hurrying up the trail. With only headlamps to light the way, these biologists are conducting the park’s annual bird survey. Identification is done by sound, so to catch the best chorus, work begins early. Researchers must recognize the quiet pit-pit-tuck of a western tanager and the slight variations between dry trills of chirping sparrows and juncos. This study is part of the National Park Service Vital Signs Monitoring program to measure park ecosystem health. Olympic teams monitor about one dozen Vital Signs including zooplankton in mountain lakes, river fish communities and tree growth patterns.

Olympic National Park

Dr. Jerry Freilich
Research Coordinator

Scientists will be able to compare the before and after Elwha ecosystems (see article below). Above the upper dam, surveyors found and counted only bull and rainbow trout. Below the lower dam, they found bull and sockeye salmon. Neither of these species has been seen above the two hydropower dams, Glines Canyon and Elwha, for nearly a century.

Restoring the Elwha

In 1992, the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act was signed, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to remove the dams to return, with numbers exceeding 390,000 fish during odd years when pink salmon return. Once they are removed, the river restored, scientists will be able to compare the before and after Elwha ecosystems (see article below).

The Long Way Home

On a wintry morning, January 27, 2008, after a long absence from their native home, eleven fishers from British Columbia bounded out of their transports and into remote sites within the Elwha and Morse creeks valleys of Olympic National Park. This historic event marked the first step toward restoring the small, reclusive mammals, similar in size to a house cat, to Olympic National Park and Washington State. On March 2, biologists released seven more fishers, and over the next three years about one hundred fishers will be restored to the park.

A dedicated alliance between federal and state agencies and nonprofit organizations has led the way to this fisher restoration project. Through years of study, biologists have determined that Olympic National Park would serve as an optimal restoration site. Native to the forests of Washington, including the Olympic Peninsula, fishers vanished from the state decades ago due to over-trapping in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Despite a trapping ban in place since 1954, fisher populations throughout the state have never recovered. Habitat loss and fragmentation contributed to their demise.

Fishers, members of the weasel family, are related to mink, otter and marten. Scampering over logs on the old-growth forest floor, fishers pursue snowshoe hares, grouse, voles, birds and mice. High in the canopy, they hunt for squirrels and other small creatures. Contrary to their name, fishers don’t catch fish, but will readily eat them.

As you explore the park, look closely. Can you discover five-toed tracks along a muddy forest trail? Are curious dark eyes peering at you from above? The long-awaited fishers are returning home.
Welcome to Olympic National Park. Whether you are here for a day, two days, or more, many spectacular sights await your discovery in this vast and diverse park. "Hurricane Ridge" was the name given to the park when a highway in the 1930’s cut into the park. Today, visitors are able to explore over 250 miles of roads and trails, over a thousand picnic tables, and enjoy one of the largest temperate rainforests in the world.

LAKES
Lake Crescent is located 19 miles west of Port Angeles on Highway 101. To get there, take exit 127 and turn south onto Staircase Road. The lake is a true gem. A 20-mile self-guiding trail, begins just past the entrance station. Elwha Lake, 12 miles west of Port Angeles, has two campgrounds and several hiking trails. Madison Falls, an accessible 0.2-mile self-guiding trail, offers opportunities for self-guiding nature trails and a ranger-guiding nature trails and a ranger.

TEMPERATE RAINFOREST
Drenched in over 107 inches of rain a year, west side valleys flourish with ancient western hemlock, Doug fir and Sitka spruce trees. Moss-draped bigleaf maple creates a magical scene that obtine a sense of time. Roosevelt elk may linger along riverbanks at dawn and dusk. The Hoh Rain Forest, 92 miles west of Port Angeles, offers a visitor center, exhibits, books, maps, self-guiding nature trails and a campground. The Quinault Rain Forest, on the Quinault North Shore Road, is only 10 miles from Port Angeles. Near Quinault Information Station, which offers information, exhibits, books, and maps, are several self-guiding trails. Located in the heart of the park, the USFS/NPS Information Station and nearby campgrounds and trails to the rocky beach.

LOWLAND FOREST
On the north and east side of the park, the magnificent lowland forest closer laversations. This old growth is dominated by western hemlock and Doug fir trees. Five miles south of Port Angeles, Heart O’ the Hills Campground offers stunning views of Lake Crescent. There is a unique destination in the park’s northwest corner. Of course, you can create countless other trip combinations for a memorable vacation.

MOUNTAINS
The most accessible mountain area is Hurricane Ridge at 5,242 feet, 17 miles up a paved road from Port Angeles. Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center offers information, exhibits, an orientation film, a snack bar and gift shop. Picnic areas provide a chance to relax amid the breathtaking scenery. Along several trails you can capture views of glacier clad mountains crowning acres of wilderness. Avalanche and glacier lilies, huluses, and lilly tiges dance beneath shaded alpahunting for trees. High-pitched warbling of an unknown siren, found only on the Olympic Peninsula. Black-tailed deer feed in summer meadows, and then migrates downhill when cold recaptures the high country.

Entrance and Recreation Fees

Fees for various activities in the park:

- $5 - Vehicle (private) or $5 - Individual (foot, bike)
- $10 - Deer Park, North Fork Quinault, Queets, South Beach
- $15 - Vehicle (private) or $5 - Individual (foot, bike)
- $20 - Olympic National Park Annual Pass
- $30 - Olympic National Park Annual Pass
- 50% discount with Interagency Senior / Access or Golden Age / Access Passes
- 30% discount with National Park Pass
- $5 - RV septic dump station use at Fairholme, Hoh, Kalaloch, Mora, Sol Duc
- $5 - 50% discount with Interagency Senior / Access Passes Permit or Access Passes Permit
- $10 - Interagency Annual Pass (Multiple Federal Lands)
- $15 - Interagency Senior Pass (lifetime, age 62+)
- $30 - Olympic National Park Annual Pass
- $5 - Olympic National Park Annual Pass
- Bicyclists are not permitted to ride above Heart O’ the Hills entrance station

For more information, please call the Wilderness Information Center at (360) 565-3100.
Safety and More

Please do not feed any park wildlife. It is harmful to the animals and hazardous to you. Man-made food promotes dietary upset and malnutrition in wildlife. Animals that are fed by humans may lose all fear of people, which can lead to aggressive food-seeking behavior. Help keep wildlife wild! In campgrounds, store food, garbage and all scented items in your vehicle. On all overnight trips, use bear containers (required on the coast) or hang foodstuffs and all other scented items from park-approved bear wires.

Drift logs are dangerous! Avoid swimming near walking near the ocean during storms or heavy surf.

Filter or boil all backcountry water for five minutes to avoid infection by Giardia, a microscopic intestinal parasite.

Bring rain gear and warm clothing. Hypothermia, a dangerous lowering of body temperature, may result from exposure to wet or chilly weather.

Please recycle and reuse here at home in order to help protect our environment and save the natural resources.

Visit the park website: www.nps.gov/olym

Tune your radio to 530 AM for park information in the Port Angeles area. At Lake Crescent or Quinault tune to 1610 AM. For recorded park information call (360) 565-3130.

At Lake Crescent or Quinault, you can reach the beach along three-mile boardwalk trails to either Sand Point or Cape Alava. A popular day hike is the nine-mile loop, which includes a three-mile beach walk. Be sure to make a reservation for wilderness camping. Have a safe and enjoyable trip!
Park Programs, June 22 - September 1
Please check bulletin boards for additional programs or schedule changes.

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER
PORT ANGELES
Daily 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Information, children’s Discovery Room, park film, bookshop, maps, exhibits, accessible forest trail.
Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday - Family Forest Activities
Join us for family fun exploring nature with a Discovery Backpack, filled with binoculars, guidebooks and more! Borrow a backpack at park visitor centers for a $5.00 donation.

LAKE CRESCENT
Storm King Information Station
Information, bookshop, maps, trails.
Daily except Tuesday, Thursday 2:00 p.m. - Marymere Falls Walk
Meet at Storm King Ranger Station. One hour. Mostly level, uphill at end.
Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday
Lake Crescent Lodge Campfire Program 8:00 p.m. - June 22 through August 2 7:30 p.m. - August 3 through August 31 Meet at lakeside campfire circle near Lake Crescent Lodge. Topics vary.

HEART O’ THE HILLS
PORT ANGELES
Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center
Information, maps, exhibits, orientation film, trails. The gift shop and snack bar limited. For more information call (360) 928-3720. Donations welcome.

HURRICANE RIDGE
Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center Opens daily at 9:00 a.m.
The information desk is staffed from 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. daily. Information, maps, exhibits, orientation film, trails. The gift shop and snack bar are open from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily.
Daily 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.
Family Forest Activities
Join us for 1 1/2-hours of forest activities. Meet at campground amphitheater.

STAIRCASE
Staircase Ranger Station
Information, exhibits, bookshop, maps, trails.
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 2:00 p.m. - Forest Walk
Meet at Staircase Ranger Station for 1 1/2-hour lowland forest guided walk.

KALALOCH
Kalaloch Campground amphitheater. Please check topics on bulletin boards.

COASTAL HIGHLIGHTS TALK
On mornings when the tide is low, join the Intertidal Walk. Days and times on bulletin boards. Meet at Beach 4 parking lot north of Kalaloch Campground. 1 1/2 hours.

ON MORNINGS WHEN THE TIDE IS TOO HIGH FOR THE INTERTIDAL WALK, JOIN THE BEACH STROLL. MEET AT 10:00 A.M. AT KALALOCH LODGE OR EXIT 37 (OFF HIGHWAY 101) AT LAKE CRESSENT LIDO MKET. CHECK BULLETIN BOARDS FOR DAYS. 1 1/2 HOURS.

MORA

MORAS
Coastal Forest Walk
Meet at Site A54 in Kalaloch Campground for two-hour walk. Park in the campground day-use area or follow the trail from Kalaloch Lodge.

JUNIOR RANGER
Olympic National Park Jr Rangers learn exciting secrets about the park. Booklets are $1.00 donation at park visitor centers. Earn your Junior Ranger badge!

MORAS
On mornings when the tide is low, join the Intertidal Walk. Days and times on bulletin boards. Meet at Beach 4 parking lot north of Kalaloch Campground. 1 1/2 hours.

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MORA

MORAS
On mornings when the tide is too high for the Inter tidal Walk, join the Beach Stroll. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Kalaloch Lodge beach gazebo (walk south from Lodge along parking lot). Check bulletin boards for days. 1 1/2 hours.

Daily except Monday - 2:00 p.m.
Coastal Forest Walk
Meet at Site A54 in Kalaloch Campground for two-hour walk. Park in the campground day-use area or follow the trail from Kalaloch Lodge.

DAILY - 2:30 p.m.
Coastal Highlights Talk
Meet at the Kalaloch Lodge white gazebo (walk south from Kalaloch Lodge along the parking lot) for 1/2-hour talk. Topics on bulletin boards.

DAILY
Evening Program 9:00 p.m. - June 22 through August 16 8:30 p.m. - August 17 through August 31
Meet at Kalaloch Campground amphitheater. Please check topics on bulletin boards.

LAKE CRESCENT
PrivateCanoe Trip/Old-Growth Forest Walk
Bring a lunch and dress in layers. Sign up at Olympic Park Institute. Lake Crescent, beginning at 9:30 a.m., first come, first served. Space is limited. For more information call (360) 928-3720. Donations welcome.

LAKE CRESCENT
Private Canoe Trip/Old-Growth Forest Walk
Christian are our most valuable natural resource.
Herbert Hoover

Discovery Backpack
Lake Crescent Junior Ranger

Junior Ranger
Lake Crescent Junior Ranger