

Determination of Eligibility

Sol Duc Road
Olympic National Park
Clallam County, Washington

Prepared for the National Park Service by
Christy Avery
Avery Historical Consulting
Seattle, WA
March 26, 2025

Historic Name

Sol Duc Hot Springs Road

Other Names

Soleduck Road; Soleduck Valley Road; Sol Duc Road

Location

Olympic National Park
Port Angeles Vicinity
Clallam County
Washington

Classification

Ownership of property: Federal

Category of property: Structure

Number of resources within property (previously listed resources are not included in the count):

Eligible	Not Eligible		
0	2	buildings	Buildings 1155 & 1156
0	0	district	
0	1	site	RV Campground
0	1	structure	Sol Duc Road
0	0	object	
0	4	Total	

Historic Function

TRANSPORTATION/Road
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

Current Function

TRANSPORTATION/Road
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation

Architectural Classification

N/A

Materials

N/A

State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination X request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ____ meets X does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
____ national ____ statewide ____ local

Applicable National Register Criteria ____A ____B ____C ____D

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KEVIN
KILLIAN

 Digitally signed by KEVIN
KILLIAN
Date: 2025.04.14
10:36:35 -07'00'

Kevin Killian, Superintendent (Acting)
Olympic National Park, National Park Service, Department of the Interior



Allyson Brooks Ph.D., Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 15, 2025

Kevin Killian
Superintendent (Acting)
US National Park Service - Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362

In future correspondence please refer to:
Project Tracking Code: 2025-04-02364
Property: Sol Duc Road Determination of Eligibility
Re: Not Eligible for the National Register

Dear Kevin Killian:

Thank you for contacting the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) regarding the above referenced proposal. This action has been reviewed on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under provisions of Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.). Our review is based upon documentation provided in your submittal: Sol Duc Road Determination of Eligibility.

We concur that Property ID: 736713 Sol Duc Road Olympic National Park is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

As a result of our concurrence, further contact with DAHP on this determination of eligibility is not necessary. However, if new information about the resource becomes available, please resume consultation as our assessment may be revised.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Maureen Elenga, M.A.
Architectural Historian – Transportation Reviewer
(360) 972-4539
Maureen.Elenga@dahp.wa.gov



Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places

Sol Duc Road, a 13.68 mile long road in Olympic National Park, is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It does not retain integrity to any historic period. The first iteration of the road—Sol Duc Hot Springs Road—was built in 1910 and was improved in 1935 and 1960. The poorly constructed road was narrow with tight curves and steep sections; drivers likened it to riding a roller coaster through the forest. The road lacked shoulders or guardrails and included only one interpretive site (the Salmon Cascades). The NPS reconstructed the first 12.12 miles of road in 1987-1988 to improve safety, reduce maintenance costs, and add visitor amenities. The road and roadbed were obliterated and replaced with a new structure along a different alignment that provided better sight lines, smoother curves, and less vertical elevation change. The new road included shoulders, pullouts and guardrails, as well as a reconfigured intersection with Highway 101. The NPS added the Sol Duc Entrance Interpretive Exhibit, which included a large interpretive structure, parking, and a vault toilet along a new road loop; two additional road loops to facilitate U-turns; a new fee station; the Ancient Groves interpretive trail and parking area; and the Sol Duc River View Picnic Area. New parking areas were constructed at the Salmon Cascades and at the two trailheads along the road.

The road is not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and is not eligible under Criterion A. The road is not significant within any historic context. Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, as it was primarily called throughout the twentieth century, was built in 1910 to provide vehicle access to Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort (which was reconstructed in 1982 and was determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1984 due to loss of integrity). It remained primarily associated with the resort throughout the twentieth century, though the US Forest Service established a campground and a ranger station near the hot springs in 1936. The road is not associated with a significant person, and is not eligible under Criterion B. The extant road structure dates from 1988 and is not fifty years old; it does not represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, and is not eligible under Criterion C.

Summary Description

Sol Duc Road is located in the Sol Duc River Valley in Olympic National Park (ONP) in Washington State.¹ The two-lane, asphalt-paved road extends for 13.68 miles between Highway 101, about 29 miles west of Port Angeles, and its terminus at the Sol Duc Falls parking lot. The road provides access to three trailheads, two nature trails, a small roadside picnic area, Eagle Ranger Station, an 82-site campground, one group campsite, and Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort. The route passes through dense old growth and second growth temperate forest as it proceeds through the Sol Duc River Valley and views are limited to the road corridor. Elevations range from 1,136 feet at Highway 101 to 1,898 feet at the road end parking lot. The road width is twenty-two feet wide, with a grassy shoulder of one to three feet wide. Steel or wood guardrails on wood posts line the road along some slopes. The extant road and its associated features were constructed in 1987-1988; it replaced Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, which was constructed in 1910 and improved in 1935 and 1960.

Narrative Description

From Highway 101, the road proceeds in a southwesterly direction through second growth forest. At 0.1 miles, a wood sign structure, with vertically set peeled log posts and a signboard, welcomes visitors to the Sol Duc Valley. The sign also marks the entrance to a 0.12 mile long asphalt-paved loop on the west side of Sol Duc Road that includes a seven-stall parking area, a prefabricated vault toilet and the Sol Duc Entrance Interpretive Exhibit. The exhibit is an open-air structure that measures 32 feet by 32 feet. The exhibit structure is topped with a cedar shake roof and is supported by peeled log and dimensional wood posts; large interpretive panels are affixed to the structure. The loop drive and parking area are bordered by halved, peeled log curbs. The entrance sign, the interpretive exhibit, and the loop drive were constructed in 1988. The loop's exit intersects Sol Duc Road about 400 feet to the southwest of its entrance.

At 0.2 miles, a metal swing gate allows the NPS to close the road when necessary. A fee booth, erected in 1988, is set in the center of the road at 0.3 miles. A short, paved loop on the east side of the road near the fee booth allows vehicles to turn around at this location. The road continues to the southwest, but at 2.2 miles, it turns to the southeast as it bends around the west end of Aurora Ridge. It remains on a southeasterly course, on the east side of the Sol Duc River, until its terminus. At 2.3 miles, on the east side of the road, an unpaved spur leads north to a clearing with a metal shed used by the NPS maintenance division (before 1988, the site served as a dump and staff gun range).²

¹ The road was primarily known as Sol Duc Hot Springs Road throughout the twentieth century, but, particularly after the mid-1970s, the NPS also used Soleduck Road and Soleduck Valley Road. This document utilizes Sol Duc Hot Springs Road as the historic name, and Sol Duc Road (which, in 2025, is the preferred name) as the current name.

² Jerald Lorenz, Denver Service Center, to Robert Shelley, Denver Service Center, February 25, 1985, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Series 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

The Aurora Ridge trailhead, with six paved parking spaces set perpendicular to the trailhead, is located on the east side of the road at 2.4 miles. (This parking area was reconstructed in 1988). Also at this point, the road begins to roughly parallel the Sol Duc River. At around 3.2 miles, USFS Road 2918 (South Fork Sol Duc Road) comes into view and parallels the Sol Duc Road for about a mile on its west side before turning south and crossing the Sol Duc River.³ The forest transitions from second growth to old growth around mile 4.5. At 5.2 miles a 26-foot-wide, 60-foot-long concrete and steel bridge spans the North Fork of the Sol Duc River as it reaches its confluence with the Sol Duc River. This is the only bridge along the road. It was constructed in 1960 to replace the log stringer bridge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

At 6.5 miles, the Sol Duc River View Picnic Area, established in 1988, is located on the west side of the road. It is composed of a small pullout with two concrete picnic tables and an interpretive panel. At 7 miles, the Salmon Cascades Overlook includes two small parking areas (one with parking spaces perpendicular to the road and the other with parallel parking spots) bound by halved, peeled logs, as well as a vault toilet and three concrete picnic tables. The two parking areas replaced a single pullout that allowed access to what had been the road's only interpretive stop (prior to 1988). A 190-foot-long trail leads to a wooden viewing platform overlooking the Sol Duc River where, in fall, visitors can watch salmon make their way upstream to spawn. At 7.4 miles, two parking spaces and a single picnic table (established in 1988) are set along the road's southwest side near the river.

The North Fork Sol Duc River trailhead is located along the east side of the road at 8.1 miles. (This parking area was reconstructed in 1988). At 8.6 and 8.9 miles, two pullouts serve as parking areas for the Ancient Groves Trail, a 0.6 mile long trail through old growth forest. One interpretive panel is installed at the southernmost pullout. At 11.3 miles, an unpaved spur leads west to a level, open area that serves as a group campsite; the only amenities are scattered picnic tables. (It is unclear when this area was designated for group camping, though it was in use by 1988).

The Eagle Ranger Station is located on the east side of the road 11.9 miles from Highway 101. The ranger station, which was built by the CCC in 1936, and the associated garage and generator house, built in 1940, were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2007. A paved loop serves as a visitor parking area as well as a turnaround area on the west side of Sol Duc Road; this feature was added in 1988.

At 12 miles from Highway 101, Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road leads southwest from Sol Duc Road, crosses the Sol Duc River, and in 250 feet, arrives at Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort. This is

³ USFS Road 2918 (South Fork Sol Duc River Road) was constructed between 1953 and 1965. The section that parallels the Sol Duc Road on the east side of the Sol Duc River in 2025 was built after 1970. Prior to this time, Road 2918 merged into the Sol Duc Road at the point where the USFS road now parallels the Sol Duc Road. It resumed its own course after about one mile, then crossed the river and continued south into Olympic National Forest. The Forest Service built the road during a time of increased timber harvesting in the area and may have constructed the portion of the road that closely parallels the Sol Duc Road in an effort to keep logging trucks off of the NPS road.

one of only two locations in the park with hot springs. Sol Duc Hot Springs, like Olympic Hot Springs to the east, lies on the Calawah Fault, which is a gap between rock layers that allows surface water to circulate down through rock layers then return to the surface as heated water.⁴ The water is piped into four pools at the facility, which also includes a lodge building and rental cabins. Most buildings at the resort were constructed in 1982 and Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort was determined to be ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 due to a loss of integrity. The pools, lodge building, and cabins are located on the southwestern side of the river (the opposite side of the river as Sol Duc Road).

Two buildings and one site associated with the concession resort are set along the southwest side of Sol Duc Road, between the road and the river, on both sides of Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road. These are Building 1156, Building 1155, and a 17-stall RV campground. None of these are individually eligible for the NRHP. Building 1156 is located 12 miles from Highway 101 and just northwest of Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road. It is a one-story, rectangular, 2,112 square foot building constructed by the Sol Duc Hot Springs Company as a motel in 1961. The wood framed building is set on a concrete slab foundation. It originally included six motel rooms; it is now used by the hot springs' concessioner as employee housing. It is not eligible for the NRHP as it does not meet the eligibility guidelines for concession buildings as stipulated in the *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources Multiple Property Documentation* form. It is not part of an eligible historic district. It is not "an outstanding example of the Modern Movement, or 'Park Service Modern,' style, preferably one published in contemporary architectural journals or the recipient of design awards." It was not "the creation of a regionally, nationally, or internationally recognized architect or architectural firm working for the National Park Service" nor was it an "important stylistic example or functional prototype" for the Mission 66 program. It was not an "essential part of an overall Mission 66 park development plan that had extraordinary importance in the history and development of an individual park," and, as required for motel buildings, it does not "reflect the character" of an extant lodge building from any historic period.⁵

Building 1155 was built as a single-family residence by the Sol Duc Hot Springs Company in 1960. At different times it likely served as a residence for the resort owner and the manager. The house is located southeast of Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road at 12.1 miles from Highway 101. It is a 1,416 square foot, one-story, rectangular building that sits on a concrete slab foundation and is topped with a standing seam metal roof (which replaced the original shake roof). The building originally included five bedrooms and two baths.⁶ In 2025, the residence is known as the Oly House or Sol Duc Bunkhouse and the NPS utilizes the property for staff housing. It is not eligible for the NRHP either as a concession property or a residence. It does not meet the

⁴ Michael Korosec, William Phillips, and J. Eric Schuster, "The 1980-1982 Geothermal Resource Assessment Program in Washington," Washington State Department of Natural Resources, August 1983, accessed on February 10, 2025 at https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/ger_ofr83-7_geothermal_survey.pdf.

⁵ National Park Service, *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation* form, September 30, 2015, National Register #64501248, F88.

⁶ Leslie Eastman Jr., "Olympic National Park Concession Appraisal," February 15, 1977, 66, Olympic National Park (ONP) Archives.

National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources Multiple Property Documentation form stipulations for eligible concession resources. It is not part of an eligible historic district. It is not “an outstanding example of the Modern Movement, or ‘Park Service Modern,’ style, preferably one published in contemporary architectural journals or the recipient of design awards.” It was not “the creation of a regionally, nationally, or internationally recognized architect or architectural firm working for the National Park Service” nor was it an “important stylistic example or functional prototype” for the Mission 66 program. It was not an “essential part of an overall Mission 66 park development plan that had extraordinary importance in the history and development of an individual park.”⁷

Building 1155 also does not meet the requirements for an eligible NPS employee residence, which, except for prototype residences, are meant to be evaluated as contributing resources to an eligible residential district (which are characterized by their suburban-style site plans and location out of public view). In addition, the MPD states that “All Mission 66 housing reflects the expressed goals of the program to provide ‘modern living quarters’ for National Park Service employees;” however, this residence was built by Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort for an owner or manager and their families.⁸

The Sol Duc Hot Springs RV Campground, established in the early 1960s, is located 0.10 miles southeast of the residence, at 12.2 miles.⁹ This concessioner-operated site is unpaved and includes seventeen side-by-side parking stalls in two rows, each with electric hookups and a picnic table, separated by low wood rails. There are no buildings, including comfort stations, or other infrastructure at the site. The site is not eligible for the NRHP. It lacks the “range of contributing buildings, structures, and cultural landscape features that encompass the goals” of the Mission 66 program, as stipulated by the *NPS Mission 66 Era Resources* MPD for eligible campgrounds. It does not have particular “importance to the overall history of camping in a park” and does not “demonstrate integrated campground and day use area planning.” The side-by-side sites do not reflect “the new concepts of providing more privacy for the users” and the campground lacks the landscape features and constructed components necessary for an eligible campground.¹⁰

Sol Duc Road continues on its southeasterly course, still roughly paralleling the Sol Duc River. Sol Duc Campground, which includes a dump station, an amphitheater, and two road loops with campsites, is located southeast of the RV park. (The campground was determined eligible for the

⁷ National Park Service, *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation form, September 30, 2015, National Register #64501248, F88.

⁸ *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation form, F75-77.

⁹ It is unclear when the RV campground, originally called a “trailer court,” was established, but it first appears on a Sol Duc Hot Springs site plan in 1963. The RV campground is located about 400 feet northwest of the Sol Duc Campground historic district boundary.

¹⁰ *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation form, F80-F81.

NRHP in 2022 for its association with the NPS's Mission 66 program.) The dump station is located along Sol Duc Road at 12.3 miles. The entrance to Loop A of the Sol Duc Campground is found at 12.4 miles, while the entrance to Loop B of the campground is at 12.6 miles.

The road continues to the southeast until it reaches its terminus at the Sol Duc Falls parking area at 13.68 miles. A 0.15 mile long asphalt-paved parking area extends from the end of the striped two-lane road and ends in an elongated loop. An asphalt-paved walkway extends along one side of the loop interior and a few picnic tables are scattered in the middle of the grassy loop. A prefabricated, two-stall vault toilet is located along the northern side of parking area. The trail to Sol Duc Falls and Seven Lakes Basin originates at the southeastern end of the parking area. The CCC established a road end parking area about one-eighth the size of the extant parking area; it was expanded into its present size in the early 1960s.

Sol Duc Road History

The Sol Duc Valley, which is only one of two places in Olympic National Park with hot springs, has long been known to the native peoples of the Olympic Peninsula. A few American settlers established homesites or filed claims to land in the densely forested valley in the late nineteenth century; these were located north of the confluence of the Sol Duc River and the North Fork Sol Duc River. Only a few cabins, possibly built by hunters or squatters, appeared south of the North Fork Sol Duc River.¹¹

Americans first traveled to the valley in significant numbers to visit Sol Duc Hot Springs, which were located six miles beyond any occupied homestead in the late nineteenth century. Theodore Moritz, who claimed the land around the hot springs in the late nineteenth century, was the first American to capitalize on the thermal waters.¹² Moritz built a dining hall, tent cabins, and a bathhouse at an unknown date in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Despite the two-day journey from Port Angeles, the nearest town, visitors began traveling to the site to soak in cedar tubs and drink the reputedly healing waters.¹³

The hot springs were incorporated into Olympic Forest Reserve in 1897 as part of a broader action by President Grover Cleveland, who set aside thirteen new forest reserves containing over 21 million acres of land at this time. The reserve contained almost 2.2 million acres and spanned most of the Olympic Peninsula, including the Sol Duc Valley. In 1905, forest reserve rangers built a horse trail through the valley to the hot springs to facilitate tourist use. In 1907, the reserve became known as Olympic National Forest, and it was overseen by a new government agency—the US Forest Service.¹⁴

Moritz died in 1909, and Michael Earles, a wealthy mill owner who credited the water with curing his terminal illness in 1903, purchased the site. Earles established the Sol Duc Hot Springs (SDHS) Company and soon obtained right-of-way permission from the US Forest Service to construct a road from Fairholme, on the western end of Lake Crescent, to the hot springs. The SDHS Company completed the 14-mile-long Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1910. The narrow, unpaved road led southwest into the Sol Duc Valley before turning to the southeast and roughly following the Sol Duc River on its east side. (This represents a similar path as the

¹¹ Gail Evans, *Olympic National Park Historic Resource Study*, (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1983), 61.

¹² Though Theodore Moritz is credited with establishing the first amenities at the hot springs, it was Harry J. Moritz who filed the land patent to the site in 1897. It is unclear if Theodore and Harry are the same man; census records do not record a man by either name in Clallam County between 1880 and 1910, though 1890 census records have been lost to fire.

¹³ Evans, 153-155.; R. Gordon Bloomquist, “Sol Duc Hot Springs: The Resort that Refused to Die,” *Geo-Heat Center Bulletin*, Oregon Institute of Technology, March 2003, accessed on February 10, 2025 at <http://digitallib.oit.edu/digital/collection/geoheat/id/11326>.

¹⁴ David Louter, “Olympic National Park Historic Trails District,” National Register of Historic Places nomination form, Section 8, Page 6, ONP archives; Gerald Williams, *The U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest: A History*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 42-44.

road in 2025, though the road alignment has changed). The NPS later noted the “minimal base work” and inconsistent horizontal and vertical road alignment of the original road.¹⁵ The road ended at Sol Duc Hot Springs and, between 1912 and 1935, primarily served visitors traveling to the hot springs.¹⁶

After his company finished the road, Earles began construction of Sol Duc Hot Springs Hotel. He first built a sawmill at the hotel site that produced over two million board feet of timber, which he used to build a 165-room hotel, a bathhouse with thirty tubs, a three-story sanitorium, cabins, and other facilities. Sol Duc Hot Springs Hotel opened in 1912; 10,000 people reportedly visited the hotel in its first year. To access the site, visitors traveled by steamship from Seattle to Port Angeles, auto stage to Lake Crescent, and steamer across the lake to Fairholme. The resort’s fleet of Stanley Steamer steam-powered automobiles met guests at the Fairholme dock and transported them the final fourteen miles, primarily along Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, to the hotel. However, the hotel was destroyed by fire only four years after it opened.¹⁷

Clallam County purchased the road from the SDHS Company in 1920, a year after Earles’ death. A new owner established a campground at the site in 1921, and the hot springs continued to draw visitors.¹⁸ Camping had grown tremendously in popularity during this time as automobiles became more affordable to the middle class—in 1923, the New York Times estimated that half of the nation’s ten million automobiles were used for camping each year—and cars made the hot springs accessible to an increasingly mobile American public.¹⁹ By 1930, the facility had expanded to include 100 cabins, a forty-room hotel, a general store, and a gas station, as well as one large indoor pool and thirty-six small pools.²⁰

Sol Duc Hot Springs Road continued to serve visitors to the hot springs into the mid-1930s. The only other infrastructure along the road before this time was the Sol Duc-Hoh River trail, which extended from the end of the road at Sol Duc Hot Springs to the Hoh River. The Forest Service had built the trail in 1913 for timber management, fire suppression, and recreation; it was one of four long trails built by the agency in Olympic National Forest that year.²¹ Two Olympic Peninsula-based logging companies—Crescent Logging Company and Clallam Lumber

¹⁵ National Park Service, “Background Paper, Soleduck Road Reconstruction,” June 2, 1986, 1, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Series 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

¹⁶ Evans, 153-154; Kit Oldham, “Michael Earles opens an elegant resort at Sol Duc Hot Springs near the Olympic Mountains on May 15, 1912,” Historylink Essay #7591, December 29, 2005, accessed on January 31, 2025 at <https://www.historylink.org/File/7591>.

¹⁷ Oldham, “Michael Earles opens an elegant resort at Sol Duc Hot Springs near the Olympic Mountains on May 15, 1912;” Evans, 153-155.

¹⁸ Harlan Hobbes, Chief, Division of Lands, to Superintendent, Olympic National Park, “Status of the Soleduck Road,” July 3, 1985, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

¹⁹ Paul Sutter, Driven Wild, *How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 78.

²⁰ *Seattle Daily Times*, Sol Duc Hot Springs [advertisement], May 22, 1929; *Seattle Daily Times*, “Indoor Pool Latest Feature at Hot Springs,” May 15, 1930.

²¹ Louter, “Olympic National Park Historic Trails District,”

Company— owned parcels of land along the road north of the hot springs and some of their employees likely utilized the road as well.²²

Sol Duc Hot Springs Road and the New Deal, 1933-1942

The first significant improvements to the Sol Duc Hot Springs Road were performed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps by executive order in 1933 to carry out the work of the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Act. The CCC program was one of Roosevelt's solutions to the Great Depression, and one that was based on the president's interest in conservation. The program aimed to employ large numbers of young men in conservation work on public lands. National forests and national parks greatly benefited from the program with CCC workers engaged in projects such as the construction of visitor facilities, forest improvement, erosion control, and landscape work. CCC companies also constructed fire breaks, fought insect outbreaks, and eradicated unwanted plants. The program was one of the most popular of the New Deal. Before it ended in 1942, around 2 million enrollees had worked in hundreds of CCC camps in national forests, parks, and monuments, as well as in state, county, and municipal areas.²³

The Forest Service utilized federal work programs during the Great Depression to construct infrastructure in the Sol Duc Valley, which remained within Olympic National Forest at this time.²⁴ The Washington State Highways Department had completed the Olympic Loop Highway, the precursor to Highway 101, in 1931, and the new route facilitated access to national forest lands such as the Sol Duc Valley. CCC crews from Camp Snider, one of seven CCC camps on the Olympic Peninsula, were charged with constructing or improving roads and trails, fire prevention activities, building fire lookouts, and erecting telephone lines. They improved Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1935 by building a log stringer bridge over the North Fork Sol Duc River, graveling the road surface and extending it for two miles past the hot springs. At this time, the road was twelve to sixteen feet wide with some turnouts. Along the new section of road, just southeast of the hot springs, the men constructed a twenty-two site campground with large stone fireplaces and log picnic tables. Olympic National Forest Supervisor H.L. Plumb noted that

²² Most logs were moved out of the valley on a spur line of the Seattle, Port Angeles and Western Railroad, instead of by road. It is unclear when the railroad up the Sol Duc Valley was built, but it was abandoned by 1942. The railroad primarily ran along the west bank of the Sol Duc River, on Olympic National Forest lands. USFS Road 2918 appears to utilize the alignment of the railroad. John Caldbick, "The Railroads of Jefferson and Clallam Counties," May 17, 2015, History Link essay #11096, accessed on February 4, 2025 at <https://www.historylink.org/File/11096>; Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker's Atlas of Clallam County*, Washington, 1942 (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1942), 20.

²³ Joseph Engbeck, *By the People, For the People: The Work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in California State Parks*, (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2002), 3-4; Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998), 338.

²⁴ President Theodore Roosevelt created Mt. Olympus National Monument in 1909, and the NPS assumed management of the monument in 1933, but the Sol Duc Valley, like most timber-rich valleys on the Olympic Peninsula, remained outside the monument's boundaries.

campers began utilizing the unfinished campground in September of 1935, though it did not officially open until the spring of 1936. About 1,000 people used the campground in 1936.²⁵

CCC crews built Eagle Ranger Station along Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, just north of the spur road that led over the river to the hot springs, in 1936. Two additional buildings were added to the ranger station site in 1940 (the complex was listed on the NRHP in 2007). They also improved the water supply system at Sol Duc Hot Springs. Outside the Sol Duc Valley, the accomplishments of men from Camp Snider included a new fifteen mile long road along the Hoh River; the reconstruction of La Poel Campground on Lake Crescent; and new roads throughout the Sol Duc Burn, an area devastated by fire in 1907.²⁶

The Sol Duc Valley was incorporated into Olympic National Park in 1938. The new park included lands from both Mt. Olympus National Monument and Olympic National Forest, and all of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road was included in the new park.²⁷ It was one of nine roads in the new park, and like the others, it terminated in a dead-end. The park's first master plan, produced in 1938, largely ignored the Sol Duc Valley, and called only for the surfacing of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road.²⁸ CCC work in the Sol Duc Valley continued after the creation of the park. Seventeen sites were added to the campground in 1939, and between 1939 and 1942 CCC crews created an approximately 70 feet by 100 feet parking area at the end of the road.²⁹ Whole peeled logs, supported by two sections of peeled logs, served as parking barriers on two sides of the lot.³⁰ (This original parking area was about one-eighth of the size as the extant trailhead parking area in 2025).

The number of CCC projects declined around 1940 as men began leaving the camp to serve in the military or work in higher wage defense jobs and New Deal funding vanished altogether as the nation entered World War II. Despite the continued support of President Roosevelt, Congress discontinued the CCC program in 1942. No significant improvements were undertaken in the Sol Duc Valley, or the rest of Olympic National Park, for the duration of World War II.

Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, 1945-1981

The NPS undertook few improvements in the Sol Duc Valley in the decade after World War II. Sol Duc Hot Springs Road was periodically graded in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and park staff hoped to pave the gravel road and replace the log stringer bridge, built by the CCC, over the

²⁵ Fred Walters, "Sol Duc Campground Developmental History," 1-4, ONP archives.

²⁶ Evans, 188-191; Walters, 1-4. The Sol Duc fire of 1907 burned a 12,800 acre area of the Sol Duc River drainage west of Lake Crescent, and north of the contemporary Highway 101.

²⁷ Some private inholdings remained along the road, and these were gradually acquired by the NPS throughout the mid-twentieth century. The largest acquisition occurred in 1944 when the NPS purchased 1,480 acres from the Crescent Logging Company.

²⁸ National Park Service, Olympic National Park, "Outline of General Development Policies and Preliminary Development Outline," 1938, 14, ONP Archives.

²⁹ Evans, 191; Walters, 4; ONP Superintendent, "Superintendent's Report for June 1939," ONP archives.

³⁰ National Park Service, "Parking Area for the End of Soleduck Road," Drawing NP-OLY 2052, December 29, 1938, ONP Archives.

North Fork Sol Duc River.³¹ Congressman Henry Jackson pushed the NPS to extend the road to Seven Lakes Basin and to establish a ski area there throughout the 1940s.³² In 1951, NPS Chief Engineer Frank Kittredge noted that such a route could be continued to the Hoh River to create a scenic loop drive in the northwestern side of the park. “This Seven Lakes Basin is rated as one of the most beautiful and scenic areas in the park, and is also excellent for skiing,” Kittredge wrote to NPS Director Arthur Demaray in 1951.³³

However, the park lacked the funds for road improvements or for an extension of the route. National Park Service budgets had been cut drastically during World War II and they remained low throughout the rest of the 1940s and early 1950s as the federal government prioritized defense spending and paying down war debts. At the same time, national parks were experiencing record visitation. Wartime gasoline and rubber rationing had ended and the popularity of outdoor recreation skyrocketed; in 1955, there were 56 million visits to the national park system, compared to 17 million in 1940. At Olympic National Park, visitation increased sevenfold between 1946 and 1956, to over 865,000 people—a number that surprised NPS planners, who had previously thought that the park’s remote location discouraged visitors. However, the infrastructure at Olympic National Park, and national parks across the nation, was inadequate for visitor needs.³⁴

In February of 1955 NPS director Conrad Wirth proposed a new program, called Mission 66, that was intended to modernize and improve national park facilities by the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service in 1966. At ONP, created less than twenty years earlier, the Mission 66 program provided the largest influx of funding in the park’s history. President Eisenhower proved enthusiastic about the plan, and in the spring of 1956, Congress approved huge budget increases for the National Park Service so that the agency could begin the \$700 million program.³⁵

Fred Overly, ONP superintendent from 1951 to 1958, created a Mission 66 plan for the park soon after Wirth announced the program. He considered road system improvement vital to accommodating the one million visitors that were expected at the park by 1966. Superintendent Overly proposed thirty-nine miles of new roads in addition to upgrades to the park’s 149.2 miles of roads (though he admitted that “a great deal of effort” would be required to bring existing

³¹ Hobbes to Superintendent, Olympic National Park, “Status of the Soleduck Road,” July 3, 1985, ONP Archives.

³² National Park Service, “Henry M. Jackson’s Political Impact on Olympic National Park,” February 23, 1987, NARA-Seattle, WA; Port Angeles Evening News, “Jackson Talks Park Problems To Local Groups,” July 9, 1948, NARA-Seattle, WA.

³³ Frank Kittredge to Arthur Demaray, September 18, 1951, RG 79, General Records: Administrative Files, 1949-1971, Box 1072, NARA-College Park, MD.

³⁴ Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 3-7; National Park Service, *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation form, September 30, 2015, #64501248, E2-E3; National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Olympic National Park,” 1956, 1-20, RG 79, Olympic National Park Subject Files 1954-1962, Box 6, NARA-Seattle, WA.

³⁵ *National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources*, E3.

roads up to modern standards). The superintendent prioritized the construction of three roads: one through the northern half of the park's coastal strip, another on the north side of Lake Crescent, and a third that would connect Deer Park and Hurricane Ridge roads. Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, and the entire Sol Duc Valley, were absent from the park's first Mission 66 plan.³⁶ The NPS classified Sol Duc Hot Springs Road as a "minor road," a category that also included developed area, utility, and campground roads. (Construction projects on minor roads in national parks were performed by the NPS, whereas the Bureau of Public Roads undertook engineering and construction of major park roads).³⁷ Subsequent plans established that Superintendent Overly sought to pave the first 11.6 miles of roadway and to replace the CCC-built log bridge over the North Fork Sol Duc River. He also hoped to expand the parking area at the end of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road to accommodate fifty cars, but he ranked this as a secondary priority.³⁸

NPS leadership approved the park's plans for a new bridge and road paving on the Sol Duc Hot Springs Road. In May 1960, park contractors removed the log bridge and completed a new concrete and steel bridge across the North Fork Sol Duc River. Later in 1960, the agency paved and widened (but did not reconstruct) most of the road between Highway 101 and Eagle Ranger Station with asphalt. The work did not extend past the ranger station, and the final two miles remained unpaved.³⁹ The NPS declined to pave other sections of the road, about a mile in total, that passed through private inholdings between Highway 101 and the hot springs. This included sections of road that traversed Sol Duc Lands, Inc (a company affiliated with the SDHS Company) property, as well as short portions that passed through timber company inholdings. The NPS installed signage informing drivers that they were passing in and out of private property at these gravel sections. The SDHS Company objected to this practice and pushed the NPS to pave these portions, but the agency refused to both remove the signage and pave these areas until the company agreed to grant the agency a 60-foot-wide road right-of-way through the privately owned parcels. It is unclear when the NPS paved the final two miles of roadway; it occurred sometime after 1970.⁴⁰

Sol Duc Hot Springs Road still primarily served resort customers and NPS Associate Director Eivind Scoyen believed that the NPS should postpone any further improvements in the Sol Duc Valley until after the agency acquired the resort property. The SDHS Resort had failed US Public

³⁶ Rothman, 292; "Mission 66 for Olympic National Park," 5 and 10-11.

³⁷ National Park Service, "National Park Service Glossary of Commonly Used Terms," Supplement to the National Park Service Administrative Manual, January 1960, 39, accessed on February 20, 2025 at <https://npshistory.com/publications/nps-glossary.pdf>.

³⁸ National Park Service, "Olympic National Park Prospectus," May 11, 1956, RG 79, Olympic National Park Subject Files 1954-1962, Box 6, NARA-Seattle, WA.

³⁹ John E. Doerr to Regional Director, "Soleduck Road Paving," December 2, 1961, RG 79, Olympic National Park Subject Files 1954-1962, Box 10, NARA-Seattle, WA.

⁴⁰ Superintendent John Doerr to Jerry Grinstein, January 25, 1961, RG 79, Olympic National Park Subject Files 1954-1962, Box 10, NARA-Seattle, WA; Oscar Sedargren, Assistant Superintendent, to Superintendent, Memo, "Visit of Tom Alderson and W.C. Abel of the Sol Duc Hot Springs," February 15, 1961, RG 79, Olympic National Park Subject Files 1954-1962, Box 10, NARA-Seattle, WA. SDHS Company lobbied Senator Warren Magnuson for help with this issue and they hoped the senator could pressure the NPS to grant the company a permit to open a cocktail lounge as well.

Health Service inspections since at least 1954, and in 1965, Superintendent Bennett Gale listed the acquisition of the dilapidated resort as one of his highest priorities.⁴¹ Additional uncertainty resulted from Senator Henry Jackson's ongoing desire for the NPS to extend the road to Seven Lakes Basin. Still, in 1964, the NPS more than doubled the size of the campground, from 40 sites to 90.

The SDHP Company added three new facilities along the road in the early 1960s as well. These were a single family home known as the Abel Residence (later known to ONP staff as the Oly House or Building 1155), a sixteen-unit RV park, and a six-unit, one-story motel (Building 1156). All were located on the southwestern side of the road, across the river from the main resort area. Owner Clive Abel failed to make improvements to the rest of the facility, however, and the NPS acquired the resort and all associated infrastructure on 320 acres, including the facilities along Sol Duc Road, in 1967 for \$880,000.⁴²

By that time, ONP visitation had soared to over 2 million per year—twice as many as park planners predicted in 1956. However, NPS planners did not envision any new development in the Sol Duc Valley. By 1968, hot springs visitors and backpackers bound for Seven Lakes Basin accounted for most of the visitors that traveled along Sol Duc Hot Springs Road. A concessioner continued to operate the hot springs resort, but a 1968 Master Plan called for the removal of the dilapidated facility and its replacement with a new complex built one-half mile downstream in a clearcut area.⁴³ By this time, the cabins were described as “dilapidated almost beyond use,” and the NPS sought private capital to replace or renovate the “obsolete” resort throughout the 1970s with no success.⁴⁴ By 1981, the resort consisted of a lodge constructed in 1930 (but altered by a succession of owners), thirty-one cabins built between 1928 and 1970, two motel units, two bathhouses, two swimming pools, and service buildings.⁴⁵

Sol Duc Road, 1982-2025

The NPS finally rebuilt Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort in 1982, and the improvements ultimately spurred the reconstruction of the road.⁴⁶ Most of the resort's cabins were removed and new single and duplex cabins were erected. The pools were replaced and the lodge building was expanded and renovated. The resort's design was fundamentally altered; the two long, straight rows of cabins were replaced with thirty-two cabins set in smaller, semicircular groups. (The property was determined to be ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 due

⁴¹ National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Cultural Resources Division, “Olympic National Park Administrative History,” May 1992, 150-151, ONP Archives.

⁴² Rothman, 320; Chet Skreen, “Sol Duc Hot Springs—NW Paradise Lost?” *Seattle Daily Times*, August 8, 1976; Eastman Jr., 66.

⁴³ John Ochsner, National Park Service, “Developed Area Narrative, Soleduck,” July 1968, D18, Planning Program, including Development Outline and Master Plan, Files, ONP Archives.

⁴⁴ National Park Service, “Master Plan, Olympic National Park,” 1973, ONP Archives; Skeen, “Sol Duc Hot Springs—NW Paradise Lost?”

⁴⁵ Oregon Institute of Technology, “Sol Duc Hot Springs Feasibility Study,” December 1981, 2, University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle, WA.

⁴⁶ Evans, 155.

to a loss of integrity to any historic period).⁴⁷ The RV campground, the residence, and the six-room motel along Sol Duc Road remained in use without significant alterations. Subsequent to the resort's reconstruction, visitation to the Sol Duc Valley increased dramatically, from about 56,400 in 1981 to over 94,000 in 1984. The NPS expected traffic, including recreational vehicle traffic bound for the resort RV park and the NPS campground, to continue to increase.⁴⁸

However, Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, which still followed the original alignment laid out in 1910, was "not adequate for modern vehicles" in the words of park staff.⁴⁹ It was narrow—only fifteen to twenty feet wide—with trees and thickly growing vegetation at the road's edge. The individual road lanes were too narrow for the large recreational vehicles headed toward the recently reconstructed Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort RV park or the NPS campground.⁵⁰ As a result, the vehicles encroached onto the other road lane; when two RVs traveling in opposite directions passed each other, the vehicles were forced to partially leave the roadway. Many curves lacked a consistent radius and the road had so many steep dips and rises and sharp curves that park staff likened it to riding a roller coaster. Though the speed limit was thirty-five miles per hour, in many stretches it was unsafe to exceed twenty miles per hour. Passing was dangerous due to the road's limited sight distances and there were too few roadside pullouts to allow slow vehicles to safely pull over. The limited sight distances also made pulling out of the Aurora Ridge and North Fork Sol Duc River trailheads unsafe.⁵¹ The Salmon Cascades parking area was located on a blind corner, and the park superintendent considered it "a tort claim waiting to happen."⁵² There were twelve accidents along the road in 1983, including five at the intersection with Highway 101, which was a substantially higher accident rate compared to other rural roads of the type.⁵³

The road needed significant repairs. A Federal Highways Administration assessment found that it had numerous foundation failures, slumps, and cracks, and it lacked adequate drains and culverts. The river had eroded the road embankment in spots; one section of road was at river

⁴⁷ National Park Service, "Historic Building Inventory Olympic National Park," 1984, 371-375, ONP Archives. The NPS initially left five cabins built before 1942 in place, but these were subsequently removed.

⁴⁸ National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road," April 1985, 2-3, ONP Maintenance Collection, Catalog 30408, Series 03.01.09, Box 16, ONP Archives.

⁴⁹ Hobbes to Superintendent, Olympic National Park, "Status of the Soleduck Road," July 3, 1985, ONP Archives.

⁵⁰ National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road," April 1985, 2-3, ONP Maintenance Collection, Catalog 30408, Series 03.01.09, Box 16, ONP Archives.

⁵¹ Jerald Lorenz, Denver Service Center, to Robert Shelley, Denver Service Center, February 25, 1985, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives; "Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road," 1.

⁵² Superintendent, Olympic National Park, to Manager, Denver Service Center, May 1, 1984, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁵³ "Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road," 1.

level and was vulnerable to flooding.⁵⁴ Years of road repairs left the asphalt twelve inches deep in some places.⁵⁵

The Sol Duc Valley lacked sufficient recreational and interpretive amenities and staff support infrastructure as well. The valley's visitor facilities—the resort, campground, and road end parking area—were located on the last two miles of road, and visitors had few reasons to stop on the first 11.6 miles of road. There were no picnic areas in the valley and the only interpretive stop was at the Salmon Cascades.⁵⁶ New staff housing and a maintenance facility were needed and the NPS hoped to construct these facilities on a former dump site and staff target shooting range at mile 2.3.⁵⁷ Finally, the NPS sought to make the drive through the densely forested valley more scenic. Staff complained, “the mature forest canopy blocks virtually all views of the Soleduck River Valley,” and the NPS hoped to clear some areas of thickly growing vegetation to allow views.⁵⁸

The NPS began working with the Federal Highways Administration in 1985 to find solutions to the road's problems and the agencies ultimately agreed to reconstruct the road. Replacing the old road with an entirely new structure was expected to remove hazards, improve the visitor experience, and reduce maintenance costs. Park staff hoped that a new road would be “devoid of the difficulties of the road as it was inherited...and subsequently maintained.”⁵⁹ In preparation for the road realignment, the NPS acquired a strip of land along the first four miles of road, totaling 183 acres, from Olympic National Forest; the prior boundary, set in 1953 by President Truman, had established the park boundary as just twenty-five feet west of the road.⁶⁰

Environmental groups and private citizens protested the reconstruction. Many considered the road's narrow path through the dense forest part of the charm and the proposed road widening and straightening, along with the loss of trees along its edges, aroused alarm. NPS planners acknowledged that these characteristics distinguished the Sol Duc Road from other area roads as they noted that “the adjacent forest still provides a semblance of unexplored wilderness and establishes a ‘deep woods’ character to the visitor traveling the roadway.”⁶¹ Olympic Park Associates president Polly Dyer, who characterized the road as a “very scenic, intimate road

⁵⁴ Federal Highways Administration, “Deficiencies/Needs,” ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁵⁵ Federal Highway Administration, “Geotechnical Report No. 1-85, Report on Retaining Wall Investigation, Soleduck Road,” April 1985, ONP Archives.

⁵⁶ National Park Service, “Background Paper, Soleduck Road Reconstruction,” June 2, 1986, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁵⁷ Federal Highways Administration, “Deficiencies/Needs,” ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁵⁸ “Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road,” 8.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁰ Robert S. Chandler and Ted C. Stubblefield, “Environmental Assessment, Proposed Minor Boundary Adjustment and Land Exchange,” December 1985, 18, University of Washington Libraries, Government Publications, Seattle, WA. The lands were owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, one timber company and one individual, and represented inholdings within the national forest.

⁶¹ “Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road,” 29.

experience,” argued that the visitor’s enjoyment of the Sol Duc Valley would be diminished as they traveled at higher speeds on a wider, straighter roadway.⁶² Guidebook author and photographer Ira Spring opposed the road’s straightening, since “the twists and turns among the forest is a major part of its charm.”⁶³ A public outcry resulted after the agency announced that around 3,450 trees between two to four feet in diameter, and 404 trees over four feet in diameter, would be removed as part of the project. These objections led the agency to reduce these numbers to 438 smaller and 39 larger trees. The amount of cleared land along the roadside was reduced from sixty-five to forty-eight acres.⁶⁴

Between February 1987 and October 1988, the Federal Highways Administration reconstructed most of Sol Duc Road. The road was closed in 1987 for the project and work was completed in 1988. Along the first 12.12 miles of roadway, between Highway 101 and Building 1155, the entire road, including the roadbed, was obliterated and replaced with a new structure along a different alignment. About 90 percent of the centerline of the new road fell somewhere on the original alignment, while 10 percent of the road was rerouted completely off the original route. The final 1.56 miles of road was resurfaced but not reconstructed. The parking area at the road’s end was also resurfaced; the NPS installed new curbs made from halved logs and laid an asphalt walkway along one side of the loop interior as well.⁶⁵

The reconstruction eliminated the safety hazards identified along the old road. The new road was twenty-two feet wide with one to three foot wide grass shoulders, which allowed recreational vehicles moving in opposite directions to safely pass each other. Curves were “softened,” and new cuts and fills were added to smooth out the vertical alignment and remove the “roller coaster effect” of driving the road. Drivers could now travel at a consistent thirty-five miles per hour along the road. The road’s intersection with Highway 101 was redesigned so that drivers had better sight lines as they pulled out onto the state highway. Two new loops alongside the road, at the fee station and the Eagle Ranger Station, provided a safe place for drivers to make U-turns, and twenty-five new pullouts were added to allow drivers to safely leave the roadway.⁶⁶

Recreational and interpretive facilities were added or redesigned. The agency constructed the Sol Duc Valley Information Station (also called the Soleduck Valley Gateway Interpretive Area) along a new road loop located 0.2 miles southwest of Highway 101. The information station included a 32 foot by 32 foot peeled log structure with interpretive panels, a parking area and a vault toilet. The NPS constructed the site to help motorists who mistakenly turned down the road (which was a common problem before 1987); it offered visitors a spot to park and study their

⁶² Polly Dyer to Robert Chandler, May 8, 1985, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁶³ Ira Spring to Robert Chandler, May 10, 1985, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁶⁴ National Park Service, “Reconstruction of the Soleduck Road, Finding of No Significant Impact,” May 30, 1986, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁶⁵ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration, “Soleduck Valley Road,” Drawing 149-41954, August 5, 1986, ONP Archives.

⁶⁶ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration, “Soleduck Valley Road;” “Environmental Assessment, Reconstruction of the Sol Duc Road,” 1

map before either turning around or choosing to explore the Sol Duc Valley.⁶⁷ Workers constructed new and larger parking areas for the Aurora Ridge and North Fork hiking trails (the initial portion of the North Fork Trail was relocated as part of the road project). Two parking areas replaced the single pullout at the Salmon Cascades; the road was relocated in this area to remove a blind corner. Vista clearing occurred in ten places, though most cleared areas simply provided views into the forest.⁶⁸

The new road included “unique or experimental features” not found on the old road. These included fourteen wood retaining walls “of an unusual design” which were intended to reduce the amount of roadside clearing needed.⁶⁹ The NPS also undertook a “large-scale, experimental revegetation effort” along the road to help restore native vegetation to areas disturbed by roadwork. Park staff replanted the steepest and most visible road cuts with 42,000 native ferns, shrubs, and tree seedlings in 1987 and 1988 (75 percent of the plants had been salvaged from the construction zone). The ditches adjacent to the roadway were seeded with native grasses to prevent the encroachment of larger plant species near the road.⁷⁰ Guardrails, which had not been present on the old road, were installed along steep slopes. Other changes included buried power lines; until 1988 these were strung on trees through the forest, and they failed regularly as a result. At about 4 miles from Highway 101, a road connection to USFS Road 2918, which ran parallel to Sol Duc Road for about a mile, was obliterated.⁷¹

After the reconstruction was completed, there were no significant changes to the road throughout the rest of the twentieth century. The motel was converted to concession housing, and the NPS withdrew Building 1155 (Oly House) from the concession lease and began to utilize the residence as employee housing.⁷² A 1988 plan for the resort called for the removal of the Oly House and the motel units on the northwest side of the river, but the buildings remained.⁷³ In

⁶⁷ Promotion Products Inc, “Soleduck Road Visitor Center,” [drawing] February 12, 1987, ONP Archives; Superintendent, Olympic National Park, to Manager, Denver Service Center, May 1, 1984, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁶⁸ “Soleduck Valley Road” [drawing]; National Park Service, “Soleduck Valley Road Vegetation Management and Maintenance Guide,” September 1990, 12, ONP Archives.

⁶⁹ National Park Service, *Soleduck Revegetation Project, Volume IV, Photographic Documentation*, (Denver: National Park Service, 1991). 2. The retaining walls consist of “wide-flange steel beams set in drilled shafts filled with lean concrete. Treated timber lagging of 4"x8", 6"x6", or 8"x8" dimensions fills the gaps between these beams. The beams simply act as cantilevers; no tieback anchors are used to support their tops. This was made possible by using lightweight backfill (hog fuel) behind the walls to reduce the outward pressure.”

⁷⁰ National Park Service, *Soleduck Valley Road Vegetation Management and Maintenance Guide*, (National Park Service, 1990), 15.

⁷¹ Superintendent, Olympic National Park, to Manager, Denver Service Center, May 1, 1984, ONP Maintenance Collection, Accession 0789, Catalog 30408, Box 03.01.08, Box 12, ONP Archives.

⁷² Acting Superintendent, Memorandum, July 7, 1980, in digital file of Gordon Boyd, “Environmental Analysis, Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort, Olympic National Park Master Plan,” 1976, 11, accessed on February 19, 2025 at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ien.35556030176259&seq=5>. It is unclear when the NPS withdrew the Oly House from the concession lease, though it likely occurred in the 1980s.

⁷³ National Park Service, *Soleduck Development Concept Plan*, (Denver: National Park Service, September 1988), 6-7.

2005, the agency fixed slumps and repaired washouts at miles 6.8 and 7.2, but the road remained on the same alignment.⁷⁴

By 2008, the road end parking area and the hot springs remained the most heavily used sites in the valley. In summer, demand for parking spaces at what was now called the Sol Duc Falls Trailhead frequently exceeded capacity. A variety of solutions were proposed to relieve overcrowding in the valley, and these included closing or expanding Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort, and instituting shuttle service along Sol Duc Road.⁷⁵ No changes were ultimately made in the valley and the road continues to facilitate vehicle access to the Sol Duc Valley's trails, campground, and hot springs.

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https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/ger_ofr83-7_geothermal_survey.pdf.

⁷⁴ National Park Service, *Olympic National Park Final General Management Plan*, Volume I, 2008, 265, ONP Archives.

⁷⁵ *Olympic National Park Final General Management Plan* 238-239.

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Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: The road is a linear resource that measures 13.68 miles long.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

- A: 48.075277/ -123.954722 (Start of road at Highway 101)
- B: 48.022778/ -123.923333 (Salmon Cascades parking area)
- C: 47.970000/ -123.862222 (Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road)
- D: 47.954722/ -123.834722 (South end of road end parking lot)

Verbal Boundary Description

The evaluated area boundary follows the edges of Sol Duc Road and its shoulders, pullouts, and parking areas. The evaluated area includes Building 1155 (Oly House), Building 1156 (concession housing) and the Sol Duc Hot Springs RV campground, which are set between the road and the Sol Duc River near the Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort Road.

Boundary Justification

The road is a linear resource and the evaluated area boundary includes the road and all associated features as well as the two buildings and one site that have not been evaluated for the NRHP.

The evaluated area does not include Sol Duc Valley resources already evaluated, such as the Eagle Ranger Station complex, Sol Duc Campground, and Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort.

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Additional documentation

Maps

1. US Geographical Survey, Mt. Muller Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 2023.
2. US Geographical Survey, Slide Peak Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 2023.
3. US Geographical Survey, Bogachiel Peak Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 2023.
4. The Northern portion of Sol Duc Road. NPS map.
5. The southern portion of Sol Duc Road. NPS map.
6. Detail of the Sol Duc Hot Springs area. NPS map.

Figures

Figure 1. Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, probably between 1910 and 1935. *Road to Sol Duc Hot Springs through trees*. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1523.

Figure 2. Sol Duc Hot Springs postcard, likely from the 1910s. *Horse-drawn wagon on Sol Duc Boulevard, Olympic National Forest*. University of Washington, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1522, no date.

Figure 3. Owner Michael Earles built Sol Duc Hot Springs Road to provide access to his hotel. *Hotel at Sol Duc Hot Springs*. Ca. 1912-1916. University of Washington, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1527.

Figure 4. Sol Duc Hot Springs Company's fleet of Stanley Steamer automobiles transported guests up Sol Duc Hot Springs Road to the hotel. *Fleet of Stanley Steamers carrying passengers, probably in Clallam County*, 1912, University of Washington, Special Collections.

Figure 5. The road ended at Sol Duc Hot Springs until 1935. Detail of US Forest Service, Olympic National Forest, 1915, University of Washington, Suzzallo Library, Historic Map Collection, Seattle, WA.

Figure 6. Ellis J. Boyd, *Cabins and automobiles at Sol Duc Hot Springs*. 1931. University of Washington, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, UW12030.

Figure 7. The CCC created a parking area at the end of the road, bound by peeled log barriers, between 1939 and 1942. National Park Service, "Parking Area, End of Sol Duc Road," Drawing NP-OLY-2052, ONP Archives.

Figure 8. The CCC graveled Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1935, but it remained a narrow, unpaved forest road until 1960. Washington State Historical Society, “Sol Duc Highway-Olympic Peninsula,” 1950, Photograph #2011.78.14.

Figure 9. The log stringer bridge over the North Fork Sol Duc River built by the CCC in 1935. *Bridge on Sol Duc*, undated photo courtesy of the North Olympic History Center.

Figure 10. The northern part of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1942. Note the railroad, marked “abandoned,” that travels from the northwest to southeast. This graphic utilizes and aligns areas of two atlas pages. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker’s Atlas of Clallam County, Washington* (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1942), 20-21.

Figure 11. The southern portion of the Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1942. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker’s Atlas of Clallam County, Washington*, 1942 (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1942), 17.

Figure 12. The Sol Duc Hot Springs area in 1963, showing the newly completed private residence (Building 1156), the motel (Building 1155), and trailer park (now called the RV campground) that were part of the resort. National Park Service, Western Office of Design and Construction, “Soleduck, Part of the Master Plan,” January 1963, ONP Archives.

Figure 13. In 1970, USFS Road 2918 merged with Sol Duc Hot Springs Road before crossing the Sol Duc River and reentering Olympic National Forest lands. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker’s Atlas of Clallam County, Washington*, 1970. Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1970.

Figure 14. Between 1960 and 1989, the road was between fifteen and twenty feet wide, with no shoulders or guardrails. This photo was taken at mile 4.9. Ben Alexander, “Photographic Documentation, Soleduck Revegetation Project,” 1988, 4. Accessed on February 15, 2025 at npshistory.com/publications/olym/soleduck-reveg-v4.pdf.

Photographs

Photographer: Christy Avery, October 17, 2024, Photos 1-14; Olympic National Park Staff, Photo 15

Photo 1. The entrance to the information kiosk and loop road at 0.2 miles. View to southwest.

Photo 2. Information kiosk. View to southwest.

Photo 3. Fee station at 0.3 miles. View to southwest.

Photo 4. Wood guardrails line the road along steep slopes (here, at 1.7 miles). View to southwest.

Photo 5. A typical section of Sol Duc Road, at 2.4 miles. View to northeast.

Photo 6. North Fork Sol Duc River Bridge, at 5.2 miles. View to northwest.

Photo 7. The Sol Duc River View Picnic Area, at 6.5 miles, contains two tables. View to southeast.

Photo 8. The Salmon Cascades parking areas. View to south.

Photo 9. Loop turnaround across from the Eagle Ranger Station. View to southeast.

Photo 10. The group camping area, at 11.3 miles. View to east.

Photo 11. The road terminates in the Sol Duc Falls parking area. View to northwest.

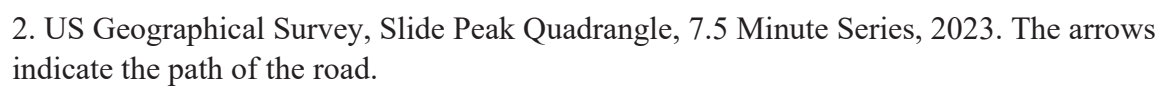
Photo 12. Sol Duc Falls trailhead parking. View to southeast.

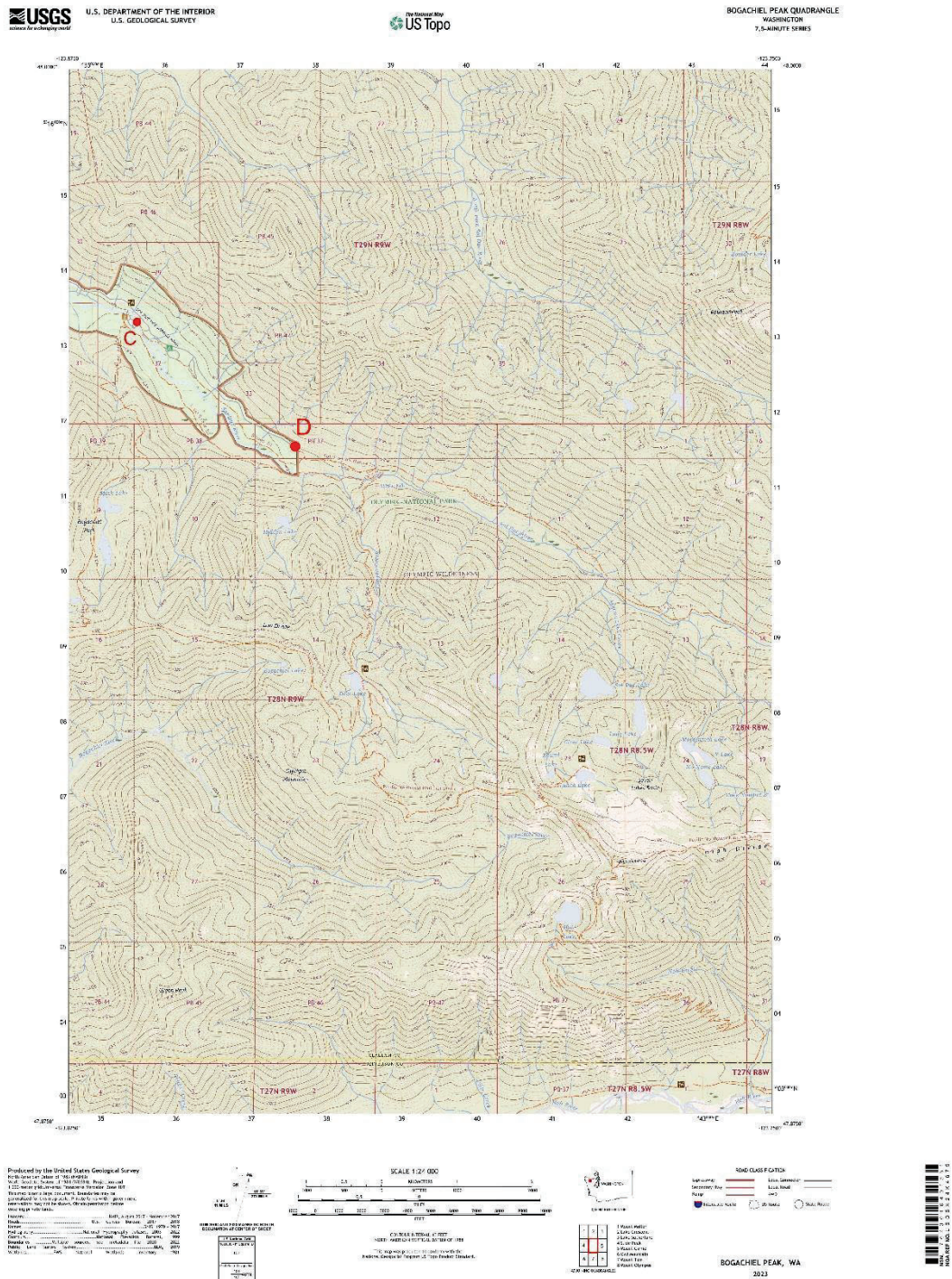
Photo 13. Building 1155 (Oly House). View to north-northeast.

Photo 14. Building 1155 (Oly House). View to southeast.

Photo 15. Building 1156, which in 2025 is used as concession housing. View to south.

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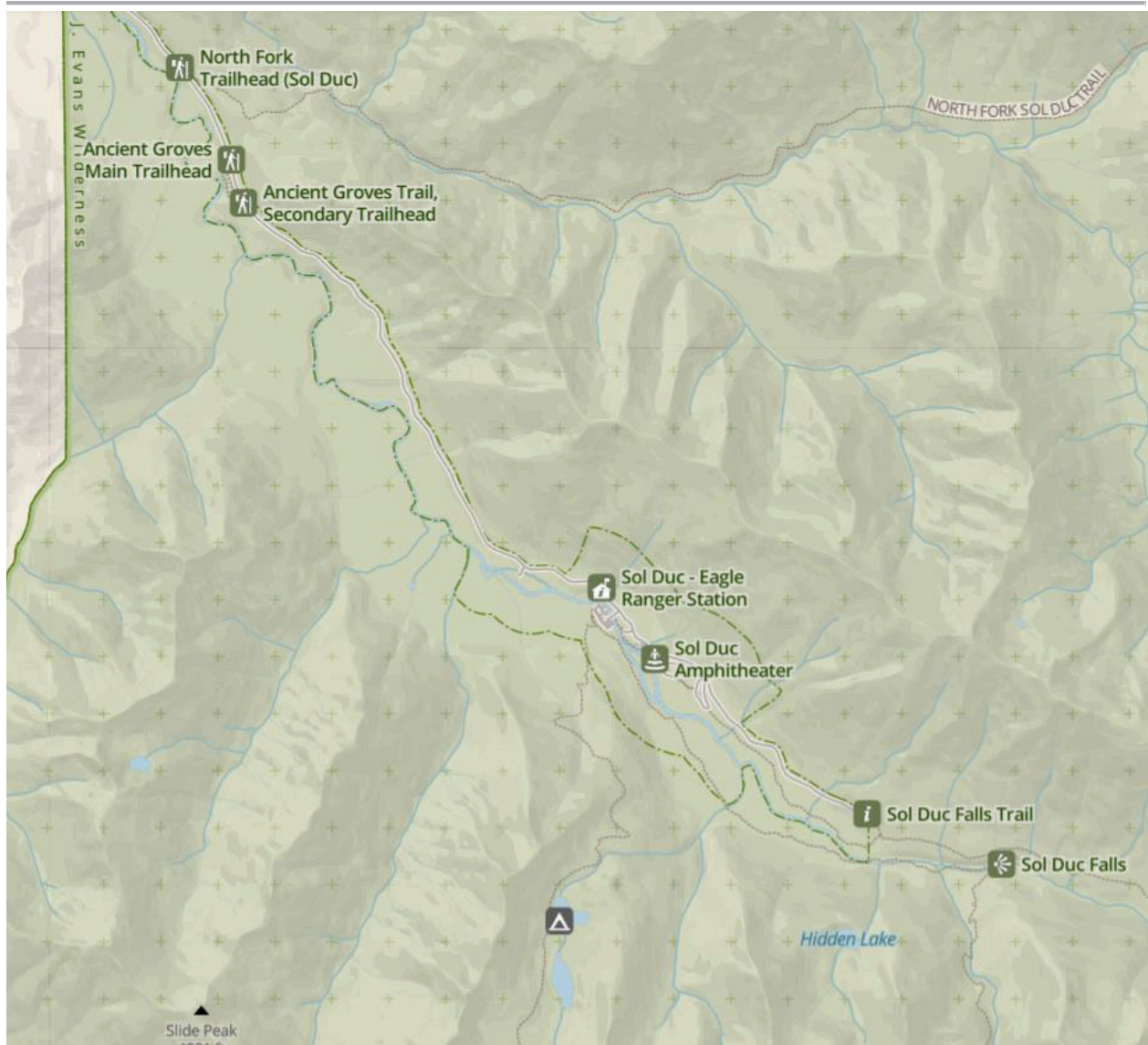
3. US Geographical Survey, Bogachiel Peak Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 2023.

Point C: 47.970000/-123.862222 (Sol Duc Hot Springs Access Road)

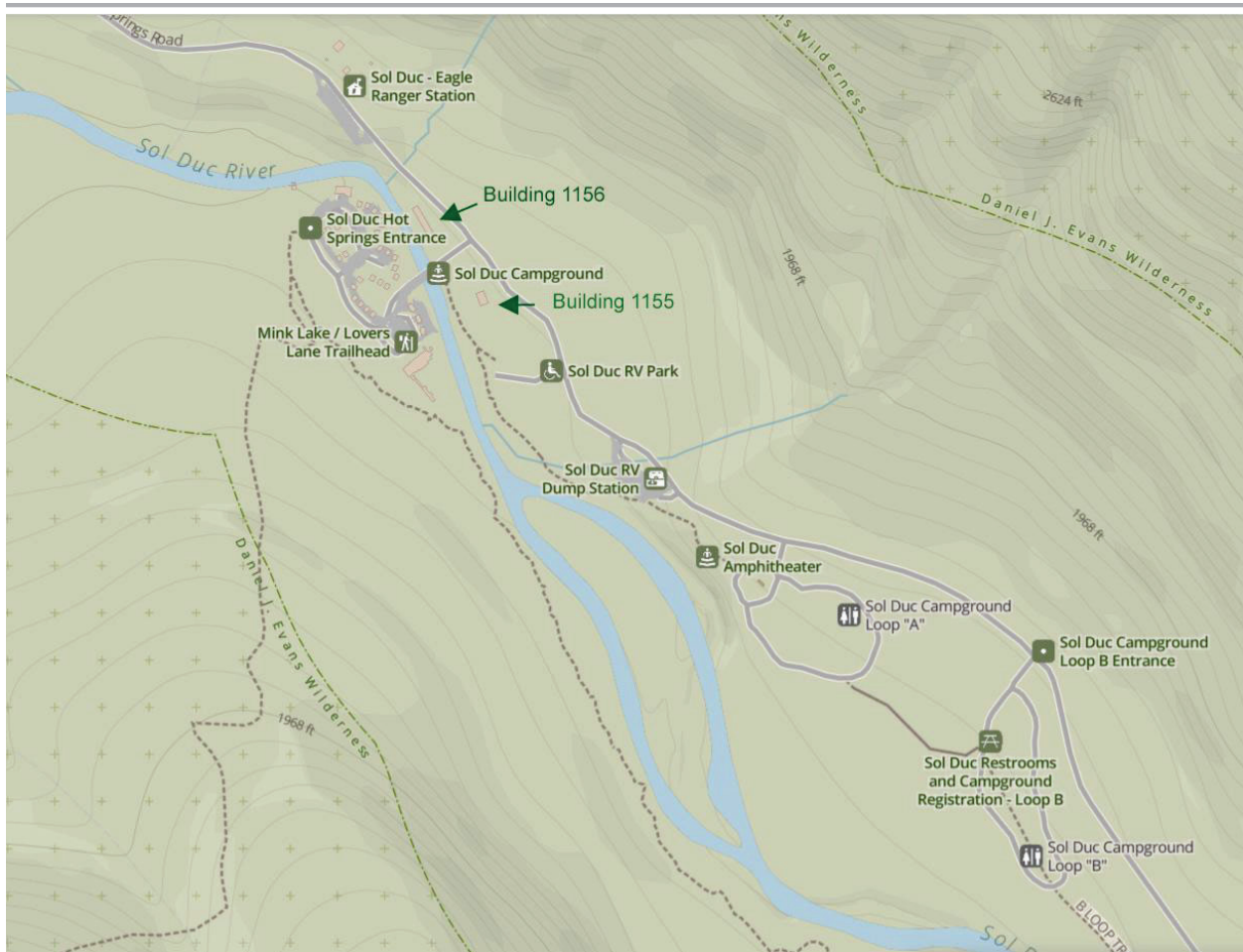
Point D: 47.954722/-123.834722 (South end of parking lot)



4. The Northern portion of Sol Duc Road. NPS map.



5. The southern portion of Sol Duc Road. NPS map.



6. Detail of the Sol Duc Hot Springs area. Building 1156 (formerly a concession motel) and Building 1155 (Oly House), as well as the RV park, are included in this evaluation. Eagle Ranger Station, Sol Duc Campground, and Sol Duc Hot Springs were previously evaluated for the NRHP. NPS map.



Figure 1. Sol Duc Hot Springs Road, between 1910 and 1935. *Road to Sol Duc Hot Springs through trees*. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1523.



Figure 2. Sol Duc Hot Springs postcard, likely from the 1910s. *Horse-drawn wagon on Sol Duc Boulevard, Olympic National Forest.* University of Washington, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1522.



Figure 3. Owner Michael Earles built Sol Duc Hot Springs Road to provide access to his hotel. *Hotel at Sol Duc Hot Springs*. ca. 1912-1916. University of Washington, Special Collections, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, WAS1527.



Figure 4. Sol Duc Hot Springs Company's fleet of Stanley Steamer automobiles transported guests up Sol Duc Hot Springs Road to the hotel. *Fleet of Stanley Steamers carrying passengers, probably in Clallam County*, 1912. Clallam County Historical Society Collection, University of Washington, Special Collections.

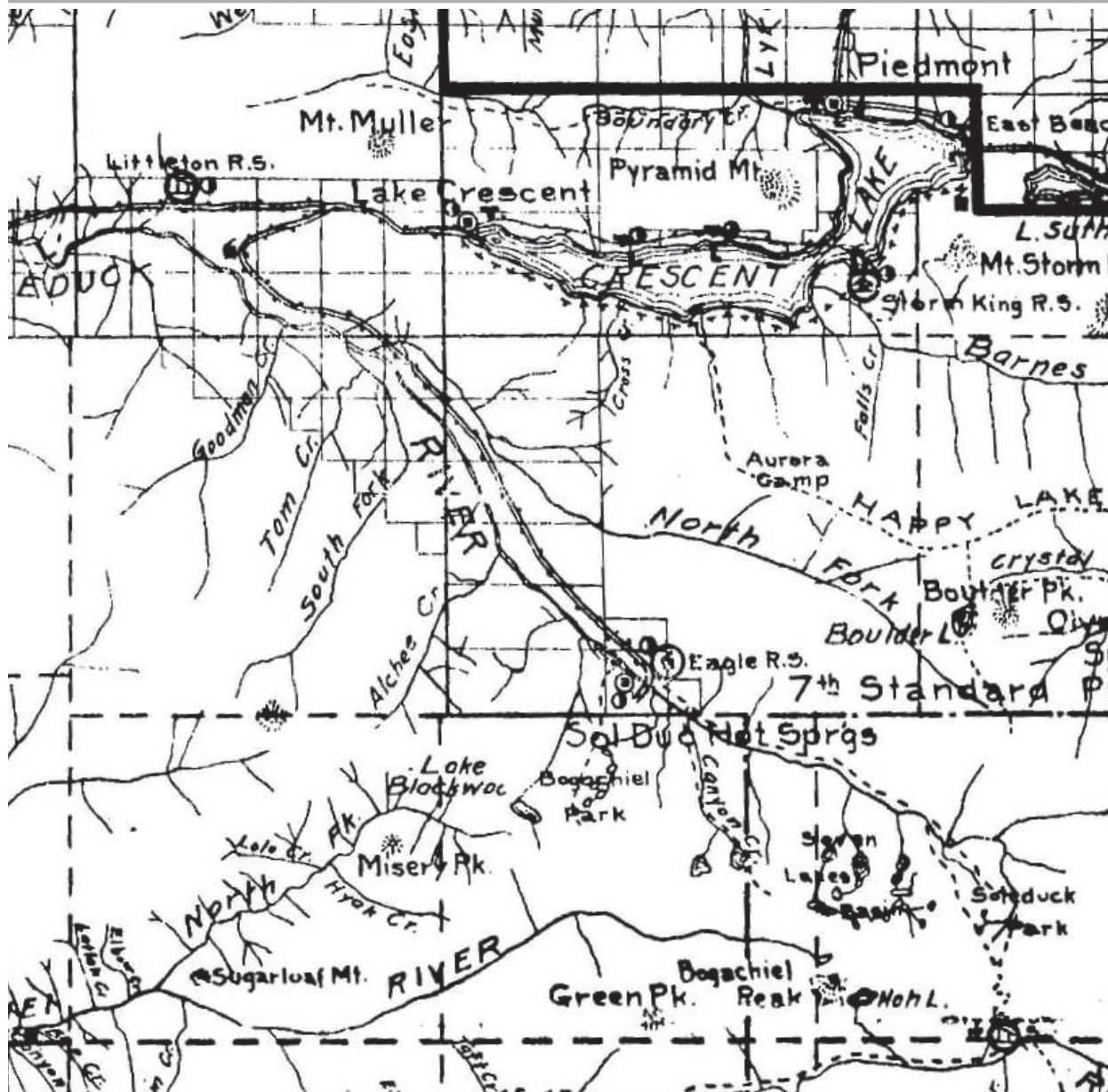


Figure 5. The road ended at Sol Duc Hot Springs until 1935. Detail of US Forest Service, Olympic National Forest, 1915, University of Washington, Suzzallo Library, Historic Map Collection, Seattle, WA.

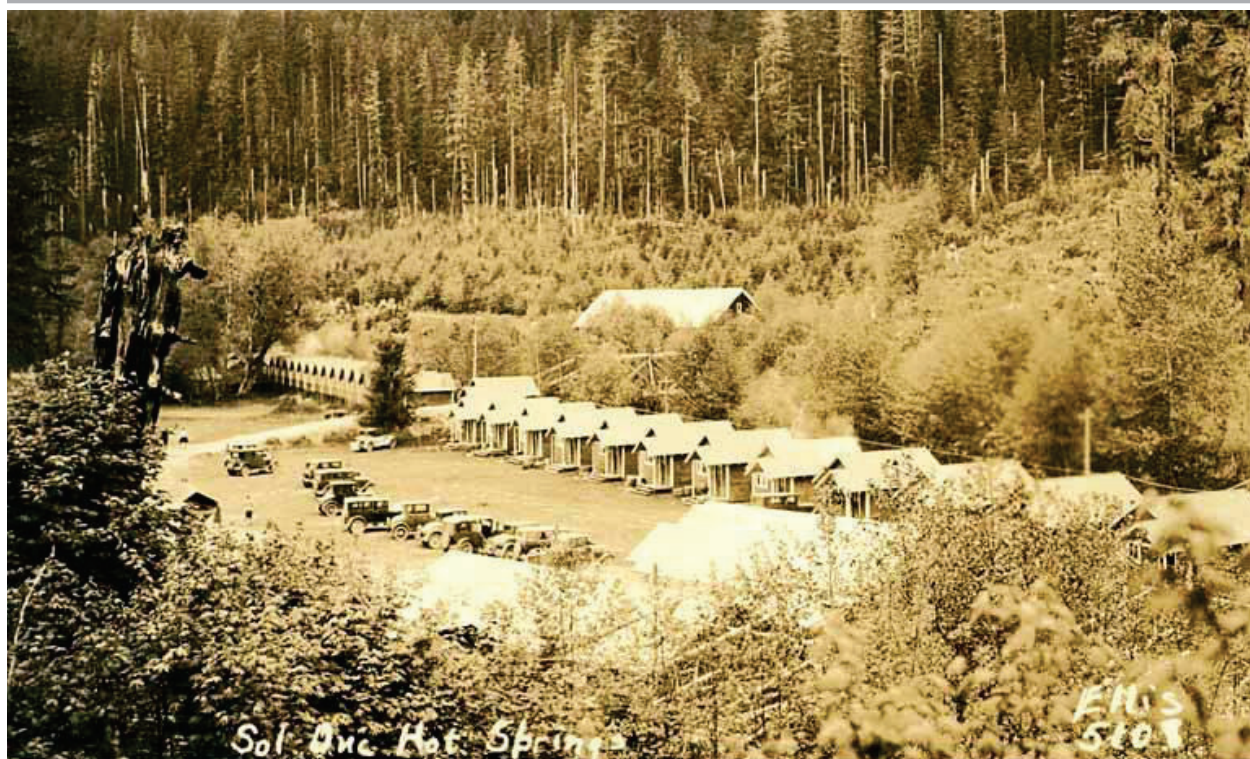


Figure 6. Ellis J. Boyd, *Cabins and automobiles at Sol Duc Hot Springs*. 1931. University of Washington, Washington Localities Postcard Collection. PH Coll 799, UW12030.

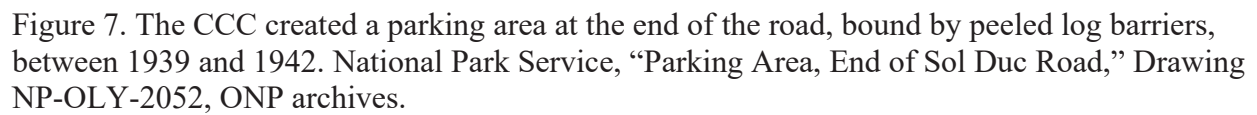




Figure 8. The CCC graveled Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1935, but it remained a narrow, unpaved forest road until 1960. Washington State Historical Society, "Sol Duc Highway-Olympic Peninsula," 1950, Photograph #2011.78.14.

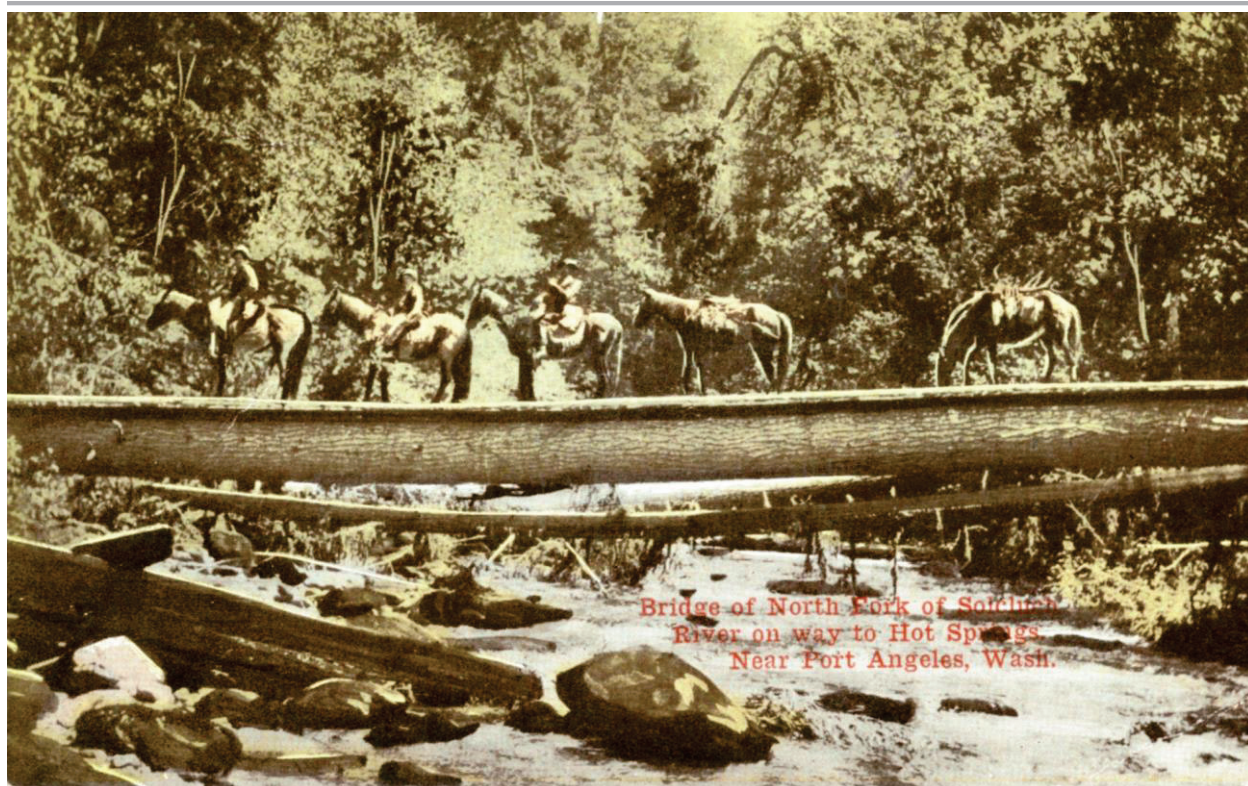


Figure 9. The log stringer bridge over the North Fork Sol Duc River built by the CCC in 1935. *Bridge on Sol Duc*, undated photo courtesy of the North Olympic History Center.

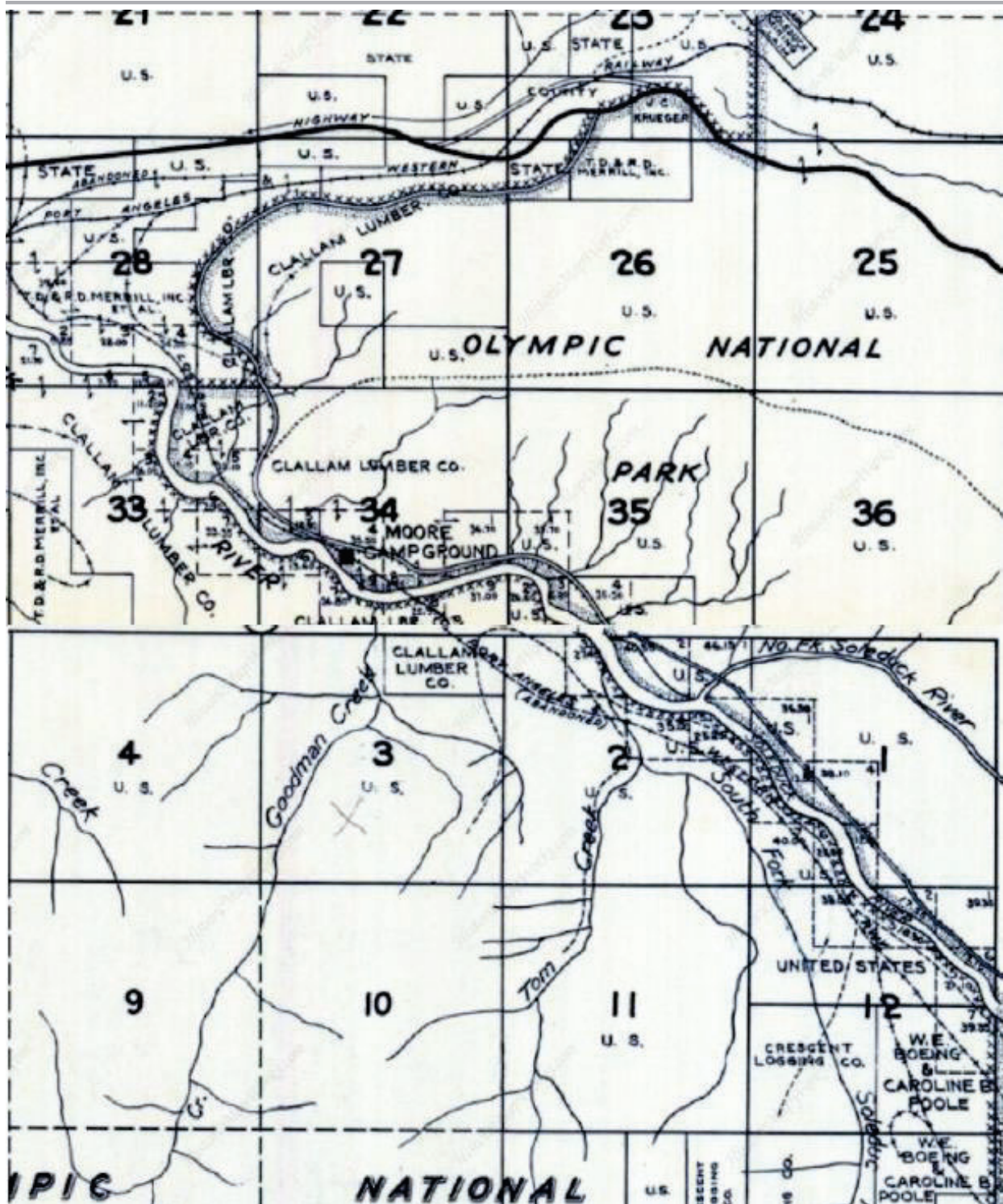


Figure 10. The northern part of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1942. Note the railroad, marked “abandoned,” that travels from the northwest to southeast. This graphic utilizes and aligns areas of two atlas pages. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker’s Atlas of Clallam County, Washington* (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1942), 20-21.

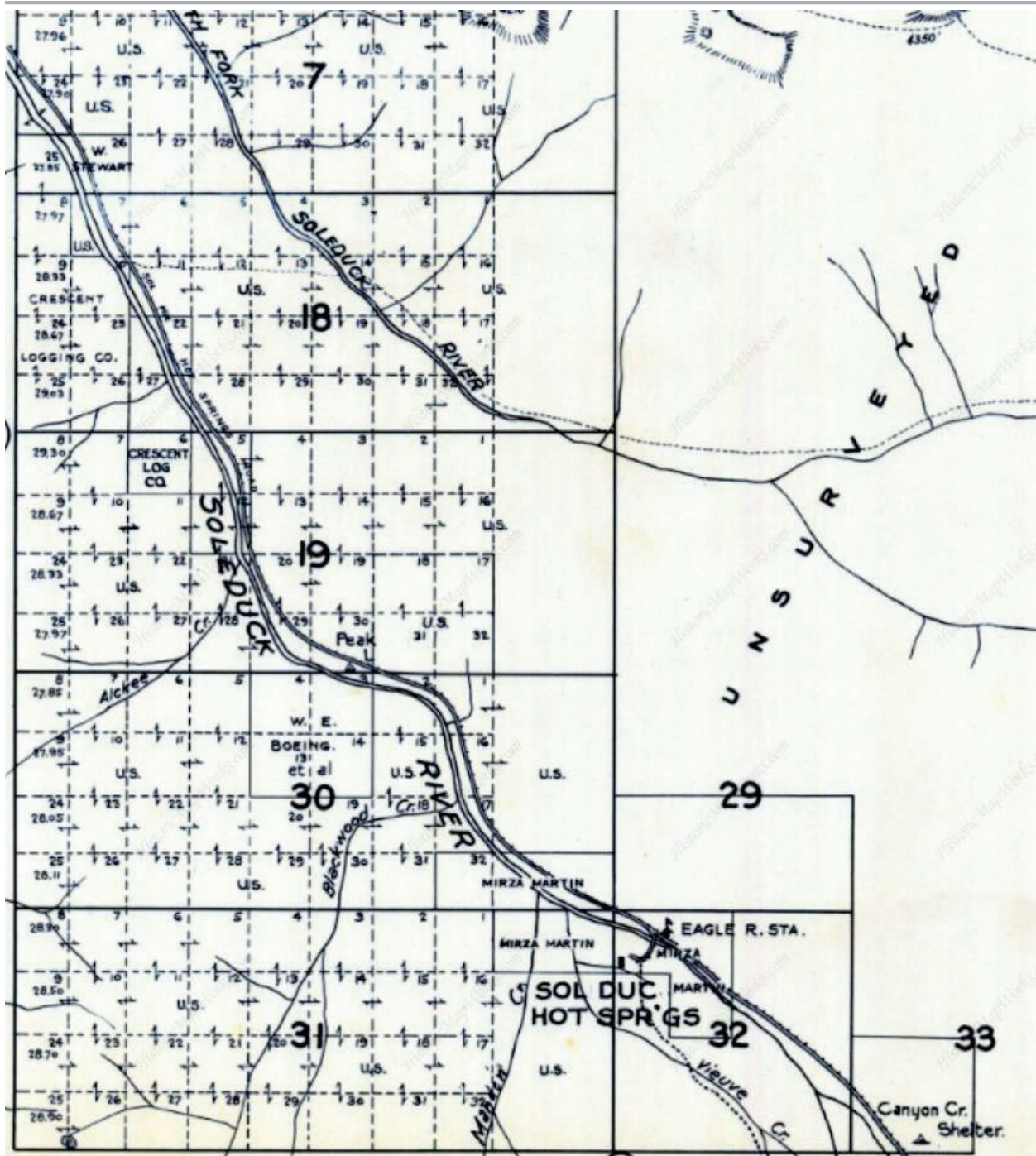


Figure 11. The southern portion of the Sol Duc Hot Springs Road in 1942. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker's Atlas of Clallam County, Washington* (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1942), 17.

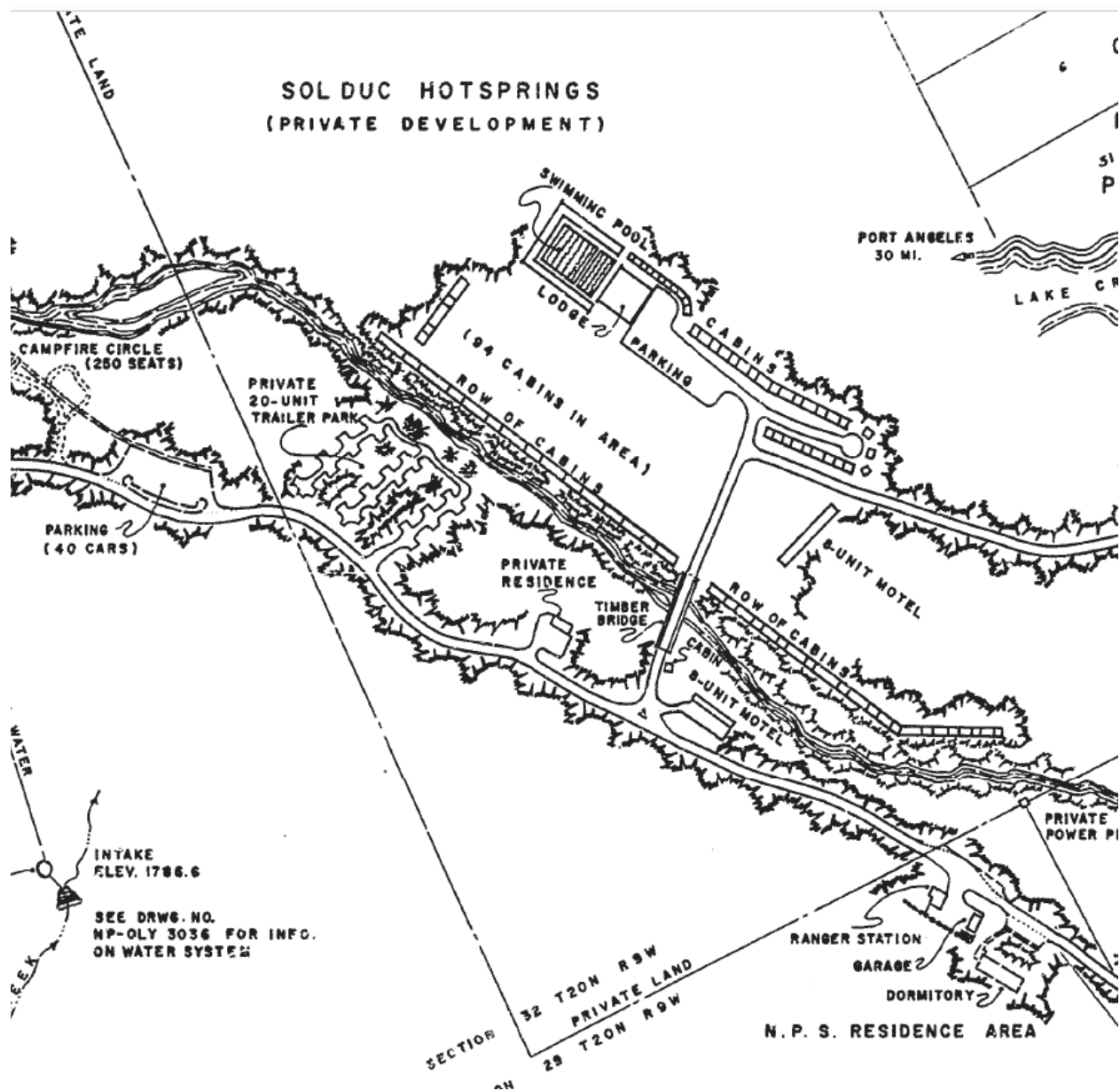


Figure 12. The Sol Duc Hot Springs area in 1963, showing the newly completed residence (Building 1155), the motel (Building 1156) and trailer park (now called the RV campground) that were part of the resort. National Park Service, Western Office of Design and Construction, "Soleduck, Part of the Master Plan," January 1963, ONP Archives.

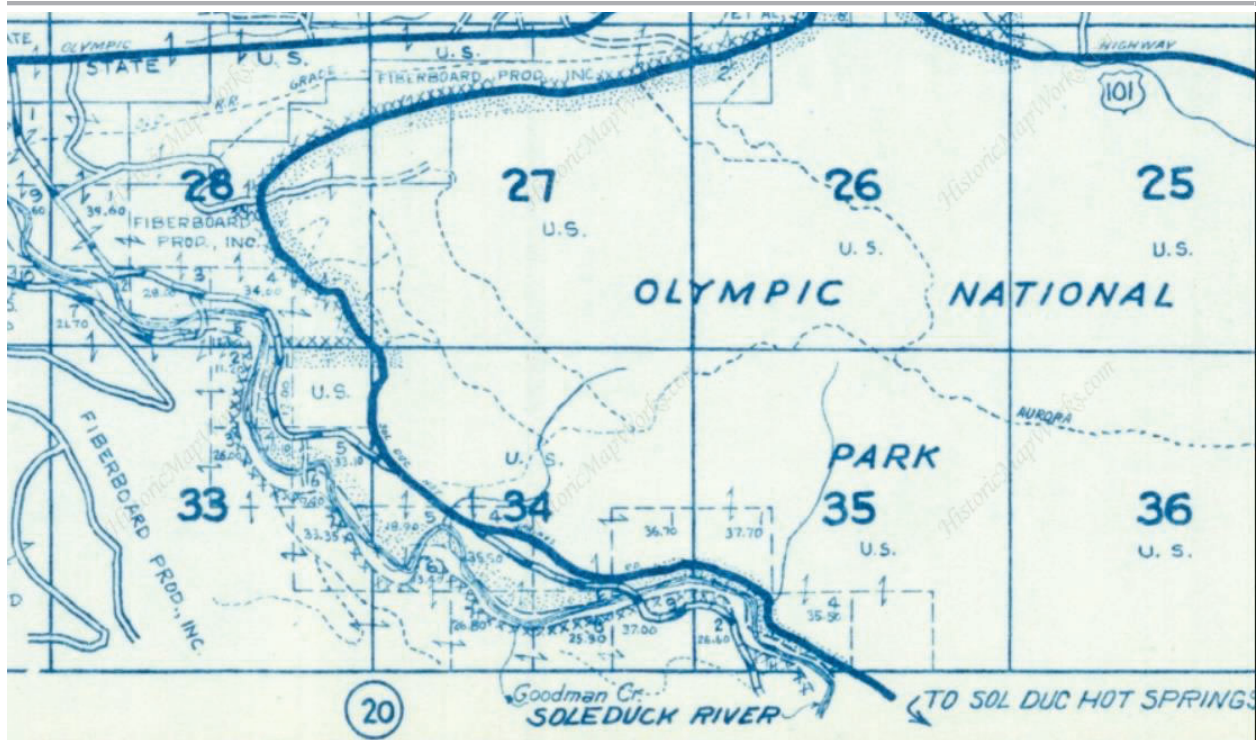


Figure 13. In 1970, USFS Road 2918 merged with Sol Duc Hot Springs Road before crossing the Sol Duc River and reentering Olympic National Forest lands. Chas. F. Metsker, *Metsker's Atlas of Clallam County, Washington* (Tacoma, WA: Metsker Maps, 1970).



Figure 14. Between 1960 and 1989, the road measured between fifteen and twenty feet wide, with no shoulders or guardrails. This photo was taken at mile 4.9. Ben Alexander, “Photographic Documentation, Soleduck Revegetation Project,” 1988, 4. Accessed on February 15, 2025 at npshistory.com/publications/olym/soleduck-reveg-v4.pdf.



Photo 1. The entrance to the information kiosk and loop road at 0.2 miles. View to southwest.



Photo 2. Information kiosk. View to southwest.



Photo 3. Fee station at 0.3 miles. View to southwest.



Photo 4. Wood guardrails line the road along steep slopes (here, at 1.7 miles). View to southwest.



Photo 5. A typical section of Sol Duc Road, at 2.4 miles. View to northeast.



Photo 6. North Fork Sol Duc River Bridge, at 5.2 miles. View to northwest.



Photo 7. The Sol Duc River View Picnic Area, at 6.5 miles, contains two tables. View to southeast.



Photo 8. The Salmon Cascades parking areas. View to south.



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Photo 12. Sol Duc Falls trailhead parking. View to southeast.



Photo 13. Building 1155 (Oly House). View to north-northeast.



Photo 14. Building 1155 (Oly House). View to southeast.



Photo 15. Building 1156, which in 2025 is used as concession housing. View to south.