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REPORT
on
RECONNAISSANCE FOR A ROAD ROUTE
through
OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
from
LAKE QUINAULT TO THE HOOD CANAL

Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Region Four
San Francisco, California

April 1950

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REGION FOUR

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

180 New Montgomery Street

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April 26, 1950

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director, Region Four

Subject: Report on Reconnaissance for a Road Route Through
Olympic National Park from Lake Quinault to the Hood Canal

Attached is one (1) copy of subject report prepared by Messrs. Carpenter and Fowler of a road route to cross the south end of Olympic National Park. The reconnaissance inspections were made in company with Superintendent Macy and park rangers, and Bureau of Public Roads Engineer Struble of the Division 8 Office.

We are sending one copy of this report to Mr. Macy and two copies to Division Engineer Lynch. The Bureau of Public Roads is likewise preparing a reconnaissance report of this road route. We will send you a copy of their report as soon as it is received.

O. A. Tomlinson
Regional Director

Attachments 3

Copy to: Supt, Olympic NP



REPORT
on
RECONNAISSANCE FOR A ROAD ROUTE
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OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
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LAKE QUINULT TO THE HOOD CANAL

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San Francisco, California

April 1950

Report Prepared by
Thomas E. Carpenter, Landscape Architect
and
Harold G. Fowler, Landscape Architect
Planning and Construction Division

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION FOUR
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
180 New Montgomery Street

April 25, 1950

Memorandum For the Regional Director

The following is a Report on Reconnaissance for a Road Route
Through Olympic National Park, From Lake Quinault to the Hood Canal

A reconnaissance trip for the purpose of determining a suitable road route across the south end of the Park between Graves Creek Ranger Station on the Quinault River on the west and the Staircase area on the east was made September 25 to 30, 1949, inclusive.

The party consisted of the following members: Messrs. Preston Macy, Superintendent; W. C. Struble, Chief Locator, Bureau of Public Roads, Division 8; Whiffler R. Oakes, Assistant Chief Ranger; Gunnar Fagerlund, Park Naturalist; Floyd Dickinson, District Ranger; Ignar Olson, Packer; and Harold Fowler, Landscape Architect.

This is the second reconnaissance trip for this study, and covers the back country location. The first trip was made on June 22 and 23, 1949 by Messrs. Carpenter, Macy, Struble and Dickinson and covered a study of the route for connections from outside the Park and an outline of possible trans-mountain routes. It is described later in this report.

Please refer to the maps in this report showing the road route and alternate sections of it, and photographs from view points along the route. The entire route from Lake Quinault to the Hood Canal is 66.4 miles in length, of which the section across the Park is 43.9 miles.

The route of the party on the second trip was, on September 26, from Graves Creek Ranger Station (Elevation 543) up the Quinault River to Graves Creek, thence up Graves Creek to Sundown Lake (Elevation about 4,000 ft.) a total distance of $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles. On September 27 to Belview Shelter (Elevation 5,056 ft.) $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles with side trip to Six Ridge (6 miles round trip); September 28 down Six Ridge to the North Fork Skokomish River to a point about two miles upstream from the Staircase area, a distance of about 6 miles. This above route was generally along the line of a possible route for the road.



The party continued up the North Fork Skokomish River, over the pass and down to Duckabush Shelter (7 miles), September 29 Duckabush Shelter to Marmot Lakes and Heart Lake thence to Enchanted Valley (16 miles), September 30 Enchanted Valley (Chalet) to Graves Creek Ranger Station (13 miles). Certain groups have proposed the Enchanted Valley route for a road across the mountains. The Regional Office is not in favor of the Enchanted Valley route because it would be considered an encroachment on a choice wilderness area.

Section Graves Creek Ranger Station to Sundown Lake

This section starts at an elevation of 543 feet at Graves Creek Ranger Station and rises to an elevation of about 4,300 feet at Sundown Lake. The trail over this section is $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The road would have to develop over 12 miles in length in order to hold a compensated 6% grade. It is shown projected up Success Creek to develop length. The construction would be moderate on heavily-wooded canyon slopes. The scenic value of this section is fairly good with the highlights being a view of Sundown Lake area and a view down the wooded Canyon.

Section Sundown Lake to Belview Shelter

This section would be the most difficult and costly to construct since it involves the rocky mountain pass terrain. From an elevation of 4,300 at Sundown Lake the route would carry over a pass of about 4,700 elevation thence down the south side of Six Ridge. Although the party took the trail via Belview Shelter (Elevation 5,060 ft.) the route of the road would be several hundred feet lower. The length of road from Sundown Lake to the pass (north-east of the lake) would have to be developed for a distance of 1.3 miles to 1.5 miles. From the pass to a point below Belview Shelter the distance would be about 3 miles to 4 miles (depending on length of slack grade retained at pass and ridge in order to hold the view) to an elevation of 3,800 on the south slope of Six Ridge.

This section of road would be the most scenic on the route. After climbing out of Sundown Lake a view of Mount Olympus appears. From the pass there is a view of many mountain peaks in various directions. It would be advisable to hold the road on this ridge as long as possible in order to take advantage of the view. Considerable study would be necessary to determine the most suitable place to pass over the mountain ridge. (Total length of section 5.5 miles).

Belview Shelter to Mount Olson and Success Creek

A spur road is shown extending from the vicinity of Belview Shelter to the northerly side of Mount Olson where there are, we believe, more outstanding views of the Olympic mountain range.

An alternate section of the route in lieu of that shown in red line, is shown for that portion between Belview Shelter area and

Graves Creek. This is shown as extending to the northerly side of Mount Olson, thence westerly about three miles, in which the grade would be held without much change in elevation, in order to obtain additional views of the Olympics, thence descending easterly on the south side of this ridge into the Success Creek basin and thence to connect with the route down Graves Creek. The party did not go over into this country and because of steep terrain with an indication of snow chutes it will be necessary to give this location and the mountain pass area additional detailed study. The north side of the Success Creek basin can be seen on the ridge to the right of center in photograph No. 3 and in the center background of photograph No. 2.

Section Belview Shelter to North Fork Skokomish River and Staircase Area

The going is relatively easy on a moderate wooded slope on Six Ridge. From elevation of 3,800 ft. (below Belview Shelter) to an elevation of 1,500 ft. at the confluence of Seven Stream and The North Fork Skokomish River, the distance required is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

From the above point the route would follow down the east side of the Skokomish River to the terminus of the present Staircase road, a distance of about 2 miles (from elevation 1,500 ft. to elevation 1,400 ft.), thence along the route of the existing road to the park boundary about 1 mile below the Staircase area (distance about 4 miles) elevation at Staircase about 875 ft. and boundary about 750 ft.

Road Route Connections from Lake Quinault on the West and Hoodsport on the East

The foregoing describes a route between Graves Creek on the west and the Staircase area on the east, within the Park. On June 22 and 23 a reconnaissance was made of those sections of the route on either end, for connections from outside the Park, i.e., from Lake Quinault to Bunch Creek near the Park boundary and to Graves Creek within the Park and from Hoodsport on U. S. 101 to Staircase, and a few miles within the Park. The field party consisted of Park Superintendent Preston Macy, Bureau of Public Roads Engineer W. C. Struble and Landscape Architect Thomas E. Carpenter, with Ranger James Hartzell at Staircase and Ranger Floyd Dickenson on the west side.

Lake Quinault to Bunch Creek and Graves Creek

In the Olympic National Forest from Quinault to Bunch Creek near the Park boundary, the existing road extends through privately owned land for about 7 miles and through U. S. Forest Service owned lands for about 3 miles, a total of 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Grays Harbor and Jefferson Counties have jurisdiction over the existing road for 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles, i.e., from Quinault to 1 mile short of the Park boundary and maintain this road. Apparently, about 1

mile of the road in the national forest, adjoining the Park, is under Forest Service jurisdiction.

The existing road from Quinalt to Graves Creek in the Park is largely a water level grade. In a new route, study should be given to locating portions of the road to the south of the existing road, farther away from the river. High water in the river inundates the existing road in places. Location on higher ground to the south would enable obtaining a route in the national forest much of which would be on Government-owned land.

A survey for a forest highway was made in 1935 by the Bureau of Public Roads, from a point on the existing road near the east end of Lake Quinalt to Bunch Creek near the present Park boundary, a distance of 7.3 miles. This was before the Park was established. Plans for that section of the route are probably about 90% completed. Design is for a 26 ft. graded roadbed and the right-of-way needed through private lands is itemized in a report. The route departs from the existing road in the national forest for about 5 miles of the 7 1/2 indicated to Bunch Creek, near the present Park boundary. It would be necessary for the route to pass through land 90% or more Government-owned in order for the route to qualify as a National Park Approach road.

Hoodsport to Staircase

From Hoodsport on U. S. 101, a county road extends west and northwest to Lake Cushman, thence north to the boundary of Olympic National Forest at Big Creek, a distance of 9.4 miles, the first 4.7 miles of which is paved 16 to 18 feet in width, on a graded width of 24 1/2 feet. From Big Creek the road extends 5.8 miles through the national forest to the boundary of Olympic National Park at Staircase which is immediately adjoining the northerly end of Lake Cushman. Bear Gulch, a small Forest Service campground is .10 mile short of the Park boundary. The road in the Olympic National Forest is of gravel construction, about 12' - 14' wide. Near the northerly end of Lake Cushman the existing road is benched out on steep side hill. There are about 2.5 miles of high rock cliffs along the route near the upper end of the lake where very heavy construction would be involved with a new road on higher standard.

The mileage of a route from Hoodsport to the park boundary is 15.2 miles of which 5.8 miles is in the national forest. Map data at the Park in June 1949 showed that there is a considerable amount of land, through which a route would pass in the national forest, that is now owned by the Federal Government. However, ^{where} the existing road passes through Township 23 North, Range 5 West, Willamette Meridian, Mason County, on the north side of Lake Cushman for approximately 3 miles in sections 10, 11 and 12, more than one half the land is owned by the City of Tacoma. It is considered from the available data that this section of the route in the national forest would not qualify as a National Park approach road because less than 90% of the land through which the route would pass is Government-owned.

From the Ranger Station at Staircase an old road extends up along the river for a distance of 3.8 miles. At the end of this road a tree is marked as being 19 miles and 3,562 feet from Hoodsport. This section of road in the Park has a gradient of about 4% at the lower end increasing to 6% higher up, based on barometric readings.

Recommendations and Conclusions

It is recommended that the standard for a road across the south end of Olympic National Park should be based on a finished top width of 26 feet with 20 feet paved width for the road, and on an alignment standard of not to exceed 35 miles per hour design speed where consistent with location to fit the terrain. Location in some mountain terrain may require curvature to 36 degree maximum.

The route across the higher elevations in the Park is feasible for construction, but at considerable cost. Additional reconnaissance survey will be necessary to determine portions of the route across the higher elevations in the Park. The views of the Olympic mountain range from Hurricane Ridge, to which a new road is now under construction, are superior to views of the Olympic range to be seen on this road route. However, this route across the southern end of the Park will reveal typical mountain scenery, serve as an access from which trail trips can be made into the interior of the Park, and provide a more direct route for visitors from the east to reach the Olympic Ocean Strip and the rain forests on the west side of the Park. At present it is necessary for visitors to travel to the north side of the Park and around it, or to proceed west of Olympia via Aberdeen and Hoquiam thence north on U. S. 101, in order to reach the west side of the Park.

Studies have been made by the State for bridge and tube crossing of Puget Sound south of Seattle. If a route is constructed here it could be expected to join on the west with State Route 14, south of Bremerton, which connects with U. S. 101 south of Hoodsport at the Hood Canal. This route would shorten the distance and time of travel considerably, from the Seattle area to Olympic National Park and it could be expected to result in increased travel to the Park.

Thomas E. Carpenter
Landscape Architect

Harold G. Fowler
Landscape Architect



① View of Sundown Lake



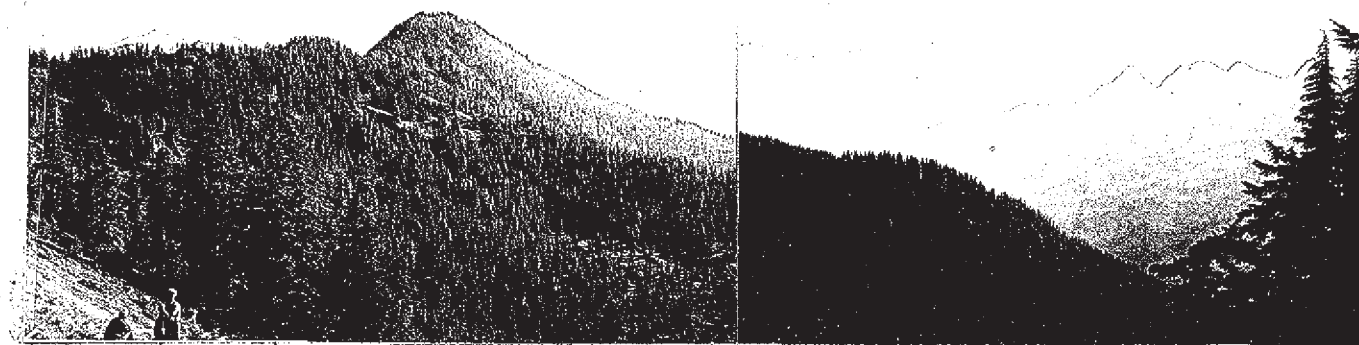
② From ridge above Sundown Lake
looking back down Graves Creek



③ From slope above Sundown Lake
looking northerly toward Mt. Olympus



④ From McGravey Lake looking northwest



⑤

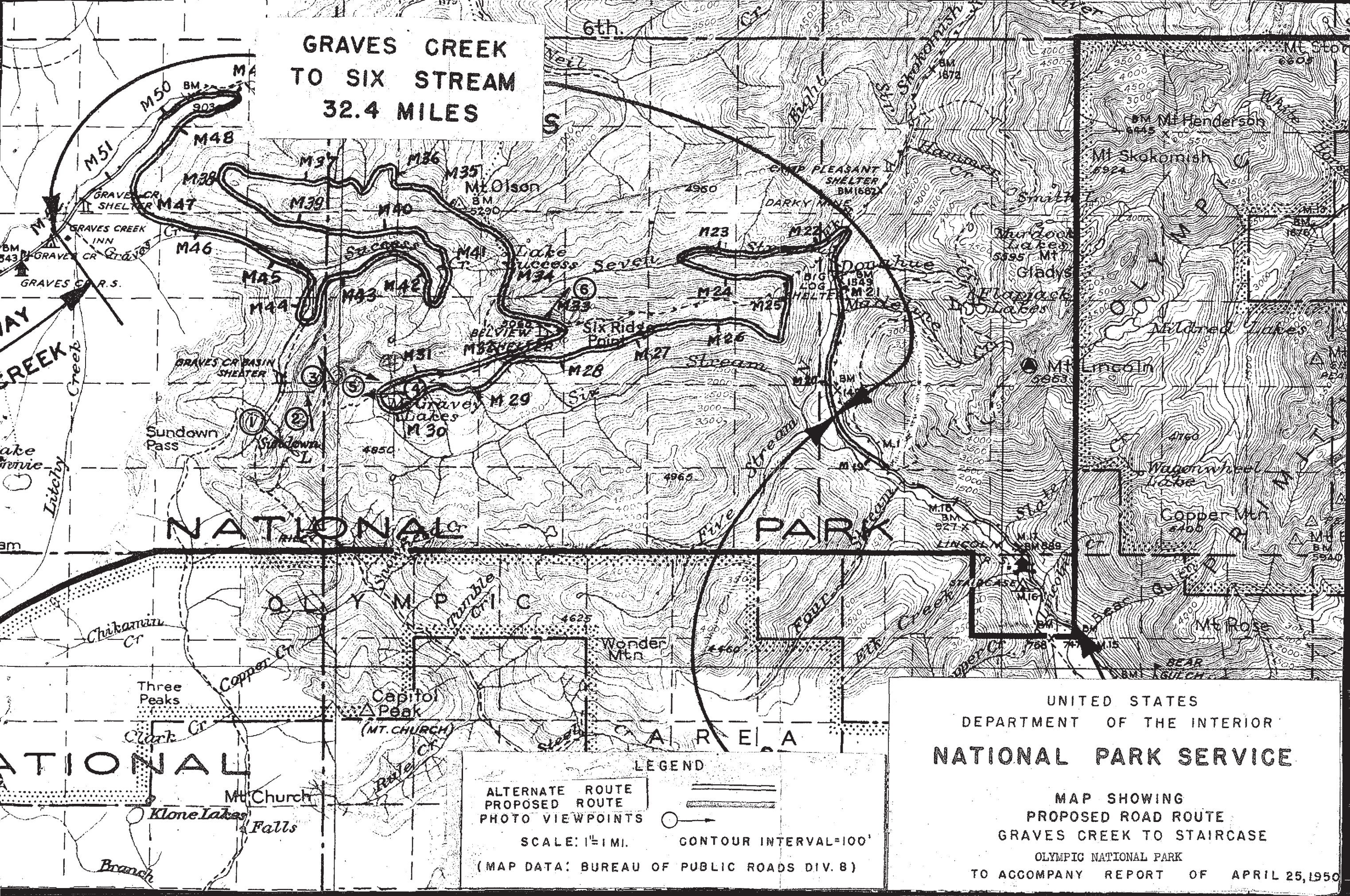
Looking easterly down Six Ridge toward
Skokomish River drainage



⑥

Looking at Seven Ridge from Six Ridge

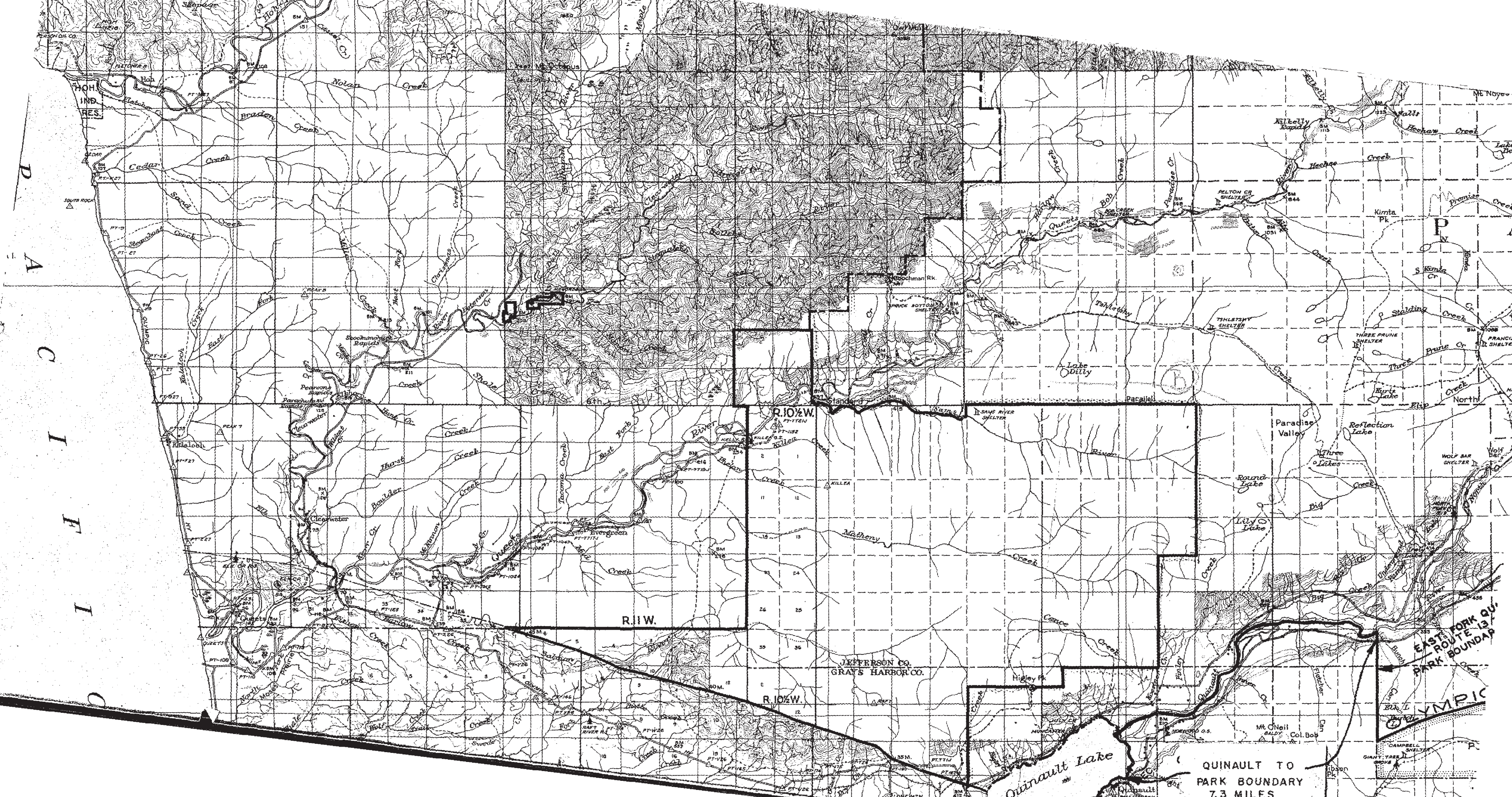
GRAVES CREEK
TO SIX STREAM
32.4 MILES



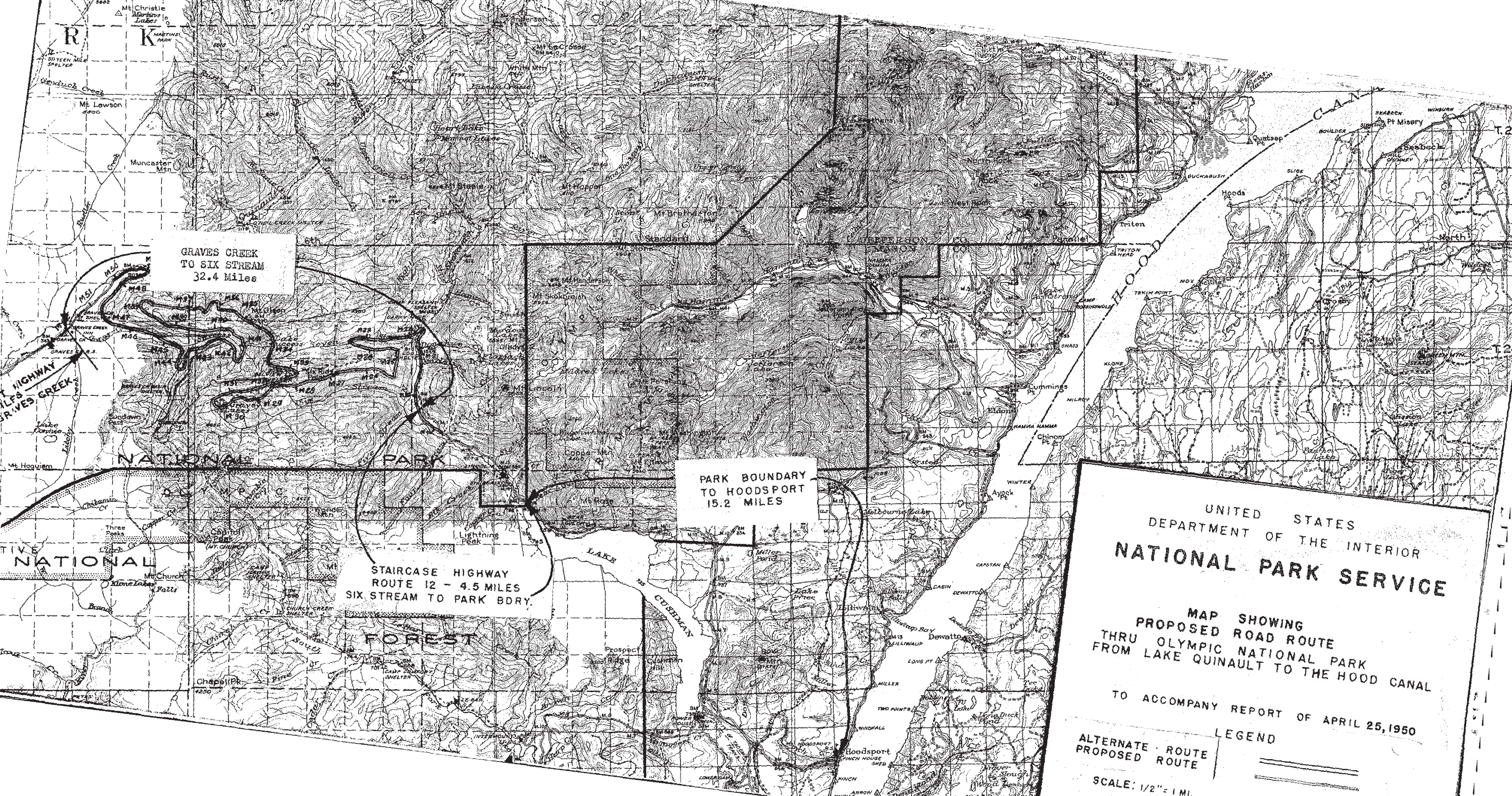
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MAP SHOWING
PROPOSED ROAD ROUTE
GRAVES CREEK TO STAIRCASE
OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
TO ACCOMPANY REPORT OF APRIL 25, 1950

LEGEND
ALTERNATE ROUTE
PROPOSED ROUTE
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS
SCALE: 1"=1 MI.
CONTOUR INTERVAL=100'
(MAP DATA: BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS DIV. 8)



QUINAUT TO
PARK BOUNDARY
7.3 MILES



GRAVES CREEK
TO SIX STREAM
32.4 Miles

PARK BOUNDARY
TO HOODSPORT
15.2 MILES

STAIRCASE HIGHWAY
ROUTE 12 - 4.5 MILES
SIX STREAM TO PARK BDY.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MAP SHOWING
PROPOSED ROAD ROUTE
THRU OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
FROM LAKE QUINALT TO THE HOOD CANAL

TO ACCOMPANY REPORT OF APRIL 25, 1950

ALTERNATE ROUTE
PROPOSED ROUTE

SCALE: 1/2" = 1 MI.

LEGEND