



Olympic Update

The Quarterly Newsletter of Olympic National Park

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A Message From the Superintendent

Spring is here, and with it, favorable weather for park visitors and park projects. Detailed herein are a variety of work projects planned and ongoing throughout the park, as well as tidbits and advice for the spring hiker and traveler.

For further visit and hiking information, both the

Olympic National Park Visitor Center and the Wilderness Information Center are open to help you plan a park visit, and provide current condition reports and safety tips. Both located at 3002 Mount Angeles Road, the two centers are open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with extended

hours to begin next month. If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, please call Barb Maynes, the park's public information officer at 360/452-0317.

David Morris
Superintendent

Park Vehicle Fleet Goes "Green"

Bringing resource stewardship a step forward, the park's fleet of heavy equipment, trucks and cars are now using a variety of environment-friendly "green" engine fluids. This winter, park snowplows, graders and other heavy equipment began using synthetic hydraulic fluid instead of the standard petroleum-based product. Unlike traditional hydraulic fluid, the synthetic product is non-toxic and environmentally safe for use in and around water.

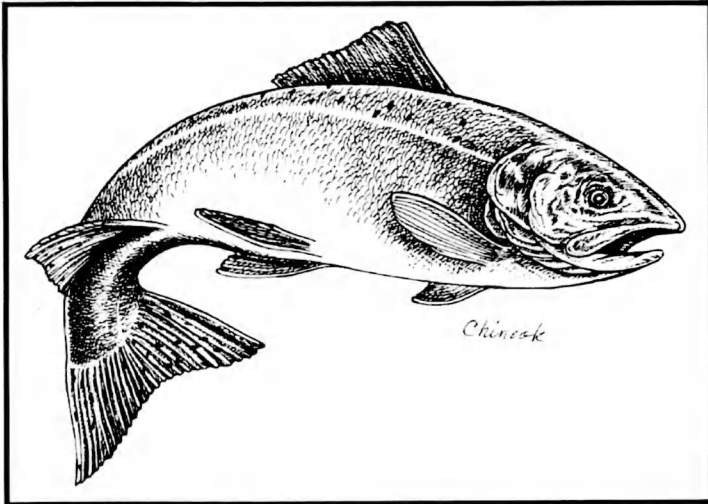
About a year ago, the park fleet began using re-refined motor oil in its vehicle fleet; by December of 1999, the entire fleet had been converted to this more economical and environment-friendly product. Since the program began, the park has used 1,500 gallons of re-refined oil,

saved 50% in costs compared to conventional motor oil. The park participates in a "closed loop system", in which the oil supplier picks up and recycles the park's used oil and delivers the re-refined product.

The fleet has also converted to long-life antifreeze, which lasts three times longer conventional antifreeze, cutting down on the amount of fluid being used and disposed of, and saving money.

Park chainsaws are "greener" now too, with biodegradable vegetable-based bar and chain oil replacing the standard petroleum product. Chainsaws are used extensively to maintain park trails; switching to vegetable-based oil will lessen the amount of petroleum products released into the park wilderness.





Elwha Restoration in the News

Capping a full year of negotiations, and paving the way towards river restoration, the Elwha and Glines Canyon dams became publicly owned on February 29. As directed by Congress in the Elwha Act of 1992, \$29.5 million was paid to the dams' former owners and operators, the Fort James Paper Company and Daishowa America, Inc.

Dam removal is expected to begin in three to four years' time, after final engineering details are completed and of water quality protection facilities are constructed.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is now operating the two dams for the National Park Service. Reclamation is a Department of the Interior agency and operates dams and water systems throughout the West. Seven Reclamation employees are now working at the dams and living in the Port Angeles area.

The two dams will continue to produce power, pending further review. Power generated by the dams is now part the regional power grid under marketing authority of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Proceeds from power generation at the dams will be donated from BPA to the National Park Foundation, the official non-profit partner of the NPS. The National

Park Foundation funds important park projects through its grant program and last year donated \$25,000 to Olympic National Park for repair of the Ozette loop trail.

The Daishowa America mill, formerly the sole user of the dams' power, is guaranteed replacement power through BPA at the preferred industrial consumers' rate, as stipulated by the Elwha Act.

The Glines Canyon dam, along with the 160 acres associated with it are within the boundaries of Olympic National Park and have been permanently added to the park. Lake Aldwell and the land associated with Elwha dam will be managed on an interim basis by the National Park Service until a long-term manager is identified.

With operation of the dams now a federal responsibility, a new Elwha project office has opened in Port Angeles. Staffed by both NPS and Reclamation employees, the office is located at 826 E. Front Street and can be reached by calling 360-565-1320.

The park has also established a new website about Elwha Recovery. Still under development, this site will provide copies of Elwha-related technical documents, as well as information geared for students and teachers. It can be reached by clicking on "Olympic News" at the park's website, www.nps.gov/olym.

The Elwha Act of 1992 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the two dams, and to fully restore the river's ecosystem and native anadromous fisheries. Prior to 1910, when construction on the lower dam began, the Elwha River supported ten stocks of salmon and steelhead, including the legendary Elwha chinook, pictured above, which could reach up to 100 pounds in size. Only about 4,000 wild salmon now spawn in the five miles of free river below the dams. Once both dams are removed and the ecosystem restored, the river's wild salmon and steelhead runs will reach an estimated 392,000, including the huge runs of pink salmon that return every odd year.

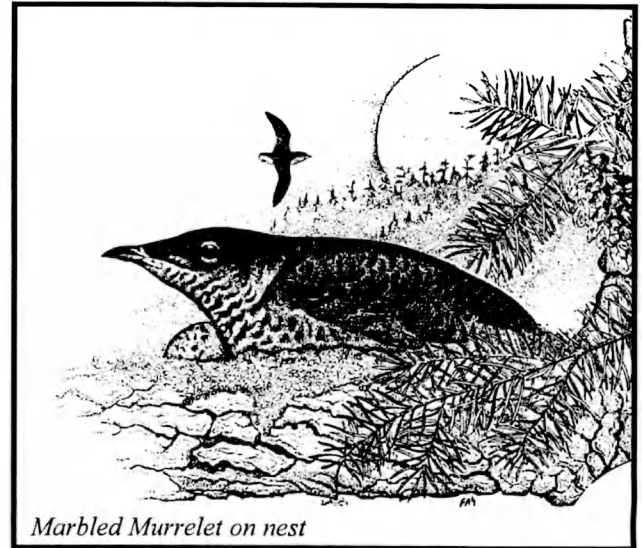
Concerns for Endangered Species Delay Backcountry Bridge Repair

The High Dose bridge, the Staircase Rapids loop trail bridge and the backcountry suspension bridge near Enchanted Valley will remain closed this summer, due in part, to helicopter flight restrictions designed to protect threatened and endangered species. Marbled murrelets, northern spotted owls and bald eagles all nest within Olympic National Park. In fact, the park protects the largest remaining contiguous tract of nesting habitat for both marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls in the lower 48 states. In order to lessen disturbance to these birds during their critical nesting period, helicopter flights are restricted between March 1 through mid-September.

The three bridges, all damaged by last winter's record-breaking snowfall, require helicopter transport of new support beams, or "stringers", before repair work can

begin. Flights will be scheduled this fall, with repair work to begin thereafter.

A three-year, \$450,000 fee demonstration project has been approved for backcountry bridge replacement. Fee funding will be used to purchase and transport materials and construct the bridges.



Marbled Murrelet on nest

Mountain Goat Review to be Released Soon

The park continues to receive inquiries about release of the independent review of scientific material related to mountain goats and mountain goat management in Olympic National Park.

This scientific study was contracted in late 1998 by the Department of the Interior and is undergoing final review. Release of the final document is anticipated by this summer.

Public Invited to Help Develop Olympic General Management Plan

Later this year, the park will begin work on a General Management Plan (GMP), designed to provide a framework for park management for the next 20 years. Anyone interested in helping to shape the future of Olympic National Park is invited to begin thinking about issues and concerns they feel should be considered in the plan.

A comment period and series of public workshops will be held during the winter of 2001; interested people will be asked to share their thoughts and ideas.

The GMP will focus on the park's future as a whole and will look at issues including transportation to and within the park, accommodating growing visitation while still protecting the park's unique natural and cultural resources and the role the park should play in the local, regional and national community.

The last General Management Plan for Olympic was completed in 1976.

Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center Update

Final interior work to the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center is being completed this spring. The lower level, with newly remodeled snack bar, gift shop and outdoor terrace will all be open by the Fourth of July this summer. The upper level of the visitor center remained open throughout the winter and will be staffed beginning in early May.

Exterior work on the roof and siding will be completed this summer as weather allows.



New Chitum Trail Open In Quinault

Thanks to the impetus of the Lake Quinault Community Action Forum, and funding support from the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service's Public Lands Corps Program, the Quinault Valley's Chitum trail is completed and will be dedicated in a ceremony in June.

Formerly known as the Big Cedar trail, the trail is still named for the cedar, but now uses the local Quinault word for cedar, "chitum". The new name reflects the heritage of the Quinault people, and their use and reverence for the cedar.

Since 1997, the trail has been completely rebuilt by a Washington Conservation Corps crew and volunteers from the Quinault community. The 1000-foot trail leads to one of the world's largest western redcedars, an important and beloved landmark in the Quinault Valley. A spur trail leads to an overlook of the Quinault River. The newly constructed trail provides a safer, easier and more environmentally friendly route to the tree and the overlook.



Bears Emerge for the Summer

With black bears emerging from hibernation, park visitors should take precautions to avoid a too-close encounter. Proper food storage is a

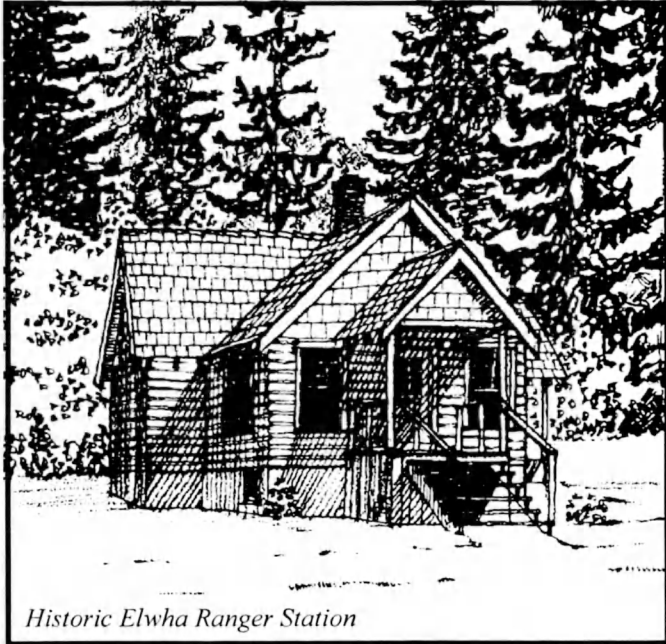
must; just as important is trash disposal.

In light of a series of bear-human encounters in the Elwha Valley backcountry, several new measures have been taken there to help avert or avoid bear-human encounters. The 6.8-mile stretch of the Elwha River trail between Lillian River and Elkhorn Overnight camping is now closed to overnight camping, though it remains open to day use. Both the Lillian and Elkhorn backcountry campsites are presently open to camping.

Also in the Elwha Valley, wilderness campers between the trailhead and Hayes River must either use bear-resistant food containers (BRFCs), or hang their

food from bear wires, available at selected sites along the trail. Rope-hanging of food is not acceptable in this section of the Valley. The use of BRFCs is strongly encouraged throughout the rest of the park wilderness. Additional bear wires will be placed at sites throughout the park backcountry this summer, as part of a project funded by park wilderness use fees.

In frontcountry areas, park fees are being used this year to install animal-resistant trashcans and dumpster lids. Animal-resistant food storage lockers will be purchased this fall for installation in developed campgrounds next summer.



Historic Elwha Ranger Station

Update on Fee-Funded Projects

Thanks to proceeds from the fee demonstration program, over 30 improvement projects throughout the park are scheduled for this year. In addition to the backcountry bridge repair project described elsewhere in this newsletter, funding has been earmarked for expanded hours and services at the Wilderness

Information Center (WIC). The WIC opened April 1 this year, a month earlier than in previous years. Reservations for popular wilderness destinations are also being accepted as of April 1.

Three historic ranger stations in the Elwha Valley, all built between 1928 and 1933, will be renovated and upgraded this summer. The Elwha Ranger Station and the backcountry ranger stations at Elkhorn and Hayes River are all slated for improvement. These buildings provide glimpses back to the days of the Great Depression and to the years when the U.S. Forest Service managed the lands now known as Olympic National Park.

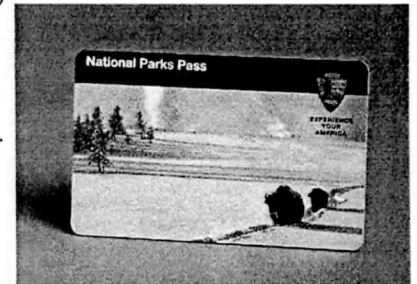
Trails through the Fairholm, Kalaloch and Sol Duc campgrounds will be improved this summer. New asphalt pads will be installed around campground restrooms as well, improving access for people using wheelchairs, strollers or other mobility aids.

Three condemned and excess park buildings at Lake Crescent will be removed this spring and summer, and their materials recycled. Acquired when the park purchased properties around the lake, these hazardous buildings are in poor condition and have been slated for removal for years, pending adequate funding. Proceeds from the fee program will allow the long-awaited removal this summer.

New National Parks Pass to Benefit Parks and Visitors

On April 18, the new National Parks Pass was unveiled at parks across the country. Available for \$50, the pass provides a great value for the tens of millions of people who visit the National Parks each year. At the same time, it gives Americans a special connection to their parks and a new and unique way to show their stewardship and support of these special places. The Pass is being sold by the National Park Service, in conjunction with the National Park Foundation, the official non-profit partner of the NPS.

month of purchase for admission to all national parks that charge an entrance fee. The Pass comes with a special Pop-Out™ map of the 379 National Parks, a "Proud Partner" vehicle decal and a subscription offer for the free *GoParks Newsletter*.



The National Parks Pass can be purchased at Olympic National Park entrance stations and visitor centers and at other parks throughout the country. It can also be purchased online at www.nationalparks.org, by calling 1-888-GOPARKS.

The National Parks Pass is valid for one full year from

Park Visitation

As of the end of March, there have been 524,909 visits to Olympic National Park, a three percent increase compared to last year. March visits were up ten percent over last year, with 194,920 visits to the park. The record-breaking snowfall of 1998-99 contributed to below normal visitation in early 1999.

Graves Creek Road Possibly Closed for the Season

Winter storms took a toll on the Graves Creek Road in the Quinault Valley. Nearly a full lane of the road was lost in two separate places during a December storm, and the road has been closed to vehicle traffic since. Later this spring, after the danger of high water has passed, the road's safety

condition will be reevaluated. If safe, the road will open for the summer.

Repairs to the road will be scheduled to minimize impacts to the bulltrout, a threatened species recently listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Repairs are also dependent on available funding, an issue which is still being explored. The total cost of rebuilding both sections of damaged road, including necessary mitigation for native fish protection, is estimated at \$400,000.

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