

# Olympic National Park Update

## The Quarterly Newsletter of Olympic National Park

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December 23, 1996

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The three months since you received the last *Olympic National Park Update* have been busy for park staff. While we completed and released the second of two Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) on Elwha River and ecosystem restoration, we began the public comment period on the Draft Lake Crescent Management Plan and EIS. We continue to work towards a solution to problems caused by the park's mountain goat population. And just as our summer and fall visitor seasons wind down, we prepare for winter recreation at Hurricane Ridge. We are happy to share our accomplishments and ongoing work with you through this newsletter -- and are eager to hear how you think we're doing. Please call us with your questions, comments and suggestions at (360) 452-4501, extension 207.

On behalf of the entire Olympic National Park staff, I wish you and your family a delightful holiday season and a happy and safe new year.

Sincerely,



David K. Morris  
Superintendent

### Visit Olympic on the Internet

Olympic National Park has a new homepage on the World Wide Web. Reachable at <http://www.nps.gov/olym/>, the park's page features trip planning information (including a virtual "tour of the park"), trail and wilderness travel information, current press releases, materials for teachers, an educational activity and detailed information about park resources.

This is the official Olympic National Park site and is the only one guaranteed by the park to provide current and accurate information about the park.

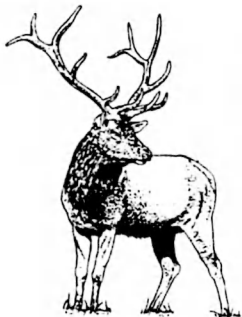
The park's website provides links to a variety of related sites, including the North Olympic Visitor and Convention Bureau, Olympic National Forest and the National Park Service homepage.

## Two Olympic Rangers Honored by Secretary of the Interior

Rangers Keith Flanery and Dan Mason were presented with Department of Interior Valor Awards at a ceremony Monday in Washington, D.C. Two of seven National Park Service employees so honored this year, Flanery and Mason each received gold medals from Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.

Ranger Keith Flanery was recognized for his June 1995 rescue of a 12-year old boy from the Queets River. While monitoring the Queets River ford during a time of high water, Flanery saw a 12-year old boy swept off his feet and carried swiftly downstream. Flanery entered the river, found the boy, who had gone below the surface, and successfully pulled him from the 38-degree water.

Ranger Dan Mason was recognized for preventing an armed, intoxicated and suicidal man from injuring himself or others along busy Highway 101 near Lake Crescent last January. Mason successfully disarmed the individual, removed two guns from his possession and convinced the man to seek medical and mental assistance. Negotiations were conducted at close quarters, with the ever present possibility that the individual would shoot himself or Mason.



The Valor Award is the highest honor granted by the Department of Interior and is given to employees who demonstrate unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger.

## Winter Arrives at Hurricane Ridge

With over six feet of snow blanketing the Ridge, park staff is preparing for a busy winter season. Highlights of the winter schedule are listed below.

- \* The Hurricane Ridge Road will be open Friday through Sunday throughout the snow season, *weather and road conditions permitting.*
- \* Guided snowshoe walks will be offered and Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center information desk staffed Friday through Sunday.
- \* The downhill ski operation, snack bar and equipment rentals will be Saturdays and Sundays.
- \* All services will be available additional days during the Christmas holiday period.
- \* Call the Olympic National Park Visitor Center at 360-452-0330 for more information about the winter schedule.

## Fee Demonstration Program at Olympic

Olympic has been selected as one of 47 national parks across the country to participate in a new Congressionally-authorized Fee Demonstration Program. As part of this program, entrance fees will increase from \$5.00 to \$10.00 at Olympic beginning on January 11, 1997. Annual passes will be available for \$20.00.

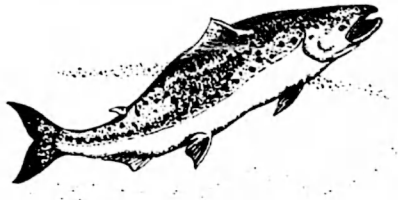
This program will return a large portion of the revenue from increased fees directly to the parks, where it will be used to

accomplish backlogged maintenance and resource management projects. More information about this program and how it will be implemented at Olympic will be forthcoming soon.

## **Elwha River and Ecosystem Restoration**

The final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation, the second of two EISs on Elwha restoration, was released on November 22.

By law, the official Record of Decision (ROD) may be released no earlier than 30 days after release of the final EIS. When signed, this ROD will mark the conclusion of the Elwha EIS process.



## **Mountain Goat Management in Olympic National Park**

At the urging of Congressman Norm Dicks and in consideration of public concern with this issue, the NPS is continuing internal discussions regarding mountain goat management. Park staff continues to work towards a solution which recognizes the widespread public interest, as well as the Congressman's concerns.

## **Lake Crescent Management Plan/EIS**

The Lake Crescent Management Plan/EIS was released October 11. A 60-day public comment period was originally scheduled, but has been extended by an additional 90 days, through March 19, 1997. The two public meetings were postponed because of inclement weather and are currently scheduled as follows:

Wednesday, January 15

7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Jackson Federal Bldg., South Auditorium  
915 Second Avenue, Seattle, WA

Thursday, January 16

7:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Vern Burton Memorial Community Center  
308 East Fourth Street, Port Angeles, WA

The plan addresses a wide range of issues and uses of the lake and watershed and when complete, will serve as a guideline for management of the Lake Crescent watershed (an area of about 30,000 acres) for the next 15 to 20 years.

## **Park Installs Environmentally-Friendly Autoparts Washer**

In early October, Olympic became the first unit of the National Park Service to purchase and install a water-based washer for automobile parts. Unlike standard parts-washers, the new washer does not use or generate hazardous solvents or wastes.

Most automobile parts-washers rely on harsh chemical solvents to clean oil and grease from dirty engine parts. The park

auto shop's old parts-washer generated approximately 300 gallons of hazardous materials each year. The new parts-washer uses a combination of water, soap and a mixture of microbes that digest grease and oil, transforming them into water and carbon dioxide. Not only will the new washer decrease the amount of hazardous materials used and generated by the park, providing a safer environment for park employees, it will decrease the amount of paperwork required for tracking and recording the use of hazardous materials.

## Statement for Management

The Olympic National Park Statement for Management (SFM) was released on November 4. It serves as a reference for people interested in the park, providing an overview of Olympic's mandates, resources, facilities, programs and management issues.

To receive a copy of the SFM, people may contact the park at (360) 452-4501, extension 264.



## New Housing at Kalaloch to be Completed Next Month

Construction continues on a new 12-person bunkhouse in the NPS housing area at Kalaloch. The bunkhouse, which will

house NPS seasonal and temporary employees, will replace three old and dilapidated mobile homes. Budgeted at

\$650,000, the bunkhouse construction is funded through a congressional appropriation specifically targeted for park service employee housing. Completion is targeted for the end of January.

## Campground Improvement

Park maintenance crews will finish their rehabilitation work at Fairholm campground shortly after the first of the year. This project will upgrade sites at the Fairholm campground with new tent pads, enlarged parking pads and new picnic tables and fire grates. Comfort stations will also be improved, with more energy-efficient light fixtures and universally accessible facilities.

## Sand Point Restoration

A total of 48 volunteers helped park staff plant over 13,000 native plants at Sand Point this fall, restoring vegetation to over 9,500 square feet of previously denuded ground. An additional 35,000 plants now growing in the park greenhouse will be planted in the spring and fall of 1997. This work is part of a two-year project to restore the heavily-used wilderness campsite at Sand Point and is funded, in part, by a grant from the Canon Corporation and the National Park Foundation.

## Park Visitation

As of the end of November, the park had recorded an 8 percent drop in total park visitation compared to the first eleven months of 1995. While this figure represents an overall decline for the year, it also shows

an increase in visitation since July, when an 11 percent decrease from 1995 was noted.

Some of this decline is likely related to last winter and spring's closure of the Hoh Rainforest area. The drop in park visitation also mirrors the overall decline in visitation Peninsula-wide.

As of November 30, there had been approximately 4.2 million visits to Olympic National Park.

**Olympic National Park  
600 East Park Avenue  
Port Angeles, WA 98362**

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