

Olympic National Park Update

The Quarterly Newsletter of Olympic National Park

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Summer has arrived, and with it, we welcome our many summer visitors. We've worked hard to prepare for the busy season, from replacing water and electrical lines at Sol Duc to renovating the Fairholm campground; from building new bridges in the backcountry to installing new nature trails and exhibits and hiring and training summer employees. We're proud to showcase our work, our staff and -- most important -- the tremendous resources that Olympic National Park offers. I invite each of you to visit and enjoy the park this summer -- take part in a naturalist-led program, camp out for a night or two, or simply find a quiet spot to sit and relax.

The recent months have also seen progress on a number of other projects, as highlighted in this issue of the *Olympic National Park Update*.

As ever, we welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Barb Maynes, the park's public information specialist, can be reached at (360) 452-4501, extension 207.

Sincerely,



David K. Morris
Superintendent

Seasonal Employees Arrive; Summer Begins

Olympic National Park's staff recently doubled, as over 150 seasonal employees reported for their summer jobs. Their duties range from presenting educational programs and staffing visitor centers to providing law enforcement and emergency services to monitoring fish populations and repairing and maintaining park facilities.

In addition to the paid seasonal employees, over 100 full-time volunteers joined the staff for the summer. These individuals donate their time and energy to serve park visitors and resources in a variety of capacities -- as campground and backcountry hosts, members of the wilderness revegetation crew, and in other front-line and behind-the-scenes roles.

Before beginning their regular summer duties, seasonal employees and volunteers

participated in a training program, which introduced them to the park and its resources, brought them up-to-date with current issues and trained them in important skills such as orienteering, fire-fighting and emergency response.



Two Backcountry Bridges Completed and Open for Use

The park's trail crew recently completed the replacement of two popular backcountry bridges -- the Sol Duc Falls bridge and the High Dose bridge. Both of the new bridges are supported by steel I-beams, which replace log stringers that are subject to deterioration and weathering. The Sol Duc bridge was closed early this spring after a structural inspection revealed cracks in the log stringers. The steel stringers on the Sol Duc bridge are hidden by half-rounds of logs, giving the bridge the appearance of being built completely of wood.

The trail crew will soon begin work on three bridges along the North Fork Trail near

Quinalt. The Kimta Creek, Stalding and Three Prune Creeks bridges will each be replaced this year. For more information, call the Wilderness Information Center at (360) 452-0300.

New Fee Program to Fund Park Projects

As directed by Congress, Olympic has implemented the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program for 1997. New fees for wilderness use, RV dump station use and parking at Ozette were added this year to existing fees for camping and park entry. To date, proceeds from park fees have totaled \$290,000, a 44-percent increase over last year.

Under Recreation Fee Demonstration Program, new moneys collected at Olympic will be returned to the National Park Service. Eighty percent of that amount will be retained by Olympic to fund visitor use, maintenance and resource management projects, while the remaining 20% will help fund maintenance and resource backlogs throughout the national park system.

Projects at Olympic include brushing all park backcountry trails, painting public use buildings throughout the park, replacement of campground picnic tables and fire grates and replacement of the park's visitor orientation film.

New fees at Olympic include a \$3 charge for RV sewage dump station use, a \$1 per day parking fee at Ozette, and increased and new fees at some park campgrounds. Wilderness use fees are \$5 per permit plus a \$2 per person nightly fee. Annual wilderness

passes are \$30. Entrance fees went from \$5.00 to \$10.00 in January, with annual passes now \$20.00.

The Recreation Fee Demonstration Program was authorized by Congress and directs the National Park Service, and several other agencies, to implement a 3-year test program to use fees to help offset budgetary shortfalls.

Wolf Restoration?

Congressman Norm Dicks, along with Defenders of Wildlife, has advanced the idea of exploring the possibility of restoring gray wolves into Olympic National Park. The gray wolf historically occupied the Olympic Peninsula, but was trapped and poisoned to extinction by about 1930.

National Park Service policy encourages restoring extirpated native species where feasible. Olympic National Park staff is currently working with representatives of several other state and federal agencies, as well as area tribes to determine what, if any, further steps should be taken.

Before wolf restoration could occur, several studies, including a feasibility study and an environmental impact statement, would be completed, with ongoing opportunity for public comment and participation.

Mountain Goat Management

The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary's science advisor and appropriate professional societies, will appoint a number of recognized experts to

review existing scientific information about mountain goats in Olympic National Park.

Review of the science is a key element in responding to concerns raised by Congressman Norm Dicks and others about the park's proposed goat management program.

Up to 12 independent scientists will examine all mountain goat research done to date, including the history of goats on the Olympic Peninsula and the effects of goats on soils, vegetation and natural processes. They are expected to present their findings to the Secretary within 18 months. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on these findings.

During this time, a goat population census will be taken and effects of goats on vegetation will be monitored. The current environmental impact statement process has been suspended until completion of the scientific review.

At the end of this review, the Secretary will have the best possible information with which to decide what, if any, action to take affecting mountain goats in Olympic National Park.





New Executive Director Joins *Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic Fund*

Jen Benn has recently been named executive director of the *Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic Fund*, a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring, enhancing and preserving Washington's three national parks.

Benn brings extensive experience with non-profit organizations to her new position. Most recently, she was the Development Program Officer for Washington Works, a non-profit welfare-to-work program. Previously she served as development director for the Women's Funding Alliance in Seattle.

Benn's primary goals include increasing individual and corporate contributions to the *Fund* to \$1 million annually and

expanding community participation in the *Fund*.

Since 1994, the *Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic Fund* has donated \$70,000 for 13 projects at Olympic National Park. These projects include construction of the Victoria Overlook at Hurricane Ridge, purchase and installation of animal-proof trash containers and repair and reconstruction of the Ozette loop trail.

Draft Environmental Assessments to Be Released Soon

Two draft Environmental Assessments (EAs) are nearing completion and will be released for public review later this month. Both documents address the environmental effects of nature trail construction. One trail is planned for the Olympic National Park Visitor Center area in Port Angeles, while the other is proposed for the Quinault area.

Further information, including the process for public review and comment, will be announced when the documents are released.

Government Performance and Results Act

In the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Congress directed federal agencies to begin using performance management to plan their work and measure their results. Developed by private industry and already embraced by many local and state governments, performance management ensures that work is guided by long-term, strategically

developed goals and is measured and evaluated according to results achieved, rather than effort expended. Through performance management, GPRA seeks to make the federal government more accountable to the American people in its actions and expenditures.

1997 is a transition year for the National Park Service to integrate GPRA requirements into its planning, budget, and reporting processes. Olympic will release its draft strategic plan, which will guide the park's work for the next six years, in early October. Review by stakeholders, partners and the public will be an important component in preparing the strategic plan.

Nature Trail Near Deer Park to Open Soon

A new educational nature trail on Blue Mountain will soon open for use. The half-mile long "Rainshadow Trail" will give visitors the opportunity to learn more about the dry alpine environment that characterizes the high eastern slopes of the Olympics. More detailed information will be released when the trail is complete and open to the public, scheduled for later this month.

A new trail guide booklet is now available for the mile-long Graves Creek Nature Trail. The "Cascading Terraces" trail booklet will

be available at the beginning at the nature trail, which is located at the Graves Creek campground in the Quinault area.

Lake Crescent Management Plan/EIS

Park staff has begun to develop the final version of the Lake Crescent Management Plan/EIS, including responses to the approximately 2,000 comment letters that were received in response to the draft.

Substantive comments will be addressed in the final version the plan, which is targeted for release later this year.

The Lake Crescent Management Plan/EIS was released October 11, 1996. The 150-day public comment period closed on March 19.

Park Visitation

June visitation to Olympic National Park increased 18 percent over June of 1996. Visitation for the year to date has increased 3 percent over the first six months of last year, with approximately 2.2 million visits so far this year.

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