



Olympic News

Bears and Visitors ... Safer, Thanks to Fee Program

Olympic National Park rangers, wildlife biologists, maintenance crews and visitors are working together to keep bears and other wildlife away from human food and garbage.

All established campgrounds in the park now offer food storage lockers, making it easier for campers at walk-in sites or those traveling on bicycles or motorcycles to keep their food safely stored.

For backpackers in the park's wilderness, 690 bear resistant food containers are now available from the Wilderness Information Center or any staffed ranger station for a suggested \$3 donation per container per trip.



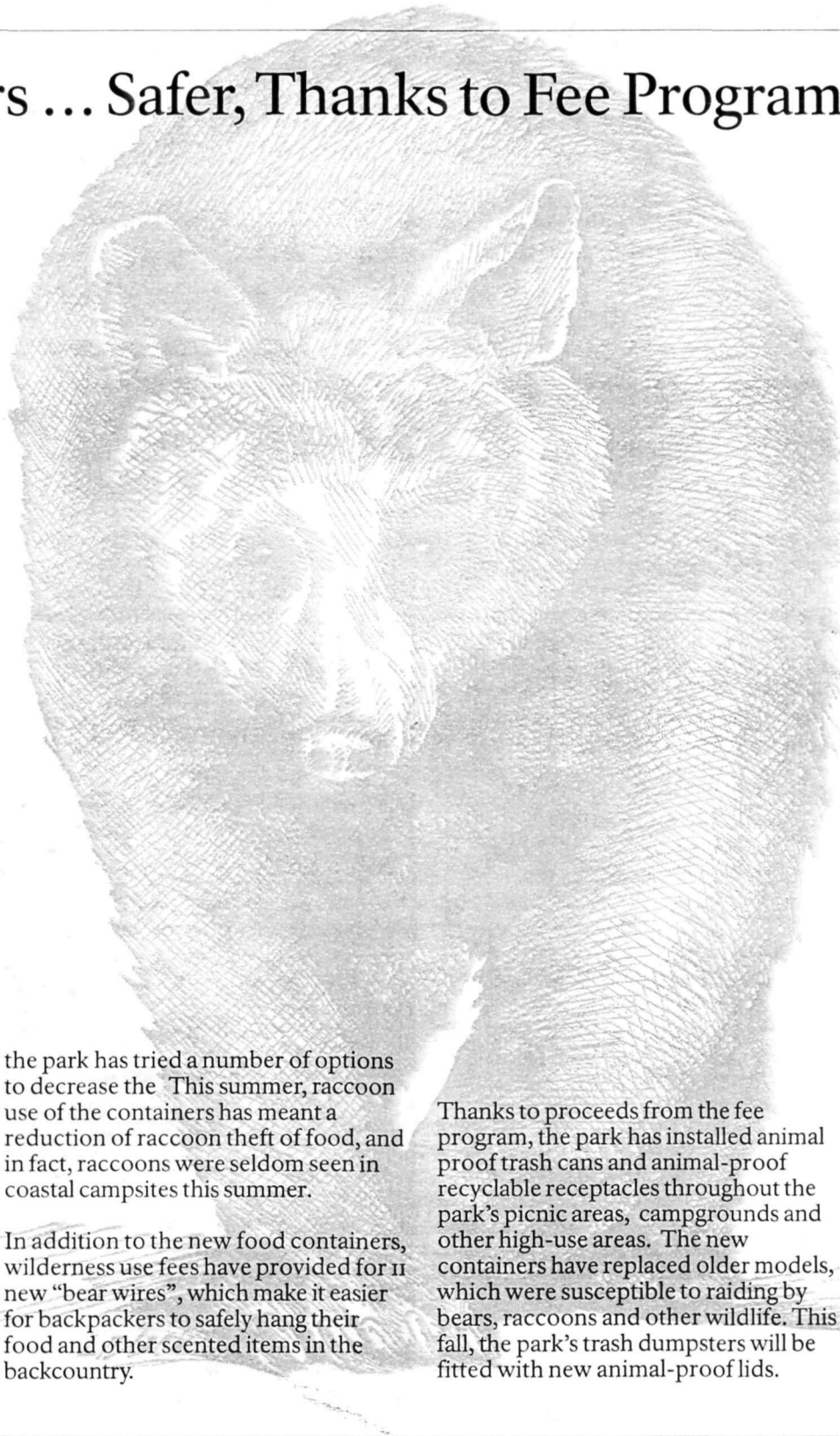
The container loan program met with resounding success during its first season, with a dramatic increase in container use since the program began. Prior to this spring, containers were available for rent; the new program both increases the number of containers available, and decreases the cost to visitors.

The benefits of container use are easily seen along the Pacific coast, where their use is required. Over the years,

the park has tried a number of options to decrease the. This summer, raccoon use of the containers has meant a reduction of raccoon theft of food, and in fact, raccoons were seldom seen in coastal campsites this summer.

In addition to the new food containers, wilderness use fees have provided for 11 new "bear wires", which make it easier for backpackers to safely hang their food and other scented items in the backcountry.

Thanks to proceeds from the fee program, the park has installed animal proof trash cans and animal-proof recyclable receptacles throughout the park's picnic areas, campgrounds and other high-use areas. The new containers have replaced older models, which were susceptible to raiding by bears, raccoons and other wildlife. This fall, the park's trash dumpsters will be fitted with new animal-proof lids.



Olympic Invites Public to Visit During Veterans Day Weekend for Unity, Hope and Healing

Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced that entrance fees to all national park areas will be waived during Veterans Day weekend, November 10, 11 and 12, 2001, to encourage Americans to seek solace and inspiration in the nation's parks, monuments and memorials.

"Special places like Olympic offer hope and encouragement – qualities needed to help the nation heal from the recent assaults on innocent Americans and unify our efforts to rebound and find justice," said Secretary Norton. "During this Veterans Day weekend, we invite all Americans to visit their parks in the spirit of unity, hope and healing. As Americans visit these special places, I urge them to do so with pride and in honor of those men and women who fought for the freedoms we value and enjoy today. Let us also remember our active military and those unsung heroes – the firefighters, police officers, medical workers and countless other Americans – who are serving the Nation valiantly in this time of crisis."

"The peace of Olympic's forests, the changeless power of the Pacific and the grandeur of its snowcapped peaks can offer solace and inspiration to anyone," said Superintendent David Morris. "On this Veterans Day weekend, and throughout the year, I invite people to find comfort and renewal here."

Entrance stations at Olympic will be staffed during the Veterans Day weekend, but no entrance fees will be charged.

For more information about this special Veterans Day weekend and national parks, please visit www.nps.gov.

Volunteers Improve Trails and Campsites at Royal Basin

Volunteers from the Washington Trails Association and Wilderness Volunteers have lent their assistance to park staff this year, by improving and restoring trails in the Royal Basin area. A grant from the Washington State NOVA program, along with the park's fee program, have helped fund the restoration effort.

Improvements along the Royal Basin trail include new footlogs and the placement of additional gravel, which will improve the trail tread and make it less prone to erosion. Eighteen thousand native plants, all grown in the park's greenhouse, are being planted in the Royal Basin area this fall. The project will be completed next year, with plans to improve and more clearly define the wilderness campsites at Royal Basin.

Royal Basin is home to a number of rare plant species, thanks to its unique combination of geologic, climatic and topographic features.



Five of the park's eight endemic plant species are found there, and six species of rare plants grow in Royal Basin, but have not found elsewhere in the park.

To help protect this special place, the park asks for cooperation in observing the following changes.

Wilderness use permits for overnight camping in Royal Basin are no longer available at the trailhead and must be obtained from the Wilderness Information Center.

Campers must camp in designated campsites in Royal Basin. A quota will be in effect from May 1 through September 30 to ensure that all campers have a campsite.

The Royal Basin trail has been re-classified from an all-purpose trail to a foot trail only. Stock animals are prohibited, in order to protect the several types of rare plants present in Royal Basin.



Hiker pauses to admire Royal Basin early this spring

Fire Management Plan Begins

Park staff has recently begun work on a new Wildland Fire Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. When finished, the plan will provide a framework for managing wildland fire in a way that is responsive both to the park's natural and cultural resources and to the safety of park neighbors, visitors, employees and facilities.

Historic and prehistoric evidence shows that wildland fires have long been a significant factor in shaping the forests of the Olympic Peninsula. Fire has been recognized as having many beneficial effects on the natural systems and processes within the park. Wildland fire can also threaten human life and property; considerable cost may be required to manage it. Balancing these and other considerations will be a major focus of the Wildland Fire Management Plan.

A draft plan and Environmental Assessment (EA), which will analyze the effects of the fire management plan, will be released for public comment this winter. A final EA will be released in the spring of 2002. Comments may be sent to the following address by November 16, 2001:

Superintendent
Olympic National Park
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362
E-mail: olymp_ea@nps.gov

For more information, call the park's fire management office at (360) 565-3120.

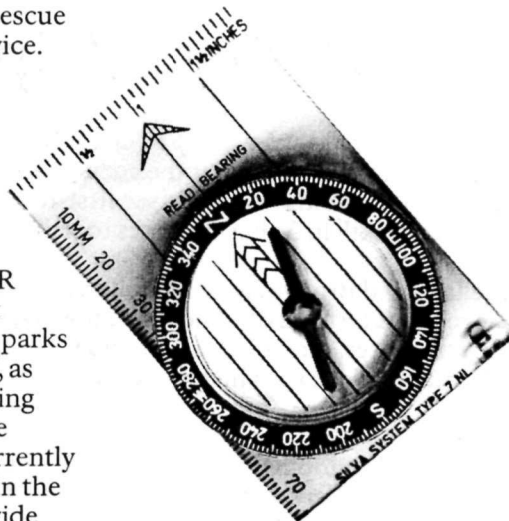
Ranger Uses Grant to Improve Search and Rescue

Dan Pontbriand, the park's Lake Crescent district ranger, received a \$10,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to develop a standardized training program in search and rescue (SAR) for the National Park Service.

The five-day program will teach park rangers the "ABCs" of search and rescue – *SAR Awareness*, *SAR Basics* and *SAR Crew Leader*. An additional training module will enable rangers to instruct the SAR ABCs, allowing them to conduct training programs in their home parks for paid and volunteer park staff, as well as personnel from cooperating agencies and organizations. The complete training program is currently under review for inclusion within the National Park Service's system-wide

Search and Rescue Plan.

Pontbriand is a 20-year veteran of the National Park Service and has worked at Olympic National Park since 1990. Before moving to the Lake Crescent district in 1995, he worked as a park ranger in Olympic's Quinault Valley. Pontbriand is widely recognized, locally and nationally, for his background and expertise in search and rescue.



Visitor Survey Completed

During July 2000, over 1,000 Olympic National Park visitors were asked to evaluate their perceptions and experiences of the park by participating in a visitor survey. Over 900 people completed the survey questionnaire, providing important information for park managers, as well as area residents and tourism officials.

An overview of the survey results will be presented at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center on Tuesday, November 27, 2001 at 12:00 noon.

Interested people are urged to attend, and are invited to bring a sack lunch to eat while they listen to the presentation. The complete survey results can be found by clicking on "Olympic News" at the park's website, www.nps.gov/olymp.

Highlights of the survey include the following:

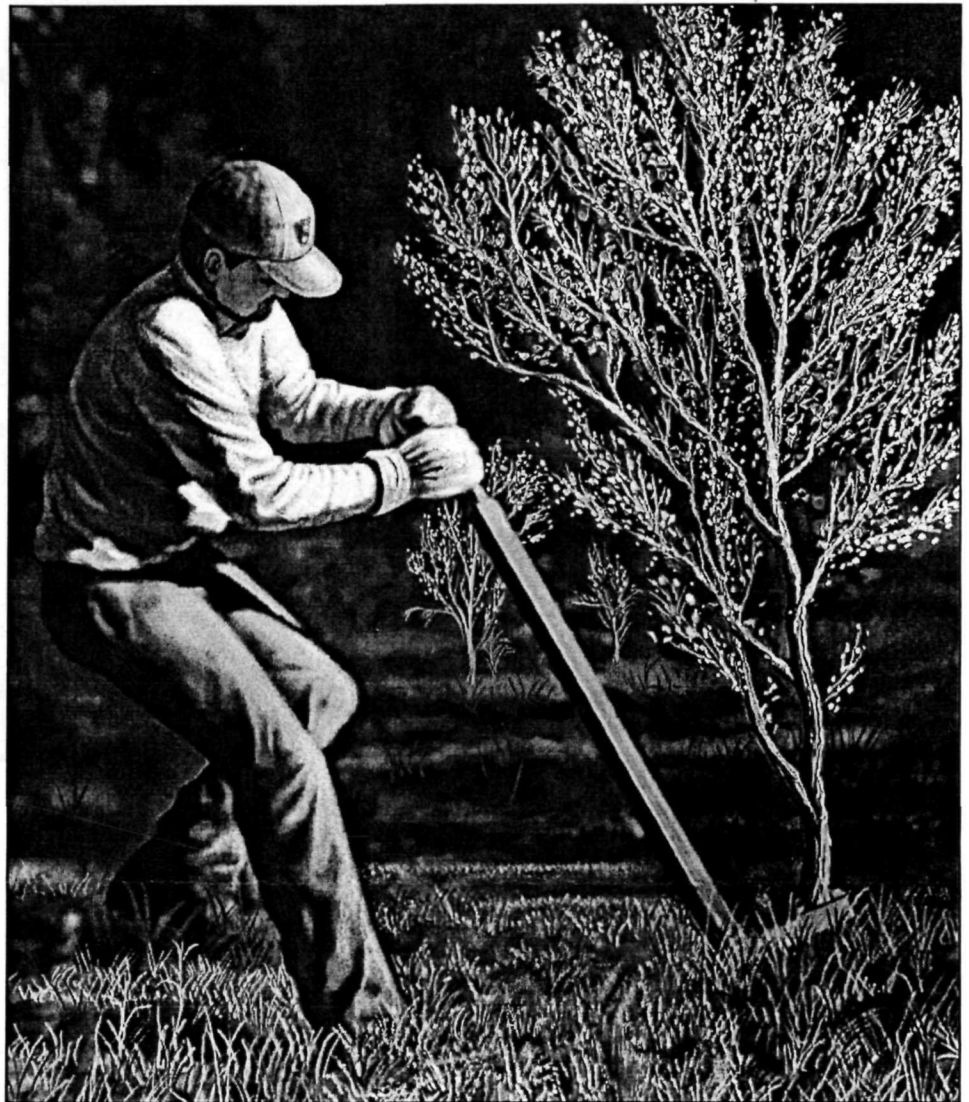
- During their visit at the time of the survey, the average visitor group spent \$300 on goods and services outside the park and an average of \$165 while inside the park.
- Ninety-three percent of the respondents rated the overall quality of visitor services at Olympic as "very good" or "good".
- The most common activities were sightseeing, walking on nature trails, enjoying wilderness, solitude and quiet, viewing wildlife and hiking.
- The most commonly visited areas within the park were Hurricane Ridge, the Hoh Rainforest, Lake Crescent and the main Olympic National Park Visitor Center.
- Eight percent of the visitors surveyed were from countries outside the U.S., with Canada and Germany the most common. Forty-seven percent of U.S. visitors were from Washington.

Olympic to Host Exotic Plant Team

Non-native plants pose a significant threat to national park areas around the Pacific Northwest. Twenty-five species of invasive and noxious weeds can be found within the region's parklands; nearly 250 species of non-native plants have been documented in Olympic National Park alone. Many of these exotic plants are invasive and can dramatically alter the native plant and animal communities. The brightly-flowered Scots broom is well-known invader of fields and roadsides around the northwest, including the park's lower elevations.

Other species can also wreak havoc with native plants. At Lake Ozette, reed canary grass, a native of Eurasia, has invaded about half of the lake's shoreline, changing the character of the lake bottom and increasing siltation in sockeye salmon spawning areas.

The National Park Service has established two exotic plant management teams to address these problems throughout northwest parks. One team will be stationed for the summer at Olympic National Park, while the other will be based at North Cascades. A primary focus of the Olympic-based team will be removal of reed canary grass at Lake Ozette.



Park ranger removes Scots broom near Lake Crescent.
Illustration by Cory Ench.

Rockwork Focus of Trail Chief's Trip to Scotland

Trails Foreman Steve Griswold recently returned from a four-week long trip to Great Britain to visit and study both modern and historic dry-stone masonry techniques. Dry stone masonry is the ancient art of building walls, fences and larger structures from rocks, without the use of mortar. Griswold was able to see first-hand the durability of this type of rockwork, which gains its strength from the stonemason's skill in fitting the rocks together.

Many of the sites Griswold visited date back to the Iron and Bronze Age and earlier, including the oldest house in Europe — a dry masonry house built 5,500 year ago, and several prehistoric dry-laid stone towers, some of them over 40 feet tall. He was also able to study a variety of more modern structures, including fences and walls in southern Scotland. These are similar to much of the dry-stone work found in U.S. national parks, which were built by Scottish immigrants skilled in dry-stone masonry.

Griswold's trip was funded in part, by a \$2,400 employee development grant from the National Park Foundation. Griswold has taught several courses on dry stone masonry for National Park Service employees, and serves as a consultant on the subject for parks across the country. His goal is to preserve and add to the existing examples of dry-stone masonry within the national park system by perpetuating the skills and techniques of this ancient art.

Public Offers Ideas on Olympic's Future

Over 200 people participated in the first round of public meetings about the park's General Management Plan (GMP). The meetings – eight in all – were aimed at “scoping” or gathering initial input towards the plan. Written scoping comments were accepted through October 19.

The next step in the process will be development of a reasonable range of alternative future conditions and management options for the park. Public workshops will be held early next year; additional written input will be invited as well.

People interested in receiving periodic GMP newsletters, or providing input should send their names and addresses via e-mail to OLYM_GMP@nps.gov or by mail to the Superintendent, Olympic National Park, 600 East Park Avenue, Port Angeles, WA 98362.

The GMP will define an overall vision for the future of the park and will guide management for the next 15 to 20 years. An environmental impact statement, analyzing potential impacts of alternative management strategies, will also be prepared.



The General Management Plan will help determine the character of Olympic National Park for her children.



Native plants like salal will be added this fall.

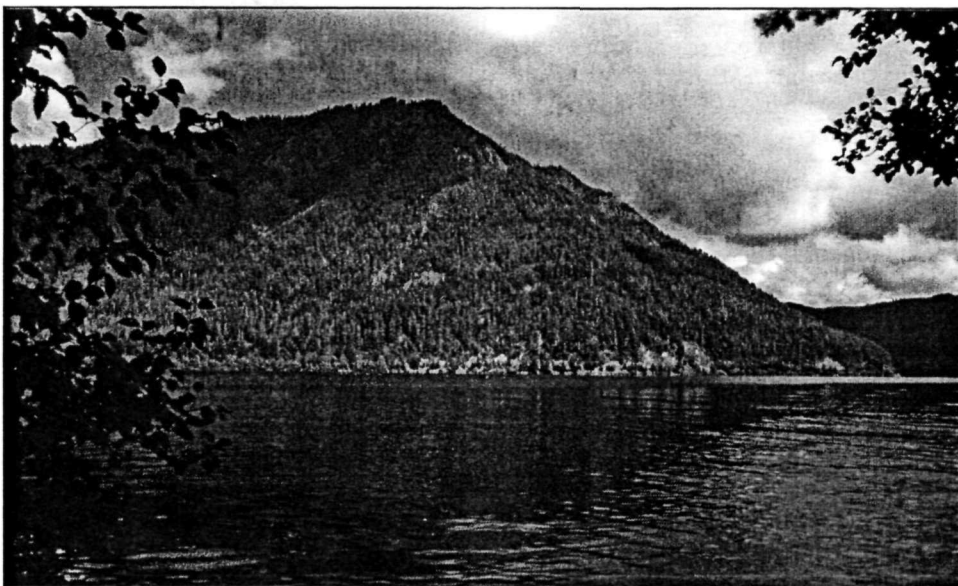
Improvements at East Beach

Thanks to an \$8,000 grant from the Public Land Corps (PLC), Lake Crescent's East Beach has a new and improved look. A retaining wall, built by the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC), has put an end to the long-standing erosion problem above the beach. Stairs and a wheelchair accessible ramp built into the three-foot high wall provide easier access for all visitors.

New barrier logs around the edge of the parking area will help prevent parking lot “sprawl” and provide a more pleasing appearance.

Volunteers are working this fall to put the finishing touches on the project, by planting native trees, shrubs and vines along the top of the wall. Volunteers and park staff will be at work again this coming spring to remove logs and other debris from the beach. Wheelchair-accessible panels are also planned, with the goal of allowing people in wheelchairs to cross the sandy beach and reach the lake.

The PLC grant program is a system-wide program of the National Park Service, and is funded through national park fee revenues from across the country. Park fee revenue also funded the new accessible restroom that was installed next to the parking area last summer.



Pyramid Mountain and Lake Crescent



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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News Briefs

“Friends” Group Forming

In early August, just under 50 people participated in a meeting designed to explore the possibility of a “Friends of Olympic National Park” group. Local TV news producer Dennis Bragg facilitated the meeting, gathering a wide variety of ideas and suggestions towards the potential role and focus of such a group. Considerable enthusiasm and support for a friends group was expressed, and about a dozen people volunteered to help develop a mission statement and by-laws. Interested in learning more? Please contact the park at 360-565-3005.

Visitor Information Upgraded

Long appreciated by visitors for the wealth of information they provide, Olympic’s informational leaflets have

been completely updated with new information and have been re-designed to be more easily read and visually attractive. The one-page flyers are available at visitor centers, ranger stations or by calling the Olympic National Park Visitor Center at 360-565-3132, and cover a variety of topics, including popular day hikes, a park overview, and site-specific information on popular park destinations such as Hurricane Ridge and the Sol Duc Valley.

Repairs Completed and Progressing

Park maintenance crews are busy on a number of projects around the park. The old log-stringer bridge over Finley Creek on the Quinault North Shore Road was recently replaced with a sectional steel bridge. The Ozette area’s Cold Creek bridge, another aging log-supported bridge is also being replaced

by a new steel bridge and is slated to be complete by the end of this year. In the park’s backcountry, the High Dose and No Lunch bridges have been fabricated and are scheduled to be flown to their locations this fall. Both should be open for next summer’s hiking season. Initial engineering work has begun for the new Enchanted Valley bridge.

Third Annual *Perspectives* Series Announced

The schedule for this season’s *Perspectives* series has been announced and will begin at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center on Tuesday, November 13. Set for 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month from November through April, the series will explore the diversity of Olympic National Park and the surrounding area. For more information, please call the park at 360-565-3138.