

# *Voice of the Wild Olympics*

Vol. 3, No. 1 (May 1995)

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## **Park Service's Preferred Alternative: Remove the Non-Native Goats**

In March, Olympic National Park released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Mountain Goat Management (DEIS). Culminating more than fifteen years of research into the damage non-native goats are inflicting on fragile alpine plant communities, the plan proposes to solve the long-standing problem by removing the goats. The report demonstrates that non-native goats (which were introduced by hunting interests in the 1920's) are doing significant damage to alpine and sub-alpine plant communities. Wallowing, trampling, and grazing by introduced goats is changing the ecology of the Olympic high country. By preferring certain plant species over others, goats disrupt stable plant communities and encourage the growth and of disturbance-related species. Among the plants impacted are a number of endemic species - plants that occur nowhere else in the world - including the Olympic Mountain milkvetch, a candidate for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The preferred alternative outlined in the DEIS (Alternative 1) is to remove the destructive goats by aerial shooting by Park personnel. Other options considered were no action (Alternative 2) and elimination by a combination of live-capture and shooting (Alternative 3).

OPA and a number of other conservation organizations believe that the preferred action is the only cost-effective, safe, and thorough solution to this ongoing problem. To date the Park Service has invested countless dollars and personnel hours experimenting with live-capture techniques. It has proven costly, ineffective, and dangerous to park personnel. To prolong the experiment using "non-NPS agencies and organizations" as specified in Alternative 3, seems extremely unwise.

Those favoring no action (Alternative 2) need only turn to adjacent alpine areas in Olympic National Forest to observe the results; bureaucratic foot-dragging has allowed exotic goats to continue unchecked with their destruction of sensitive alpine meadows in National Forest wilderness.

The Park Service is now seeking public input on this DEIS. Everyone wishing to preserve the ecological integrity of Olympic National Park should write the Park Service. Urge the superintendent to adopt Alternative 1 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is due out later this year. Sport hunting interests and vocal animal rights activists will be pressuring the Park Service to do otherwise.

Copies of the DEIS as well as the excellent monograph, *Mount Goats in Olympic National Park: Biology and*

*Management of an Introduced Species* which presents the scientific basis for the DEIS) are available by contacting the Park. Also, a limited number of OPA's briefing paper on the mountain goat issue are available by writing OPA, 13245 40th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125.

The final EIS is expected to be issued in November, 1995.

The father of the modern conservation movement, Aldo Leopold, said it best: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

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### **Position of Olympic Park Associates on the Mountain Goat Management Draft EIS**

*(Excerpts from the statement presented by President Polly Dyer at Olympic National Park's DEIS hearing, Federal Building, Seattle, 3 May 1995.)*

Some twenty-eight years ago members of Olympic Park Associates and the Klahane Club, who were frequent visitors in the Park, over the course of many years, were the first to observe and bring to the attention of the National Park Service the extreme damage to endemic Olympic plants and fragile alpine soils being caused by the expanded numbers of the non-native mountain goats.

Olympic Park Associates supported Olympic National Park's subsequent years of research and its laudable efforts to remove these exotic goats by trapping and helicopter transport. We concurred with having state game and wildlife agencies remove them to areas in the Cascades and other states where mountain goats are or were indigenous and there was sufficient habitat for them, together with the mountain goats who originated there.

The research, analyses, and conclusions in the Draft EIS and the scientific monograph leave no viable alternative to the use of lethal means.

Olympic Park Associates endorses the Preferred Alternative to eliminate the exotic mountain goats from Olympic National Park. This should be done by national park personnel and not by members of the public.

We would prefer that all of the exotic mountain goats on the Olympic Peninsula be removed. Otherwise, we foresee the need for continued vigilance between Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest. It is essential to assure the biological integrity of Olympic National Park through the millennia. (We remind you that there was a Congressional directive, I believe in 1988, for ONP to assess the impacts on the Park from activities outside the Park boundaries).

Lethal removal of the exotic mountain goats is essential to provide that Olympic National Park can "conserve [not only] the scenery" but "the natural...objects and wildlife therein...by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (National Park Act of 1969). We point out that "future generations" includes indigenous wildlife and plants in Olympic National Park, not non-indigenous.

It extends, for example, to those marmots, whose habitat is lessened by the competition from the exotic mountain goat population. They have a natural right to not have their homes and plant food sources gradually destroyed by the alien invaders brought by man. They have a legal right to continue unmolested by those aliens in the Olympics.

Paraphrasing Senator James Buckley (NY, 1979), we have "a moral responsibility for the integrity of the natural world".

So, thank you, Olympic National Park, for your research and analyses... We strongly recommend the Preferred Alternative as the only way to assure the restoration of the Olympic National Park ecosystem so that it can

evolve naturally through the eons -- for itself, for its indigenous creatures and plants (microscopic to large), for its souls and rocks, for its streams and lakes, for its air.

Polly Dyer, President, OPA

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## **OPA Supports Removal of Non-Native Goats from Olympic National Park Why?**

**The Law:** The Organic Act of 1916 states that the role of the National Park Service is to conserve these parklands: "...in such manner as by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." ...[T]he Endangered Species Act of 1974 mandates us "to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved."

**The Park as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site:** The Olympic Peninsula is an island ecosystem. Isolated by glacier ice through much of the Pleistocene Epoch, it served as a *refugium* for plant species and communities that were displaced elsewhere throughout the Northwest. As a result, numerous rare, endemic (occurring nowhere else) and disjunct (far removed from their normal range) plant species...developed in the absence of any large rocky outcrop herbivores -- including mountain goats -- until this century.

**Goats are not native to Olympics:** Before 1925, no reliable reports of goats on the Olympic Peninsula can be found in any archaeological evidence, native American historical references, or records of sixteen exploratory expeditions between 1792 and 1921. In the 1920s local sportsmen imported seven goats, which by 1983 had become 1,175.

**Damage to alpine ecosystem:** The Draft EIS concludes that mountain goats have done considerable damage by trampling, grazing, and creating wallows in fragile alpine areas. This puts 33 known rare and/or endangered plant species at risk... Even small numbers of mountain goats have a detrimental effect...

**Animal species depend on alpine plants:** [The] alteration of plant communities, whether by outright destruction...or by compositional change, affects animals that occupy these areas. The endemic Olympic marmot appears to have been displaced by mountain goats... Diminished plant cover...reduces necessary nutrients for a host of insects and birds.

**Unfortunately, no alternative:** Since 1981, park scientists and outside experts have conducted experiments using no less than 10 separate field techniques [including rope snares and traps, drop nets, manual capture, net guns, tranquilizer darts, eight surgical sterilization methods, and chemical contraception] in an effort to determine an appropriate non-lethal procedure to eliminate mountain goats from Olympic National Park. The conclusion of [a team of nine noted specialists in non-lethal technologies]: "...lethal shooting appears to be the only feasible option for use in eliminating mountain goats in Olympic National Park." (Fayer-Hosken, Garrott, Jessup, Kirkpatrick, Warren, 1992).

**Other conservation groups** supporting removal of the non-native goats include Friends of the Earth, The Mountaineers, National Parks & Conservation Association, Pilchuck Audubon Society, Seattle Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Washington Native Plant Society, Washington Wilderness Coalition, The Wilderness Society, and Wilderness Watch - The Washington Task Force.

*Text on this page is primarily excerpts from **Analysis of the Mountain Goat Issue in Olympic National Park**, prepared by and available from Olympic Park Associates, 13245 40th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125.*

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## **An Open Letter to David Morris, Superintendent of Olympic National Park**

January 2, 1995

Dear Superintendent Morris:

The Executive Committee of Olympic Park Associates wishes to thank you for the time you devoted on December 19, 1994, to this committee at park headquarters to review mutual interests about Olympic National Park. We felt that we were able to share with you our current interests such as Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration, draft EIS on non-native goats, development of a Lake Crescent plan, Shi Shi Beach mining, wilderness management plan, and other matters. You were able to relate the direction, policies, and philosophy that you see with your stewardship of Olympic National Park. All in all, it was a very fruitful meeting.

You pointed out to us that while you were superintendent at Crater Lake National Park, you had formed a group called Friends of Crater Lake to assist the national park in its endeavors. You then asked what was the purpose of our group. Our answer off the cuff may have been insufficient. Possibly this letter will assist you to discern our organization better.

Olympic Park Associates throughout its history considers that it has been the best "friend" Olympic National Park has had. We have not always been the best friend to individual park management, for when we find activity straying from national park principle and purposes for which this park was established, OPA may be in "active disagreement."

In other words, Olympic Park Associates is what may be considered a "purist" organization. We are purists in the sense that we take a very strict interpretation of the National Park Service's Enabling Act. "The fundamental purpose" as you well know of the parks being defined in that bill was "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of future generations."

When Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes came to the dedication of Olympic National Park, he emphasized that this was to be a wilderness national park. The banner headline the next day in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* read, "KEEP OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK A WILDERNESS ICKES URGES IN TALK HERE." Ickes unsuccessfully sought an additional bill or wilderness bill so "...it will be possible to protect the great wilderness of the newly established Olympic National Park from unwise road construction, and from hotels which might better be operated in nearby local communities." It may be said that through the years, the members of the board of trustees of Olympic Park Associates have considered themselves to be the descendants of Ickes and his philosophy. We state our purpose on our letterhead as "Founded in 1948 to preserve the integrity and wilderness of Olympic National Park." In short, we take a critical view of development plans and roads within the park.

Yes, we do support Olympic National Park management at least 90 percent of the time, but when the park fails to live up to its own basic philosophy, we are not averse to voicing our opposition. Our president, Polly Dyer, spoke at our meeting with you about why Olympic Park Associates was formed. In 1948, there was a House Interior hearing in Port Angeles chaired by Representative Henry Jackson. The local pressure was on to eliminate the rain forests of the Bogachiel and Queets corridor from the park. Unfortunately, the National Park Service itself was supportive of these efforts. The conservationists who showed up at the hearing to fight the locals, including forest industry efforts, felt it was essential to organize opposition to such proceedings; and so Olympic Park Associates was born.

Unfortunately, this was a national park forced on the National Park Service. From the director on down, Park Service personnel were quietly undermining all efforts to create this as a national park. You need to read Carsten Lien's book, *Olympic Battleground: the Power Politics of limber Preservation*, to discover this truth. What he documents is not a pleasant history for the National Park Service.

When Governor Langlie, at the urging of the forest industry, decided to set up a committee to make

recommendations for eliminating rain forest areas from the park, conservationists forced their way onto the committee. Although the conservationists were a minority on this committee, an analysis prepared for the minority by John Osseward, secretary of OPA, so conclusively rebutted the forest industry's shortage demands that the industry had no real comeback. In addition, so many letters organized by the conservationists poured into the Governor's office that he quietly dropped all demands for park land removal.

Another major battle that occurred with conservationists and Olympic National Park was in the 1950's when Superintendent Fred Overly initiated a policy to log Olympic National Park. Admittedly, PA was not as observant as we should have been and before we belatedly caught up with what was taking place approximately 100,000,000 board feet were removed from Olympic National Park. In that instance, Olympic Park Associates was involved in alerting the major national organizations to pressure the Park Service to desist. Campaign headquarters for presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson in 1956 was dying to release the story, but we and the other conservationists felt the Democrats had insufficient facts. Finally, Director Conrad Wirth met with us and stated, "We took a calculated risk. There will be no more salvage logging in Olympic National Park."

When Fred Overly later headed up the regional Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in the Interior Department, he recommended eliminating a total of 58,000 acres from the park. Olympic Park Associates started a national campaign to stop this and succeeded. Overly in that same position managed to organize a Department of Interior and Park Service committee to make recommendations for the park. Olympic Park Associates was able to nip a wilderness disaster in the bud before the bureaucrats could make a formal proposal to place a road down the length of what is now the wilderness beach of the Olympic Coastal Strip.

At one time or another there have been proposals to build a road through Olympic National Park. We fought these proposals in order to maintain the integrity of the park and its wilderness.

There have been a number of positive things initiated by Olympic Park Associates that have been supported by Olympic National Park. Without the initial efforts of our organization, Point of the Arches and Lake Ozette would not be part of the park today. Without the tremendous effort of President Polly Dyer, a sizable reduction in the park would have taken place on the north shore of Lake Quinault. The idea for the restoration of the Elwha ecosystem came from one of our present board members. When the Department of Transportation wanted to rebuild the Sol Duc road creating a wide swath and eliminating far more trees than necessary, it was Olympic Park Associates who battled to have this made a road with a minimum number of tree removals. With the re-planning, this forested road benefits park visitor enjoyment.

What this adds up to is that Olympic Park Associates does indeed believe that it is the best possible friend Olympic National Park could have. When it comes to the principles and philosophy stated by the National Park Service, you will find that Olympic Park Associates will provide backing. That has been our history, and we are certain that this will continue to be our story for decades to come.

We look forward to working with you for the best interests of Olympic National Park.

Sincerely yours,

Philip H. Zalesky Secretary, OPA

### **Superintendent Morris Responds to OPA's Introductory Letter**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Olympic National Park

January 11, 1995

Mr. Philip H. Zalesky, Secretary  
Olympic Park Associates

Dear Phil:

Many thanks for your informative letter of January 2. I too enjoyed the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest with the Executive Committee. I am very comfortable with your definition of "friends", i.e., a best friend of the park, but not always supportive when you perceive activities that deviate from national park principle and purpose. In my view, the type and caliber of people necessary to develop and maintain a vital "friends" group should not be expected to rubber stamp something they cannot support. I also strongly feel that regular communication between our staff and the Olympic Park Associates will go a long way to minimizing potential areas of disagreement.

Your synopsis of the background of the Associates and some of the issues in which you have been involved was most helpful. I look forward to a productive and positive relationship.

Sincerely,  
David K. Morris  
Superintendent

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### **David K. Morris, New Superintendent**

David K. Morris, the new Superintendent of Olympic National Park, brings with him a strong background of education, experience, and skills that may be particularly appropriate to ONP at this time in its history.

Morris arrived as storm clouds were building around the release of the NPS Draft EIS on non-native goats, in which the preferred alternative would eliminate the goats from the park. With a B.S. in wildlife management, Morris must certainly bring with him a sound grasp of the scientific basis for this regrettable but necessary measure. Scientific conviction will be needed to steer this ecosystem-sensitive decision all the way to its goal.

Morris is no stranger to the skills needed to pilot Olympic National Park through the present squall. He has served at the helm of Crater Lake National Park and Oregon Caves National Monument, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and as assistant superintendent for the southeast Utah Group in Moan, Utah. Presumably he steered a fairly straight course: he was presented with the Department of Interior's Superior Service Award in 1991.

More to the point, Morris has reason to be familiar with the history damage by of non-native species in the national parks, and of the Park Service's record favoring their removal. (*The goats in Olympic National Park are by no means an isolated example. The list is long: Eastern brook trout in Yellowstone feral goats and eucalyptus trees in Maui's Haleakala Park, European wild boars in the Great Smokies, bison in Wrangell-St. Elias in Alaska, burros in Grand Canyon and in Bandelier N.M., feral horses in Ozark N. Scenic Riverway, and others.*) Morris has the advantage of previous experience with exotic species. His first NPS assignment was as park ranger and biologist in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, where decisions were being made to eliminate non-Aniakchak National Monument and native goats and pigs. So he is no novice about either the theory or the practicalities of navigating the stormy discourse surrounding the presence of any alien species in a national park.

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### **Reaching Home: Pacific Salmon, Pacific People**

Photographs and captions by Natalie Fobes, essays by Tom Jay and Brad Matsen. Alaska Northwest Books, 1994. \$37.95

*Reviewed by Phil Zalesky*

This is both a book of beauty and a book of disaster. The beauty of the book comes from Natalie Fobes's photography. One can understand why Fobes was once nominated for a Pulitzer prize in photography, for the quality and diversity of the photography cannot be overemphasized. Not only is the salmon pictured in its habitat and in its phases with stunning vividness, but the its spell is captured in pictures such as those depicting the rites of the first fish ceremonies. The pictures range from around the Pacific Rim: Northwest United States, British Columbia, Alaska, Siberia, Japan.

The disaster comes from reading what the authors say about endangerment of species of salmon. Prehistoric salmon date back in time to fossil salmon of the Eocene period\_50 million years ago. Miocene sabertooth salmon fossils show species 10 feet long and 500 pounds. Modern salmon first occur in the Pleistocene period, 2 million years ago. It is obvious that salmon in the north Pacific region colonized our streams once again after the great period of glaciation that stretched back 18,000 years. As the authors point out, the salmon and the human culture co-evolved during the postglacial bareness.

The authors spell out the disaster poignantly. "In 50 years we will surely remember as prideful our attempts to mend the shredded eco-fabric of a watershed like the Columbia River. Hatchery midwifery, farms, and fingerlings barged around dams have only postponed the disastrous consequences of our collision with the Pacific salmon. We reckoned, incorrectly, that we could disturb elegant cosmic rhythms and make them right with our brain and muscle. We were wrong. Salmon are not vegetables with eyes."

In the midst of this eco-collision with the salmon, Olympic National Park has become a major player. In fact this book, *Reaching Home*, makes our efforts to remove the Elwha River dams highly credible. Before the dams, the king salmon of the Elwha evolved to enormous size. Why? The authors say that salmon 6 feet long and 100 pounds needed to be "powerful enough to excavate spawning beds (reads) below scour depth of this steep and highly energized river."

Today there are no 100 pound salmon returning to the

Elwha River. In fact, there may be no wild salmon returning even in the five miles still free flowing. At one time all five species of wild salmon\_plus steelhead trout, sea-run cutthroat, sea-run Dolly Varden, and sturgeon -- spawned in the Elwha River. Today, salmon are being perpetuated in salmon rearing ponds, which by the accounts of the authors weakens the individual fish for its rhythmic journey.

Eighty-three years ago Elwha Dam was constructed blocking access to 70 miles of pristine stream and tributary habitat. In the late 1920's Glines Dam was also built. What has been the impact of the dams? Obviously, all but five miles of spawning habitat is gone. The authors also remind us, "Water warmed by a fall drought in 1987 aggravated a once rare disease, dermocystidium, causing the deaths of hundreds of chinook salmon on the Elwha River.... In a natural river, even in a drought water is cooled by a constant flow from mountains and wetlands. The Elwha has two dams that impede the flow of cool water, warming it."

In 1992 Congress passed the "Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act." Unfortunately, the funds to remove the dams were not included. With the political climate of 1995, the possibility of appropriation of funds becomes diminished. Olympic Park Associates and other conservation groups still remain hopeful, however.

For restoration of salmon the authors have little hope of the federal government doing the job. "Even today, as the somber notes of acute ecosystem crisis are sounding in the Sacramento, Columbia, Fraser, and dozens of watersheds, politicians support destructive logging and mining practices...assuring us that they will not harm their healthy salmon runs.... Extinction for profit is a dreadful by-product of our civilization."

The debate is now centered on Congress not only for the removal of the Elwha dams and restoration of what is already prime spawning habitat waiting to be used, but also for salmon species everywhere in the U. S. The Washington delegation seems determined to re-write the Endangered Species Act, and if that act falls, the hopes for salmon restoration go with it. Senator Slade Gorton questions whether saving salmon from extinction is worth \$160 million over the next five years. He has been quoted as saying, "There is a cost beyond which you just have to say very regrettably we have to let species or subspecies go extinct."

The photographer and authors of *Reaching Home* clang the warning bell. The crisis is now. Others toll the warning as well. The State of the World 1995, A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society, cries out that all 17 oceanic fisheries are now being fished at or beyond capacity. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, "...the Decline in seafood supply per person of the last few years will continue indefinitely." The Worldwatch Institute goes on to say, "As global demand for seafood overruns the sustainable yield of fisheries or as pollution destroys their productivity, for instance, fisheries collapse raising seafood prices, eliminating jobs, and shrinking the economy. The economic wreckage left in the wake of these collapses can be seen around the world."

For now it will be the responsibility of Olympic Park Associates to think globally, but to act locally. *Reaching Home* reminds us how badly we need the restorative effects of the Elwha dam removals. The book reminds us, too, of the responsibility of Olympic Park Associates and other conservation groups to accelerate our efforts to return salmon to Olympic National Park.

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### **Olympic Park Institute's Field Seminars**

From May through October, Olympic Park Institute offers a series of wonderful weekend seminars on the natural and cultural treasures of the Olympic Peninsula. These small, informal courses feature guided hikes and hands-on activities, and give the general public the chance to study nature in the company of local instructors who are world-class authorities in their fields.

What a treat to learn about alpine ecology with Ola Edwards, watch butterflies with Robert Pyle, explore tide pools with Eugene Kozloff, practice photography with Natalie Fobes, write poetry with Tim McNulty ... to name only a few!

Nearly sixty seminars are offered in five categories. Here is a sampler of a few of the many courses offered:

**Earth and life sciences:** Marine Mammals of Puget Sound, Birds of the Olympic Peninsula, Mountain Flowers and High Country Ecology, Butterflies of the Olympic Peninsula, The Glacial Legacy, Geology of Olympic National Park.

**Pacific Northwest culture and history:** Traditional Plant Uses, NW Coast Indian Prehistory and Contemporary Lives, Alpine Dwellers to Homesteaders: Cultural History of ONP, Ethnobotany, Wild Olympic Salmon: Restoring the Balance.

**Creative arts:** Asian Landscape Painting, Storytelling, Deawing and Watercolor, The Joy of Listening, Colored Pencil Drawing. Also note poetry course under backcountry/ backpacking.

**Backcountry and backpacking:** Poetry in the Wild (taught by OPA Board member Tim McNulty), Backpacking for Women, Fire and Ice: Trailside Geology of Anderson Pass, Sol Duc Natural History Backpack, plus several backpacking trips forages 11-14.

**Family and youth programs:** Nature Photography, Arts in the Wild, Puppets and Tales, Critters and Creatures.

Fees range from Fees range from about \$35 to about \$275, and some include optional overnight accommodations.

Olympic Park Institute is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire environmental stewardship through education.

For a catalogue, write Olympic Park Institute, 111 Barnes Point Road, Port Angeles, WA 98363, or call 360-928-3720.

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