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Clinton Vows to Protect 40 Million Acres of National Forest Roadless Lands

by Tim McNulty

On October 13, President Clinton promised to protect 40 million of the 60 million acres of National Forest roadless areas remaining in the U.S. One of three areas nationwide singled out for protection in the President's announcement was South Quinault Ridge. This 9,800-acre roadless area is a spectacular blanket of old growth and temperate rain forest that forms a stunning backdrop to Lake Quinault.

OPA has lobbied intensely for wilderness protection for South Quinault Ridge since 1974. A narrow, overgrown road and two 30-year-old clearcuts are all that separate it from the larger Colonel Bob Wilderness Area to the east. We have argued that the road should be closed and the area protected as a single unit, the largest swath of intact rain forest left in Olympic National Forest.

Clinton's plan is still unformed, but road-building, logging, and mining presumably would be prohibited. The lands would not be designated as Wilderness by Congress, but would be protected by administration directive. The Forest Service estimates that timber harvests will decline nationally by only about 28 million board feet (of an average 4 billion annual cut, which is itself less than 5 per cent of the annual U.S. lumber and fiber demand).

Public hearings are being scheduled, and regulations should be developed by the Forest Service before the end of next year. "We're going to have a big fight on this for about a year." Clinton said. "In the end, we're going to protect all this before it's too late."

Public hearings will help determine which of the roadless lands on Olympic National Forest and else where will be

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Next OPA Board Meeting
Jan. 26, 6p.m.

Olympic Coast Clean-Up: April 2000

Spend A Weekend at the Beach!

Celebrate Earth Day's 30th anniversary!

You are invited to join other volunteers for an April weekend and be part of the first-ever major community effort to clean up Olympic Coast beaches.

The Olympic Coast Clean-Up will collect and remove marine debris from Peninsula shores, preserving the natural beauty of Washington's wilderness beaches. The effort is being sponsored by a partnership of citizen volunteers, conservation groups, businesses, and government agencies.

Teams will be formed to clean up

protected. Along with South Quinault Ridge, there are extensive areas in the middle Dungeness including Three O'Clock Ridge, Dirty Face Ridge, and the north and east slopes of Mount Townsend. In the highly visited east Olympics, Jupiter Ridge, Lena Lake, and the upper Hamma Hamma watershed remain unprotected, as well as the spectacular valley of the South Fork Skokomish River. On the west side, Moonlight Dome and Rugged Ridge await protection.

These will vie with other roadless lands in Washington worthy of protection, Dark Divide and the Kettle Range among them. Many of the remaining roadless areas in Olympic National Forest already have some protection, either as roadless recreation areas, or as late successional reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan. At present, 37% of the forest, 145,765 acres, is now off-limits to road-building. But only 88,265 acres of that are congressionally protected as Wilderness. The rest can be changed with a new administration and different directives to the Forest Service. Clinton's plan would make changes in roadless status somewhat more difficult to accomplish.

It is important to let the Forest Service know that we want full protection for critical roadless areas in Olympic. Write Forest Supervisor Dale Hom (address below); tell him to protect key roadless lands remaining in Olympic National Forest, and ask to be placed on mailing lists for announcements and scheduled public hearings on roadless area protection. Be sure to send copies of your letters to Senators Gorton and Murray and your congressperson.

Nationally, the comment period on Clinton's proposed roadless area policy ends December 22. Letters should also be sent to: USDA Forest Service-CAET, Attn: Roadless Areas NOI, P.O. Box 221090, Salt Lake City, UT 84122. Request that the Forest Service:

1. include all national forests in the process, including the Tongass in Alaska;
2. eliminate all logging, grazing, mining, and off-road vehicles from selected areas, and;
3. protect all roadless areas of 1,000 acres and larger until final decisions are made.

Let's do all we can to help Clinton keep this last, grand presidential promise.

Express your support for protection of roadless areas by:

- Attending a public hearing.

designated zones from Shi Shi Beach to South Kalaloch Beach. Each zone will be approximately 1/2 to 1 mile in length. Access to the beaches will be from the usual locations, respecting the wilderness character of the beaches and Olympic National Park.

Volunteers will register at field operation centers at Mora, Ozette, Oil City, and Kalaloch, where they will receive information, tools, and guidance.

Volunteers will also record descriptions of the debris collected as well as bird and mammal information. These data will provide a "snapshot" record of the coast, and will be analysed by naturalists and marine scientists at Olympic National Park, the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, and the University of Washington.

Sign up NOW!

Send the following information to:

Jan Klippert, Project
coordinator
14036 Meridian N
Seattle, WA 98133
phone 206-365-2689,
e-mail jpklippert@aol.com

Name and address:

Best phone number and e-mail address:

I would like to help collect beach debris.____

I will organize a team._____

I would like to work with the host volunteers at one of the field operation sites _____ Preference? _____

I would also like to help later to remove debris from cache sites._____

An Olympic National Park ranger can call me to help._____

I am interested in knowing more about volunteering with Olympic National

- Writing letters to:

Park programs. _____

Forest Supervisor Dale Hom
Olympic Nat. Forest
1835 Black Lake Blvd.
Olympia, WA 98512

The Honorable (your congressman)
US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable (Patty Murray, Slade
Gorton)
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510


Troublesome Elwha Bear Gets Eleventh Hour Reprieve

by *Tim McNulty*

The summer of 1999 was a record for wildlife news. Cougars made cameo appearances throughout the Olympic Peninsula, often stalking pets, sometimes people. A small dog was snatched on Little River Road near the Elwha, another was roughed up at Sol Duc Campground. Park Managers reminded hikers and campers what to do if en countering a cougar (look large, maintain eye contact, back away slowly). Some reports suggest that the big cats find this behavior curious; it might even distract them from a more nefarious errand.

But front-page headlines were reserved for the saga of "Devil bear".

Readers of the *Voice* will recall an earlier report, "Bears Prompt Closure of Portions of Elwha Trail" ([Summer, 1999](#)). Some Elwha bears were getting into mischief. They had torn open backpacks and snagged food bags from tree limbs. One tried to enter, uninvited, an occupied tent. As a result, a seven-mile stretch of the Elwha trail, from Lillian Camp to Elkhorn, was wisely closed to camping.

The final straw came this summer when a particularly troublesome bear routed a party of English campers at Elkhorn and finished their picnic for them while they watched, terrified, from nearby trees. The bear was a known repeat offender. It had gained notoriety for similar antics, and for shaking off two radio collars. The local press picked up on the unfortunate name "Devil Bear," dropped by a frustrated ranger. 

Following the English incident park managers decided that the bear had to be killed, and rangers were dispatched to do the job. They camped at Elkhorn for weeks but the bear eluded them. Finally, in Mid-September with the summer hiking season behind, the bear was given clemency. "The sentence has been lifted," Superintendent David Morris told the *Peninsula Daily News*. "If he behaves himself, the pressure's off."

But another aspect of the story came vividly to light a few days earlier. In a letter to the *Daily News*, Joanna Wigginton of Modesto, California, took issue with the name, "Devil Bear." She noted that none of the seven rangers, a packer, or several trail crew members she spoke with while hiking the Elwha used the

name Devil Bear, or wanted to see the animal killed. She didn't see the bear. What she did encounter, however, was campers who left so much trash that the next party filled a good sized bag with it, including hot dogs and marshmallows that were strewn across the meadow. "I think it was quite obvious," she wrote, "that if there was any devil around, we were looking at it in the mirror."

Joanna commended the rangers for their patience and efforts and educating campers about backcountry etiquette. But rangers cannot be all places at once. In Yellowstone this summer, our family's backpacking trip into grizzly habitat was preceded by a thorough session in bear-country etiquette before we received our permit. Campground rules forbid leaving anything even scented with food out on picnic tables, and rangers and camp-tenders educated with born-again fervor. Perhaps Olympic could do more up front to educate campers on how to avoid making wilderness nuisances of themselves and causing good bears to go bad. In the meantime, we hope that "Troublesome Bear" keeps a safe distance from junk food pushers in the woods. As Joanna Wigginton put it, "If I were making a decision about this animal, I would remove the dangerous people from the bear's home turf."

Wild Washington Campaigns for Olympic Wilderness Additions

by Jim Scarborough, Wild Washington Campaign

Building upon the many conservation victories the Olympic Mountains over the last century, the Wild Washington Campaign seeks to extend Wilderness designation to the remaining roadless areas of Olympic National Forest. The Campaign is a statewide effort aimed at achieving permanent protection for three million acres of Washington's federal public lands. With specific regard to Olympic National Forest, the Pacific Biodiversity Institute estimates that over 120,000 acres remain potentially eligible for future Wilderness designation.

The majority of Olympic National Forest's roadless areas are contiguous to its previously designated Wilderness Areas and Olympic National Park. For a variety of reasons, these relatively pristine extensions have yet to receive official protection from Congress, despite clearly warranting it. Examples include the rainforest of South Quinault Ridge, the ancient forest of the Upper South Fork Skokomish, lower Lena Lake, and the rainshadow drainage of Sleepy Hollow near Mount Townsend, to name a few.

The Campaign was given a tremendous boost with President Clinton's announcement in October of his intent to protect National Forest roadless areas nationwide. (See [accompanying article](#)) The focus of his proposal entails devising administrative regulations for managing these areas in a manner consistent with their unique natural characteristics. Political opposition is certain to be intense, yet it is hoped that the regulations, once finalized, will essentially ban all new road-building and logging in our roadless areas, including those in Olympic National Forest.



The Wild Washington Campaign views these developments as a giant window of opportunity for advancing the cause of Wilderness designation for those roadless areas that qualify. Administrative revisions such as those proposed by the President, while not providing the ironclad, legal protection of Wilderness designation, should enable such areas to remain intact until Congress can be persuaded to act. In summary, the President has granted Olympic's roadless areas a reprieve, and it is now our job as concerned citizens to strive for permanent, unequivocal protection for them. This is only possible through their actual designation as Wilderness Areas by Congress.

To this end, volunteers have spent much of the past summer exploring these areas firsthand in a process called "ground-truthing," whereby maps are directly compared to on-the-ground reality. Aside from the

obvious benefit of increasing our knowledge of the land, this activity has the added benefit of generating a personal and intimate appreciation of these obscure forest jewels.

The Campaign is an ongoing endeavor that will require the energy and enthusiasm of a multitude of volunteers for success. There are many ways to contribute while having fun along the way. It's no secret that several OPA members were instrumental in the passage of the 1984 Wilderness Act, one of the great accomplishments of recent times. However, whether you're an old veteran or a fresh face in the conservation community, the Campaign needs you.

To get involved in the Wild Washington Campaign, contact:

Jim Scarborough (206-780-2254) e-mail whulj@aol.com -or-
Ezra Eickmeyer (206-633-1992), e-mail ezra@wawild.org

For more information on the wild Washington Campaign, call toll free 1-877-4WILDWA, or visit www.wildwashington.org.

Dam Breaks on Funding for Elwha Removal

by *Tim McNulty*

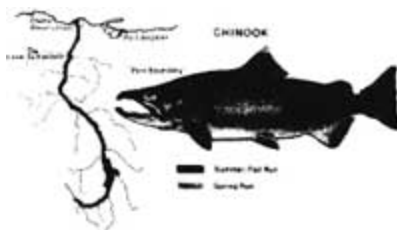
A watershed was reached this fall in the contentious struggle over removing two salmon-blocking dams on the Elwha River. In October, U.S. Senator Slade Gorton, Representative Norm Dicks, and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt reached an agreement on funding the purchase of the dams and engineering for removal of the Elwha Dam, the lower of the two.

For months Senator Gorton had held dam removal hostage for an agreement not to breach any of the dams on the Snake or Columbia rivers in eastern Washington. But this fall, Gorton, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, agreed to drop the stipulation.

With these three key players in agreement, it was agreed that the government will purchase the dams by the end of February 2000. Though Elwha Dam removal was a top environmental priority for the Clinton administration, much of the credit for breaking the deadlock and securing funding goes to Congressman Dicks.

Dicks, the ranking Democrat on the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, led five of his fellow committee members on a tour of Olympic National Park in July. They visited the dam sites with park Superintendent David Morris and river restoration specialist Brian Winter, and enjoyed a clear and glorious day on Hurricane Ridge. For one committee member, Representative Joe Skeen (R-New Mexico), the trip was a homecoming. He recalled being among the school children in Port Angeles in 1937 who welcomed Franklin Roosevelt to the Peninsula on the eve of the creation of the park. According to Dicks, the visit created a lot of enthusiasm for dam removal among the committee members. Echoing their sentiments, he predicted the project would be "one of the greatest restorations in the history of the country."

The deal received a final seal of approval in September when Secretary Bruce Babbitt, National Park Service Director Robert Stanton, and members of the National Park Foundation also visited Olympic. Babbitt assured reporters that money for purchase and engineering for removal would be in this year's budget. "At long last," he told the *Peninsula Daily News*, "this is the beginning of the



end."

The government had already set aside \$29 million to buy the dams. An agreement hammered out in November provided an additional \$22 million for the restoration. About \$5.5 million of that would be siphoned off for a pork-barrel water treatment project for the city of Port Angeles. The rest goes to engineering for removal of the lower dam.

Chinook salmon historic spawning habitat on the Elwha River. From Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Draft Environmental Impact Statement, April 1996.

Senator Gorton remains "a little skeptical" about the success of the restoration according to a spokeswoman from his office, and is still unwilling to fund removal of the upper dam. In a final effort to wrest a pound of environmental flesh for the appropriation, Gorton attached a rider that would circumvent a recent federal court ruling by allowing agencies to log forests without conducting wildlife studies required under the Northwest Forest Plan. Clinton promised a veto, and Gorton was forced to let it drop. "It's total frustration on our part," his spokeswoman said.

Forest Service Road Failures

by Tim McNulty

Last winter's La Niña conditions brought near-record snowpacks to the Olympic high country and played havoc with valley roads and trails. Five major trail bridges were destroyed in the park's backcountry last winter and every road accessing the middle and upper Dungeness country in Olympic National Forest slid or washed out.

Most problematic is FS Road 2860 which accesses the east side of the Dungeness River from Palo Alto Road to East Crossing campground and the river crossing above Gold Creek. Traversing steep, unstable slopes directly above the river, this road has been subject to slides and failures on several occasions in the past. It should never have been built. Past clearcutting on steep slopes above it only compounded problems. The Forest Service has curtailed logging in the area, and old cuts are regrowing. But the road, popular with recreationists, remains a problem. Over the past winter several sections of the road slid, and landslides carried silt and debris to the Dungeness River.

Quilcene District Ranger Ben Kizer is committed to maintaining access to the upper Dungeness River and the popular trailheads to Royal Basin and Home Lake, but he admits that the 2860 road may be to problematic to repair. "This road continues to erode loads of sediment into the river," he said, "and that's a tragedy considering the efforts being made to recover endangered salmon in the Dungeness."

A major cooperative effort is underway to restore endangered Dungeness Chinook salmon, and numerous habitat restoration projects are directed at recovering other threatened salmon runs.

This fall crews opened an alternative road to the upper river and did some erosion control along the 2860 road. La Niña conditions are expected for this winter as well.

Kizer admits the best option for the 2860 road is to decommission it: remove culverts, stabilize unstable slopes, obliterate the road bed, and revegetate the site. But past road closures on the forest have met with vocal opposition. For this one to go through, the Forest Service will need strong support from conservationists.

A decision will probably be made early in 2000.

In the meantime, a short letter to Olympic National Forest Supervisor Dale Hom would help the forest

Service do the right thing. Request that the problematic FS Road 2860 (the East Crossing road) be closed and erosive slopes stabilized.
