

## Olympic National Park's Wilderness Stewardship Plan

You can help influence this important plan.

Comments are due by March 23, 2013

A new plan will guide future decision-making for 95% of Olympic National Park. Right now, the Park is seeking comment on the kinds of issues and concerns the plan should address. And planners want to know your vision for the future of the Olympic Wilderness.

Next summer or fall the Park will release a range of preliminary alternatives outlining different futures for the Olympic Wilderness. They will range from maximizing recreational use to prioritizing protection for the Olympic ecosystem and preserving wilderness character. A draft environmental statement is due in spring of next year; the final plan and EIS will be shortly after that.

This special issue of the *Voice* will familiarize you with the major issues facing the Olympic Wilderness, and help you help the Park Service create the best plan possible.

### Background

Overall, the Park Service has done a good job protecting the Olympic Wilderness. But as the popularity of the park's wilderness increases, so does demand on its irreplaceable wilderness resources. Natural and ecological health, clean water, solitude, natural quiet, an "untrammled" or un-manipulated natural environment, and other aspects of wilderness character are at risk.

Park managers will try to protect these resources while accommodating increasing demands for access, safety, comfort and unfettered enjoyment of wilderness. Possible tradeoffs may include increased administrative helicopter use, unrestricted use of mechanized tools, communications installations, reconstruction of historic structures, increased trail developments to facilitate stock use, expanding minimum group sizes... the list goes on. All these pose a threat to wilderness character and would degrade the experience of wilderness visitors.

### The Wilderness Act

OPA believes strongly in the 1964 Wilderness Act definition of wilderness: "*an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.*" The way to preserve that untrammled sense of wilderness is by diligently protecting the area's wilderness character.

What follows is a short list of points you can make in your letter. Also, there are a number of issues and discussions OPA addressed in its scoping letter to Olympic National Park. You can read the full text of OPA's scoping letter at <http://www.olympicparkassociates.org/>

Remember, the comment deadline is March 23, 2013.

You may submit your comments to the park online at:  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OLYMWildNews1>

You can send your comments in writing to: Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent  
ATTN: Wilderness Stewardship Plan, Olympic National Park 600 E. Park  
Avenue, Port Angeles, WA 98362

You can follow the planning process on ONP's [wilderness planning website](#).

And you can also visit [OPA's website](#) for further information and alerts.

Points you can make in your letter.

- \* Olympic is one of our nation's premiere wilderness parks. Every effort should be made to protect and preserve its wilderness character.
- \* Support the Park's stated purpose of the plan, "to guide the preservation, management, and use of the park's wilderness areas as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964," and its goal, "to restore, protect, and enhance overall wilderness character of the Olympic Wilderness."
- \* In light of human-caused global warming and increasing demands on wilderness, request that Park managers protect and restore Olympics natural ecosystems as an inherent part of its wilderness. That means restoring extirpated species (like wolves), and eliminating non-native species (like introduced mountain goats).
- \* Support the current permit system for wilderness backpackers; campfire restrictions in high country; food storage requirements; and group size limits. All wilderness fees should be used for wilderness stewardship.
- \* Request that the plan regulate stock use in wilderness to protect natural resources and trail infrastructure, and keep commercial services at current levels.
- \* Cultural resources, like Wedding Rocks and archeological sites should be protected in wilderness, but reconstruction of historic shelters, sheds, barns, and cabins is prohibited by the Wilderness Act.

Thanks for your help!