

Options for Olympic National Park's Wilderness Stewardship Plan Announced

Draft Alternatives B and C Provide strongest protection for Olympic Park wildlands

Park planners are making excellent progress on ONP's wilderness stewardship plan and have offered a range of possible alternatives. The plan is heading in a good direction. Your comments will help ensure that the final plan gives strong protection to the Olympic Wilderness and ensures a quality wilderness experience for future visitors to the park.

A draft plan with a preferred alternative and environmental impact statement will be released sometime in 2015.

Deadline for comments on Preliminary Draft Alternatives is May 17, 2014.

In the meantime, the park will hold a series of public information meetings. Dates, times and locations can be found [here](#).

Best Options for the Olympic Wilderness

OPA has reviewed the preliminary draft alternatives. The best options for protecting the spectacular Olympic Wilderness are to be found in Alternatives B and C. Alternative B emphasizes reduction of the human footprint in wilderness while Alternative C emphasizes protection of natural resources and ecological processes. Elements of both should be included in the final plan.

Among the strong measures to be found in alternatives B and C are:

- Trails would be zoned to reflect levels of visitor experience and appropriate levels of maintenance, from Zone 1 (nature trails – high maintenance) to Zone 5 (way trails and climbing routes like the Bailey Range – no maintenance). (Alt. C is stronger on this.)
- Non-native plants and animals would be controlled or eliminated.
- A wolf restoration plan would be developed.
- No new trails would be constructed.
- No new radio or transmission towers would be installed.
- Stock use would be regulated and restricted from fragile alpine areas like High Divide, Skyline Divide, Grand Ridge, Grand Valley and Royal Basin. (Alt. C is stronger on this.)
- Administrative helicopter flights and mechanized tool use would be minimized. (Alt. B is stronger on this.)
- Historic structures would not be reconstructed and would only be maintained following analysis of their impact on wilderness character. When threatened by natural process, natural processes would prevail. (Alt. B is better on this.)

Alternative A is no change from present management, and Alternative D reflects the full plate of visitor services with more trails, facilities, structures, stock use and fewer restrictions on visitor use to protect sensitive environments.

Please share your thoughts with park planners.

Comment on the Preliminary Alternatives here. [Comments are now closed.]

Many other issues are addressed in the Preliminary alternatives. Go to ONP's [wilderness planning website](#) for details.

Look to this website for a more detailed response to the Preliminary draft alternatives, and check out the forthcoming Spring 2014 issue of [*Voice of the Wild Olympics*](#) for a full discussion of the issues.

For additional information on background of the wilderness plan, follow the links below:

[OPA Wilderness Plan scoping alert](#)

OPA Wilderness Plan issue, [*Voice of the Wild Olympics*](#), (Spring 2013)