



Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Scoping Newsletter • Winter 2013



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The Olympic Wilderness was established by Congress on November 16, 1988. This outstanding resource is one of the most diverse wilderness areas in the United States. The Olympic Wilderness is made up of the rugged Olympic Mountains, temperate rainforest valleys, and wild coastline, including beaches, tide pools and coastal rainforest. Olympic is also one of the most popular wilderness destinations in North America, with nearly 40,000 overnight wilderness visitors each year.

Today, you play an important role in protecting this wilderness heritage. We are beginning the development of a Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. This newsletter is intended to provide you with information about the planning effort and to invite you to participate in the planning process. By sharing your ideas and opinions about how the park's wilderness area should be managed, you can help us shape its future.

Thank you for your interest in Olympic National Park. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent
Olympic National Park

You're Invited!

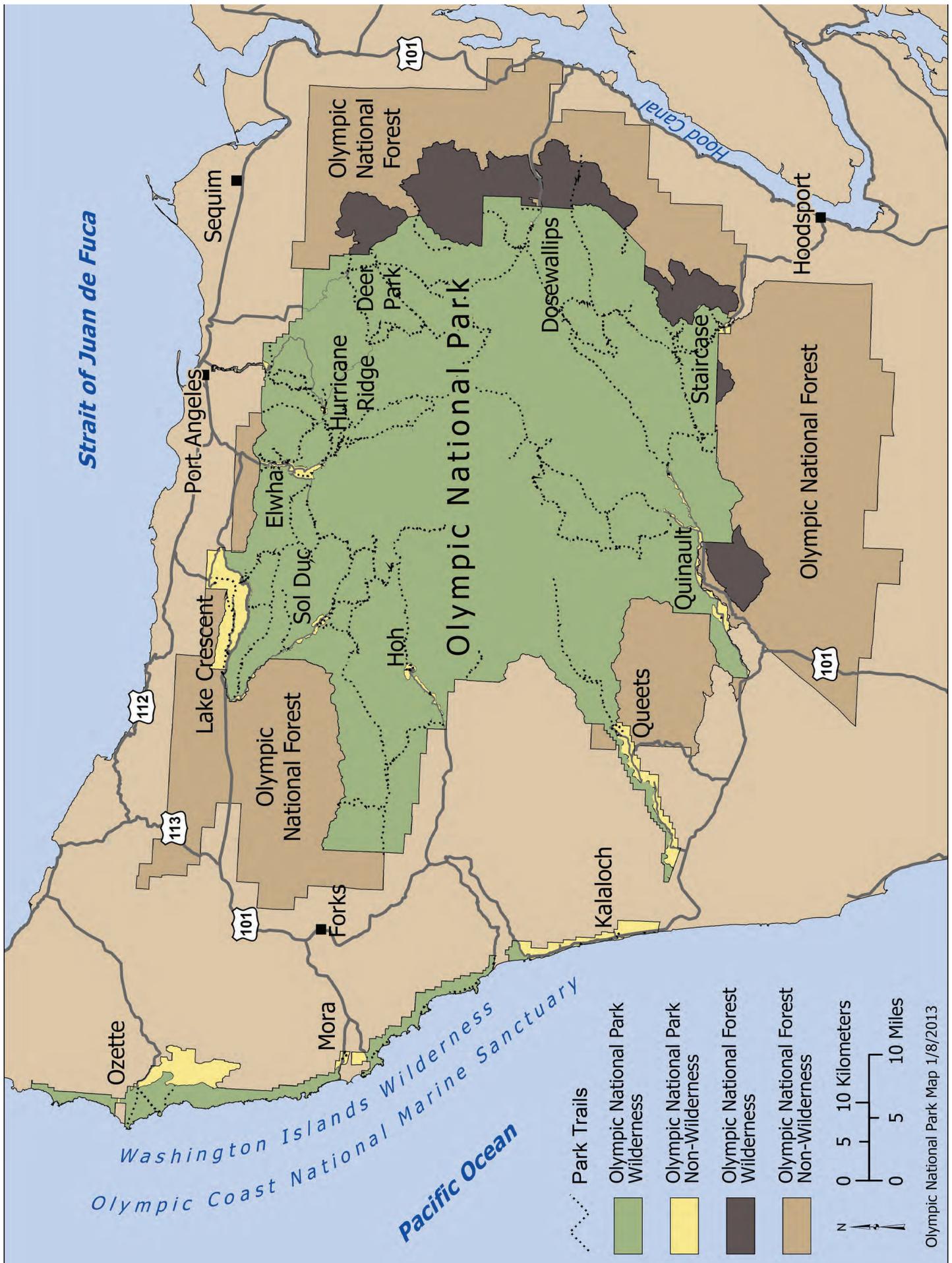
Between late January and the end of spring 2013, we will ask you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future of the Olympic National Park wilderness area. Your input is very important in guiding the planning team in our work.

We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information, visit the park's wilderness planning website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olywild>





Purpose and Need

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of a wilderness stewardship plan is to guide the preservation, management, and use of the park's wilderness area as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The overarching goal of the plan is to restore, protect, and enhance overall wilderness character of the Olympic Wilderness.

Need for the Plan

National Park Service policy directs wilderness stewardship plans to include “desired future conditions, as well as establish indicators, standards, conditions, and thresholds beyond which management actions will be taken to reduce human impacts to wilderness resources.”

In 1980, Olympic National Park completed a Backcountry Management Plan for park wilderness and backcountry areas. This Backcountry Management Plan is now outdated and does not adequately address protection of the area's wilderness qualities that are essential to effective wilderness management. The Wilderness Stewardship Plan is needed to replace the Backcountry Management Plan, while ensuring consistency with the existing General Management Plan of the park (2008).

Decision to be Made

When finished, the Wilderness Stewardship Plan will establish a vision for the Olympic Wilderness and guide long-term management and decision-making based on that vision. A Record of Decision, signed by the Regional Director (National Park Service Pacific West Region) will be published after the release of the Final Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

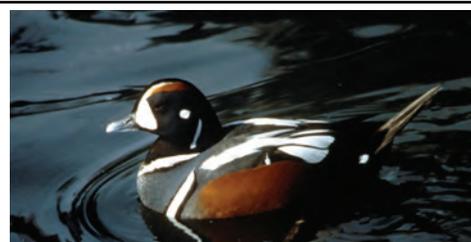
Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law [PL] 88-577, 16 United States Code [USC] 1131 et seq.) establishes a policy for the enduring protection of wilderness resources for public use and enjoyment. The act defines wilderness as,



a tract of undeveloped federal land of primeval character without permanent improvements or human habitation; an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain; where the forces of nature predominate and the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable; which provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

This act established the National Wilderness Preservation System, and set forth management directives that specify the preservation of wilderness character. Section 4 of the act identifies appropriate uses and prohibited uses in wilderness areas.



Key Components of the Plan

Wilderness Character

The Foundation for Wilderness Planning

Describing the wilderness character of an area is central to meeting the goals and objectives of a wilderness stewardship plan. The publication, “Keeping it Wild: An Interagency Strategy to Monitor Trends in Wilderness Character Across the National Wilderness Preservation System” defines wilderness character as “the combination of biophysical, experiential, and symbolic ideals that distinguishes wilderness from other lands.” The publication identifies four distinct and necessary “qualities” of wilderness character that apply throughout every wilderness regardless of size, location, agency administration, or other attribute. A fifth quality, defined by the National Park Service, provides for “other features of value” that typically occur in specific locations within a wilderness area. All five qualities are tangible, and link wilderness resources and its management directly to the statutory language of the Wilderness Act.

The qualities of wilderness character are:

Untrammeled

An “untrammeled” wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from the actions of modern human control or manipulation. Therefore, actions that intentionally manipulate or control ecological systems inside wilderness degrade the untrammeled quality of wilderness character.

Natural

The “natural” quality of wilderness is best represented when ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. This quality is degraded by the effects of modern people on the ecological systems within the wilderness area since the time the area was designated as wilderness.

Undeveloped

The “undeveloped” quality is best represented when wilderness retains its primeval character and influence, and is essentially without permanent improvement or modern human occupation. The presence of structures, installations, habitations, and other evidence of modern human presence or occupation degrades this quality.

Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

This quality is degraded by settings that reduce opportunities for solitude (such as encounters with other wilderness visitors), opportunities for primitive recreation (such as signs of modern civilization adjacent to the wilderness), or by facilities provided by the agency or created by users that reduce people’s self-reliance or manage visitor behavior.

Other Features of Value

The National Park Service has defined a fifth quality, “Other Features,” which may include ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. This quality is used to capture elements of a park’s wilderness area, such as Olympic’s cultural resources, that aren’t included in the other four qualities and is unique to an individual wilderness based on the specific features within that wilderness. This quality is preserved or improved by the preservation or restoration of such features, even when such management actions degrade other qualities of wilderness character. Loss or impacts to such features degrade this quality of wilderness character.



Key Components of the Plan

Baseline Condition Assessment

This plan will assess baseline conditions for five qualities of wilderness character, and will address the specific characteristics that are important to describe and measure for each wilderness quality. The plan will identify strategies for tracking trends to understand if an area's wilderness qualities are improving, stable, or degrading over time. Desired conditions for this plan will restore, protect, and enhance the overall wilderness character (the sum of all five qualities).

Indicators, Measures, and Standards

A major part of a wilderness stewardship plan is the development of a comprehensive monitoring strategy to track trends in wilderness character by developing a set of indicators and measures for each wilderness quality. Indicators and measures track conditions to assess progress toward attaining desired conditions and preserving wilderness character. Standards (or thresholds) are based on the measures and developed to ensure that trends are stable or improving over time.

Management Actions

The Wilderness Act of 1964 requires each agency that administers wilderness to “preserve the wilderness character of an area.” Two main types of management actions will be employed to meet this goal: 1) actions that can be implemented immediately following approval of the plan as part of a broad management strategy, and 2) actions that would be triggered by exceeding a standard (based on the results of ongoing monitoring).

Wilderness Issues and Opportunities

During the scoping phase, the first step in any planning process, we gather initial ideas about the scope of issues the plan should address. The preliminary list below provides a sample of issues and opportunities to be considered in the plan.

During the comment period, we invite you to share your thoughts about these issues or other topics that you feel should be considered as part of this wilderness planning effort.

- day and overnight use
- wilderness permitting
- traditional use
- use of campfires
- proper food storage
- group size
- camping and campsites
- human waste management
- stock use
- research activities
- wildlife management in wilderness
- cultural resources management in wilderness
- maintenance of trails, bridges, or other existing or necessary infrastructure
- commercial services in wilderness



Share Your Thoughts

The comment period for public scoping is late January to late spring 2013. This is an ideal time for you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future of Olympic National Park's wilderness area. Your input will help guide the planning team in developing the Wilderness Stewardship Plan, including the consideration of various alternatives for managing the wilderness area. Additional opportunities for public input will be announced as the planning process progresses.

We look forward to hearing from you.

How to Comment

There are several ways to provide comments:

- Attend a public meeting
- Submit comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OLYMWildNews1>
- *Mail comments to:

Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent
ATTN: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
Olympic National Park
600 E. Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362

*For timely and accurate review of your comments, when submitting comments by letter, please be sure to identify the question(s) to which you are responding. Thank you!

Your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be publicly available at any time. Comments made by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.

Questions to Consider

1. What makes the Olympic National Park wilderness area special to you and why?
2. When you visit the Olympic National Park wilderness area, what activities and experiences are most important to you?
3. What do you think the issues are in the Olympic National Park wilderness area?
4. Imagine you are visiting the Olympic National Park wilderness area 20 years from now. What conditions, experiences, visitor services, and facilities would you like to see?
5. Please share any additional comments or suggestions.



Schedule of Scoping Meetings

Tuesday, February 5, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Jefferson School Gymnasium
218 E. 12th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Phone: 360-457-4231

Thursday, February 7, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Trinity United Methodist Church
100 S. Blake Avenue
Sequim, WA 98382
Phone: 360-683-5367

Tuesday, February 19, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Community Center
42 Rice
Sekiu, WA 98381
Phone: 360-963-3155

Wednesday, February 20, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Department of Natural Resources
411 Tillicum Lane
Forks, WA 98331
Phone: 360-374-2800

Thursday, February 21, 2013
4:00 - 6:00 PM
Amanda Park Library
6118 U.S. Highway 101
Amanda Park, WA 98526
Phone: 360-288-2725

Monday, March 4, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
REI
222 Yale Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: 206-223-1944

Tuesday, March 5, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Ridgetop High School
10600 Hillsboro Drive NW
Silverdale, WA 98383
Phone: 360-662-2900

Wednesday, March 6, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Civic Center
525 W. Cota Street
Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: 360-426-4441

What is a scoping meeting?

The purpose of a scoping meeting is to determine the scope of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to ensure that issues are identified early and properly studied. The result of scoping is to ensure that the draft EIS produced for public review is thorough and balanced.

Scoping should identify concerns of both the agency and the affected public and should clearly define environmental issues and alternatives to be examined in the EIS. If there are important environmental or social impacts that the public wants considered, the place to raise these issues is at a scoping meeting.



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 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
 OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
 600 E. PARK AVENUE
 PORT ANGELES, WA 98362

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Planning Phase	Tentative Timeframe	Opportunities for Public Input
Public Scoping	Winter/Spring 2013	Review information provided in this newsletter, attend a public meeting and/or submit your comments online.
Alternatives Development	Spring 2013	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olywild or provide your email address for updates.
Public Comment on Preliminary Alternatives	Summer/Fall 2013	Review the preliminary alternatives, attend a public meeting and/or submit your comments online.
Prepare Draft WSP/EIS	Fall 2013/Winter 2014	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olywild
Public Comment on Draft WSP/EIS	Spring 2014	Review the draft WSP/EIS, attend a public meeting and/or submit your comments online.
Prepare Final WSP/EIS	Spring/Summer 2014	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olywild
Release of Final WSP/EIS	Summer/Fall 2014	
Record of Decision	Fall 2014	
Implementation of WSP	Fall 2014/Winter 2015 Onward	