Questions & Answers

What is a general management plan and why are you doing one?

General management plans (GMPs) are long-term documents that establish and articulate a vision for the future of a park. When complete, this GMP will provide management direction for cultural and natural resource protection and visitor use at Olympic National Park for the next 15 to 20 years.

The last comprehensive planning effort for Olympic was the *Olympic National Park Master Plan*, completed in 1976. Much has changed since then and a new plan is needed to address the many regulation changes, issues and concerns that have developed in the past 30 years.

If I don't have time to read the entire 400-page document, what parts should I focus on?

- The Summary and "Guide to This Document" (pages iii – ix) give a concise overview of the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft GMP/EIS).
- Chapter 1 sets the foundation for the document, describing the desired conditions for natural and cultural resources and for visitor experiences
- Chapter 2 describes each of the four alternatives under consideration
- Focus on the areas of the park that interest you most – the Draft GMP/EIS is organized by area to make it easy to find your favorite park location.

How did you develop the National Park Service's preferred alternative?

The National Park Service (NPS) preferred alternative was developed using components of the no-action alternative and alternatives B and C, taking into account National Park Service policies and regulations, park desired conditions, and agency, tribal, and public input and review.

The Draft GMP/EIS doesn't include any details about specific project implementation – why not?

As a general management plan, this document is intended to establish the overall framework for managing Olympic National Park. After completion and approval of this plan, more detailed studies and plans, including additional environmental compliance and public involvement, will be needed before implementing any specific project.

How will the park's proposal affect my access and experiences in the park?

The NPS preferred alternative aims to protect natural and cultural resources while improving visitor experiences. It includes retaining road access to existing frontcountry areas, though some roads may need to be modified or relocated to protect park resources and/or to maintain vehicular access. In addition, certain areas of the park (Hurricane Ridge, Sol Duc, and Hoh) would be studied to see if seasonal transit systems would be feasible and effective. If determined feasible, optional transit systems may be implemented in the future.

Under the preferred alternative, most of the park's existing trails would be retained and maintained for hiking and stock use. However, some paths and routes (i.e. way trails and social trails) may be removed for resource protection. Overall, the amount of trail mileage open to stock use would remain about the same, though in some areas opportunities for stock use could be reduced.

What about things like park user fees and fishing regulations?

The park's fee structure and fishing regulations will continue to be reviewed annually and revised if necessary. These review processes are independent of the GMP process and will not be affected by it.

Are you proposing changes to any of the lodges in the park or to the Hurricane Ridge Ski Area?

Under the preferred alternative, the park would retain all existing concessioner-operated resorts generally at the current levels of service. We would encourage longer operating seasons for some of the concessions, and would recommend improvements or modifications in some concession areas for resource protection (i.e. shoreline protection at Barnes Point).

The preferred alternative includes possible improvements to the downhill ski support facilities at Hurricane Ridge, with no area expansion or increase in use above current (normal year) use levels.

The preferred alternative proposes to relocate the Kalaloch Lodge, cabins, and related facilities outside the active coastal erosion and channel migration zones and outside the floodplain of Kalaloch Creek.

Are you proposing to build any new roads?

In the Kalaloch area, the park is proposing to work with the Washington State Department of Transportation to relocate Highway 101 outside the park to address threats from coastal erosion and enhance visitor experience. The park may need to construct access routes from the new road to the coastal portion of the park at Kalaloch. No other new roads are proposed.

Some park roads (Hoh, Queets, Quinault North Shore roads) may be modified or relocated for resource protection and/or to maintain vehicle access.

What about new facilities?

The NPS preferred alternative includes both construction of new facilities and improvements to existing ones. Under this alternative, the Hoh Visitor Center may be improved to provide a higher quality visitor experience. The visitor information station at Kalaloch would be replaced by a new multi-agency facility that would better serve the needs of the visiting public and would feature the coastal marine and cultural resources of the area. In addition, the concessioner-operated facilities at Kalaloch would be relocated or reconstructed outside the active coastal erosion and channel migration zones and outside the floodplain of Kalaloch Creek.

Does the NPS preferred alternative propose any boundary adjustments or land acquisitions?

Yes. We have considered boundary adjustments in several of the alternatives, including the preferred alternative. The National Parks and Recreation Act (Public Law 95-625) and NPS *Management Policies* state that the National Park Service will identify and evaluate potential boundary adjustments, and may seek boundary revisions through the planning process. In accordance with NPS policy, lands would be acquired from willing sellers only.

Under the preferred alternative, three boundary adjustments are proposed. Maps of each proposed adjustment, described below, are provided in the Draft GMP/EIS.

- Lake Crescent – (1,640 acres) for the protection of critical spawning habitat for the Beardslee and Crescentii trout;
- Queets – (2,300 acres) for the protection of Coho salmon spawning and rearing habitat and elk habitat;
- Ozette – (12,000 acres) for protection of the threatened Ozette Lake sockeye and its critical habitat, the watershed and water quality of the lake, and the viewshed. In addition, we would work to acquire approximately 44,000 acres of land in the Lake Ozette watershed outside the boundary of the park to exchange with the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources. In return, the state would exchange their sub-surface mineral rights that are located within the current boundaries of Olympic National Park.

How does the GMP address wilderness?

The Draft GMP/EIS establishes parkwide policies for wilderness management including desired conditions based on servicewide mandates and policies and those specific to Olympic National Park. It also includes general strategies that may be used to meet the desired conditions. Strategies will be further defined through the wilderness management plan process.

The Draft GMP/EIS also establishes and describes three zones within wilderness – wilderness trail, primitive, and primeval zones. Each of the four alternatives includes a wilderness map that explores different options for wilderness zoning. Under every alternative, the majority of the park's wilderness would be included in the primeval zone.

Does the Draft GMP/EIS propose to add or delete any wilderness within the park?

Under the preferred alternative, wilderness suitability studies would be conducted for the area north of the Spruce Railroad Trail (near Lake Crescent) and at Ozette Lake. If boundary adjustments occur, any new lands included in park boundaries would be studied for wilderness suitability.

No wilderness deletions are proposed. However, wilderness boundaries may need to be adjusted to retain road access in certain areas of the park (Hoh, Quinault), with no net loss of total wilderness acreage.

How does the preferred alternative affect trails, stock use and wilderness camp areas?

Specific details on wilderness use will be addressed and included in the Wilderness Management Plan. We anticipate beginning the wilderness planning process by

gathering initial public input (or scoping) in late 2007, after the GMP is complete.

Under the NPS preferred alternative, most existing hiking trails would be retained and maintained, though some paths and routes (i.e. way trails and social trails) may be removed to protect park resources and the wilderness character. Stock use would continue to be allowed in designated areas. In some areas, opportunities for stock use may be reduced or modified or stock campsites may be relocated to protect resources. However, the amount of trail mileage open to stock use in the park would remain about the same as current conditions. Existing wilderness campsites would generally remain the same under the preferred alternative, though we may modify or relocate sites, and possibly restore some areas to protect wilderness resources. In addition, in some areas of the park, we may establish limits on campers or close areas for resource protection.

More detailed planning about Olympic's wilderness will be conducted during the Wilderness Management Planning process.

How are you proposing to manage cultural resources within the NPS preferred alternative?

We will continue to manage in accordance with existing laws and policies. We will preserve and rehabilitate structures or cultural landscapes that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places to retain a high degree of integrity. We would manage these in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which set forth standards for the treatment of historic properties and contain standards for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. We may adaptively reuse some historic structures to achieve preservation and/or administrative objectives.

What about cultural resources located in wilderness?

We will protect and maintain cultural resources, such as archeological sites, historic trails, cultural landscapes and structures that have been included within wilderness, using methods that are consistent with the preservation of wilderness character and values and cultural resources requirements.

How can I participate?

We invite you to review the Draft GMP/EIS and provide us with your input by any one of several different methods.

We also invite you to attend one of the eight Draft GMP/EIS Open Houses scheduled for this August, where you can discuss the plan with park staff and submit your comments orally or in writing.

Written comments may also be sent to:

Olympic National Park GMP,
NPS Denver Service Center – Planning,
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225

Fax: 303-969-2736.
Email: olym_gmp@nps.gov
Online: http://parkplanning.nps.gov

Written comments may also be hand delivered to Olympic National Park headquarters at 600 East Park Avenue in Port Angeles, Washington or to one of the public open houses. Comments must be received or postmarked by September 15, 2006.

How will public comments be used?

The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and members of the park and Denver Service Center interdisciplinary team thoroughly review and evaluate all comment letters received during the public review period for the general management plan. We analyze and screen the comments to determine if any new issues, reasonable alternatives, or mitigation measures have been suggested, and if text modifications or corrections are warranted. The final plan will include letters from government agencies, any substantive comments on the draft document, and the National Park Service responses to those comments. We will clearly distinguish any text modifications and corrections in the final plan.

What happens after the comment period closes?

After all the comments are analyzed and issues are addressed, the planning team will prepare the Final GMP/EIS. We anticipate completing the final document for distribution in early 2007. Following distribution of the Final GMP/EIS and a 30-day no action period, the NPS Regional Director will sign a "Record of Decision."

Who makes the final decision on which alternative will be implemented?

The Regional Director of the NPS Pacific West Region is responsible for the final decision.

How soon will you implement the plan after it is approved?

A “Record of Decision” does not guarantee funds or staff for implementing the approved plan. This is a long-term plan, and, in the framework of the plan, we will take incremental steps to reach park management goals and objectives.

While some of the actions can be accomplished with little or no funding, some actions would require more detailed implementation plans, site specific compliance, and additional funds. We will actively seek alternative sources of funding, but there is no guarantee that all the components of the plan will be implemented.

We have identified approximately $11 million in initial capital development costs for new facilities, $520,000 for road and facility removal and restoration projects, and approximately $24 million for land protection and boundary adjustments.

These estimated costs would need to be refined by more detailed consideration of needs, sizes, and amounts of future development.