

Your Participation Will Help Meet the Objectives

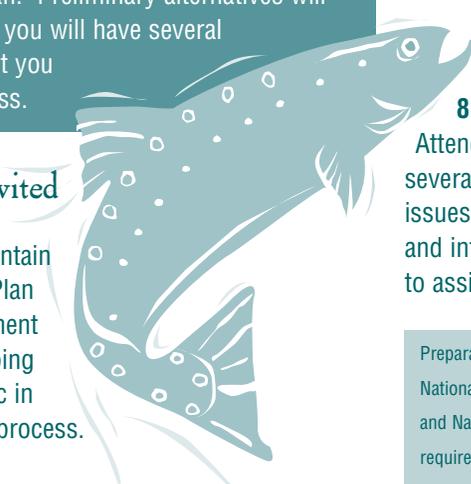
Your participation is vital to the environmental impact analysis process. Because you live near or recreate in the North Cascades National Park Service Complex, your input is important to help the National Park Service further develop or refine management alternatives that will be analyzed in the environmental impact statement.

Through presentations, posters, and fact sheets, more detailed information will be available at the scoping meetings about the proposed fishery management plan. Preliminary alternatives will be presented for your review, and you will have several opportunities to comment on what you learned during this scoping process.

Scoping Meetings: You're Invited

Scoping meetings for the Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement will be held in four locations. Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the environmental impact analysis process.

Because the environmental impact statement will analyze many complex ecological and social issues, your participation is encouraged and needed.



Meeting Agenda

7:00 pm to 7:20 pm – open house (review posters, read information, speak to National Park Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives)

7:20 pm to 7:50 pm – Presentation by North Cascades Superintendent Bill Paleck

7:50 pm to 8:00 pm – Break

8:00 pm to 9:00 pm – Attendees will be divided into several workgroups to express issues and provide input. Maps and information will be available to assist workgroups.

Preparation of the EIS will be guided by National Park Service Director's Order #12 and National Environmental Policy Act requirements. The document will address Washington State and public concerns.

The Complex

contains more

than 240 natural

mountain lakes.

Meeting Schedule

March 18, 2003

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Sedro-Woolley, WA
North Cascades National Park Service Complex Hdqrs. Bldg.
810 State Route 20

March 20, 2003

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Wenatchee, WA
Red Lion Inn
1225 North Wenatchee Ave.

March 25, 2003

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Bellevue, WA
Meydenbauer Center
11100 N.E. 6th St.

March 27, 2003

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Seattle, WA
Seattle Mountaineers
300 Third Ave. West

Please send comments before April 18, 2003, to Superintendent, North Cascades National Park 810 State Route 20 Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
Email: noca@den.nps.gov

EIS Website: <http://www.nps.gov/noca/highlakes.htm>

Or call, Roy Zipp, NPS Natural Resource Specialist
360-873-4590, ext. 31

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
North Cascades National Park
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284



North Cascades National Park Service Complex

Mountain Lakes Fishery

Management Plan

Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Meetings



The Proposal: A New Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan for North Cascades National Park Service Complex

The National Park Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), in cooperation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, will soon begin preparation of the Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

The environmental impact statement, or EIS, will address issues surrounding current and proposed management of natural mountain lakes within the North Cascades National Park System Complex, which is comprised of North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. The EIS will not address management of Lakes Chelan and Ross (both man-made reservoirs) nor the Skagit River, but the EIS will include these three water bodies on a watershed-level assessment.

Through preparation of a new management plan, the National Park Service seeks to resolve long-standing debate and conflicts over fish stocking in the naturally occurring lakes within the Complex.

History of Mountain Lakes Fishery Management

The rugged landscape of the North Cascades contains at least 240 natural mountain lakes, most of which were fishless because of natural geologic barriers. Though fishless, these lakes once contained a rich array of native aquatic life, including plankton, aquatic insects, frogs, and salamanders.

Settlers began stocking North Cascade lakes in the late 1800s with various species of non-native trout. By the early 1900s, stocking had become a routine practice for various government agencies. This practice created an entirely non-native trout fishery for both food and recreation.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly the Department of Game) assumed responsibility for stocking mountain lakes throughout the state in order to create and maintain recreational fisheries. The department's involvement grew largely out of the need to prevent haphazard stocking by individuals without biological expertise. With particular emphasis on systematic assessment of fish species and stocking rates, the department conducted the first high lakes fisheries research and developed many principles central to fisheries management today.



Organized volunteers began stocking lakes in the 1930s.

Protection - Conservation - Recreation: Working Together to Find a Balance

The North Cascades National Park Service Complex was established in 1968. The enabling legislation for the Complex does not define what fishing activities are to be allowed within park boundaries. Regulation of fish stocking by the National Park Service has been an issue because decades of stocking by the state occurred before the Complex was created. Also, Park Service management policies prohibited stocking to protect native ecosystems. The policies of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife encouraged stocking to promote recreation. To resolve differences in policy and to foster a spirit of cooperation, these two agencies negotiated a series of agreements beginning in 1979 that allowed stocking to continue in selected lakes within the Complex. Policy differences continued to create conflicts.

In 1986, the director of the National Park Service issued a policy waiver that

- Acknowledged long-standing fish stocking practices
- Allowed for continued stocking in select lakes
- Called for ecological research into impacts of stocking

Soon after 1986, the National Park Service initiated a long-term research effort with Oregon State University to evaluate effects of fish stocking on native biota in mountain lakes. The research was performed in three phases, with

the final phase completed in July 2002. Results of the research will be used as part of the analysis contained in the environmental impact statement. The complete text of the entire research report can be found on the EIS website at http://www.nps.gov/noca/high_lakes.htm.

The Proposed Plan: Purpose of and Need for Taking Action

The Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement will support development of a new management plan for natural mountain lakes in order to conserve native biological integrity and provide a spectrum of recreational opportunities and visitor experiences, including sport fishing.

The environmental impact statement is needed because there is an opportunity for action at this time because research studies are available that can be applied to a new lakes fishery plan in accordance with the 1985 Memorandum of Understanding and a Consent Decree. The Consent Decree resulted from a law suit in 1989 over the 1987 National Park Service Draft General Management Plan for Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. The Consent Decree, in part, ordered the Park Service to "... conduct a NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] review of the fish stocking of naturally fish-free lakes within [the park] upon completion of ongoing research."

The analysis is also needed to fulfill the adaptive management intent of the 1988 Fisheries Management Agreement between the National Park Service and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, which states that results of ecological research would be used to guide future management decisions.

Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement Objectives

Numerous objectives were developed to help guide preparation of the fishery management plan and environmental impact statement. Those objectives are to

- Obtain agreement with and support from interested parties and groups to implement a new management plan for mountain lakes within the North Cascades National Park Service Complex
- Advance the protection and rehabilitation of native biological integrity by maintaining native species abundance, viability, and sustainability
- Provide a spectrum of recreational opportunities, including sport fishing, while minimizing impacts to the biological integrity of natural mountain lakes
- Apply science and research in decision making at multiple spatial scales that include landscape, watershed, lake cluster, and individual lake levels
- Provide to the public and interested parties, full and open access to available information