



# BUGLER

Olympic National Park  
Winter 2013-2014



## *A Golden Anniversary* *50 Years of Protecting Wilderness*

**P**recious gold symbolizes 50th anniversaries. Its rarity and cost reflect the high value we place on five decades of caring and commitment.

In 2014, America celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Congress overwhelmingly passed the act in 1964, creating a National Wilderness Preservation System representing our nation's commitment to preserving some of the last, large undeveloped tracts of our natural heritage. In the 1988 Washington Park Wilderness Act, Congress designated 95 percent of Olympic National Park and much of Mount Rainier and North Cascades National Parks as wilderness, adding to the national system.

### *Room to Roam*

The value of wilderness depends on perspective. For threatened species like salmon, bull trout or marbled murrelets, the Olympic Wilderness is a rare place to call home. They find sanctuary in the cloak of old-growth forests draping protected lowlands and mountain slopes, and in the 3,000 miles of rivers and streams that are unmatched in the lower 48 states. For far-ranging species like elk, cougars, fishers and bears, there is room to roam in nearly one million acres of wilderness away from roads and other development.

For scientists, these wild lands provide a living laboratory to study and measure changes—from intertidal zones to glacier-capped peaks. Long-term monitoring of old-growth forests, mountain lakes, climate, water and air quality, as well as fish, elk and bird populations offers insights into our changing planet. Although wilderness isn't immune from impacts originating outside its boundaries, it serves as a gold standard to compare with changing conditions elsewhere.

### *A Dose of "Vitamin N"*

For people who like to explore, wild lands offer a sanctuary of quiet, solitude and challenge on many scales. You can wander up a trail immersing yourself in moss-muffled silence, or embark on an epic adventure. Both offer a big dose of what author Richard Louv calls "Vitamin N." Medical professionals have learned this natural essential "vitamin" benefits us all, and have used it to treat patients from traumatized veterans to over-stressed children.

Winter and spring in the Olympics is an ideal time to take a healthy dose of Vitamin N, whether you gaze into the park's wild interior from a viewpoint or head up a trail. Snowshoe or ski amid snow-clad firs. Escape into a symphony of wind, water and a wren's ebullient song in the temperate rain forest. Feel the power of storm-driven surf pommeling the wilderness coast.

With your continuing support, this priceless wilderness park will be protected for the next 50 years, and beyond.

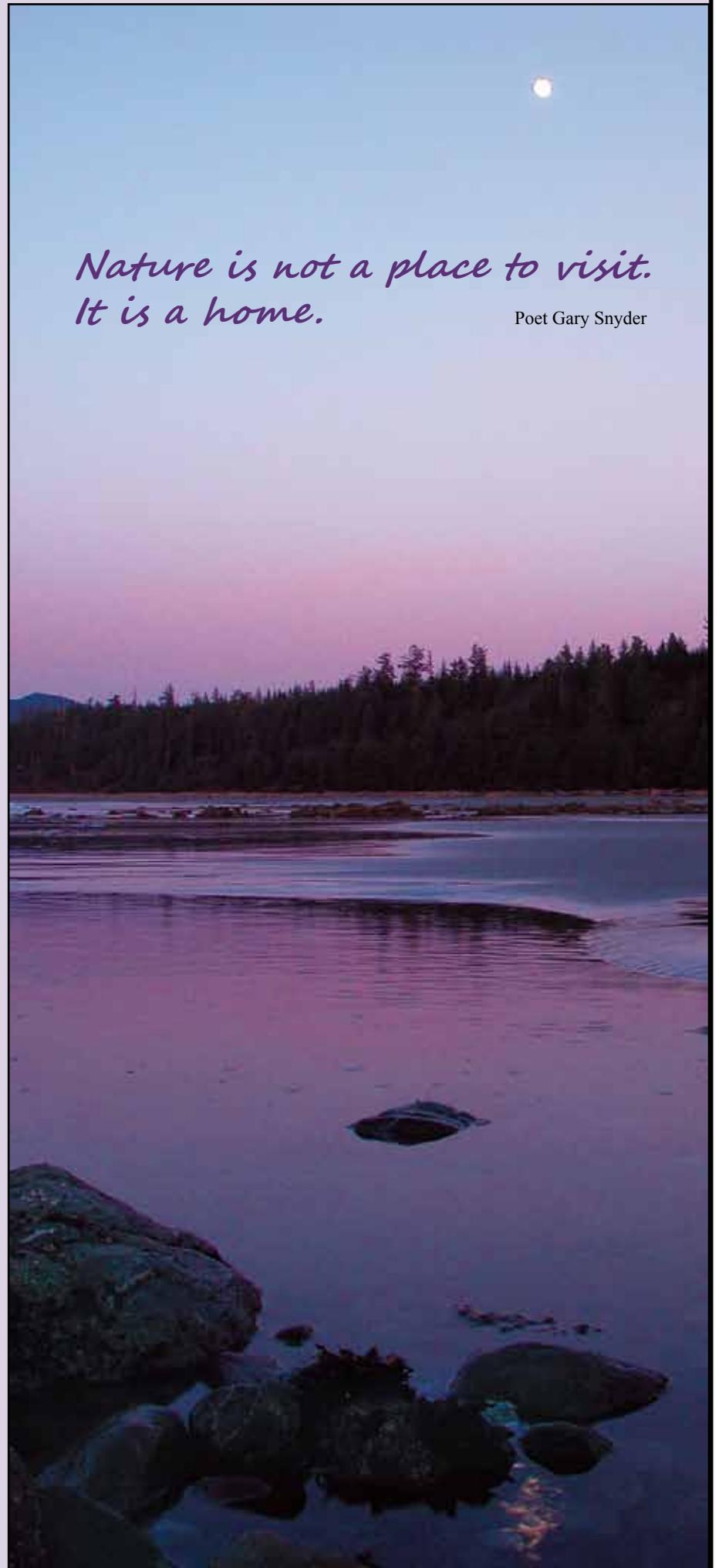
### **Get Involved!**

Olympic National Park is developing a Wilderness Stewardship Plan for protecting and managing wilderness. You can review preliminary management alternatives this spring. For details go to the park's wilderness planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/olywild>.

February moonrise along Olympic Wilderness coast, photo by Bryan Bell.

*Nature is not a place to visit.  
It is a home.*

Poet Gary Snyder





# Services and Facilities

Visiting Olympic National Park's mountains, coast and forests in winter can be magical, but it takes planning as fewer services and facilities are available. Many areas of the park are open and accessible 365 days a year, but roads and facilities may close due to snow, high water, downed trees or reduced staffing. Call (360) 565-3131 or see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm) for road and weather updates.

## Emergencies

Dial 911 for emergencies or to report a crime. For non-emergency help call (360) 565-3000 ext. 0 from 7 to 5:30 or (360) 417-2459 after hours.

## Entrance and Other Recreation Fees

Entrance fees apply year-round in main spur road areas (Elwha, Heart O' the Hills, Hoh, Ozette, Sol Duc, Staircase). A single visit pass (1-7 days) is \$15 per private vehicle or \$5 per person (age 16+) entering by bus, bike or foot. The Olympic National Park Annual Pass is \$30. The America the Beautiful-National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass is \$80 and is honored at national park, national forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management lands. A \$10 lifetime pass for U.S. seniors (age 62+), and a free lifetime access pass for those with permanent disabilities are also available, as well as a free annual pass for certain military personnel and their dependents. Additional recreation fees apply for overnight camping permits. The Senior and Access passes provide a 50 percent discount on these fees.

Park fees provide critical funding for many projects such as repair of roads, trails and signs; printing brochures like the park map; and providing staff at entrance station and wilderness permit locations. This year fees are being used to produce outdoor exhibits on the Elwha Restoration project. Your support of the fee program is very important. Thank you!



## General Park Information

For park information see the park website [www.nps.gov/olymp](http://www.nps.gov/olymp) or call (360) 565-3130. Park information, maps, wilderness permits, bear cans and information on wilderness fees are available year-round at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center/Wilderness Information Center in Port Angeles. For the park's OnCell audio tour, call (360) 406-5056 and make selections for information about different areas of the park.

Pets are not allowed in public buildings, on trails or in winter use areas, and must be on a leash in parking areas or campgrounds. Check at the visitor center for a list of places pets are allowed. Please do not approach or feed any park wildlife, including birds. It is illegal, harmful to the animal and hazardous to you. Violators are subject to a \$100 fine.

## Port Angeles Area

**Olympic National Park Visitor Center & Wilderness Information Center:** Open 9-4 daily (except Thanksgiving and Christmas) with exhibits, movie, map and book sales and staff to help you plan a visit. Wilderness camping, hiking and permit information, as well as bear canisters, are also available. Most ranger stations do not have regular winter hours; call the main visitor center (360) 565-3130 for general park information or (360) 565-3100 for wilderness trip planning.

## Hurricane Ridge Road

Call (360) 565-3131 for a 24-hour recording. For the winter season, current conditions are also updated daily at [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/hurricane-ridge-current-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/hurricane-ridge-current-conditions.htm). Follow road condition updates on twitter at: [twitter.com/HRWinterAccess](https://twitter.com/HRWinterAccess).

**To improve public safety, all vehicles (including 4WD) traveling above Heart O' the Hills on the Hurricane Ridge Road between November 15 and April 1 must carry tire chains.** The road is scheduled to be open



Friday through Sunday and holiday Mondays (January 20, February 17), weather permitting, from November 29, 2013 through March 30, 2014. The road usually opens at 9:00 a.m., but times vary depending on conditions. At 4:00 p.m. the road is closed to uphill traffic at Heart O' the Hills, five miles above Port Angeles. As days lengthen in spring, the road closes later. The Ridge parking lot closes at sunset and vehicles must be below Heart O' the Hills by dusk (1/2 hour after sunset).

**Storms, high winds, drifts or high avalanche conditions may delay or prevent road opening, or force an early closure.** To minimize closures due to a full parking lot, please carpool and park close to other vehicles at Hurricane Ridge. For safety, do not ski or walk on roads if plows are working since the operators have limited visibility. Also for safety, vehicle passengers must be inside vehicles or fully inside a pick-up truck bed. After March 30, the Hurricane Ridge Road may open as weather, staffing and road conditions allow. By early May the road is usually open 24 hours a day.

From mid December to late March, the local business community works to provide a shuttle service to Hurricane Ridge. Inquire at the Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, (360) 452-2363, [www.portangeles.org](http://www.portangeles.org), or the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau, (800) 942-4042, [www.olympicpeninsula.org](http://www.olympicpeninsula.org) for contact information on reservations, schedules and prices.

## Hurricane Ridge Area

**Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center:** Open 9:30-4 Fridays through Sundays and holiday Mondays when the road is open, with restrooms, exhibits, movie and warming area. A foyer warming area and restroom are open 24 hours a day.

**Hurricane Ridge Snack Bar & Rental Shop:** December 7, 2013 through March 30, 2014, food and ski/snowshoe rentals are available at Hurricane Ridge 10-4 weekends and holiday Mondays, as well as December 27 and January 3. Weather and road permitting, it may stay open weekends in April; check at the park visitor center for updates. In May, gift shop/snack bar hours will be 10-6 weekends only from May 3 to 18, 2014, then daily May 23 through October 19, 2014.

**Hurricane Ridge Downhill Ski, Snowboard & Tubing Area** is operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club, [www.hurricaneridge.com](http://www.hurricaneridge.com). When fully operating there are two rope tows and a Poma lift for beginner to advanced skiers, and a tubing park. Weather and snow permitting, tows and tubing park operate 10-4 weekends and holiday Mondays from December 7, 2013 through March 30, 2014, as well as

December 27 and January 3. Full day rates are \$32 for all runs, \$30 half day. For rope tows only, rates for full and half day are \$24 and \$22. **Tube park rates** (including tubes) are \$10 for 2-hour sessions, \$8 for one hour. **Only tubes furnished by the ski area will be permitted in their tube park.** Cross country skiers in the ski area must use ski leashes.

**Downhill Skiing/Snowboard Lessons:** Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club offers lessons for ages four and up starting January 11, 2014. Private lessons are available with 24 hours notice. For more ski school information see [www.hurricaneridge.com](http://www.hurricaneridge.com) or call (360) 457-2879 (message only).

**Equipment Rentals:** Several businesses on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Puget Sound area rent winter recreational equipment. Hurricane Ridge Rental Shop (see hours and dates above) packages include skis, boots and poles. The shop requires a driver's license to rent equipment.

Location	Cross-Country	Downhill	Snowshoes
Hurricane Ridge (no phone)	\$32/day	\$37/day \$42/day w/ helmet	\$17/day \$22 w/ poles

## Roads

Some park roads regularly close in winter and others may be closed temporarily by weather conditions. Call (360) 565-3131 or see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-road-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-road-conditions.htm) for current conditions. **Deer Park Road** is closed at the park boundary (9 miles from Highway 101, 2,000 feet elevation) from mid October until early summer, depending on snow and staffing. **Obstruction Point Road** is closed mid October until mid summer, depending on snow and staffing. **Dosewallips Road** is washed out 4 miles from the park boundary. Roads in the *Staircase*, *Sol Duc*, *Hoh*, *Mora*, *Ozette*, *Queets* and *Quinault* areas are open year-round, weather permitting. In the *Elwha* valley, the *Olympic Hot Springs Road* is closed beyond Altair Campground for Glines Canyon Dam removal, while *Whiskey Bend Road* is open weather permitting.

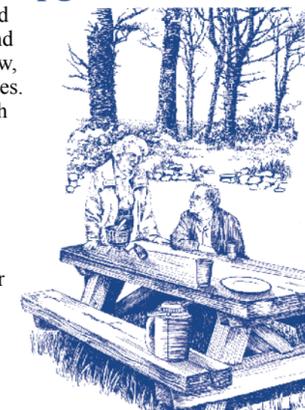
## Other Park Facilities

**Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center:** Closed December 2, 2013 through February 27, 2014. Open 10-4 Friday through Sunday from February 28 through April 27, 2014; open daily starting May 2, 2014. Exhibits, information, wilderness permits, bear cans and books, (360) 374-6925.

## National Park Campgrounds

The following park campgrounds are closed this winter: Altair, Deer Park, Fairholme and South Beach. Others may be closed by snow, storms, high winds, flooding or downed trees. Several have primitive winter camping with pit toilets, no running water and no fees. Most campgrounds fully open in April. Fees at most campgrounds with facilities are \$12 a night, but range from \$10 to 18 depending on facilities and season. Check at the Visitor Center, see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm), or call (360) 565-3131 for current status. The following campgrounds usually have some loops open year-round.

**Quinault:** Graves Creek (primitive)  
**Kalaloch:** Kalaloch Campground



Reservations can be made for Kalaloch campsites for June 18 through September 1, 2014 by calling (877) 444-6777 or at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) no more than 6 months ahead.

- Hoh:** Hoh Campground
- Mora:** Mora Campground
- Ozette:** Ozette Campground (primitive in winter, flooding may limit sites)
- Elwha:** Elwha Campground (primitive)
- Hurricane area:** Heart O' the Hills Campground (walk-in if it snows)
- Staircase:** Staircase Campground (walk-in only, primitive in winter)

## Park Concessions

- Lake Crescent Lodge:** Open through January 1, 2014. Remainder of winter Roosevelt Cabins open weekends (no food service). Lodge fully reopens May 2, 2014 to January 1, 2015 with lodging and food service (April 18 opening possible, check locally); (360) 928-3211, [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).
- Log Cabin Resort:** Closed in winter. Lodging, RV park, food service and store open May 23 to September 30, 2014; (360) 928-3325. [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).
- Fairholme Store:** Closed in winter. Open 9-6 Friday to Sunday, May 2 to 18, 2014 and September 12 to 28; daily 9-7, May 23 to September 7, 2014.
- Olympic Raft & Kayak:** Guided raft trips on the Elwha River March through September; (360) 452-1443, [www.raftandkayak.com](http://www.raftandkayak.com).
- Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort:** Closed in winter. Pools, cabins, restaurant and RV park open March 28 to October 19, 2014; (360) 327-3583, [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).
- Kalaloch Lodge:** Lodging and food service open all year, (360) 962-2271, [www.TheKalalochLodge.com](http://www.TheKalalochLodge.com).

## Lodging and Services Outside the Park

Local communities offer other services year-round. Contact the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau at (800) 942-4042, [www.olympicpeninsula.org](http://www.olympicpeninsula.org).

## Perspectives

Learn more about your park at these free winter programs. This year's series commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Programs are at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, November through April, at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center, 3002 Mt. Angeles Road, Port Angeles.

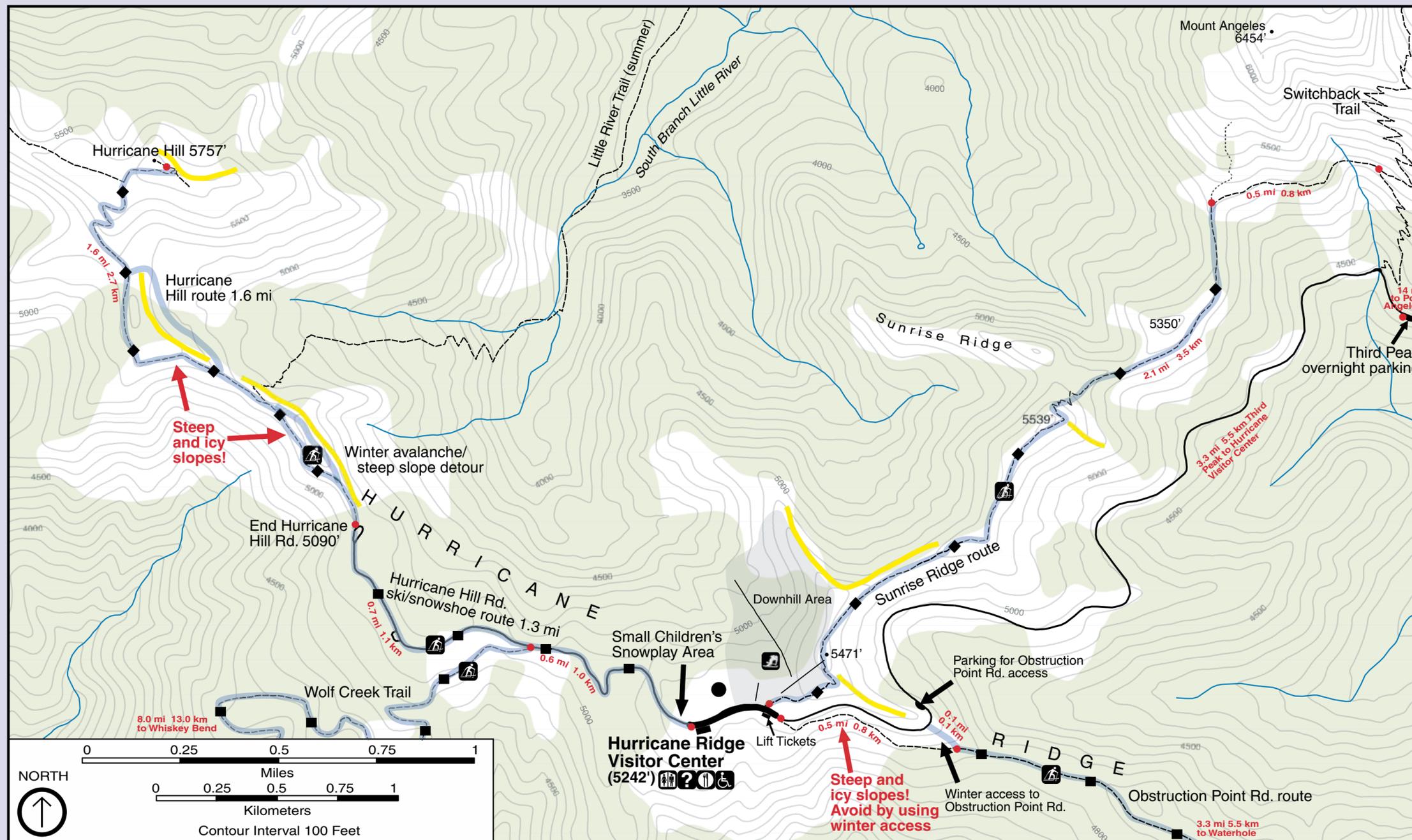
### December 10 - Protecting Wilderness Coast and Sanctuary Waters:

In December 2012, Coast Guard searchers found a 185-ton dock from the March 2011 tsunami in Japan. Located in a rugged, remote section of Olympic National Park's coast and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the dock threatened visitor safety and coastal resources. Steve Fradkin, the park's coastal ecologist and a member of the multi-agency response team, will share his stories of the successful removal effort.

**January 14, February 11 and March 11 – Celebrating Wilderness:** It's been 50 years since Congress passed the 1964 Wilderness Act and 25 years since the 1988 Washington Park Wilderness Act designated 95 percent of Olympic National Park as the Olympic Wilderness. Speakers will present some of the many perspectives on wilderness and how it inspires us. See the events calendar under the Things To Do link at the park website [www.nps.gov/olymp](http://www.nps.gov/olymp) for exact speakers.

**April 8 – Cascade Frogs: What Does the Future Hold?** The Olympic Wilderness serves as an important and rare laboratory for scientists. University of Washington researcher Maureen Ryan studies Cascade frogs in Seven Lakes Basin, a popular wilderness backpacking destination. Join Dr. Ryan to learn more about these mountain amphibians and how a warming climate and declining snowpack affect the seasonal pools they need to survive.

# Hurricane Ridge Area in Winter



Legend	
	Ski/snowshoe routes (unmarked & ungroomed)
	Easiest
	More difficult
	Most difficult
	Summer trails
	Prevailing wind cornice areas (locations vary with wind patterns)
	Downhill ski area boundary
	Distance between points

**!** Before heading out, check at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for current avalanche conditions. Wear an avalanche beacon, carry a probe, snow shovel and the 10 essentials (see page 8), and avoid avalanche terrain such as cornices, gullies and steep lee slopes.

# Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

With its easy access and 15 to 20 miles of routes, Hurricane Ridge is the focus of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in Olympic National Park. Though winter explorers of all abilities can enjoy the area, flat, easy, beginner ski terrain is limited to the meadows above the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. Backcountry skiers can explore several slopes and bowls in the area. No trails are groomed or marked; however, two routes use unplowed roads which can usually be navigated.

**NOTE FOR SNOWSHOERS, WALKERS AND SNOWBOARDERS:** Skiers, walkers, snowshoers and snowboarders can safely share this area. Snowshoers, walkers and snowboarders, please stay to one side to avoid damaging ski tracks on trails, and do not snowshoe or walk through the downhill ski area.

**Before heading out on any trip remember to register at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center and check current avalanche conditions. Below are descriptions of routes in the Hurricane Ridge area.**

## ● Easiest

### The Meadows

The meadows above the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center offer gentle, easy terrain for everyone and excellent views in fair weather. Because the meadows are exposed to the wind, they are sometimes icy or wind packed.

## ■ More Difficult

### Hurricane Hill Road

1.3 miles one way

Beginning just west of the visitor center, this trail first descends steeply, then follows the rolling, moderate ridgeline along the unplowed Hurricane Hill Road. Experienced skiers can use this trail to reach the Hurricane Hill Route (see Most Difficult), as well as several bowls for backcountry skiing. In clear weather there are good views to the north and south, especially at the trail's terminus at the Hurricane Hill trailhead. Much of this ridgetop trail is sheltered by a subalpine forest, making it a good choice in windy, inclement weather or when there is elevated avalanche hazard.

### Wolf Creek Trail

8 miles one way to Whiskey Bend

This route begins 0.6 miles west of the visitor center along the unplowed Hurricane Hill Road (see above) and descends through meadows and forests into the Elwha valley. There are several south-facing slopes near the beginning which are good for backcountry skiing. The Wolf Creek Trail is seldom snow-covered at lower elevations. Users usually just descend a few miles through forest and several meadows with nice south views, then return the same way.



### Obstruction Point Road: To Waterhole

3.4 miles one way

Rather than descend the exposed, steep, often drifted and icy route of the summer Obstruction Point Road, the winter route starts at the sharp curve along the Hurricane Ridge Road, 0.5 miles below the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. Park in the plowed pull-off below the curve, cross to the east side of the road and walk the snow bank back uphill to the curve. After descending a steep but short meadow, the route intersects and follows the unplowed Obstruction Point Road. The first 1.5 miles are relatively easy and sheltered by forest. After a steep climb, the route crosses below Steeple Rock and onto a short section of exposed slopes which can be icy and difficult to traverse. After that, the trail flattens and meanders through subalpine forest. Beyond Waterhole, it climbs steeply (see below).

## ◆ Most Difficult

### Hurricane Hill Route

1.6 miles one way

This route starts at the end of the Hurricane Hill Road route and climbs 700 feet to the summit of Hurricane Hill. There are several very steep sidehills if users follow the summer trail route, so use extreme caution under icy or elevated avalanche hazard conditions. As an alternative, skiers and snowshoers can follow the ridgeline, which has fewer steep sections. Be careful to stay off cornices that build up along the lee side of the ridge. Under good conditions, advanced skiers will find this a rewarding trip with good views and some nice slopes.

### Obstruction Point Road: Waterhole to the end

4.3 miles one way

(Obstruction Point Road is 7.8 miles one way)

This route begins at the midway point on the unplowed Obstruction Point Road (see description above for the first 3.4 miles to Waterhole). After Waterhole, the route gains 900 feet, climbing steadily for 0.5 miles to open slopes on Eagle Point. In clear weather, views can be spectacular but steep sidehills and exposure to storms make this a difficult route. It is recommended only under good conditions for experienced skiers. Travel beyond Obstruction Point can entail steep terrain with high avalanche potential.

### Sunrise Ridge

2.1 miles one way

Begin this route by crossing below the intermediate rope tow and tube park, then climbing to the right of the ski hill (stay right of the trees). After crossing under the top of the ski area's intermediate rope tow, this route follows a narrow ridge toward the south side of Mount Angeles. There are several avalanche prone areas along the way, so check conditions and use caution under unstable conditions. Be especially careful to stay off cornices that form along the ridge and side ridges. Several nice slopes on the east side descend to the Hurricane Ridge Road.

## Other Areas

Depending on the snow level, other roads and trails in both the park and in Olympic National Forest may be snow-covered. Check at the visitor center for current snow levels. The Deer Park Road may provide skiing or snowshoeing opportunities. For safety, this steep, narrow road is closed to cars at the park boundary, 9 miles from Highway 101, at around 2,000 feet elevation. The road climbs steadily about 9 more miles from the park boundary up to Blue Mountain. If the snow level is low enough, the road may be skiable from the boundary; but users usually need to hike several miles before reaching snow.

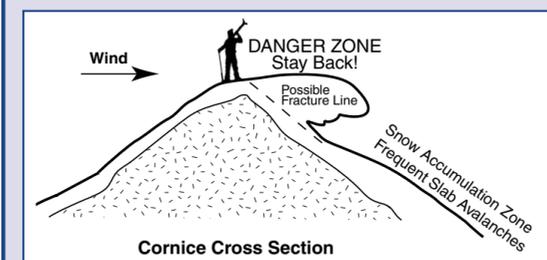
For other routes on the Olympic Peninsula, refer to guides such as *100 Best Cross-Country Ski Trails in Washington*, by Tom Kirkendall and Vicky Spring or *Snowshoe Routes: Washington* by Dan Nelson.

Snowshoers and rime-plastered subalpine firs on a shoulder off the Hurricane Hill Road ski route.

## Avalanche!

Olympic Mountain terrain and weather create ideal conditions for avalanches. Before heading out, check the Northwest Avalanche Center forecast at [www.nwac.us](http://www.nwac.us), and check at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for current local conditions. Wear beacons and carry a probe and snow shovel. The hazard levels range from low to extreme. Even in low hazard conditions avalanches can occur on some slopes. With extreme conditions backcountry travel should be avoided. Certain terrain features, for example steep gullies that funnel snow, unstable cornices (see below), or dark cliff faces on warm spring days, can increase avalanche hazard. The survival rate for avalanche victims is extremely low. If you or a group member are caught in an avalanche, take these steps in your rescue attempt:

- \* Ensure the safety of survivors.
- \* Mark where victims were caught and last seen.
- \* Quickly search downslope from the last seen points for clues.
- \* Search the avalanche debris below the last seen points by probing in a grid pattern with probes, ski tails or poles.
- \* Keep searching! The victim could be inches away from your boots.
- \* Send an extra person for help.
- \* If you are caught, make swimming motions and try to keep yourself on top of the snow. As the snow begins to slow down, push the snow away from your face to create an air pocket.



Overhanging shelves of snow called cornices form on the lee side of windblown ridges. They can be unstable, breaking off far from the edge. Stay back from ridge lines to avoid traveling on unsupported cornices.



Ranger examines the sliding surface of a January 2011 slab avalanche in the Hurricane Ridge area. NPS photo by Dave Turner.

## Hey Kids!

Hurricane Ridge is a fun place to visit in the winter but would you want to live there? Nearly 70 years ago, Herb Crisler, a famous film maker, and his wife spent a winter in the old Hurricane Hill lookout (right). Imagine their experience...



- \* **How did they travel?** Hurricane Ridge receives an average of 32 feet of snow each winter. If your house were up in the mountains, it could be buried! With such deep snow, snowshoes or cross-country skis are essential for efficient travel.
- \* **Batten down the hatches!** Winter storms with hurricane force winds (over 73 mi/118 km per hour) sometimes hit Hurricane Ridge. Many winters gusts over 100 mph are recorded! Notice the cable anchoring the lookout in the photograph.
- \* **Who are your neighbors?** Despite what we might consider pretty tough conditions, Herb and his wife weren't alone on the mountain that winter. Look for tracks of snowshoe hares, squirrels, weasels, bobcats and more on your visit. The snow always has stories to tell!
- \* **Unexpected dangers!** At 5,242 feet elevation there's less atmosphere between us and the sun, so ultraviolet radiation levels can be high. While sunscreen didn't exist in Herb's days, sunglasses and sunscreen are important parts of your winter survival kit!

## Snow Play

Snow sliding is a favorite pastime for some, but it has also been one of the most dangerous activities at Hurricane Ridge. **Serious injuries, even permanent disabilities occurred when people collided with trees, other sliders, or lost control and ended up in the road.**

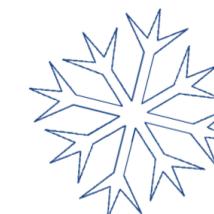
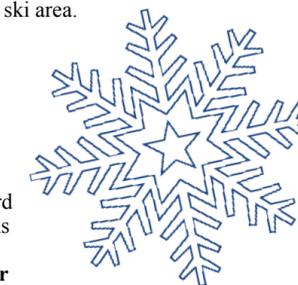
For your safety, sliding/tubing is permitted in only two locations:

- \* The Small Children's Snowplay area near the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center where children eight and under may slide.
- \* The tubing park operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club in the downhill ski area.

**Sliding is not allowed anywhere else in the Hurricane area or along the Hurricane Ridge Road.**

If conditions are too icy to allow safe sliding, the sliding areas may be closed. For the safety of participants, metal or hard plastic runner sleds and wooden toboggans are not permitted. **Only tubes provided by the ski area will be permitted in their tubing park.** Compressed air for inflating inner tubes is not available. To be as safe as possible, please observe the following rules:

- \* Slide only in the designated areas.
- \* For your safety, be sure the path is clear before starting your slide. Collisions can result in injuries. Watch for skiers and snowshoers crossing below the areas.



# Exploring Olympic in Winter

Olympic is a park for all seasons. Visitors prepared for unpredictable weather can experience the beauty and solitude of winter without summer crowds. But winter is the wet season. Snow and rain can swell streams overnight, making crossings treacherous and washing out trails. Camp above flood plains. Boardwalks and bridges are very slippery when wet or icy. On the coast, storms push tides higher, creating huge waves that easily move beach logs or trap hikers on rocks. Winter storms can blow down trees, blocking trails. Be prepared, always carry the 10 essentials, even for short hikes: **extra clothing, extra food and water, map, compass, flashlight, knife, sunglasses, matches, fire starter/candle, first aid kit.**

But don't let winter chase you inside! There are always options for exploring. Stop at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center/Wilderness



Winter in the Hoh Rain Forest, photo by Bryan Bell.

Information Center (WIC) in Port Angeles for maps, tide tables and trail reports or check the park website [www.nps.gov/olym](http://www.nps.gov/olym). If you plan to camp overnight in the park's wilderness, check the above website for information on bear canisters, wilderness fees and required permits, or call the WIC (360) 565-3100. May through September some popular spots, including the coast, have camping limits. See the website for making reservations. For you and your pet's safety, pets are not allowed on trails in the park. The following options are usually accessible in winter, depending on snow level and storm damage.

## Low-Elevation Hiking

**Elwha Valley:** Geysir Valley Loop, West Elwha, Griff Creek, Cascade Rock trails and lower parts of the Elwha River trail.

**Lake Crescent:** Marymere Falls and Spruce Railroad trails.

**Ozette:** Cape Alava or Sand Point trails.

**Mora and La Push:** James Pond, Second, Third and Rialto Beaches.

**Kalaloch:** Short trails to beaches, beach hikes and the forest nature trail.

**Hoh:** Hall of Mosses and Spruce Nature trails, or lower Hoh River trail.

**Quinault:** Nature trails on both sides of the lake, Irely Lake and Cascading Terraces trails, or lower parts of the North Fork and Graves Creek trails.

## High Country Trips

Snow camping requires preparation and many safety precautions, but offers a glimpse into a season that few truly experience. Weather can change quickly. Places like Hurricane Ridge and Blizzard Pass earn their names, and whiteout conditions can occur anytime. Be prepared!

**Hurricane Ridge** offers the easiest access to winter high country. For safety, please observe these rules:

- ❄️ **Overnight campers must get a permit at the WIC, and register and check with a ranger at Hurricane Ridge for camping and parking locations.**
- ❄️ Plan trips for weekends since the road is usually closed Monday through Thursday. If a storm forces a road closure, you may need to install tire chains and have a shovel in case of a snowy descent. Use caution as plow operators may not see you! If you are locked in uphill from the gate, call (360) 565-3000 ext. 0 (before 5:30 p.m.) or (360) 417-2459 after hours.
- ❄️ **Because of the risk of sudden storms, winter overnight parking is not allowed at Hurricane Ridge.** You must park 3.3 miles below the Ridge at Third Peak (see map pages 4-5). Check with rangers at Hurricane to see if a shuttle is available.
- ❄️ Camps must be 1/2 mile away from the Hurricane Ridge parking lot and out of sight of ski/snowshoe trails. Check with a ranger for suggestions.
- ❄️ Use a camp stove. Campfires are prohibited.
- ❄️ Share the trails—avoid walking or snowshoeing in ski tracks.
- ❄️ In emergencies, dial 911 from the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center foyer.
- ❄️ Check avalanche conditions and carry beacons (see page 7).

## Restoring the Elwha

After years of planning and preparation, the largest dam removal in United States history began September 2011. Two years later, removal of the Elwha Dam is complete, less than 40 percent of Glines Canyon Dam remains and the Elwha River flows freely from its headwaters in the Olympic Mountains to the Strait of Juan de Fuca for the first time in 100 years.

As the dams come down and the river returns to its historic channels, the Elwha Valley is experiencing dramatic changes. The Lake Mills and Lake Aldwell reservoirs have drained, revealing the old forest floor now blooming with new life. To date, over 67,000 seedlings and 2,000 pounds of native seed have been planted in the former reservoirs. Millions of cubic yards of sediment, once trapped behind the dams, are washing downstream, expanding the estuary at the river mouth, replenishing beaches, and creating critical habitat for spawning salmon and other marine life.

In fall 2013, the strongest run of Chinook salmon in over 20 years returned to river stretches once blocked by the Elwha Dam, carrying with them marine derived nutrients and restoring a vital link between sea, river and forest. And the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, inhabitants of the Elwha Valley since time immemorial, has renewed access to historic and cultural sites long covered by the waters of Lake Aldwell.

Removal of the dams will be completed in fall 2014, but the story of Elwha River restoration is just beginning. For more information, frequent updates and links to project webcams, visit Olympic National Park's website [www.nps.gov/olym](http://www.nps.gov/olym), share or interact with 'Elwha River Restoration' on Facebook, pick up a brochure at a park visitor center, or take a walk to one of the viewpoints along the Elwha River.

Glines Canyon Dam September 2011 (close), November 2013 (middle). Newly released sediment is building new beach at the river mouth (far right, photo by Tom Roorda).

