

Olympic



Olympic National Park

Elwha Area

A Salmon Homecoming

For millennia, the Klallam people relied on fish nurtured by the Elwha River watershed. That relationship was largely severed in 1913, when the Elwha Dam was built, blocking fish runs five miles from the river mouth. Glines Canyon Dam was completed upstream in 1927. Though a state law required fish passage, both dams were built without it. Thousands of salmon no longer reached most of the Elwha valley.

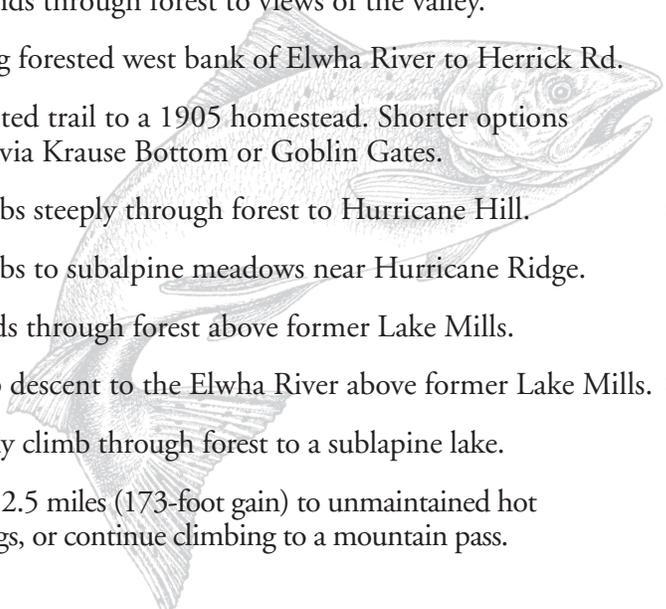
But in 1992, Congress passed a law requiring restoration of this watershed and its fish, and authorizing dam removal. After careful planning, both dams were removed by 2014. Within months of dam removal, salmon were spawning in the park for the first time in 100 years! Look for them as you explore this wilderness valley. Or stop by the Glines Canyon Spillway Overlook to learn more of the story and witness how revegetation crews and nature are greening the exposed sediments of the drained reservoir. The Elwha River Restoration story continues...

Elwha Area Information

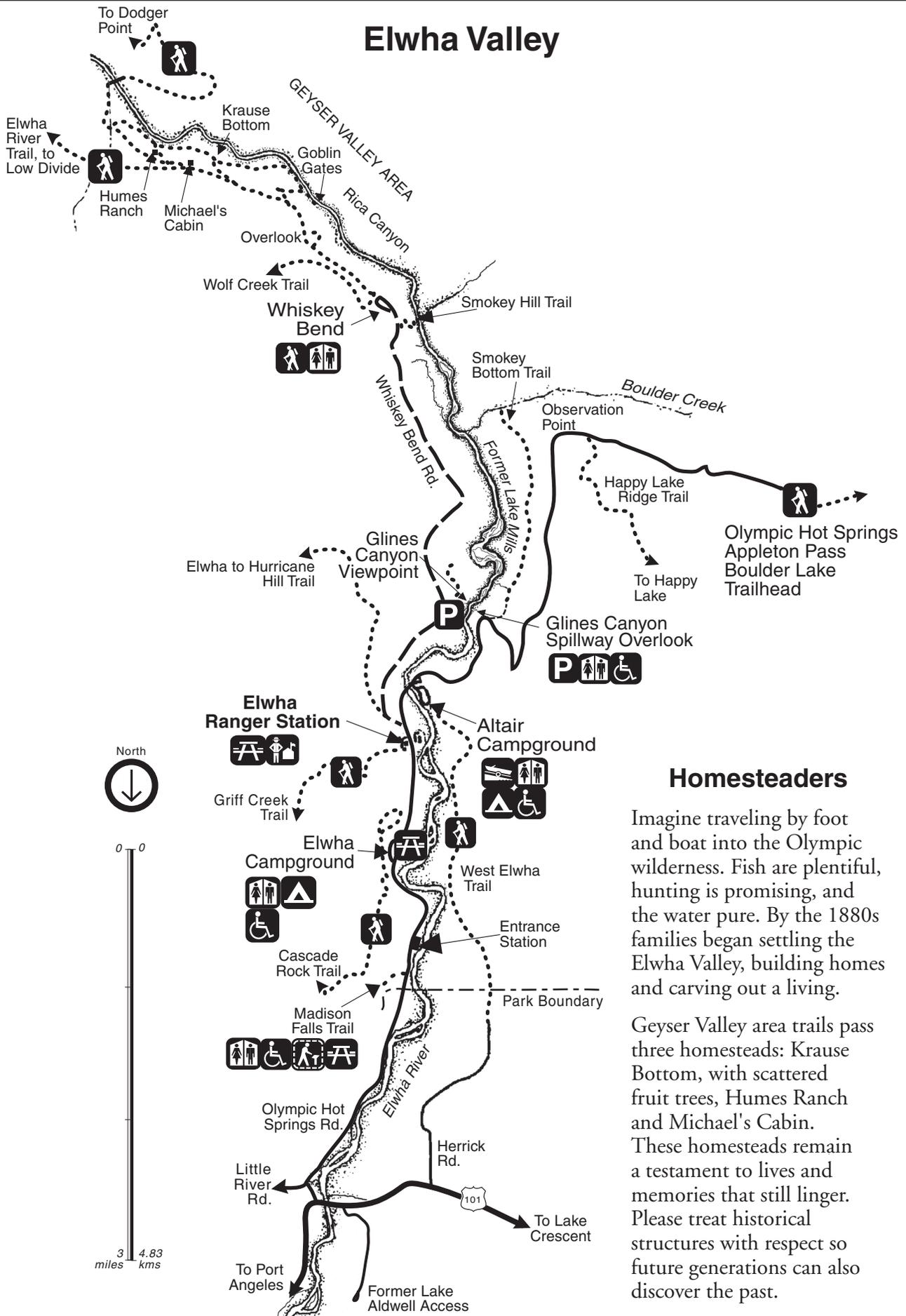
- Facilities:** Elwha Ranger Station: self-serve information and wilderness camping permits; staffed intermittently summers.
- Camping:** Elwha: 40 sites (one wheelchair accessible), open year-round (Nov. thru March: pit toilets, no water.) Altair: **Note: closed in 2015 due to flood damage.** Check locally for current status. When open, both have fire pits with grates, picnic tables, animal-proof food storage, accessible toilets, and potable water (summer only).
- Picnic Areas:** Madison Falls: tables, accessible vault toilet. Elwha Ranger Station: tables 100 yards past ranger station.
- Regulations:** Pets and bicycles are **not** permitted on trails.

Day Hikes Around Elwha

Trail	Description	Miles	Elevation Change
Madison Falls	Wheelchair accessible, paved trail to a 60 ft. waterfall.	0.1 one way	46 ft.
Cascade Rock	Ascends through forest with a spur trail to valley views.	2.1 one way	1,256 ft.
Griff Creek	Ascends through forest to views of the valley.	2.8 one way	2,841 ft.
West Elwha	Along forested west bank of Elwha River to Herrick Rd.	3.2 one way	221 ft.
Humes Ranch Loop	Forested trail to a 1905 homestead. Shorter options loop via Krause Bottom or Goblin Gates.	up to 6.5 loop	up to 665 ft.
Elwha-Hurricane Hill	Climbs steeply through forest to Hurricane Hill.	6.2 one way	5,305 ft.
Wolf Creek	Climbs to subalpine meadows near Hurricane Ridge.	7.9 one way	3,837 ft.
Smokey Bottom	Winds through forest above former Lake Mills.	1.9 one way	18 ft.
Smokey Hill	Steep descent to the Elwha River above former Lake Mills.	0.5 one way	400 ft.
Boulder Lake	Steady climb through forest to a subalpine lake.	5.9 one way	2,505 ft.
Olympic Hot Springs/ Appleton Pass	Hike 2.5 miles (173-foot gain) to unmaintained hot springs, or continue climbing to a mountain pass.	7.7 one way (to Appleton Pass)	3,321 ft.



Elwha Valley



Homesteaders

Imagine traveling by foot and boat into the Olympic wilderness. Fish are plentiful, hunting is promising, and the water pure. By the 1880s families began settling the Elwha Valley, building homes and carving out a living.

Geysers Valley area trails pass three homesteads: Krause Bottom, with scattered fruit trees, Humes Ranch and Michael's Cabin. These homesteads remain a testament to lives and memories that still linger. Please treat historical structures with respect so future generations can also discover the past.