



Washington Native Plant Society

Appreciate, Conserve, and Study Our Native Flora

6310 NE 74th Street, Ste 215E, Seattle, Washington 98115
(206) 527-3210

January 22, 2004

David Craig, Hood Canal Ranger District
Olympic National Forest
P.O. Box 280,
Quilcene, WA 98376.

Dear Mr. Craig:

Members of the Washington Native Plant Society (WNPS) and its Olympic Peninsula Chapter visited the site of the washout of Dosewallips Road on January 18, 2004. We walked the surveyed route, with markers by the U.S. Department of Transportation, for a road to bypass the washed out section of road. This route traverses mature forest including many large western red cedars and Douglas firs. We measured four old growth Douglas firs at 51 inches DBH, 69 inches, DBH, 77 inches DBH, 79 inches DBH and 72 inches DBH.

This is a fully functioning mature forest. It shows no evidence of recent timber felling and has no invasive plants. Its great value, as a reservoir for species requiring old growth habitat and as a recreational resource, is heightened by its proximity to the Buckhorn National Wilderness. We consider mature forests with this density of old growth trees to be among the most important habitats in Washington. Their importance for plants and animals is extensively documented in the Northwest Forest Plan and related studies.

Because of the steep slope, grading and filling for the proposed right-of-way will cut a wide swathe and permanently destroy several acres of mature forest habitat. Many other acres adjacent to the road will also be impacted to a lesser extent. The mandates of the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Federal Land Policy Management Act as implemented through the Northwest Forest Plan clearly argue against a project that would have such an impact on old growth forests. For these reasons, we join Olympic Park Associates in opposing the building of a road on this route.

We do not oppose the re-connection of the road to the Elkhorn campground. However, we strongly encourage the Forest Service to seek an alternative route that will have a lesser permanent long term environmental impact.

A copy of this letter was submitted by Wendy McClure, Chair of our Olympic Peninsula Chapter.

Sincerely yours,

Fred Weinmann, President, Washington Native Plant Society
Michael Marsh, Chair, Conservation Committee, WNPS