

Prepared by:



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THE ELWHA RIVER VALLEY

A SCENIC TOUR

Place
Stamp
Here

Congressman Norm Dicks
c/o

National Parks Conservation Association
313-A First Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104

The second largest restoration project ever in the National Park Service is happening here in the Elwha River Valley, where two 100-foot dams will be removed to restore salmon to the park. Experience the Elwha River, get up close and personal with Glines Canyon Dam and the lake that has formed behind it, and explore the issues surrounding the dams and their impending removal.

THE FUTURE OF SALMON IN THE ELWHA RIVER VALLEY

The Elwha and Glines Canyon Dams, both built without fish passages, prevent salmon from returning to their traditional spawning beds. A vital link in the lifeline of this ecosystem, Chinook, coho, pink, chum and sockeye salmon all used to swim up the Elwha to spawn, some weighing up to 100 pounds. Once the largest producer of salmon on the Peninsula, today the Elwha's salmon returns are closer to 4,000/year. The Elwha River Valley suffers as a consequence.



Cover and above photos courtesy of NPS

Salmon eat other fish while in the ocean, and then return up the Elwha, transferring the riches of the ocean into sustenance for wildlife, forests, people, and the next generation of fish.

Certain plant and tree species, including Sitka Spruce, devil's club and fern, derive much nitrogen from salmon, and as a result, are often larger near spawning sites.

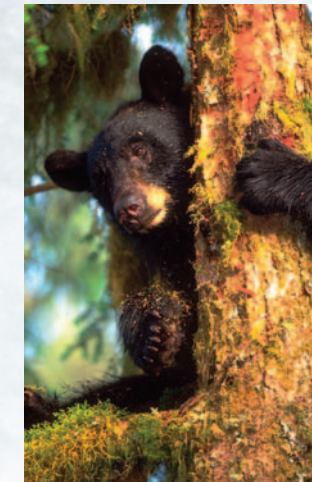
© Duncan Haas



130 species of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife feed on, or derive their life-giving nutrients from, salmon carcasses.



NPS



© Art Wolfe

1927: The Glines Canyon and Elwha Dams are completed, blocking salmon from swimming upstream.

1992: Congress orders Elwha ecosystem restoration

2007: Dam removal begins, and volunteers begin native plant revegetation.

2010: Biologists reintroduce native salmon to upper Elwha River.

2030: Healthy Elwha River Valley is restored!

SALMON RECOVERY TIMELINE

Directions: Visit the Elwha by entering Olympic National Park at the Elwha River Valley entrance, located on Hwy 101. (Note: Stop #1 is located on Hwy 101 before you reach the entrance.)

1

Stop #1: Lake Aldwell Overlook. (Located on Hwy 101.) While Lake Aldwell may appear still and serene, there is actually a lot of activity occurring as you gaze upon the lake. The 105-foot Elwha Dam harnesses the Elwha River for hydroelectric power, creating Lake Aldwell. Built between 1910 and 1913 to supply energy to the local community, the Elwha Dam altered the ecosystem of the Elwha River Valley, turning a river ecosystem into a lake ecosystem. Similarly, the 210-foot Glines Canyon Dam was constructed from 1925-1927, also blocking the river. How do these dams touch the lives of animals, plants and humans in this valley? Continue your drive into the valley to explore their consequences.



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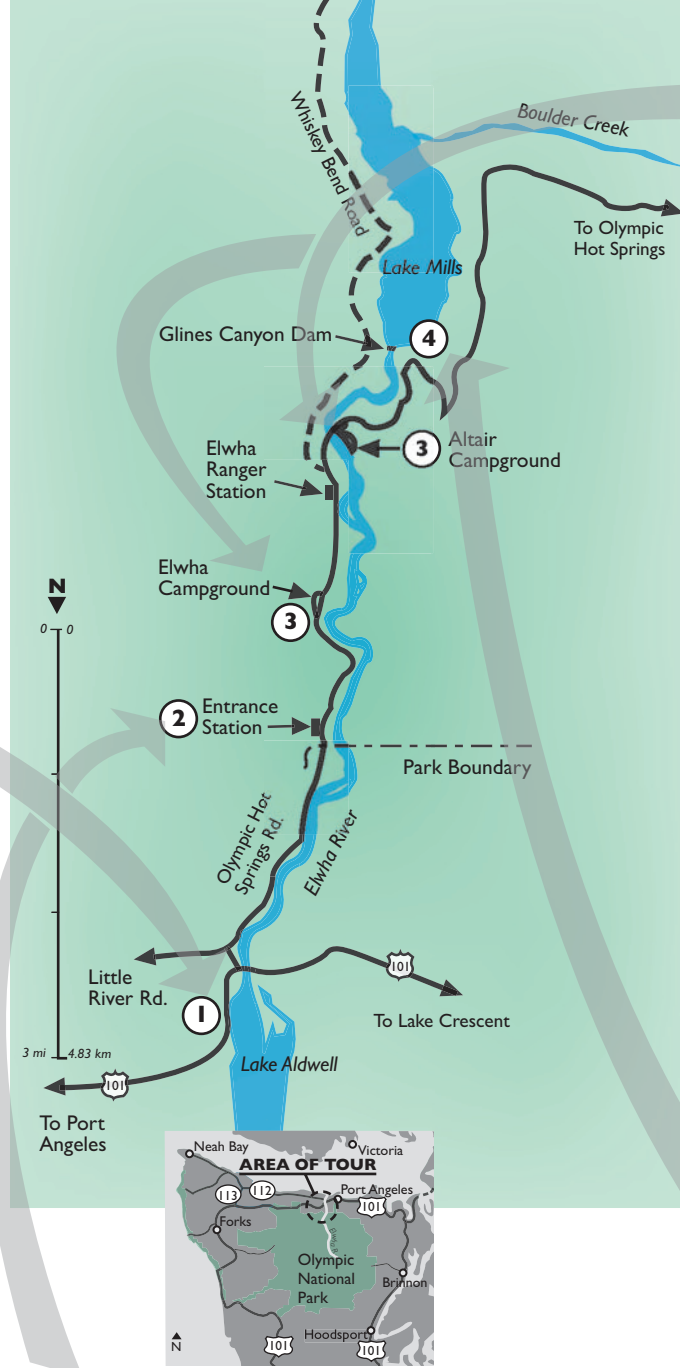


The dams also prevent gravel from moving downstream—nearly eliminating all salmon spawning habitat below the dams.

© Duncan Haas

2

Stop #2: Elwha River Valley entrance. (Stop and pay your Park entrance fee. Proceed along the valley floor.) Welcome to the Elwha River Valley, a critical ecosystem that comprises 19% of Olympic National Park. As you drive, the flowing Elwha River to your right appears much as it would have 100 years ago, cascading 45 miles from the soaring Olympic peaks into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, nourishing the surrounding plant, animal, and human inhabitants of the valley. The fish of the pristine waters of the Elwha have sustained the Klallam people for millennia, and today the river supplies the drinking water for the local Port Angeles community.



3

Stop #3: Any pullout overlooking the Elwha River. (Possible stops include the Elwha or Altair campgrounds.) The Elwha River that you are experiencing today is a salmon-free zone. Only 70 years ago, they were plentiful. A local Port Angeles resident, Dick Goin, remembers a time when he was a child: "When I was a lad in the late '30s, there would be several hundred thousand salmon. From the mouth to the dam and from bank to bank it was like maggots; it was just crawling. You couldn't see the stream bottoms."



NPS

4

Stop #4: Glines Canyon Dam and Lake Mills. (Parking available at the dam and lakeside.) To ensure the complete restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem, in 1992 the U.S. Congress passed the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act, which resulted in the removal of both the Glines Canyon and the Elwha Dams. Removal is scheduled to begin in 2007. Come back to this site in a few years, and what you see now will be drastically altered. The dam will be gone; the lake will be drained. The river will eventually be restored to its free-flowing state, from the Olympics to the Strait. Return to this site in 30 years, and you may see salmon once again battling the untamed Elwha, nourishing this ecosystem and the park.



Photo courtesy of Olympic National Park/NPS

TAKE ACTION!



NPCA

U.S. Congressman Norm Dicks, Olympic National Park's representative, has championed Elwha restoration over the last decade. It's time to say thank you! Write a postcard today and tell Rep. Dicks that you appreciate his years of leadership and continued support of Elwha River restoration.

Learn more at:

www.npca.org/field/northwest.asp

Thank you for your continued support of the Elwha!

Dear Congressman Dicks,

As a visitor to Olympic National Park, I'd like to thank you for your continued support of Elwha River restoration. I agree that salmon should once again return to the Elwha, and truly appreciate your leadership in making restoration a reality.

.....

Name
 Address
 City, State, Zip