

GMP Dynamic Sourcebook - Appendix C: Examples of Legal Requirement Sections

C.1 Boundary Adjustments and Land Protection Criteria

Excerpt from the Mount Rainier NP GMP

As one of the provisions of Public Law 95-625, the National Park and Recreation Act of 1978, Congress directed that the National Park Service consider, as part of a planning process, what modifications of external boundaries might be necessary to carry out park purposes. Subsequent to this act, Congress also passed Public Law 101-628, the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act. Section 1216 of this act directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop criteria to evaluate any proposed changes to the existing boundaries of individual park units. Section 1217 of the act calls for the National Park Service to consult with affected agencies and others regarding a proposed boundary change, and to provide a cost estimate of acquisition cost, if any, related to the boundary adjustment.

These legislative provisions are implemented through NPS *Management Policies*, which state that the National Park Service will conduct studies of potential boundary adjustments and may make boundary revisions:

- to include significant resources or opportunities for public enjoyment related to the purposes of the park
- to address operational and management issues
- to improve identification by topographic or other natural features
- to protect park resources critical to fulfilling park purposes

NPS policies and special directive 92-11 instruct that any recommendation to expand park boundaries be preceded by determinations that the added lands will be feasible to administer considering size, configuration, ownership, cost and other factors, and that other alternatives for management and resource protection have been considered and are not adequate.

The following is a review of the criteria for boundary adjustments as applied to Mount Rainier National Park. This review is included as supporting documentation for the alternatives 2-and 3, which includes a recommendation for a boundary change along the Carbon River corridor contiguous with the Northwest quadrant of the park.

This plan does not address the legislative requirement to provide a cost estimate for the boundary adjustment. However, the legislative proposal for the boundary adjustment and accompanying support materials would include a cost estimate.

Boundary Change Proposal — Carbon River Corridor

The proposed boundary change would seek congressional authorization for an addition of approximately 1,063 acres to Mount Rainier National Park. Also recommended would be an accompanying authorization to appropriate funds to the National Park Service from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to immediately purchase, on a willing seller basis, 210 acres within the revised boundary for purposes of developing a new vehicular accessible campground and administrative area along the Carbon River.

Significant Resources or Opportunities for Public Enjoyment Related to the Purpose of Mount Rainier National Park

The boundary modification would allow the National Park Service to provide both enhanced and replacement vehicular accessible campground for the public along a scenic and protected section of the Carbon River immediately west of the current park entrance. This new campground would be in addition to the existing Ipsut Creek campground, which would be converted to a facility that would be accessible only by foot or nonmotorized vehicle. It is anticipated that a future naturally occurring flood event will permanently preclude motorized vehicle access to the Ipsut Creek campground located some 5 miles up the Carbon River Valley from the current entrance. The Ipsut Creek campground would then be converted to a walk-in campground. Therefore, this boundary change will enable the development of a new campground within the Carbon River, in turn providing more recreational opportunities to the public. Its development will also help to mitigate the loss of recreational use caused by the anticipated future closure of the Ipsut Creek campground to vehicular access.

Operational and Management Issues Related to Access and Boundary Identification by Topographic or Other Natural Features

The proposed boundary change will follow a dedicated county road on the south and an established section line on the north side of the Carbon River on the north. The proposed boundary is contiguous with the existing park boundary on the east. On the west, multiple ownerships and the west side of the county road right-of-way would frame the western boundary north of Carbon River Road. Given these features and topography, the National Park Service will be able to easily identify and mark the amended boundary of the park. The proposed boundary also allows the National Park Service to move certain administrative facilities from the current park entrance, which are in a floodplain, to an area within the proposed new campground site that is not in a floodplain.

Protection of Park Resources and Fulfillment of Park Purpose

The proposed boundary change will protect additional areas along the Carbon River corridor directly adjacent to the park. This includes protection of both scenic and natural resources, and includes protection of the road corridor entering the park from the west, and protection of the Carbon River and its environs. Portions of the proposed addition also contain designated critical habitat for marbled murrelets a threatened species.

The addition of about 1,063 acres to Mount Rainier National Park also would provide additional public recreation opportunities that are not currently present, including a new vehicular accessible campground, sites for group camping, additional miles of non-motorized hiking trails, and additional accessible riverbank fishing, and an appropriate southeast terminus of the foothills trail.

Feasibility to Administer the Lands Added through Boundary Adjustment

The proposed addition is very feasible for the National Park Service to manage. Alternatives 2 and 3 both include a permanent visitor contact facility (welcome center) in the nearby community of Wilkeson. This would include resource protection and interpretive staff that would be available to strategically serve the proposed approximate 1,063-acre boundary addition, as well as the Carbon River/Mowich areas of the park. Also, the proposed campground site offers opportunities for the siting of certain administrative/ maintenance facilities, which would enhance on-site capabilities for staff to meet varying situations within the Carbon River/Mowich area of the park.

Protection Alternatives Considered

Regarding the proposed campground area, other locations were considered, but rejected. This is the closest large area to the existing park boundary that is conducive to camping that is outside of the floodplain of the Carbon River. A willing seller is involved in the proposed acquisition of the site. Regarding other lands within the proposed boundary addition, one parcel is a proposed land donation to the National Park Service by a non-profit entity. Other lands with the proposed boundary addition can either be managed by the National Park Service or by the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. In any event, an addition to the park boundary affords the best opportunity to provide for future public recreational use of the area, along with the protection of important scenic and natural resources within a National Park setting.

Proposed Additions to the Mount Rainier National Park Boundary and Other Adjustments

Under the preferred alternative, about 1,063 acres are proposed for inclusion within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park. Congressional action would be required to authorize this change, and authorize and appropriate the funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which would be necessary to acquire interests in private lands from willing sellers. About 14 parcels of private lands would need to be acquired within the proposed boundary change. Some land within the proposed boundary change is currently managed by the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. These lands could either be administratively transferred to the National Park Service, or retained as part of the National Forest.