



Crater Lake National Park

General Management Plan, Newsletter 2

July 2001

Dear Friends,

Our general management planning process for Crater Lake National Park continues. The purpose of the general management plan (GMP) is to identify the future of Crater Lake National Park and to map out a clear management direction for the next 15 to 20 years. The GMP will provide guidance to keep the natural, cultural, and scenic resources unimpaired for future generations, protect wilderness values, and nurture visitor understanding. The planning process begins with reaffirming the purpose and significance of the park, identifying future conditions, recognizing existing laws and policies, developing alternatives, and evaluating impacts of those alternatives in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The process involves interaction with other government agencies, neighbors, visitors, and you, the general public.

Many of you responded to our first newsletter or attended our open houses in April. We received 72 written comments to the survey in the first newsletter, and 96 people attended one of the four open houses held in Klamath Falls, Medford, Roseburg, and Salem. We thank all of you for your time and thoughtful comments. With your help, we have been able to complete the park purpose and significance statements that serve as the foundation for the rest of the planning process. We also asked you for comments on various issues facing the park. These are summarized in this newsletter, and we will continue to refer to them as we develop the general management plan.

We invite you to stay involved in this process. During the summer, the planning team will begin working on preliminary management zones that include desired visitor experiences within the park. We want to identify the types of experiences that might be available in the park and the resource conditions and facilities that would be compatible with each experience. Later, in late fall or early winter, we will use these zones to develop alternatives. We anticipate sharing the preliminary management zones and draft alternatives with you sometime next winter and will request your input through another newsletter.

Thank you for continuing to share your ideas.

Chuck Lundy
Superintendent
Crater Lake National Park

In our first newsletter, we asked for your comments on the purpose and significance statements. Of the 72 responses received, over half expressed agreement with the draft statements. Very few people suggested changes. Those who did, suggested that we include more detail and expand the statements to clarify the balance between preservation and the enjoyment and benefit of public access. Others recommended new statements that expressed the biological uniqueness of the lake, placing more importance on the high elevation pristine forests within the park and the significance of isolated destinations. We have carefully considered all comments received and incorporated as many as possible into the final draft of the purpose and significance statements.

For clarification, the following concepts were used to guide our revisions:

Park purposes statements are based on the specific legislation and associated legislative history for each park. The statements serve to remind us of the original reasons for which the park was set aside as part of the national park system and provide the foundation for park management and use.

Park significance statements place each park within its current regional, national, and international context. They provide a means to recognize important resources or characteristics that were perhaps not recognized at the time of establishment. Defining park significance helps managers make decisions that preserve the resources and values necessary to accomplish the park's purposes.

The following revised purpose and significance statements will be used as the foundation for the next phase of the general management plan.



Crater Lake National Park was established in 1902, "...dedicated and set apart forever as a public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States." In managing this park, the National Park Service is charged with "...preservation of the natural objects...the protection of the timber, and ...the preservation of all kinds of game and fish." The National Park Service is committed to "...forever preserve the beauty of Crater Lake National Park, its unique ecological and cultural heritage; and to foster understanding and appreciation through enjoyment, education and inspiration." The NPS Organic Act of 1916 directs that the fundamental purpose of all parks is "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Significance

- Crater Lake is one of the most famous lakes on earth, principally because of the beauty imparted by its large size, blue color, mountain setting, and ever changing character.
- Crater Lake lies in a caldera that was left by the climactic eruption of Mount Mazama more than 7,700 years ago. The circular caldera exposes geologic history and is considered a unique model for how volcanoes and subsequent calderas evolve. At a depth of 1,947 feet, Crater Lake is the 7th deepest lake in the world and holds the world record for clarity among great lakes.
- Crater Lake is unique among the world's large lakes due to its geologic origin and its physical, chemical, and biological characteristics. Because of these characteristics and pristine waters, Crater Lake offers world-class opportunities to study lake ecosystem processes, global climate change, and an unusual assemblage of aquatic organisms.
- In addition to the lake, the forests that surround Crater Lake have never been logged and are largely preserved in their pristine condition. These mature forests harbor a variety of plant and animal life that are characteristic of higher elevations in the Cascade Range. Because extensive alteration of forestland has taken place elsewhere in the Cascade Range, some of these plants and animals are rare. The park forests, combined with the surrounding forest landscape, provide a contiguous experience. Those forests within the park boundary add unique opportunities for solitary and wilderness experiences.

- Some of the nation's best examples of blending rustic architecture and other built features with a national park setting can be seen at Rim Village, Park Headquarters in Munson Valley, and along Rim Drive. Much of Rim Village and Park Headquarters are within districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rim Drive is in the process of being nominated to the national register.
- Crater Lake is of enduring importance to contemporary members of American Indian tribes because of its centrality to long-standing cultural traditions and resource harvesting activities, as well as its symbolic significance as a sacred site. The park is part of a larger cultural landscape that extends well beyond park boundaries.
- The unique natural and cultural resources of Crater Lake National Park provide exemplary opportunities for students and educators.

Issues — A Summary of Your Responses

We had excellent response to our first newsletter. Seventy-two written comments to the survey in the first newsletter were received, and 96 people attended one of four open houses. Four issues received the greatest number of comment: snowmobiling, boundary expansion, logging and fire management, and impacts to surrounding communities.

Snowmobiling was the issue that brought the greatest number of comments. A large number of people commented that we should expand or have no limitations on snowmobile use. Close in number of responses was that snowmobile use should be kept at the same level. A relatively small number of those commenting on snowmobiling felt that we should eliminate or further limit snowmobile use.

Closely associated with the snowmobile issue was boundary expansion. Many of those opposed to boundary enlargement were snowmobilers. Boundary expansion to the north could eliminate a network hub of snowmobile trails. A smaller number of people desired boundary expansion due to a range of reasons — some to provide a buffer for the park to protect resources; others felt it would promote economic development in the region.

A surprising number of people commented on logging

and fire management. Many people commented that logging should be considered for fire management or maintenance of timber stands. Some were opposed to logging and a few extended this opposition to outside park boundaries into the surrounding area and region. A few people thought prescribed burning would help to remove dead trees. A larger number felt we should protect against fire damage.

Possible impacts on the surrounding communities and region were the fourth issue to receive comments. Several suggestions proposed moving development and housing out of the park. Close to the same number felt housing should remain in the park. Several people recommended forming partnerships in the region. Others were concerned with the economic impact that management changes could have on businesses in the area. A few comments were concerned with protecting regional ecosystems.

A number of park use issues were mentioned — winter use, winter ski camps and lodging, hiking, biking, picnicking, horseback riding, camping, and backcountry use. We also received comments on interpretation, operations, and resources management. These comments and suggestions will be considered during formulation of the alternatives. Some comments about park operations are too detailed to be addressed by the general management plan. These comments will be considered by the park staff to improve current and future operations in other detailed plans.

How Will Your Issues Be Addressed in the GMP

Your comments were varied and helpful in making us aware of your concerns about Crater Lake. Some comments provided overall direction for the park, some gave specific ideas for making a better visitor experience. All comments received in response to the newsletter and the public open houses have been considered and will remain in the administrative record throughout the planning process. A summary and listing of the public comments are available to the public and can be obtained through the superintendent.

The general management plan sets overall direction and is intended to provide conceptual guidance.



The GMP will

- ensure protection of the park's resources
- consider alternative futures consistent with the park's purpose and significance statements
- address management of visitor numbers and access
- comply with all applicable laws and NPS policies

The GMP will not

- address the comments concerning logging and fire management in a detailed way. The overriding concepts will be addressed. Those comments and others providing more detail on resource management, interpretation, and maintenance will be looked at and considered in future plans.
- deal with detailed management and maintenance suggestions received. These comments are, however, considered important and have been forwarded to the park staff to help them serve you better in the future.

The Planning Process — Where are We?

Park planning is organized around three primary questions:

1. **WHY** was the park established (what is its overall mission?)

Statements of the park's purpose and significance provide answers to the **WHY** questions and form the foundation for the general management plan. This step has now been completed.

2. **WHAT** is the vision for the future (what kind of places do we want it to be?)

Developing a vision for the park's future is the primary role of the general management plan. Comments from park visitors and the general public are very important

in the identification of issues and desired visitor experiences. This is where we are now.

In this newsletter we build on the purpose and significance statements to identify some of the types of visitor experiences that may be applicable to Crater Lake National Park. We need your comments on this preliminary list.

This summer information will be used in the development of possible visions for the future (called alternatives). Evaluating a set of alternatives enables us to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one course of action over another and provides the sound approach to decision making required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

3. **HOW** do we accomplish our future vision (what actions are needed to create this desired future?)

Most **HOW** questions will be answered in new or revised implementation plans, such as resource management plans, interpretive plans, and others that follow the general management plan.

What's Next

Management Zoning

One of the tools we use in park planning is management zoning. Management zones identify how different areas of a park could be managed to achieve a variety of resource conditions and serve recreational needs. Each zone specifies a particular combination of physical, biological, social, and visitor experiences. The National Park Service would take different actions in different zones with regard to the types and levels of uses and facilities.

At this point, we want to identify the types of visitor experiences that might be made available in the park and the resource conditions and facilities that would be compatible with each experience. We are not trying to list specific activities in which visitors might participate or designate their locations, but rather to capture the "feel" of the park under varying conditions. These are broad descriptions that can be arranged eventually, with your input, into alternative management zoning concepts.



Alternatives

Based on information gathered from public comment, the park's enabling legislation, and data collected, NPS staff will develop possible visions for the future (called alternatives). The alternatives will be developed by placing the management zones in different locations or configurations. These configurations could be similar to or quite different from existing conditions.

In all cases, responsibilities of the National Park Service would continue in accordance with its 1916 establishing legislation: "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

These alternatives will be sent to you in newsletter #3, due out winter of 2001-2002. You will be asked to give your thoughts on the positive and negative aspects of each alternative. As we receive your input we will be evaluating the impacts of each alternative. Evaluating a set of alternatives enables us to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one course of action over another and provides the sound approach to decision making required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Based on your input, resource impacts, and the visitor experience, we will pick a preferred alternative. The preferred alternative may have aspects from several of the original alternatives, or it may have new components based on suggestions we receive from you. The preferred will be sent to you as a draft plan for your evaluation and input again. We anticipate sending this to you early in 2003.



Where we are now

Step	Planning Activity	Your Involvement Opportunity
1	Initiate Project The planning team assembles, begins to identify the project's scope and issues, and customizes the planning process.	
2	Identify Planning Context Based on the park's enabling legislation, the team examines WHY the park was established and reaffirms the park's significance. Team members collect and analyze relevant data and public input needed for planning.	Comment on newsletter #1. Attend public open houses.
3	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives The planning team explores WHAT the park's future should look like and proposes a range of reasonable alternatives for its future.	Send in your comments on newsletter #2. Attend public meetings/open houses.
4	Prepare a Draft Document Based on the impacts identified in the environmental impact statement and public comment, the team identifies a preferred alternative. A draft general management plan/environmental impact statement is published. The draft document describes the planning context, sets the foundation for HOW management alternatives would attain desired future conditions, and determine the impacts of implementing each of the alternatives.	Send in your comments on the draft plan.
5	Publish Final Document Based on public comment, environmental analysis, and other information, the team revises the draft general management plan/environmental impact statement and distributes a final plan to the public.	
6	Implement the Approved Plan After the record of decision is issued, when funding is available, implement the approved management plan.	