

CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Introduction

The Dosewallips Road Washout Project (DRWP) addresses conditions created by a storm in January 2002 which washed away a portion of Forest Service Road (FSR) 2610. Subsequent storms also damaged a portion of Olympic National Park's (ONP's or park's) Dosewallips Road about 4 miles west of the damage on FSR 2610. Reestablishing road access is needed to restore motorized access to developed recreation facilities on both the Olympic National Forest (ONF, FS or Forest) and ONP thereby meeting Forest objectives and desired conditions as identified in the Olympic National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990) and park goals and mission. This draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) assesses three alternatives for reestablishing road access on FSR 2610, with the proposed repair to Dosewallips Road in the park being consistent with each of the alternatives. The ONF of the U.S. Forest Service and Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are co-lead agencies in the preparation of this DEIS, and the ONP is a cooperating agency. Collectively all three are referred to as the Agencies.

Document Structure

Olympic National Forest and WFLHD, in cooperation with ONP, have prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws, regulations, and policies. These include, but are not limited to the regulations of the Council of Environmental Quality (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500), National Park Service Director's Order – 12, Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision Making, and the other laws listed in Chapter 3 of this DEIS under *Compliance with Other Laws, Regulations, and Policies*. This EIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives.

This EIS will provide the analysis and supporting rationale for each agency Responsible Official to make a decision concerning their authority, documented in separate decision documents (called Record of Decisions [ROD]). ONF, WFLHD, and ONP personnel have worked on this EIS. While the intent was to produce a seamless document, due to subtle differences in each agency's analysis requirements there are sections of this EIS which are only pertinent to one agency. An example would be the park requirement to analyze potential effects to determine if actions would impair park resources. These differences are noted as they occur throughout the document.

The document is organized into four chapters:

- *Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action:* The chapter includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the Agencies' proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also describes how the public was informed of the proposal and their responses.
- *Chapter 2. Alternatives, including the Proposed Action:* This chapter provides a more detailed description of the Agencies' proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose and need. These alternatives were framed based on issues raised by the public and other agencies. This chapter also contains a description of alternatives

considered but eliminated, mitigation measures, and a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.

- *Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences:* This chapter describes the affected environment and environmental effects of implementing the alternatives. The analyses are organized by the issues identified in Chapter 1.
- *Chapter 4. Supporting Information:* This chapter provides a list of preparers, distribution lists for the EIS, glossary, abbreviations, references, and index.

Additional documentation, including more detailed resource specialist reports, may be found in the project analysis file located at Olympic National Forest headquarters in Olympia, Washington.

Agency Responsibility and Funding

The ONF and WFLHD are co-lead agencies, and the ONP is a cooperating agency, in addressing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for proposed road work and in the preparation of this DEIS. The ONF and ONP have a shared land management responsibility regarding the road access provided by FSR 2610 and the park's Dosewallips Road. These roads help both agencies meet goals and management strategies. Successful completion of this EIS is mutually beneficial because it would assist both parties in meeting legal/jurisdictional obligations in an environmentally sound manner and would foster interagency consistency.

The proposed repair of the washout along FSR 2610 is being developed as part of the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) category of the FHWA Federal Lands Highway Program, which is financed by the Federal Highway Trust Fund. At this time there is no anticipated funding for needed repairs on the Dosewallips Road within the ONP, but the ONP may seek ERFO funding for the proposed repair at mile post (MP) 0.85 near the Dosewallips Falls.

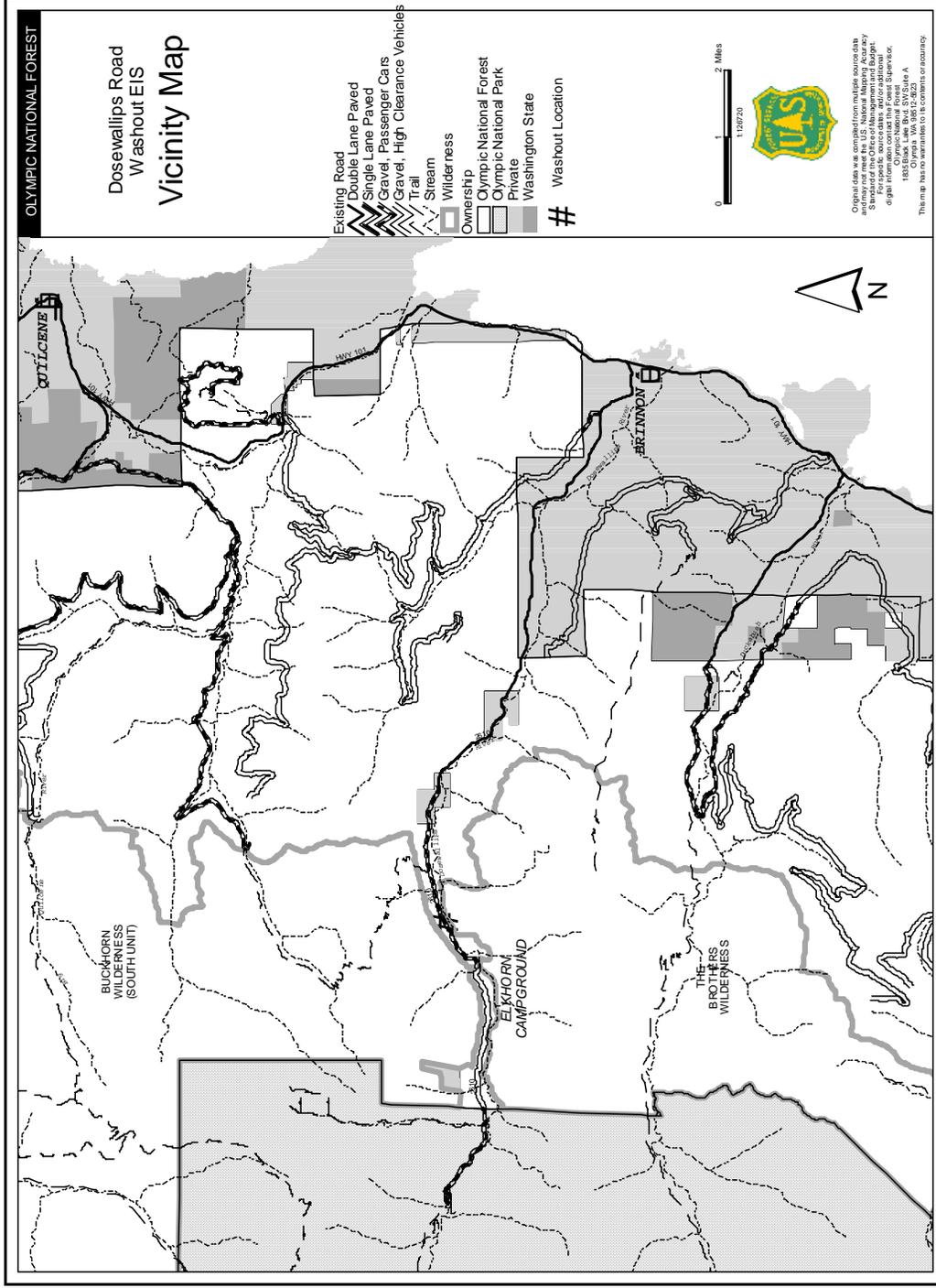
Project Location

The project areas (includes both damaged sites) are located in Jefferson County, Washington. The first damaged site is located on the Hood Canal Ranger District of the Olympic National Forest (Figure 1). Proposed ONF activities at this site are located along Forest Service Road (FSR) 2610 about 10 miles west of Highway 101 and Brinnon, Washington. This site location is at about milepost (MP) 3.1, which indicates it is 3.1 miles up FSR 2610 from the Forest boundary (Figure 2). The project area is bounded on the north by the Buckhorn Wilderness, on the south by The Brothers Wilderness, and is within the Dosewallips Key Watershed (74,400 acres) as identified in the Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision (USDA/USDI 1994). The legal description is Township 26 North, Range 3 West, Sections 16 and 17. About 4 miles west of the damage on FSR 2610 is the other damaged area, which is on ONP land located along Dosewallips Road. Its legal description is Township 26 North, Range 4 West, Sections 23 and 24 (Figure 3).

The 14.9 mile long Dosewallips River road parallels the Dosewallips River and provides access up the Dosewallips River valley (Figure 4). The road begins at Highway 101 near Brinnon, Washington and ends at ONP Dosewallips Ranger Station and campground. It passes through Jefferson County, ONF, and ONP jurisdictions.

- The initial 6.8 miles are designated CR 2500 and is a two-lane paved road managed by Jefferson County.
- The next 6.4 miles (designated FSR 2610) are managed by ONF. It is a single-lane road surfaced with crushed aggregate up to Elkhorn Campground (currently maintained for passenger cars), and crushed aggregate and an improved native material surface beyond the campground to ONP boundary (was maintained for high clearance vehicles).
- The last 1.7 miles are managed by ONP and is narrow with an improved native material surface.

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



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Figure 2: Washout site showing river, FSR 2610, and proposed reroute

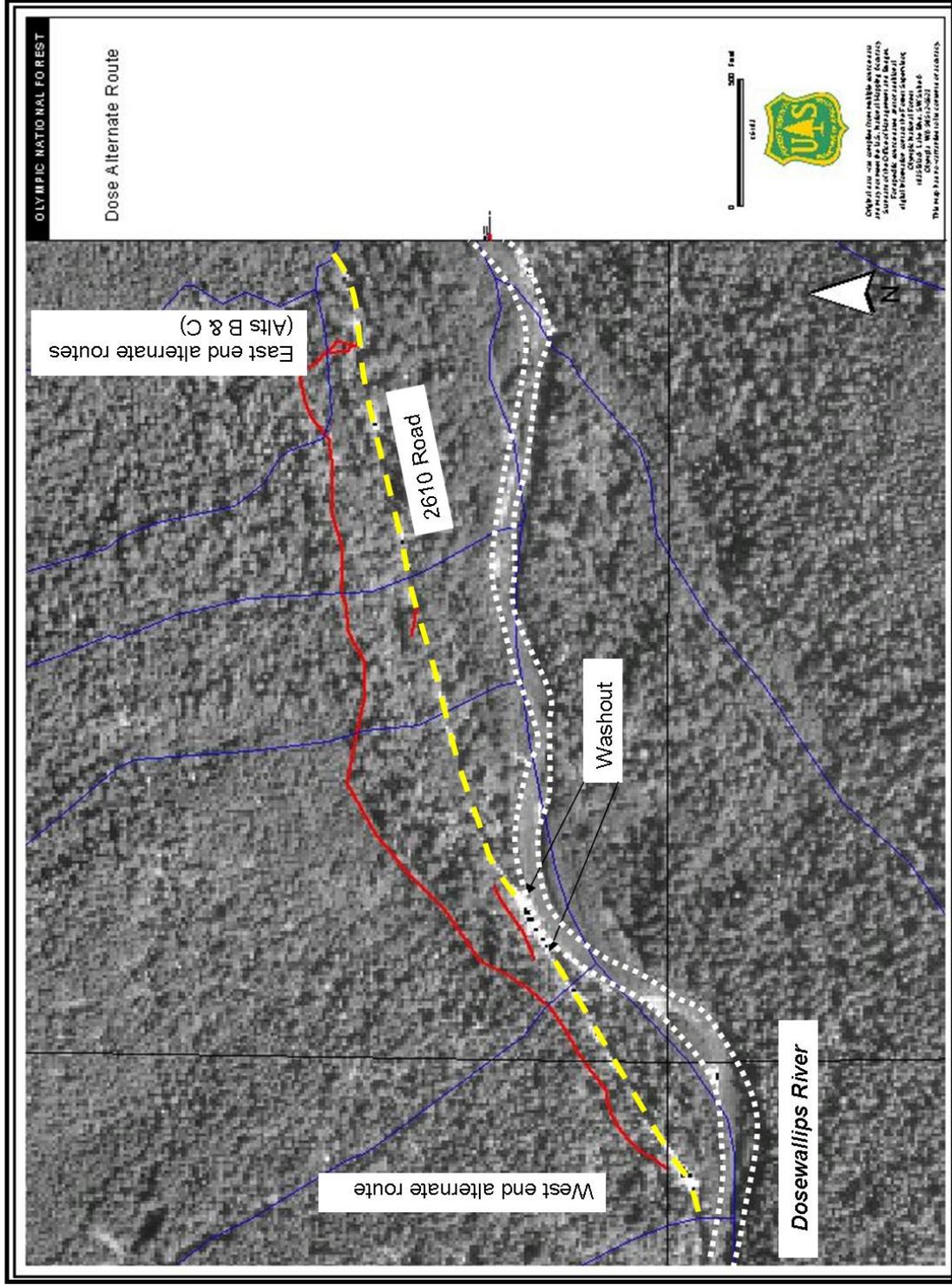


Figure 3: Location of ONP facilities and proposed activity area

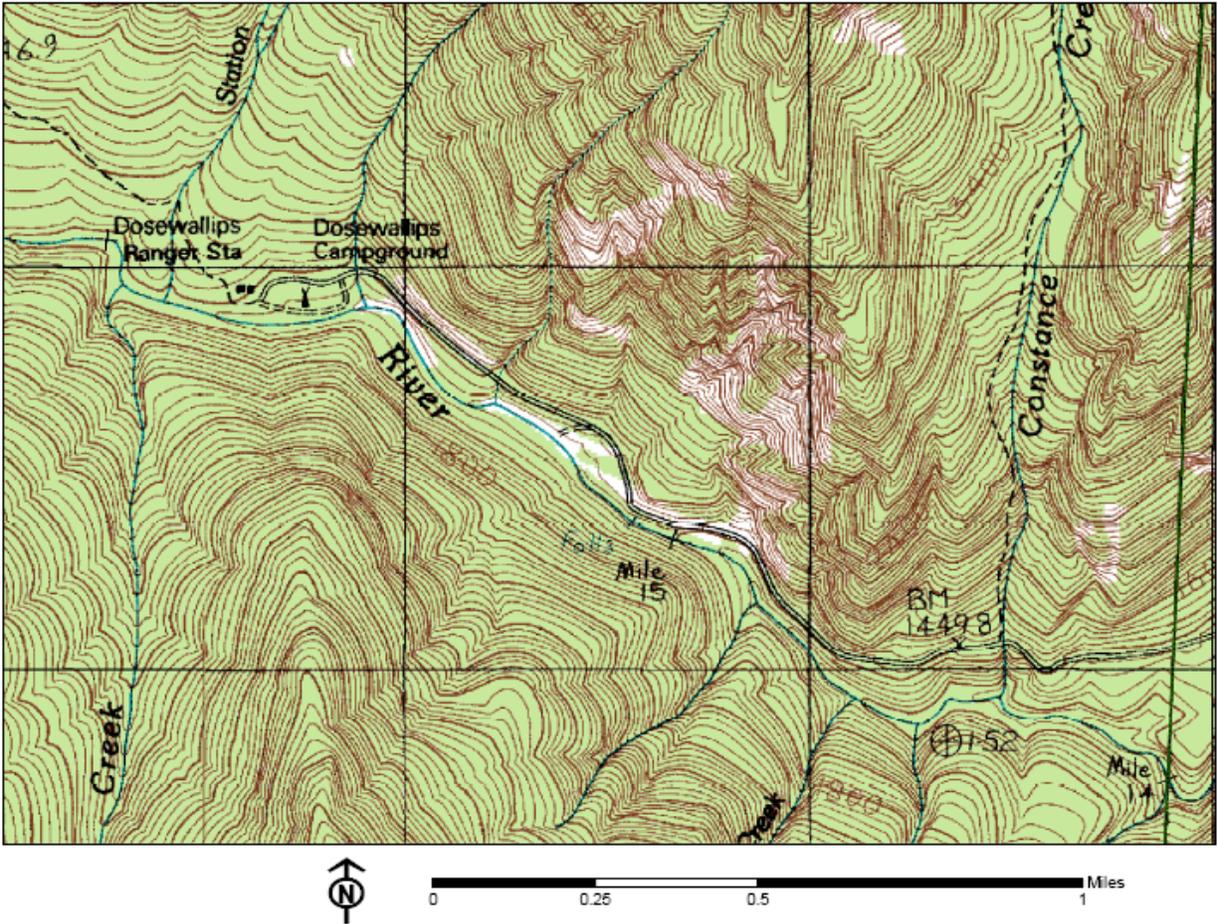
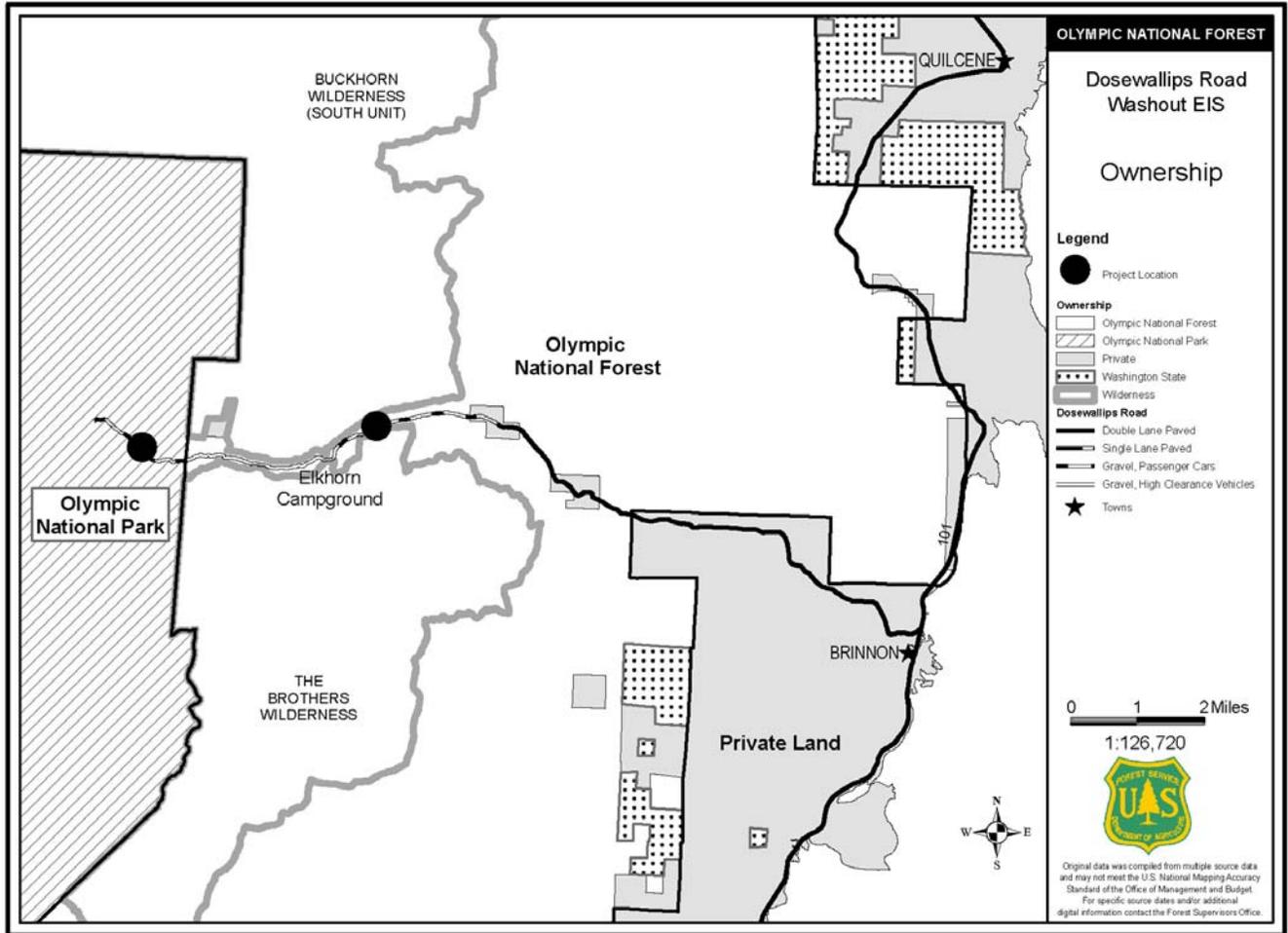


Figure 4: Dosewallips Road and land ownership



Background

During a storm in January 2002 approximately 320 feet of FSR 2610 washed away. The washout site has been surveyed and measured a number of times (2004, 2006, and 2007) since the washout. This monitoring indicates that the outside bend of the river at the washout continues to progress into the bank (lateral shift) and migrate slowly downstream (translation). The change since 2002 has been about 8 to 9 feet per year laterally with a 10 to 15 feet per year downstream translation. The end result is the washout has increased in length to about 510 feet as measured in December 2007 and further into the hill (Figures 5 and 6). The washout cut off road access to approximately 5 miles of FS and ONP roads which had provided access to the ONF Elkhorn Campground and the ONP Dosewallips Ranger Station, campground, and several trailheads. FSR 2610 and the Dosewallips Road provide one of two motorized access portals into ONP on the east side of the Olympic peninsula.

FSR 2610 is a single lane road with turnouts, surfaced with aggregate (crushed rock). This road up to Elkhorn Campground, which includes the washout section, is maintained for passenger cars (FS maintenance level 3)¹. Prior to the washout it had also provided access to Elkhorn Campground for vehicles pulling trailers and recreational vehicles (RVs). In 2001 approximately 1900 people used campsites at Elkhorn.

Figure 5: FSR 2610 washout area looking north from end of the road (spring 2006)



¹ Maintenance Level 3 – This is a FS designation and means the road is open to public travel and is maintained for passenger car use.

In May 2002 the Forest Service prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze management alternatives to address the conditions created by the washout. Based on a need for additional information, the EA was revised in February 2003. After a public comment period on the February 2003 EA, a decision was made in March 2004 to reestablish road access via a reroute located upslope and north of the washout. This decision was subsequently withdrawn to complete a more detailed analysis, which is documented in this draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

Figure 6: Washout on FSR 2610 looking toward the north (late 2007)



In late 2003 about 120 feet of the Dosewallips Road in the ONP at MP 0.85 (0.85 miles from the park boundary and about 4 miles from the washout on FSR 2610) near the Dosewallips Falls sustained damage when log retaining walls failed (Figure 7). These cedar log retaining structures were constructed in the 1940's along a very steep area of the exposed bedrock side channel and supported the outbound lane of the road. Failure of the retaining structures resulted in slumping of the road fill material (Figure 8).

Figure 7: ONP Dosewallips Road at MP 0.85



The Dosewallips Road is an extension of FSR 2610 that dead-ends in the park. It is a single lane road with turnouts, surfaced with aggregate, and is maintained at park primitive road standards. A steep section of the road in the vicinity of the road failure is not recommended for large RVs and vehicles pulling trailers. Prior to the washout and road failure it had provided access to the Dosewallips Campground, Ranger Station, and to a major cross-park trailhead for two trails (the Main Fork and West Fork Dosewallips trails). Lake Constance and Constance Pass trails are also in this area. This is where the road dead-ends in the park and the site where most motorists who travel over FSR 2610 and Dosewallips Road are destined to visit as it is the entrance into the designated ONP wilderness areas. In 1999 approximately 4300 vehicles used the Dosewallips Road annually, and in 2001 use levels were at about 200 vehicles per day (counted in both directions). The road also provided motorized access for park trail maintenance operations on the east side of ONP and a helicopter search and rescue base located near the campground.

Figure 8: Retaining structure failure

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations as the underlying purpose and need to which an agency is responding. It discusses the relationship between the existing condition and the desired condition (described by agency goals and objectives).

Existing Condition

FSR 2610 has washed out (Figure 9) at about MP 3.1, and the ONP Dosewallips Road at MP 0.85 beyond the park boundary is damaged and nearly impassible due to a failure of the road's log structure retaining wall. These two roads had provided motorized access to both ONF and ONP recreational facilities along the Dosewallips River, including the Dosewallips Campground and trailhead where the Dosewallips Road dead-ends in ONP. For the park in particular, motorized access had facilitated single day use, provided trailhead access for multi-day hikes, and allowed park visitors who were unable to walk long distances an opportunity to visit a more remote area of the park.

Figure 9: High bank at the washout in November 2007



Desired Condition

The desired condition is to restore public and administrative motorized access to pre-washout standards on FSR 2610 and ONP Dosewallips Road to existing FS and ONP recreational facilities along the Dosewallips River. Access for passenger cars, vehicles pulling trailers, and RVs would be provided to Elkhorn Campground, with passenger car access to Dosewallips Campground, Ranger Station, and trailheads.

Project Purpose

Based on the established need as identified by the difference between the existing and desired conditions for FSR 2610 and Dosewallips Road, the purpose of this project is to reestablish road access on FSR 2610 and Dosewallips Road to ONF and ONP recreational facilities.

This project is consistent with direction in the 1990 ONF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended (including proposed project specific non-significant amendments). The Forest Plan established management prescription *A3 Developed Recreation Sites and Administrative Sites* for the Elkhorn Campground area. This management prescription is dependent on the road access provided by FSR 2610. The Forest Plan also identified this site for reconstruction/expansion to meet the projected increase in demand for developed campgrounds (USDA 1990a). The Northwest Forest Plan amendment (USDA/USDI 1994) also provides management direction for the project area, identifying the area as Late-Successional Reserve and

Riparian Reserve. This direction envisions that existing uses and developments will remain as maintenance of existing facilities is expected to have less effect on current old-growth conditions than development of new facilities.

The park's road system, in this case the Dosewallips Road, is managed to facilitate accomplishment of park purpose, significance, and mission. Park roads are intended to enhance visitor experience while providing safe and efficient accommodation of park visitors and to serve essential management access needs. Roads are both a means and an end for visitors – they enable one visitor to reach a desired goal, for another they are the goal. FSR 2610 and ONP Dosewallips Road help meet the ONP mission as they provide one of the two motorized access points on the east side of the park. The roads provide access for a more primitive recreational experience for park visitors than those found at the more developed sites with road access elsewhere in the park. This assists the park in meeting its goal of providing a wide range of recreational opportunities.

Proposed Action

A proposed action is a proposal to authorize, recommend, or implement an action to meet a specific purpose and need. It is formed at that stage in the development of an action when agencies; in this case the ONF, WFLHD, and ONP; have goals and are actively preparing to make a decision on one or more alternative means to accomplish those goals (40 CFR 1508.23). It is a starting point from which to help focus identification of issues and alternatives. The proposed action is separate from the “preferred alternative” and “environmentally preferred alternative”. The preferred alternative is the alternative which the agency believes would fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, technical, and other factors. A preferred alternative will not be identified in this document but will be in the Final EIS. The environmentally preferred alternative is that alternative which will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101 and will not be identified in this document but will be in the Final EIS.

The FS and WFLHD propose to meet the primary purpose and need by restoring road access on FSR 2610 and Dosewallips Road to the access condition which existed prior to the storm events. Initially the proposed action was to rebuild FSR 2610 through the washout area with a low-water crossing, which was formerly Alternative E. However Alternative E was dropped from further consideration, and now the proposed action is Alternative B (as described in the revised Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on May 11, 2007). With Alternative B, FSR 2610 would be rerouted along the hillslope above and to the north of the washout to restore access for passenger cars, recreational vehicles, and vehicles pulling trailers. Approximately 0.84 mile of single lane road with turnouts would be constructed using standard construction methods. At the damaged site on Dosewallips Road, approximately 120 feet of road would be repaired and reconstructed to current road standards. A retaining wall would be constructed, and no in-stream work would be required.

Should Alternative B be selected, then the ONF would also need to include a proposal for non-significant Forest Plan amendments, which would waive compliance for this project with certain standards and guidelines for Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves as identified in the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest.

The proposed action is described in more detail in Chapter 2 under Alternative B.

Decision Framework

As a result of this EIS, the FS and FHWA responsible officials (Olympic National Forest Supervisor and WFLHD Division Engineer) will decide whether and how road access on FSR 2610 will be restored and what management requirements, mitigation measures, and monitoring requirements to include as part of the project. The FS will also determine what if any Forest Plan amendments will be required. The decision will include a statement regarding consistency with the Forest Plan and other laws and regulations.

National Park Service (NPS) and FHWA responsible officials (Regional Director, Pacific West Region and WFLHD Division Engineer) will make a decision on restoring road access on the park's Dosewallips Road, which will include any mitigation measures, and management and monitoring requirements. This decision will include a determination on impairment.

Forest Service Management Direction

This EIS is tiered to the Olympic National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) approved July 17, 1990, (USDA 1990b) as amended. A major amendment includes the FSEIS on Management of Habitat of Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, as adopted and modified by the April 1994 Record of Decision (1994 NWFP ROD) (USDA/USDI 1994), which provides additional standards and guidelines (commonly known as the Northwest Forest Plan). Northwest Forest Plan documents, including the Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines, are available on the internet at <http://www.reo.gov>.

This EIS incorporates by reference the following documents:

- Olympic National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) (USDA 1990a). The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities and establishes management standards and guidelines.
- Dosewallips Watershed Analysis (USDA 1999). The purpose of this analysis is to develop and document a scientifically based understanding of the ecological structures, functions, processes and interactions occurring within the watershed.
- Hood Canal North Late Successional Reserve Assessment (USDA 1996). This assessment examines the historic and current uses, vegetative conditions, and late-successional forest associated species within the late successional reserve (LSR), as well as identifying appropriate treatments to achieve desired conditions. The Assessment determined that continued recreation use and operation of developed campgrounds (including Elkhorn) within the LSR would not interfere with accomplishment of LSR objectives.
- Olympic National Forest Access and Travel Management Plan (ATM) (USDA 2003). The objective of this planning process was to develop a framework for managing the Forest's present road system in a safe and environmentally sound manner in the context of substantially reduced road maintenance funding. This plan provides the starting point for moving toward a smaller, more affordable road network, and informs future analyses and decisions regarding management of the Forest's road system.
- Geomorphic Processes and Habitat Conditions Along the Dosewallips River in the Vicinity of the Washout on US Forest Service Road 2610 (Cenderelli et al. 2003). This

document summarizes geomorphic characteristics, processes, and aquatic habitat conditions along the Dosewallips River in the vicinity of the washout.

- Dosewallips Road Washout – Choosing by Advantages (CBA) Analysis (USDA 2005a). This is a decision making system or process which bases decisions on the importance of the advantages between alternatives (see following discussion for a more detailed description).
- Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Memo – Guidance on the Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis (CEQ 2005).
- Dosewallips Road Washout analysis file – contains specialist reports and other technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusions in this EIS.

A Choosing by Advantages (CBA) Analysis was completed in early May 2005 for this project by a team of Forest Service and park specialists. Forest Supervisor Dale Hom requested this analysis as a means to provide additional insights into the project apart from the NEPA process. This decision making process is based on the importance of advantages and results in recommendations based on a comparison of the advantages between the alternatives. Factors, elements, or components to consider in making the recommendations were identified for the project. The relative advantage each alternative had in addressing these factors was used to make overall recommendations. Results of this analysis provide another source of information for the decision to be made on this project.

The lands within the Forest Service analysis area are allocated to a number of management areas identified in the Forest Plan, as amended. These allocations are briefly described below and shown in figures 10 and 11. Note that these figures were based on the Forest's hydrologic database which has not been updated to reflect the current geospatial relationship between FSR 2610 and the Dosewallips River. See Figure 2 for a true representation of river and road locations. For a more detailed description of each allocation refer to the Forest Plan.

The 1994 ROD (USDA/USDI 1994) incorporates seven land allocations (three of which are found in the project area: Congressionally Reserved Areas, Late-Successional Reserve, and Riparian Reserve) which amend the allocations described in the 1990 Forest Plan. There is considerable overlap among some allocations, and more than one set of standards and guidelines apply (such as Riparian Reserve requirements within a Late Successional Reserve). In addition, standards and guidelines and land allocations in the 1990 Forest Plan not directly superseded remain in effect, and where these standards and guidelines are more restrictive or provide greater benefits to late-successional forest related species than do those of the 1994 ROD, the 1990 standards and guidelines apply.

Congressionally Reserved Areas – These areas include lands with congressional designations that normally preclude timber harvest, such as Wildernesses, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Monuments. Management of these lands follows direction written in applicable legislation or plans. Management Prescription B1 in the Forest Plan (USDA 1990a) applies to Olympic National Forest lands classified as Wilderness in the 1984 Washington Wilderness Act and later adjusted in the 1986 Forest/park boundary changes. The primary goal is to preserve and protect in perpetuity the primeval character and influence of Wilderness.

There are two Wilderness areas near the project area. The Buckhorn Wilderness area is to the north and The Brothers Wilderness area is to the south. No project activities are proposed within Wilderness.

Late-Successional Reserves - Late-Successional Reserves (LSR) are identified with an objective to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems, which serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth related species, including the northern spotted owl. Road construction in LSR for silviculture, salvage, and other activities is not generally recommended unless potential benefits exceed the costs of habitat impairment.

The project area is located within the Hood Canal North LSR.

Riparian Reserves - Riparian Reserves (RR) are portions of watersheds where riparian-dependent resources receive primary emphasis and where special standards and guidelines apply. As a general rule standards and guidelines for Riparian Reserves prohibit or regulate activities in Riparian Reserves that retard or prevent attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. Riparian Reserves include those portions of a watershed required for maintaining hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological processes that directly affect standing and flowing waterbodies such as lakes and ponds, wetlands, streams, stream processes, and fish habitats. Riparian Reserves occur at the margins of standing and flowing water, intermittent stream channels, ephemeral ponds, and wetlands. They generally parallel the stream network but also include other areas necessary for maintaining hydraulic, geomorphic, and ecological processes.

For fish-bearing streams, riparian reserves consist of the stream and the area on each side of the stream extending from the edges of the active stream channel to the top of the inner gorge, or to the outer edges of the 100-year floodplain, or to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation, or to a distance equal to the height of two site-potential trees, or 300 feet slope distance (600 feet total, including both sides of the stream channel), whichever is greatest. The two differing criteria for nonfish-bearing streams is only one site-potential tree height is used and the slope distance is reduced to 150 feet.

The interdisciplinary team considered the entire FS project area as Riparian Reserve, although as mapped, a portion of the terrace area in the reroute alternatives is outside the RR area.

Key Watershed – Key Watersheds overlay portions of other land allocations designated under the Northwest Forest Plan and place additional management requirements on activities in these areas. As one of the four components of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy they form a system of large refugia comprising watersheds that are crucial to at-risk fish species and stocks, and provide high quality water. Tier 1 (Aquatic Conservation Emphasis) Key Watersheds contribute directly to conservation of at-risk anadromous salmonid, bull trout, and resident fish species.

The Dosewallips watershed is designated as a Tier 1 Key Watershed. The majority of the watershed, 92 percent, is in federal ownership. Ownership by acreages are: ONP – 47,200, ONF – 21,600, and state/private – 5,600.

A1B Undeveloped Recreation (Motorized) – The primary goal of this management area is to provide a variety of undeveloped recreation opportunities in areas characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment in a Semi-Primitive setting where motorized use may be permitted. Facilities should be kept to a minimum but provided when needed for access, resource protection, safety, and habitat improvement.

This management area is primarily found just north of the road proposed in the reroute alternatives (a small section of the east end of the road reroute proposal is within this allocation), and in areas along FSR 2610 upstream of the washout.

A2 Scenic – The primary goal of this management area is to manage specific landscapes in such a manner that their scenic values are protected, maintained, and/or enhanced as viewed from major travel routes, use areas, or water bodies.

This management area is found at the end of FSR 2610040 (a short spur road off FSR 2610 upstream of the washout), approximately one quarter mile southwest of the project area.

A3 Developed Recreation Sites and Administrative Sites – The primary goal of this management area is to provide readily accessible, appropriately designed facilities for concentrated use by people seeking a convenient recreational experience, employees performing duties, and visitors seeking information.

This management prescription is found at the Forest's Elkhorn Campground, located off FSR 2610 about 1 mile past the washout. FSR 2610-050 accesses the campground.

A4BN River Corridors – Natural Management Rivers - The primary goal of this management area is to retain the inherent values of these rivers and to provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities in a pleasing scenic environment while maintaining or enhancing wildlife and fish habitat. Some evidence of timber harvest and housing may be visible, but the shorelines are generally undeveloped. The forest along the riverbanks generally appears natural when viewed from the river. The rivers are accessed in places by roads. Roads may reach and occasionally bridge rivers.

The west ends of the proposed road reroutes are within this management area allocation. Additionally it is found along the Dosewallips River upstream and downstream of the project area.

C3 Bald Eagle Management Areas – The primary goal of this management area is to provide sufficient habitat for nesting and wintering bald eagles so as to expedite their removal from the Federal and State threatened or endangered species lists. Additional goals are to: 1) provide a long-term natural gene pool of all species, plant and animal, found in this ecosystem; 2) provide an area to study this type of ecosystem; and 3) provide for aesthetic needs.

The washout area and majority of Forest Service proposed activities occur within this management area allocation.

E1 Timber Management – The primary goal of this management area is to produce timber on a long-term sustained yield basis.

This management area allocation is found down river of the project area, approximately one half mile to the southeast.

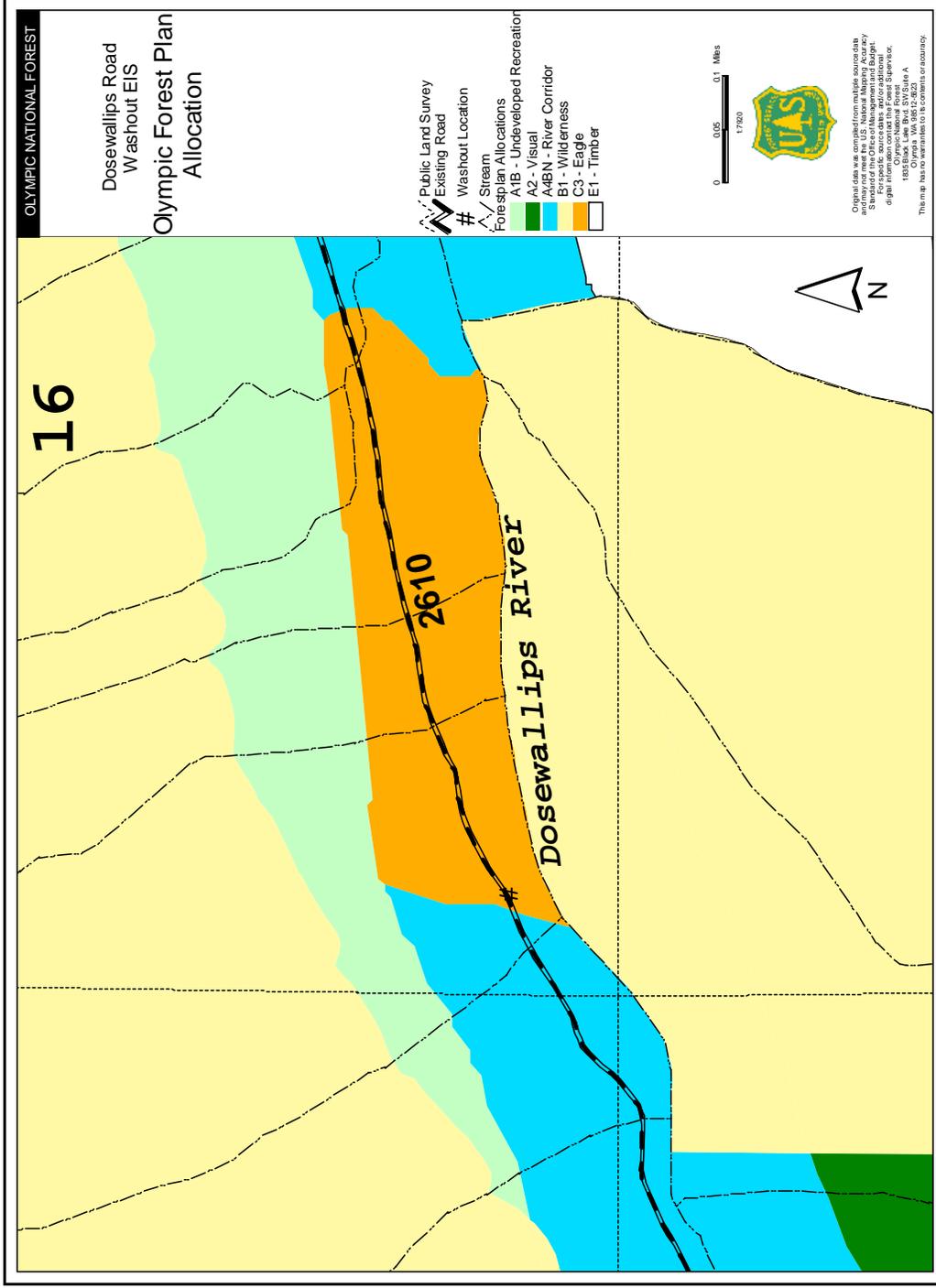
F2 Riparian Areas – The primary goal is to protect, manage, or improve the unique values of riparian areas for wildlife and fish habitat, and water quality.

This management allocation is not mapped but consists of the zone extending 200 feet on each side of a streamcourse or other water body.

Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) – The area directly south of the Dosewallips River and east of The Brothers Wilderness lies within the Jupiter Ridge IRA. Management of IRAs is currently governed by the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (USDA 2001). All activities associated with the proposed action and all other alternatives considered in this assessment would occur well outside the Jupiter Ridge IRA (the nearest boundary is approximately one quarter mile southeast of proposed activities) and thus would have no effect on its roadless characteristics.

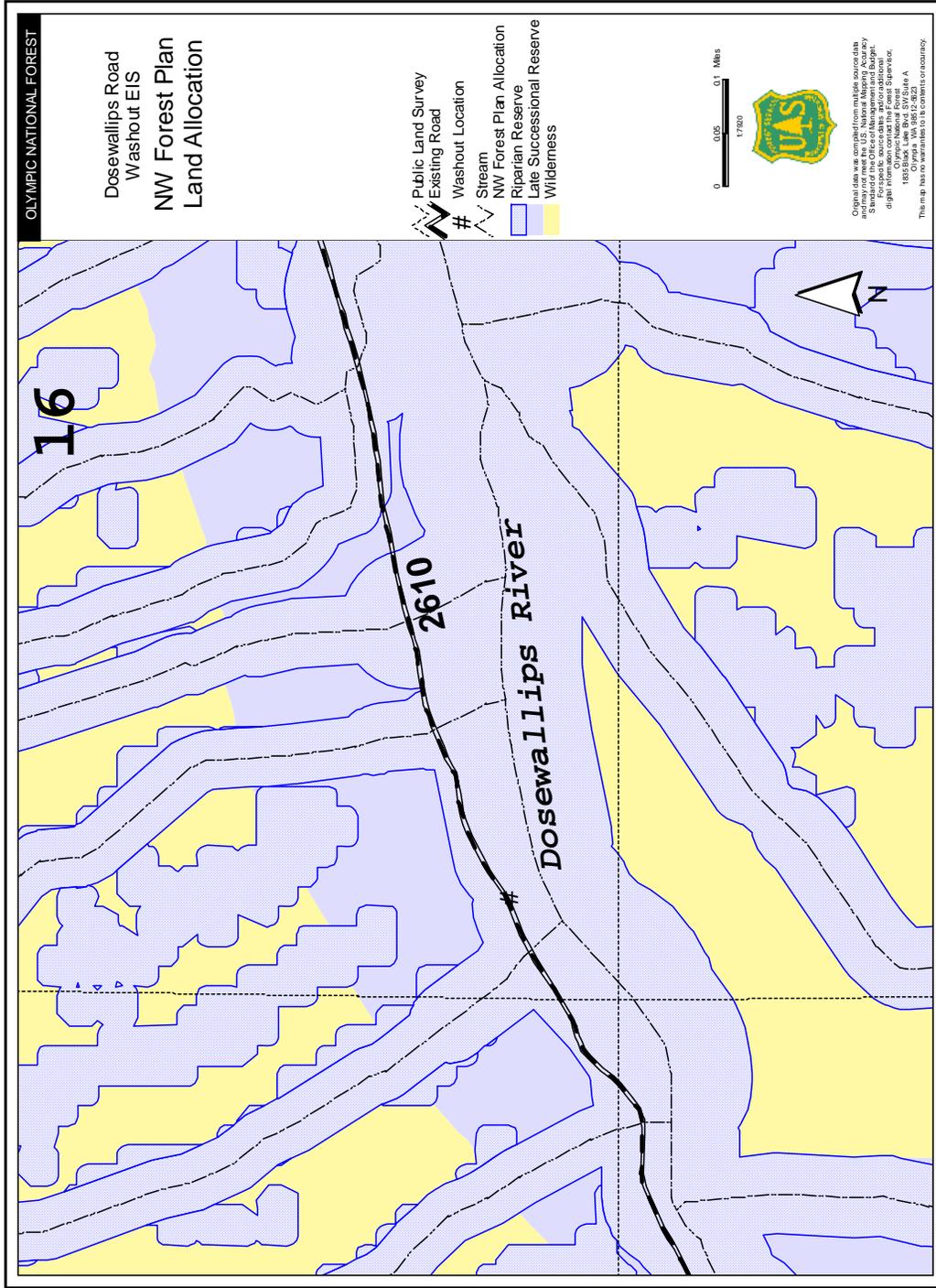
Roads Analysis - Forest Service Manual 7712.15 provides that decisions made after January 12, 2002, must be informed by a roads analysis unless the Responsible Official determines that such an analysis is not needed. This EIS analysis is informed by the Forest's Road Management Strategy and the Hood Canal District Access and Travel Management Plan, which in combination, form the Forest's roads analysis.

Figure 10: Forest Plan allocations



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Figure 11: NW Forest Plan allocations



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ONP Management Direction

Park activities are directed by the following two management documents.

- 1) Olympic National Park Master Plan (ONP 1976). This plan outlines park purposes to preserve, protect, and interpret, for the enjoyment and benefit of the American people. The plan integrates park actions into the natural environment of ONP. Established goals related to access have also been addressed in this master plan.
- 2) Olympic National Park Statement for Management (ONP 1996). This document includes information regarding the park's purpose, the natural and cultural resources found in the park and their significance, the legislative history, and the jurisdiction over ONP and the surrounding areas of the peninsula.

ONP is currently developing a general management plan (GMP). The draft GMP was released for public review from June 15 to September 30, 2006. The park anticipates final completion of the GMP in 2008. The GMP will evaluate existing and future potential road access objectives and alternatives for ONP, including the Dosewallips area. While the ONP has not selected an alternative for the GMP, the proposed action is consistent with ONP's preferred alternative identified in their draft plan. Until the GMP is finalized the park operates under the existing management strategy as defined in the management documents described above.

Public Involvement

To keep the public informed about this project and help identify project related issues, a number of public involvement strategies have been used over the life of this project, since the damage occurred to FSR 2610 in 2002. All comments received from the initial scoping conducted in March 2002 through those submitted on this EIS have been included in the analysis file and have been considered during this current analysis.

Project scoping initially began with a scoping letter sent to interested publics and local, state, and federal government agencies on March 22, 2002. On May 30, 2002, the initial environmental assessment (EA) was made available for public comment. Additionally an open house was held at the Hood Canal Ranger District Office in Quilcene on June 18, 2002. The project was also listed in the Forest's quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). After the public comment period for the 2002 EA, further studies resulted in additional information becoming available.

The additional information was analyzed in a revision of the 2002 EA. The revised EA was completed and made available for public comment on February 27, 2003, through a letter sent to the project mailing list, legal notice in the newspaper of record, and news releases. A decision to reestablish road access via an upslope reroute was made on March 22, 2004. This decision was announced through letters sent to the project mailing list, legal notice in the newspaper of record, and a news release. This decision was subsequently withdrawn in order to complete additional analysis, documented in this EIS.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for this project was published in the Federal Register on August 12, 2005. Minor corrections to the NOI (location clarification and park email address) were published in the Federal Register on August 26, 2005. The notice asked that comments on the proposed action be received within 30 days following publication of the notice. A revised

NOI was published on May 11, 2007 to notify the public of a change in the proposed action as well as a delay in when the draft EIS would be completed. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the Forest mailed 267 scoping letters on August 16, 2005, to interested publics and local, state, and federal government agencies. There was also a news release for the project, and it has been included in the Forest's quarterly SOPA. Over 100 comments on the proposed action were received and considered in the development of this DEIS.

Tribal Consultation

The FS has been conducting on-going consultation with tribal governments throughout the development of this project in recognition of their government to government relationship with them. There have been letters to tribal governments and personal contacts by the Hood Canal District Ranger with representatives of the Jamestown S'Klallam, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, and Skokomish Tribes concerning this project. Tribal resource specialists have been invited to and have attended interdisciplinary team (IDT) meetings for this EIS. Tribal concerns included that a road decommissioning-convert to trail option was not fully considered in this analysis, as well as concerns about potential impacts to river and old-growth resources.

Issues

In addition to issues identified by the Agencies, comments from the public, other agencies, and tribes were used to identify issues concerning the proposed action that are truly important to the action and thus deserving of study. The identified issues are also being used to aid in distinguishing and comparing the alternatives. The final decision will be based on a comparison of the respective alternative's ability to address the identified issues as well as the overall purpose and need for the proposed action.

Non-significant issues were identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations explain this delineation in 40 CFR 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec 1506.3)...". A list of non-significant issues and reasons why they were found non-significant may be found later in this chapter.

Issues for Detailed Study

Road Management

The proposed action would have short-term construction and long-term maintenance costs, and user safety is an important consideration.

Indicators: Construction costs.
 Maintenance costs.
 User safety.

Geotechnical and Geomorphic Processes

Concerns were expressed regarding the uncertainty of geotechnical conditions along the proposed reroute alternatives for FSR 2610, especially in the area of slope stability. Also an

understanding of the geomorphic processes (those processes which create or shape land forms) is important in evaluating the alternatives and in understanding the dismissal of those alternatives which would repair FSR 2610 in the river channel approximately on the original road location along the river. Geomorphic processes have the potential to affect future structure failures and sediment (spawning gravel) supply.

Indicators: Discussion of slope stability.
Discussion of river (fluvial) processes and sediment (spawning gravel) supply.

Soil Productivity

Some concerns were expressed that newly constructed or reconstructed roads have the potential to locally reduce soil productivity and negatively impact site productivity, water quality, and aquatic habitat conditions. These and other associated management activities could result in soil compaction, surface erosion, mass wasting (such as landslides), modifications of surface and subsurface hydrology, alteration of wetland functions, and sedimentation into nearby streamcourses. Others think that these concerns can be addressed through appropriate project design and implementation of mitigation measures.

Indicators: Narrative description of the effects of activities on soil productivity, hillslope hydrology and sedimentation to streamcourses, including:

- Area in detrimental soil condition (short and long-term), loss or gain in soil productivity (quantitative), and expected surface erosion (qualitative).
- Hillslope hydrology, including possible alteration of both surface and subsurface water flows and wetland areas.

Aquatic Species and Habitat Conditions

Fish bearing streams within the project area include the Dosewallips River and an unnamed tributary located just downstream of the washout. Some are concerned that road reconstruction may alter channel dynamics, sediment delivery, and riparian conditions in these waterbodies. They think the proposed action could affect the amount and quality of spawning and rearing habitat for a number of anadromous fish species, including Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed Chinook salmon. Others think that road access can be restored in an environmentally acceptable manner and that effects to aquatic habitat can be kept to acceptable levels through project design and mitigation measures.

Indicator: Narrative description incorporating selected indicators taken from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) “Matrix of Pathway and Indicators”, which include: sediment, large woody debris, pool frequency and quality, off-channel habitat, width/depth ratio, streambank condition, drainage network increase, road density and location, temperature, and riparian reserve function.

Terrestrial Species and Habitat

Some are concerned that proposed activities may affect Threatened or Endangered (T&E) species; FS Sensitive species; Management Indicator Species (MIS); Species of Concern; the habitat functions of Late-Successional Reserves; or the functions of marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl critical habitat units. Others think that road access can be restored in an

environmentally acceptable manner, and the effects to terrestrial wildlife and habitat can be kept to acceptable levels through project design and mitigation measures.

Indicators: Narrative description of effects and effect determinations to the above mentioned species groups and habitats.
Amount of late-successional reserve acres removed through road construction.

Botanical Species and Habitat

Concerns were expressed that project activities have the potential to affect botanical species and habitat.

Indicator: Degree of effects to FS Sensitive botanical species and habitat.

Invasive Plants

There are existing populations of invasive plants in the project area. Road construction activities resulting in the exposure of mineral soil, create conditions favorable to the spread of invasive plants.

Indicators: Areas of newly exposed soil.
Presence of existing invasive species.

Access and Recreation Use

There are concerns with reestablishing the road and thereby allowing motorized access past the washout area. Some think that non-motorized access past the washout area provides opportunities to enjoy the features of the area (river corridor and adjacent wilderness areas) in a quieter and more slow-paced manner. They think the relatively easy walk on the road past the washout provides a valuable, low-elevation hiking opportunity. Others believe it is important to provide road access past the washout in order to provide access to all users and not restrict visitation to those physically able or having the time to make the walk past the washout. They want everyone to be able to experience the more remote Forest and park areas that exists past the washout.

Indicator: Narrative discussion of recreation uses.
Deferred maintenance and start-up costs.

Wilderness

Project activity is proposed within a narrow corridor between the Buckhorn and The Brothers Wildernesses. While no activities are proposed within the Wilderness areas themselves, there could be indirect impacts to Wilderness values.

Indicator: Degree of effect to Wilderness character.

Social/Economic

Some have expressed concerns with respect to the social and economic effects of on-going restricted access past the washout to the communities along Highway 101 in the vicinity of the Dosewallips River. They think that road access to Forest and park recreational facilities past the washout are an important aspect of the local and southern Jefferson County economies. Others

think that the economic impacts of the restricted access are overstated and that reopening the road would cost too much.

Indicator: Narrative description of the connection between road access and local businesses, and a qualitative measure of economic efficiency expressed as present value of discounted costs.

Visual Quality (specific to ONF)

Proposed activities could affect the visual quality of the project area.

Indicator: Degree of effect to Visual Quality Objectives (VQO).

Climate Change

Concerns were expressed regarding the potential for increasing stream flow conditions as a result of climate trends and how this would relate to the risk of future road washouts.

Indicator: Risk of structure failure associated with high stream flows.

Soundscapes (specific to ONP)

A National Park Service (NPS) policy states that the NPS will strive to preserve the natural quiet and natural sounds associated with the physical and biological resources of parks. The noise associated with the proposed repair on ONP land could temporarily adversely affect park resources by modifying or intruding upon the natural soundscape.

Indicator: Degree of effect of noise associated with park project activities.

Park Operations (specific to ONP)

Park operations refer to the quality and effectiveness of their facilities. For the proposed project, an issue was developed regarding the park's ability to maintain the Dosewallips Road in order to adequately protect and preserve vital resources, maintain existing facilities and trails in the Dosewallips area, and provide for a successful visitor experience.

Indicator: Degree of effect on the park's ability to maintain facilities.

Non-significant Issues

Private Land Access

The New Elkhorn Group of Mining Claims, eighty one acres of private land, is located upriver from the washout near the park boundary, about ¼ mile north of FSR 2610. The legal description is T.26N., R.04W., Sections 13 and 24. There are no roads directly accessing these claims, and FSR 2610 had provided the closest road access to the claims. One of the claimants responded during the comment period on the 2003 EA with a request for road access along FSR 2610. No comments from claimants were received during the EIS scoping period.

The right of reasonable access for purposes of prospecting, locating, and mining is provided by statute. Reasonable access must be in accordance with Forest Service rules and regulations while not preventing lawful mineral activities or causing undue hardship on miners. Mining activity on these claims has been limited in recent years, and details of any future activities have not been presented to the Forest Service (as in a Plan of Operations). Access to the claims is currently

provided by foot or pack-stock, and this is considered a sufficient level of access to support current activities. If the level of activity changes, future access needs would need to be considered at that time. At this time a decision on access is not considered “ripe” in a NEPA sense and will not be part of this decision.

Increased Drug Activity

A concern was raised about increased illegal drug activity on National Forest System Land in the Dosewallips River area related to the decreased traffic (both Forest Service and public) associated with the limited access.

Forest Service law enforcement personnel reported that although law enforcement activity in the Dosewallips area has been down since the washout, there is no indication of an increase in illegal drug use associated with the limited access.

Unmanaged Garbage and Human Waste

A concern was raised about possible health impacts to down river residents due to unmanaged recreation use along the Dosewallips River at and upriver of the washout area. Sanitation facilities at both the Forest Service and park campgrounds have been closed since the washout occurred.

Recreation beyond the washout area has been limited to activities which can be supported by non-motorized access. This has reduced the numbers of people using the area from what occurred with motorized access. Forest and park personnel have not observed levels of improperly disposed garbage or human waste which would pose a health concern for down river residents.

Dosewallips Road in Wrong Location

Some respondents indicated their belief that the entire Dosewallips River road is in the wrong location to support the ecological objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy and assist in the recovery of threatened salmon. Some expressed concerns that due to the road’s location in relation to the river there is potential for future washouts in locations other than the washout which is the subject of this analysis.

The issue of the entire road’s location is beyond the scope of this project and would need to be considered in a separate analysis which focused on this issue.

Dosewallips Road is Dangerous

A concern was expressed that the unpaved portion of the Dosewallips River road is a terrible road for most vehicles and is very dangerous and dusty.

The Forest Service and park maintain their respective portions of the Dosewallips River road to meet management needs and provide for public safety. Road maintenance levels were established prior to the washout and would continue to be implemented if a decision is made to reestablish road access. A change in the maintenance level for the road is beyond the scope of this project and would need to be considered in a separate analysis which focused on this issue.

Oil Availability and Fuel Costs

Some respondents stated that the EIS should consider the reality of the decline of oil availability and the cost of fuel to keep vehicles running as part of this project’s decision.

This issue is beyond the scope of this project.

Obesity and Public Health

A statement was made that Americans are dying of obesity and they need to walk and hike, and that this should be considered while making a decision on this project.

This issue is beyond the scope of this project.

Eliminate Reconstruction of Washout Prone Roads

A suggestion was made that the Olympic National Forest Plan be amended to eliminate the reconstruction of non-critical roadways that are prone to washouts.

This issue is beyond the scope of this project.

Consider Recreation Use in the Watershed

A respondent suggested that the EIS consider the larger picture of recreation use in the entire Dosewallips watershed.

This issue was considered to a degree as part of the cumulative effects analysis for the recreation resource, but a full study and consideration of recreation use in the watershed is beyond the scope of this project.

Project Prioritization and Funding

A concern was expressed that there are many other projects whose importance exceeds the need to reestablish road access on FSR 2610, and funds spent for road access would be much better spent on salmon recovery and other vital work.

The issue of prioritizing Forest and park projects and funding is beyond the scope of this project.

