



Dosewallips Washout Update

The Issue: The U.S. Forest Service has published a Notice of Intent to reconstruct the crumbling Dosewallips road in Olympic National Forest through 300-year-old forest and chinook salmon habitat. Although the agency will be completing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) this winter, which requires consideration of several alternatives, the most responsible option of converting the last five miles of road into a scenic, non-motorized trail would not be studied at all. By choosing to ignore the obvious benefits of a road-to-trail conversion above the massive washout, the Forest Service has essentially thumbed its nose at the many citizens who have previously commented in favor of ensuring the future integrity of the “Dosey.”

Background: A football field-sized length of the Dosewallips road was swept away in January 2002 during a flood of the river, about ten miles west of Highway 101. A massive wall of glacial till is all that remains of the road's original location there. Each subsequent winter, the washout has grown larger. The Forest Service's first environmental study, which emphasized reinstalling the road in place, was yanked by the agency due to salmon habitat concerns. A second study yielded a decision by Forest Supervisor Dale Hom to re-route the road above the washout, which would have destroyed seven acres of centuries-old trees. Following a formal appeal by the Olympic Forest Coalition and partners, Mr. Hom withdrew his decision – rather than face a ruling against him that was due from the USFS Regional Office the very next day.

In the meantime, hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians have rediscovered the beauty of the Dosewallips' middle valley, while the wild critters do their thing in quiet peace. Once again, however, *the Dosewallips depends upon you!* The Forest Service has indicated they will sacrifice this Northwest icon for the sole benefit of getting motor vehicles five miles farther upvalley. Only a concerned and vocal public can keep the chainsaws and bulldozers at bay.

What YOU Can Do: Please write the Forest Service. Ask to be put on their mailing list. Suggested talking points follow:

- An alternative that would convert the last five miles of road above the washout into a non-motorized trail must be included in the DEIS. The Forest Service cannot simply disregard the public's prior and current demands for studying this option.
- Re-routing the road through the old-growth forest and unstable slope above the washout would violate the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) and illegally degrade spotted owl critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Any degradation of chinook salmon critical habitat would similarly violate both the NFP's aquatic standards and the ESA.
- An upslope re-route of the road is likely to cause an illegal incursion into the adjacent Buckhorn Wilderness Area as further erosion results from industrial-scale road engineering.
- The Forest Service must deliver an honest accounting of both short-range and long-term comparative expenditures to taxpayers. A comprehensive economic analysis is necessary.

Please address your comments to:

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You may also email your comments to: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic@fs.fed.us. If you choose to email, please ask for a confirmation from the agency that they have indeed received your message. As always, personalizing your comments is helpful. *Thank you.*