

Pacific Seabird Group



DEDICATED TO THE STUDY AND CONSERVATION OF PACIFIC SEABIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

9209 - 180th St. N.W.
Stanwood, Washington 98292
November 25, 1986

Senator Dan Evans
702 Hart
Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Evans:

The Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) is a scientific organization composed of seabird researchers and conservationists dedicated to the study and conservation of Pacific Seabirds and their environment. The PSG was formed in 1972 and now has over 600 members. An information pamphlet on the activities and scope of the PSG is enclosed.

The PSG is opposed to the recent transfer of a National Wildlife Refuge to Olympic National Park. The islands of the Quillayute Needles and Flattery Rocks National Wildlife Refuge were included in the National Park in the "Park Boundary Bill", S 2351. We believe that these refuges should be restored to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (UFWS).

Eighty percent of Washington's seabirds nest on the islands in these coastal refuges. The area was established as a refuge in 1908, specifically to protect the large population of migratory birds. This population is one of the greatest remaining concentrations in the lower 48 states.

The exploration and establishment of this refuge was very significant to ornithological history. W.L.Dawson, one of the most famous Pacific Coast ornithologists, was employed by the Biological Service (now USFWS) to explore the islands. He describes the large seabird colonies in great detail in his book Birds of Washington. Franklin D. Roosevelt established the refuge, and it should remain a refuge to honor his memory. Washington's coastal islands are recognized worldwide as seabird refuges. The beauty of these islands may be appreciated from the shore, but their significance as a sanctuary for Pacific wildlife has long been recognized.

The Islands should be managed by an agency whose responsibility is Wildlife. National Parks are entrusted with outdoor recreation and the preservation of natural features. Wildlife is treated as part

of the "Park Ecosystem", but the management of birds is not considered the primary function of the park. Park biologists must manage a large number of wildlife species in a variety of habitats. The specialization required to study and manage seabirds is generally not possible.

The management of seabirds extends well beyond park boundaries. Many seabird species migrate to California, South America, the mid-Pacific, and the Bering Sea. An organization of international, federal and state agencies, the Pacific Flyway, has been established to discuss the management of migratory birds in the Pacific. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the leader of this organization and handles all the policies, regulations, etc. that the group generates. Communication between biologists in different countries and states is necessary if a population of migratory seabirds is to be correctly managed. In addition, the birds spend relatively little time actually on the refuge. Research into the "At Sea" portion of the breeding season is necessary. USFWS already has an established management program that includes boat and aerial surveys of the entire coastal area, "At Sea" inventories, and coordination of research and management of activities throughout the flyway. Park biologists, on the other hand, rarely work outside of the National Park.

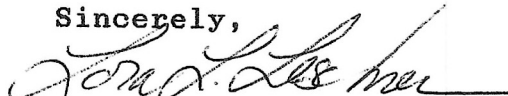
The USFWS has spent years building a data base on Pacific seabirds. Transfer of part of the coastal islands to another agency would disrupt the system and result in incomplete information. Inclusion of these two refuges into the National Park splits the jurisdictions managing the islands. Some of the islands remain as a National Wildlife Refuge. The joint jurisdiction may result in differing management goals and incomplete data collection.

The withdrawal and transfer of these refuges establishes an alarming precedent. The seabird populations may be protected in this case by a National Park, but now that the precedent has been established, what about the possibility of refuge transfers to agencies that exploit rather than protect resources?

We have heard that some "housekeeping" actions are necessary for the "Park Boundary Bill", S 2351 and that the bill will be reviewed in the 1987 session. We urge you to delete Section 1.a.2. of S. 2351. Leave the seabird colonies in the National Refuge System.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is the agency mandated to protect and manage migratory birds. Transfer of the refuge islands to another agency is outside of that mandate, is contrary to ornithological history, sets a precedent, and could threaten existing management which has resulted in a relatively stable and secure wildlife population.

Sincerely,


Lora L. Leschner
Chair

enclosure
cc: J. Blum
Executive Council

Park border bill sent to president

By KEVIN PATTERSON
of The Daily News

A bill to modify and expand the boundaries of Olympic National Park is among the stack of legislation sent to President Reagan by the 99th Congress before it adjourned Saturday.

Though it was originally designed to realign boundaries between Olympic National Park and Olympic National Forest, the bill drew fire from some Olympic Peninsula residents. They are upset because of amendments tacked onto the measure that would add coastal tidelands and the waters of Lake Ozette and the Ozette River to the Park.

The boundary bill proposes land swaps between the Park and Olympic National Forest in 10 areas to align their common boundaries along natural features instead of artificial map lines.

The House of Representatives on Oct. 15 approved its version of the Park boundary bill introduced by Washington Republican Sen. Dan Evans. The Senate approved Evans' bill Oct. 10.

In addition to the boundary changes between the Park and national forest, the bill would extend the Park's boundaries to include the inter-tidal zone along the 57-mile coastal strip and would add the waters of Lake Ozette and the Ozette River to the Park. The islands and rocks off the Park's coastal strip also would fall within the Park boundaries if the bill is approved by the president.

Complaints registered against inclusion of the inter-tidal zone, Lake Ozette, and the Ozette River centered around concern that recreational uses now permitted by the state would be eliminated if the areas were part of the Park.

Randy Jones, assistant park superintendent, said those concerns prompted modifications of the bill's language by Evans to emphasize that

state laws still apply to the inter-tidal, lake and river areas. "The popular recreational uses of the beach, like clamming and fishing, will not be affected," Jones said.

The Park welcomed inclusion of the inter-tidal area — which extends from the high tide mark to the lowest low tide mark — to better protect the area's natural resources. Park biologists are particularly concerned that the coast's tidepools are being depleted of marine life by Park visitors.

Jones said addition of the tidelands will clear up jurisdictional questions and allow Park personnel to protect the resources there.

Adding the waters of Lake Ozette and the Ozette River to the Park corrects an oversight dating from 1976, when the land bordering the lake and river was added to the Park, Jones said. Inclusion of the lake and river in the Park was inadvertently left out of the 1976 legislation, Jones said.

The offshore islands added to the Park currently are under the stewardship of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are designated as wilderness areas.

Jones said some of the land swaps between the Park and national forest should benefit recreationalists and loggers as well as the Park and Forest Service.

One transfer of land along Rugged Ridge in the West End will allow extension of a Forest Service road across what is now Park land to reach a large stand of old-growth timber. It is estimated the boundary change will save \$1.3 million in road building costs and open a new stand of timber for harvest, Jones said.

From a recreational view, aligning boundaries along ridges will add complete drainage areas to the Park, thus protecting watersheds for areas such as Lake Crescent.