

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****National Park Service****Notice of Availability of the Draft General Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Niobrara National Scenic River, NE**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the National Park Service (NPS) announces the availability of the draft general management plan and environmental impact statement (GMP/EIS) for the Niobrara National Scenic River (Scenic River).

**DATES:** The GMP/EIS will remain available for public review for 60 days following the publishing of the notice of availability in the **Federal Register** by the Environmental Protection Agency. Public meetings will be held in the cities of Omaha, Valentine, Ainsworth, and Lincoln, Nebraska. Meeting places and times will be announced by the local media.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the GMP/EIS are available by request by writing to the superintendent at Niobrara National Scenic River, P.O. Box 591, O'Neill, Nebraska 68763; by telephoning the park office at (402) 336-3970; or by e-mail, [niob\\_administration@nps.gov](mailto:niob_administration@nps.gov). The document is also available to be picked up in person at the Scenic River's offices in O'Neill and Valentine. Finally, the document can be found on the Internet at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) Web site at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/publicHome.cfm>. This Web site allows the public to review and comment directly on this document.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Superintendent, Niobrara National Scenic River, P.O. Box 591, O'Neill, Nebraska 68763.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Scenic River is an area of the national park system. The Scenic River extends 76 miles in Nebraska between the Borman Bridge southeast of Valentine to the Nebraska Highway 137 bridge north of Newport.

The GMP/EIS describes and analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed management action and one other action alternative for the future management direction of the park, and the environmental impacts of the boundary alternatives. A no-action management alternative is also evaluated.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There may also be circumstances where we would withhold from the record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials or organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: April 29, 2005.

**Ernest Quintana,**

*Regional Director, Midwest Region.*

**Editorial Note:** This document was received in the Office of the **Federal Register** on July 18, 2005.

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****National Park Service****Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Elwha Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Final Environmental Impact Statement Olympic National Park, Clallam County, WA; Notice of Availability**

**Summary:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Pub. L. 91-190, as amended) and corresponding Council of Environmental Quality implementing regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior and its cooperating agencies have finalized a supplement to the Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation final environmental impact statement (1996 Implementation EIS). Two dams built in the early 1900s block the Elwha River and substantially limit anadromous fish passage. A 1996 Implementation EIS (second of two EISs that examined how best to restore the Elwha River ecosystem and native anadromous fishery in Olympic National Park) identified dam removal as the preferred option and identified a particular set of actions to remove the dams. The release of sediment from behind the dams would result in sometimes severe impacts to water

quality or the reliability of supply to downstream users during the 3-5 year dam removal impact period, which the 1996 Implementation EIS proposed mitigating through a series of specific measures (see below). However, since 1996, when the Record of Decision was signed, new research and changes unrelated to the project have necessitated re-analysis of these measures. The primary purpose of this supplemental EIS (SEIS) is to analyze the potential impacts of a new set of water quality and supply related mitigation measures.

**Background:** Elwha Dam was built on the Elwha River in 1911 and Glines Canyon Dam in 1925, limiting anadromous fish to the lowest 4.9 miles of river and blocking access to more than 70 miles of Elwha River mainstem and tributary habitat. The two dams and their associated reservoirs have also inundated and degraded important riverine and terrestrial habitat and severely affected fisheries habitat through increased temperatures, reduced nutrients, the absence of spawning gravels downstream and other changes. Consequently, salmon and steelhead populations in the river have been considerably reduced or eliminated, and the Elwha River ecosystem within Olympic National Park significantly and adversely altered.

In 1992, Congress enacted the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act (Pub. L. 102-495) directing the Secretary of the Interior to fully restore the Elwha River ecosystem and native anadromous fisheries but also protecting municipal and industrial water users from the possible adverse impacts of dam removal. As noted above, the decisions associated with this process indicated removal of both dams was needed to fully restore the ecosystem. Impacts to water quality will result from the release of sediment which has accumulated behind the dams. Impacts to water supply will result from the release of fine sediment (*i.e.*, silts and clays). These sediments can reduce yield by clogging the gravel that overlies subsurface intakes during periods of high turbidities. Increases in flooding or flood stage are also a likely result of dam removal, as sediments would replenish and raise the existing riverbed back to its pre-dam condition.

The 1996 Implementation EIS proposed and analyzed numerous mitigation and flood control measures to protect quality and ensure supply for each of the downstream users, which included:

- The installation of an infiltration gallery to collect water filtered from the riverbed;