



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mount Rainier National Park
55210 238th Avenue E.
Ashford, Washington 98304-9751

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L76

January 9, 2013

Subject: National Park Service Announces Decision to Rehabilitate the Camp Muir Historic District

Dear Friends of Mount Rainier:

Chris Lehnertz, Pacific West Region Director, National Park Service, has issued a decision and a *Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI) for the *Camp Muir Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment (EA)*. Lehnertz's decision permits the rehabilitation of the Camp Muir Historic District, including the removal and replacement of non-historic structures at Camp Muir. The NPS will implement a minor modification of Alternative 3, which is also the preferred alternative identified in the EA.

Camp Muir is located on a narrow east-west ridge, or "cleaver," at 10,080 feet on the Gibraltar route, long known as the most direct route to the summit of Mount Rainier. The number of climbers has ranged from approximately 9,000 to 11,000 annually on the mountain since 2001. Approximately two thirds climb through Camp Muir and up to 500 climbers and hikers visit Camp Muir per day during the peak use months of July and August. The Camp Muir Historic District is located within a small developed site surrounded by Wilderness. It was listed in the National Register in 1991 and included in the Mount Rainier NHL in 1997. The popularity of Camp Muir as a climbing base camp and destination day hike, and extreme environmental conditions strains existing facilities and adjacent resources. These factors have presented challenges to park managers in their efforts to maintain the site and its public facilities while striving to address safety concerns and minimize impacts to the natural and cultural environment.

Under the selected alternative, the Client and Butler shelters will be removed and replaced, and four new toilets will be constructed to replace five existing toilets. Toilets at the center of the ridge will be removed, and new toilets will be located on the east side of the ridge. The Historic Public Shelter will have a ventilated cooking area partitioned within the building to provide separation between sleeping and cooking functions. New shelters will be designed and constructed to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. New buildings will house instruments and utilities and provide more efficient and convenient storage opportunities. New dry laid stone walls will be constructed to infill between existing retaining walls to direct the flow of pedestrian traffic and stabilize pathways along the ridge. The modified alternative does not import crushed rock to Camp Muir, which will address natural resource concerns related to importation of gravel, and reduce the number of helicopter flights to the ridge. Implementation of the selected alternative will take three to five years depending on funding availability.

The FONSI, EA, Errata and associated documents are available for viewing on-line via the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mora/> and selecting

the project from the drop-down menu. For a printed copy of the FONSI, please call Mount Rainier National Park at (360) 569-6501.

Thank you for sharing your comments, ideas and concerns, and your contribution to the Mount Rainier National Park planning process. Please feel free to call if you have questions about this decision. I can be reached at 360-569-6501, or contact Karen Thompson, Environmental Coordinator at 360-569-6507.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy King". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Randy King
Superintendent