

July 28, 2018

Dear Superintendents Creachbaum and National Parks Director Smith,
Sarah_Creachbaum@nps.gov

I write with strong opposition and questions about the proposed mountain goat removal/relocation plan at Olympic National Park. In short, the brutal murder of 350 goats is cruel and inhumane and an excessive, needless waste of tax payer funds. As someone who just hiked 3 days into the heart of ONP into the Bailey Range, I can attest that the goats can be pesky in their harassment of hikers, seeking their urine salts. I am aware of the fatality in 2010. But let us be clear on a couple of points:

This is a human caused problem first and foremost – the relocation in 1920, not a problem of goats breeding and adapting to an environment successfully over the course of a century. Though it is claimed that the goats harm plant life and disturb the ecological balance represents anthropocentric logic. Yes, they are dangerous, but let's remember, this is wilderness – bears, cougars, mountain weather, cliffs, rockfall, avalanches, rivers, fog, earthquakes, trees, and probably more – can all be dangerous. Do we exterminate or attempt to regulate them? No, of course not. And in fact, wilderness icons such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir all reminded us that in wilderness is the preservation of man. And so, what are we doing turning our sacred public places into neutered theme parks, devoid of any risk – casual amusement facilities that require nothing more of us than passive, distracted engagement typical of the screen age consciousness?

Has NPS considered strategically supplying inexpensive salt lick in areas away from popular hiking routes and tourist facilities in order to supplement the salt nutrient deficiency in the goat's diet? No, this is not natural. But again, this is a human caused problem caused by foolish hunters. If humans are to survive on the planet, we need to recognize that our violence as a species, our willingness to use military force (i.e. killing) in order to solve problems, instead of diplomacy, and non-violent conflict resolution – will be our downfall. Recently, Governor Inslee ordered a moratorium on the death penalty in Washington state. I urge you to take a cue from him on this point, and consider the repercussions of the implicit violence in this so-called solution to the problem of goats in ONP.

Let there be no mistake, there is a direct connection between goat killing and the level of violence in society including handgun violence and the nationwide epidemic of school shootings. Violence begets violence. Why not introduce language, if it doesn't already exist, requiring hikers and tourists to sign waivers, acknowledging that wilderness has inherent dangers, including goats (and the long list mentioned above), and requiring them to acknowledge that they take those risks consciously and willingly. ONP is not a zoo.

And if you are genuinely serious about removing unnatural dangers and intrusions into ONP – please stand up to the Navy and their insane plan to turn the park into an electronic warfare training zone for their Growler aircraft. Twice I heard them shattering the silence of the night from our camp in Cat Basin, more than 10 miles inside the park boundary, and close to one of quietest spots in the world. The hypocrisy in the Parks deadly assault on goats, while issuing a welcoming mat to the navy, cannot be more obvious. War machines that rain death and destruction upon villages in far away places, terrorizing Washington residents with PTSD are okay, because... well....jobs. But goats, now there a nasty problem that need to be dealt with. Please reconsider the killing and relocation of the goats. Get them the salt they need. Let the goats live .

Sincerely,