

The review has included:

1) a historical recognition of the Upper Valley Road and its importance to valley visitors and the Stehekin Community, 2) a presentation of data that suggests dwindling visitation in the North Cascades National Park and the lower Stehekin Valley, 3) an introduction of the essential elements of legislative history that codified the value of maintaining visitor access into the heart of the Cascades, 4) quotes from public testimony representing the majority of respondents who supported reopening the road, 5) a presentation of public safety issues not addressed by the Environmental Assessment conducted by the NPS, 6) a sampling of news articles and editorials favoring reopening the Upper Valley Road and 7) recommendations for ACTION you can take to promote visitor access and public safety in the North Cascades of Washington State.

We hope you will actively support reopening of the Upper Stehekin Valley Road...



“Our children no longer learn how to read the great Book of Nature from their own direct experience or how to act creatively with the seasonal transformations of the planet. They seldom learn where their water comes from or where it goes. We no longer coordinate our human celebration with the great liturgy of the heavens.”

~Wendell Berry~

THE LAW

The National Park Service (NPS) decision to permanently close the Upper Stehekin Valley Road countermands the intention of all legislative action regarding visitor access in the North Cascades National Park Complex.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

The NPS Environmental Assessment (EA) minimized or willfully ignored the preponderance of public testimony supporting the reopening the Upper Valley Road.

DATA GATHERING AND ASSESSMENT

It is not apparent that the NPS gathered or analyzed data (in the form of visitor surveys or other quantifiable instruments) to assess impacts of the road closure on visitor access and public safety values.

The NPS “Finding of No Significant Impact” document declaring the permanent closure of the road is heavily laden with NPS opinion but disturbingly light on actual data supporting these opinions.

CONCLUSION

When the NPS permanently closed the Upper Stehekin Valley Road, the agency ignored the intention of Congress as it pertains to visitor access, minimized the bulk of public testimony supporting the reopening of the road and offered little quantifiable data assessing the impact of the road closure on visitor access and public safety issues.

ACTION

1) At a minimum, the NPS should be required to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assessing the value of reopening Stehekin’s Upper Valley Road. The Environmental Assessment (EA) performed by the agency was far too blunt an instrument to properly assess the impact of visitor access and public safety issues.

2) Stehekin Heritage encourages you to write: National Park Service Regional Jon Jarvis (address found on page next page) sending copies of your letter to elected officials.

This letter would communicate your desire that the NPS conduct an EIS concerning the reopening of the Upper Stehekin Valley Road and that the EIS consider alternatives that support low impact vehicular access along the Congressionally mandated access corridor.

3) Additionally, if the NPS believes it impossible or undesirable to conduct an EIS, it will be necessary to request that elected officials support Congressman Doc Hastings’ Bill H.R. 3408 that would reopen the Upper Stehekin Valley Road with no net loss of Wilderness.

The Wilderness opportunity available to Sierra Club’s David Brower and his sons in 1958 should be available to Stehekin Valley visitors in 2008.