



Sustainable Recreation FAQ's

What is Sustainable Recreation?

In 2012, the [Forest Service Planning Rule](#) defined sustainable recreation as “the set of recreation settings and opportunities on the National Forest System that is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generations.” This definition recognizes the role the recreation program plays in supporting the overall Forest Service mission of sustainability. National forest recreation plays a key role in the social stability, environmental integrity, and economic vitality of surrounding communities of place and associated communities of interest.

On the Olympic National Forest Sustainable Recreation means teaming with communities across boundaries to create outdoor recreation places and opportunities that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable.

Why is the Olympic National Forest initiating this new approach to recreation management?

Our work is rooted in our mission: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Through the sustainable recreation initiative, the Olympic National Forest wants to ensure we are aligned with that mission, specifically, ensuring recreation opportunities are sustained for future generations. As we adapt to increased visitation, a changing climate, and the shifting needs and wants of recreators, we are rethinking our approach to recreation management while staying anchored to our mission at the core of our decisions. Both out of necessity, and because it makes good economic and public service sense, we need to engage our fellow land management agencies, our partners, our stakeholders, and our communities to provide recreation opportunities for present and future generations.

For a more in-depth explanation of “The Big Why” behind Sustainable Recreation, visit the [Region 6 Sustainable Recreation Strategy](#).

How is the Sustainable Recreation effort different from the current recreation management?

Currently, we tend to manage recreation as an independent agency based on our own agency goals. Sustainable recreation broadens our goals and objectives by managing with others across the Olympic Peninsula and focuses specifically on the *sustainability* of recreation opportunities and places.

What recreation sites will be reviewed under this new effort?

134 developed recreation sites on the Olympic National Forest including campgrounds, trailheads, day use sites and cabins will be reviewed.

What does collaboration look like when talking about sustainable recreation?

Federal and state land managers, tribes, community members, and other stakeholders working together to develop an integrated approach, through a sustainable lens, to assess our recreation sites across the peninsula. The goal of collaboration is to build and promote a collective vision for how to manage recreation sites across the Olympic Peninsula.

Why collaborate?

By employing an "All Lands, All Hands" approach, we can reduce duplication of services, share limited resources, and promote the highest use of all public lands. Through working together, understanding each other better and building relationships and trust, we can then deliver the broadest array of services and opportunities to the public.

How long will this project last?

Indefinitely. Sustainable recreation is a catalyst to change our behavior, thinking and direction, and to move our recreation program in a more sustainable direction over the long term. We are steering the ship of over one hundred years of recreation management towards a more sustainable future.

How does sustainable recreation benefit future generations?

If we work toward the goal of sustainable recreation, then we are working to sustain our natural resources (and national forests) for future generations. We are ensuring that current recreation use does not compromise the integrity of the natural processes occurring on the land so that future generations will have the opportunity to recreate on their public lands.

How does sustainable recreation benefit my community?

Sustainable recreation benefits your community in many ways, some of which are as follows: sustaining public lands to provide recreation opportunities for future generations, increased visitation which could contribute to the local economy, providing health benefits (both physical and mental), improving quality of life, and continuing to provide access to and education about the natural world. Communities engaged with the Forest Service will also benefit by sharing knowledge, having more exposure for their organization or business, and becoming stakeholders.

Will sustainable recreation limit recreation use?

Moving towards sustainable recreation will not hinder recreation use. Recreation use will continue to occur on the Olympic National Forest, but it may look different than past years. Potential ideas include adjusting the season of use, changing fees, prioritizing maintenance, and needed resource protection measures. We need to achieve balance between social, ecological, and cultural resources. With good management, the Olympic National Forest can mitigate the impacts of recreation on the natural environment and areas of cultural significance; but our mitigations can be ineffective if we do not have the help, support, assistance and understanding of our users.

Just like the Forest Service motto, we must serve people while caring for the land. It is our duty to provide recreation opportunities and benefits AND protect natural and cultural resources so that everyone benefits, not only in this generation but future generations as well.

How can I be involved?

The Olympic National Forest will be providing multiple ways to engage while as we work through the sustainable recreation effort. As we move throughout this process, we will keep information about meetings, open dialogue sessions, and other events posted on the [Sustainable Recreation website](#), where you can also sign up to receive updates.

Where can I find more information?

[Sustainable Recreation Website](#)

[Contact Us- Olympic National Forest](#)

[Region 6 Sustainable Recreation Strategy Summary](#)