



Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association

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September 30, 2010

Park: North Cascades National Park Service Complex
Project: Ross Lake NRA General Management Plan and EIS
Document: The Draft North Cascades National Park Service Complex Foundation Statement

Dear Sirs:

Seaplanes provide an important, unique mode of travel throughout North America, especially in the western states and in Canada. They are particularly useful in providing direct transportation to remote areas, while reducing the carbon footprint inherent in highway vehicles – which as surface transportation they produce due to longer travel distances and the need for massive oil, tar, and steel based road and bridge infrastructure. Seaplanes simply use existing water bodies for their infrastructure, and carry all of their required equipment and facilities within their vehicle, similar to that of canoes and kayaks.

It is for this reason that we proudly point out that: “Only seaplanes and canoes can visit the wilderness and leave no trace.”

Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protecting of seaplane access rights. We have approximately 350 members in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. We focus our interest on land within the Columbia River watershed, but comment on other watersheds since we fly between states and internationally.

We must insist that seaplane use of all of Ross Lake be retained as a matter of basic infrastructure need for seaplanes when traveling on interstate and international flights. Our pilots’ seaplanes follow the pathways of rivers and lakes, as that creates safety of operations and allows for stopping while traveling as needed due to nightfall, weather, or just overnight recreational camping. Under the Commerce Clause in the U.S. Constitution, Section 9, we believe seaplanes that are traveling from Oregon and through Washington are protected with a right of access to Ross Lake for those travel purposes.

We will be the first to state that we recognize seaplane pilots must be responsible in using this access. Therefore we believe strongly in noise abatement rules, noise abatement procedures, and noise abatement training to minimize noise impacts to other users. I’m sure others have commented to you on this subject. We would be pleased to participate in the development of such procedures for Ross Lake, and will work actively and strongly to get future noise abatement rules and procedures to our members.

When seaplanes are used as “vehicles of arrival” on Ross Lake, the seaplane landing or takeoff occurs as an event of one to two minutes. After arrival and taxiing (which is at idle power or with paddles) to shore, the tents and other camping gear are unloaded, and the pilot and passengers are there specifically to enjoy the near wilderness setting. The seaplane makes no

Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association
Ross Lake Comments
September 30, 2010
Page 2

further noise. We understand that there is currently a low volume of usage by seaplanes, and firmly believe that the total impacts of the seaplanes at Ross Lake is miniscule when compared to other vehicles that are more common.

In conclusion, we must with all due respect, request that the final plan continue to allow our seaplanes access to the entirety of Ross Lake.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment for your plan.

Respectfully,

Columbia Seaplane Pilots Association

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aron Faegre". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Aron Faegre, President