

Elwha Area

Fish out of Water

For millennia, the Klallam people relied on fish nurtured by the Elwha River watershed. That relationship was largely severed in 1913, when the Elwha Dam was built, blocking fish runs five miles from the river mouth. Glines Canyon Dam was completed upstream in 1927. Though a state law required fish passage, both dams were built without it. Thousands of salmon no longer reached most of the Elwha valley.

But in 1992, Congress passed a law requiring restoration of this watershed and its fish. The federal government purchased the dams and the removal and restoration process are underway. Freeing the river will reopen over 70 miles of pristine salmon habitat. Restoration plans call for releasing juvenile salmon in their historical habitat to ensure adult returns. Future visitors should be able to witness fish battling the untamed Elwha River. Details and webcams are at the Elwha River Restoration link at: www.nps.gov/olym.

NOTE: The Olympic Hot Springs Road is closed beyond Altair Campground. Areas south of Altair Campground and west of the Whiskey Bend Road are closed for the duration of the Glines Canyon Dam removal (see map).

Elwha Area Information

- Facilities:** **Elwha Ranger Station:** self-serve information and wilderness camping permits; staffed intermittently in summer.
- Camping:** **Elwha:** 40 sites (one wheelchair accessible), open year-round (but Nov. thru March: pit toilets, no water.) **Altair:** 30 sites (one wheelchair accessible), ranger programs in summer, closed in winter. Both have fire pits with grates, picnic tables, animal-proof food storage, accessible toilets, and potable water (summer only).
- Picnic Areas:** **Madison Falls:** tables, accessible vault toilet. **Elwha Ranger Station:** tables 100 yards past ranger station.
- Regulations:** Pets and bicycles are **not** permitted on trails.

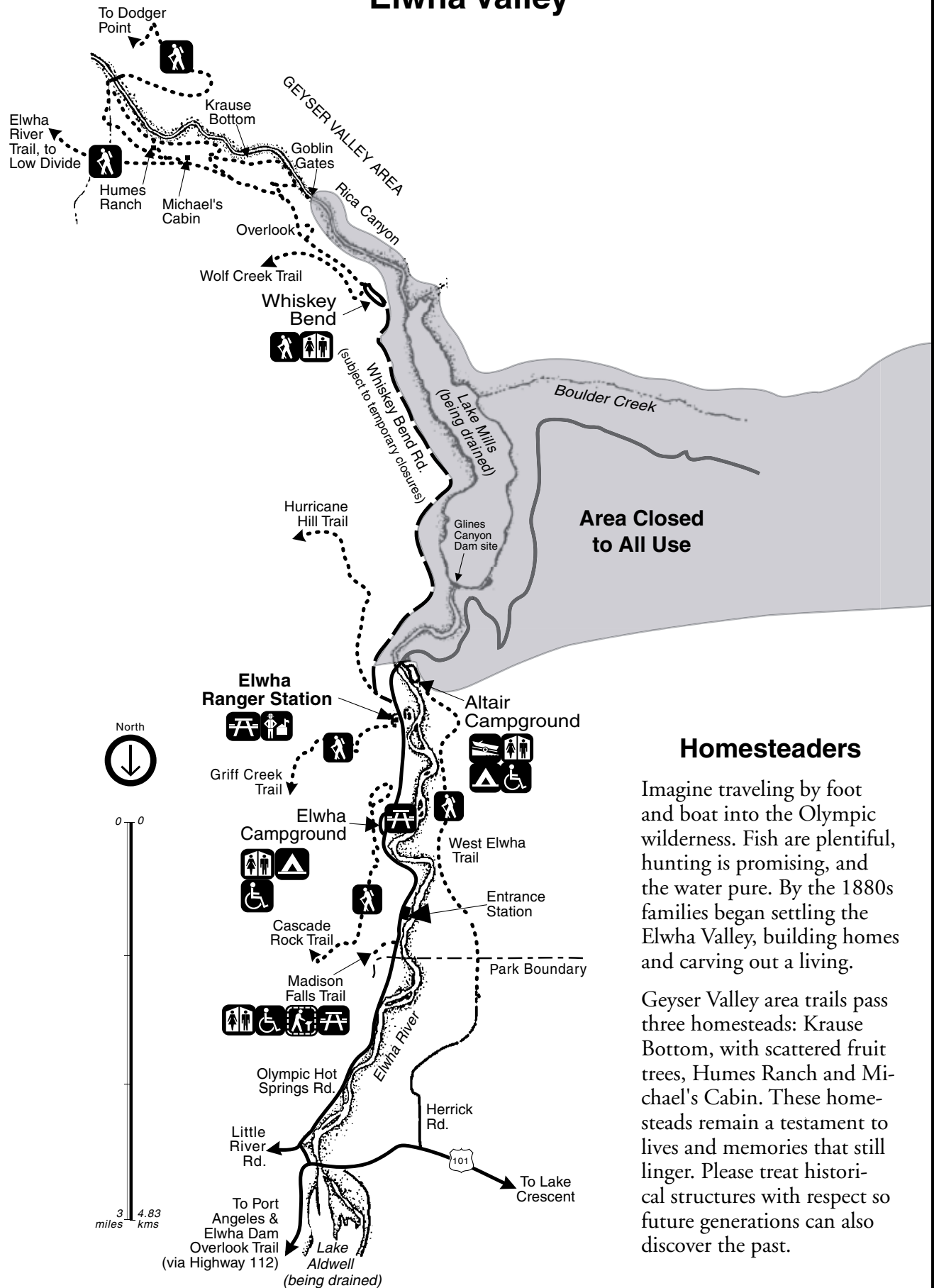
Day Hikes Around Elwha

Trail	Description	Miles	Elevation Gain
Madison Falls	Wheelchair accessible, paved trail to a 60 ft. waterfall.	0.1 one way	none
Nature Loop Trail	Forested loop trail from Elwha campground picnic shelter.	0.6 loop	100 ft.
Cascade Rock	Ascends through forest to views of the valley.	2.0 one way	1,300 ft.
Griff Creek	Ascends through forest to views of the valley.	2.9 one way	2,910 ft.
West Elwha Trail	Along forested west bank of Elwha River to Herrick Rd.	3.0 one way	200 ft.
Humes Ranch Loop	Forest loop trail which can be broken down into shorter loops via Krause Bottom or Goblin Gates.	6.0 loop	500 ft.
Hurricane Hill	Climbs steeply through forest to the top of Hurricane Hill.	6.2 one way	5,360 ft.
Wolf Creek Trail	Climbs to subalpine meadows near Hurricane Ridge.	8.0 one way	3,900 ft.
Elwha Dam Overlook Trail	Forested trail forest to view of Elwha Dam removal. First 200 yards universally accessible. See local maps for directions.	0.3 one way	50-100 ft.

Olympic Hot Springs are not accessible from the Elwha valley due to area closures for Glines Canyon Dam removal. Access from the Sol Duc is 14 miles one way, requiring an overnight backpack.



Elwha Valley



Homesteaders

Imagine traveling by foot and boat into the Olympic wilderness. Fish are plentiful, hunting is promising, and the water pure. By the 1880s families began settling the Elwha Valley, building homes and carving out a living.

Geyser Valley area trails pass three homesteads: Krause Bottom, with scattered fruit trees, Humes Ranch and Michael's Cabin. These homesteads remain a testament to lives and memories that still linger. Please treat historical structures with respect so future generations can also discover the past.