

OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

HOT SPRINGS

Several hot springs can be found in Olympic National Park, occurring on or near the Calawah fault zone. This presently inactive fault zone extends from the southeastern Olympics to the northwest and probably into the Pacific Ocean.

One spring area can be reached by road, others have been reported in remote areas of the back-country. Indian legend reputedly speaks of the origin of the Sol Duc and Olympic Hot Springs:

Two "dragon-like creatures" (lightning fish) with a mutual hatred for one another engaged in a mighty and desperate battle. There was no victor as both were evenly matched. Admitting defeat each of the creatures crawled into their separate caves where they still weep hot tears of mortification.

The Olympic Hot Springs consist of 21 seeps located in a bank on Boulder Creek, a tributary of the Elwha River. Several of these have been trapped by human-made rock lined depressions. The depth of these pools is about one foot and water temperatures vary from lukewarm to 138 degrees F (54 degrees C).

A resort existed in the area until 1966, when the lease expired. Heavy winter snows caused many of the old buildings to collapse. They were removed, but the seeps remain. *Nudity is prohibited.* The impounded pools frequently fail water quality standards for public bathing. *Use at your own risk.*

Sol Duc is a Native American word for "sparkling water". In the 1880's Theodore Moritz nursed a native with a broken leg back to health. In gratitude, the Indian told Moritz of the "firechuck" or magic waters. Moritz staked a claim, built cedar-log tubs and soon people were coming great distances to drink and bathe in the healing water.

Michael Earles, the owner of the Puget Sound Mills and Timber Company claimed he was cured of a fatal illness after visiting Sol Duc. When Moritz died in 1909, Earles bought the land from his heirs and built a \$75,000 road to the springs from Lake Crescent. Three years later, on May 15, 1912, an elegant hotel opened.

The grounds were immaculate - landscaping, golf links, tennis courts, croquet

grounds, bowling alleys, theater, and card rooms. A three-story building between the bathhouse and hotel held the sanatorium. With beds for one hundred patients, a laboratory, and x-ray it was considered one of the finest in the West.

Four years later in 1916, sparks from a defective flue ignited the shingle roof of the hotel. The water had not yet been turned on as it was early in the season. Wires were short-circuited on the organ and Beethoven's "Funeral March" began to play as the hotel was consumed in flames in just three hours.

The resort of today may be more modest than the one that existed sixty years ago, but people enjoy the "hot tears" of the Sol Duc dragon. The resort is open from late spring through early fall and offers cabins, motel rooms, a dining room, gift shop, some cooking cabins, a swimming pool, three mineral water pools, and several hot tubs.

An 86 unit National Park campground lies on the banks of the Soleduck River. Evening programs are offered nightly from July 1 through Labor Day.