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Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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August 12, 2010

Item E-3: Mount Spokane State Park - Master Facilities Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This agenda item requests that the Commission adopt a Master Facilities Plan for Mount Spokane State Park. The Master Facilities Plan and its Final Environmental Impact Statement will guide facility development within the park for the foreseeable future. This request complies with our Centennial 2013 Plan element, "Our Commitment - Stewardship" and with our core values.

In a separate document, Mount Spokane 2000, the concessionaire operating the Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park, will prepare a Master Concession Plan for the current alpine ski facility and any proposed expansion. This document is expected to be completed for Commission consideration in late 2011.

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND: At nearly 14,000 acres, Mount Spokane State Park is the largest park in the state park system. It is also among the first created, having been acquired and developed with enormous support and many donations from the greater Spokane community.

Its rich history began with private efforts in the 1920s, followed by the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. These efforts left a lasting mark on the landscape and a solid connection with the community, one changed relatively little in the ensuing seven decades. The current park retains many of the attributes that existed three generations ago: spectacular views, a passive recreational destination for nearby residents to savor for a day trip, and an active recreation destination for those so inclined.

This proposed Master Facilities Plan supports and is consistent with the Commission adopted Classification and Management Plan (CAMP, 1999) for the park and supports reaching the broad goals and visitor experiences found in the agency approved Management Plan (2003) for Mount Spokane State Park:

"As Washington's largest state park at the footstep of a major urban area, Mount Spokane State Park offers easy access to a wide spectrum of outdoor recreational pursuits while preserving vast and varied natural forests, gentle alpine meadows, wildlife habitat areas, and dozens of clear running streams that feed the greater Spokane County and Northern Idaho region's many lakes, rivers and aquifers."

Winter, summer, active, and tranquil recreational activities can be pursued in dramatic, beautiful and diverse environments, surrounded by native plants and animals, and supplied with recreational facilities that are both true to the cultural heritage of the park and up to modern standards of comfort and quality. Through a combination of user education, volunteer support, appropriate use control and other integrated management techniques, these recreational pursuits complement each other, enhancing the options and experience for all while protecting the park's environment."

The Mount Spokane State Park Facilities Master Plan contains several elements. Among those elements are detailed studies and reports on:

1. Mount Spokane State Park Cultural Resources Management Plan (2009)
2. Mount Spokane State Park Interpretative Plan (2009)
3. Mount Spokane State Park Comprehensive Trail Plan (2009)
4. Vegetation Impacts Assessment of Proposed Trail Additions in Mount Spokane State Park (2009)

Each of these plans may be found at <http://parks.wa.gov/plans/mtspokane/>

The Cultural Resources Management Plan

The older developed areas of the park owe much of their present appearance to the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and contractors working for State Parks in the 1930s. The original site of the CCC camp remains largely intact, as do important structures such as the Vista House and the stone latrine at the Cook's Cabin area. Also included in the important work of the CCCs are improved roads throughout the park.

The Cultural Resources Management Plan identifies 24 individual resources significantly associated with the history of Mount Spokane State Park and specifies a range of treatments for them from preservation to demolition to limited restoration. Many of these identified resources contribute to the cultural landscape within the park, which is separately identified as an historic feature.

Mount Spokane State Park Interpretive Plan

Mount Spokane is more than a mountain - it's a destination. Its sub-alpine environments and panoramic vistas have attracted humans for centuries. Many have come in the pursuit of spiritual and physical well-being, while others for economic prosperity. Over the decades, several generations have left their mark on this landscape in the form of travel routes, structures and memorable events.

The interpretive plan builds upon previous interpretive efforts to organize and support the incremental development of interpretive and outdoor learning opportunities within Mount Spokane State Park. The ultimate goal of this effort is to identify how visitors can be connected with its diverse natural and human heritage. Specific elements address natural resources, cultural resources, recreation opportunities and interpretive and educational opportunities.

Mount Spokane State Park Comprehensive Trail Plan

The trail plan proposes trail uses and trail management based on sharing the trail resources in Mount Spokane State Park. Consistent with the Washington State Parks Trail Goals and Policies (2004), it favors non-motorized, low impact activities over motorized, high impact activities. It seeks to expand trail opportunities for mountain biking, snowshoeing and Nordic skiing and prevent interference between these activities and other activities. It seeks to separate user groups where conflict is most frequent and where separation is the best option available to minimize such conflicts. It emphasizes involving volunteers and organized user groups wherever possible in both the planning and the implementation in order to help foster ownership and personal responsibility. It also favors light-handed management as a means of minimizing the need for much more expensive law enforcement.

While not all possible recreational pursuits will be permitted, a balance will be sought between higher impact, higher speed activities such as mountain biking or trail running and lower impact, lower speed activities, such as hiking or nature study so that all users will enjoy as high a quality of recreational experience as possible.

Because of the parks extensive trail system (21 miles of single track trails, 38 miles of primitive roadways, 21 miles of groomed Nordic ski trails and over 50 miles of groomed snowmobile trails) the plan identifies Mount Spokane State Park as a destination and preferred use site for equestrians, for mountain bicycling and for Nordic skiing. It incorporates a comprehensive suite of trail management measures: monitoring trail use and resource impacts; a trail difficulty ratings system; maintenance and construction standards; trail condition standard; seasonal trail opening and closing; criteria for approving new recreational trails and a commitment to encouraging volunteer participation.

Vegetation Impact Assessment

To assess the potential impacts of ground disturbing new development, a firm surveyed the vicinity of the proposed developments. The survey looked for rare or sensitive plant species and possible impacts on wildlife, particularly during key period of the life cycle such as nesting, breeding and during the early stage of life. Based on the survey results, several trail routes were re-located to avoid sites used as calving areas or containing sensitive plant species. None of the building sites contained sensitive plants or animal habitat.

Major Recommendations of the Master Facilities plan are as follows:

1. Replace several trails in order to avoid environmental damage;
2. Build several new summer trails for additional loop experiences and a route down from the summit;
3. Separate Nordic skiers and snowmobilers by creating a separate snowmobile route near Linder Ridge;
4. Enhance interpretive facilities to provide information to visitors about the significance of the cultural and natural resources they are experiencing when they visit the state park;
5. Add additional parking to support the growing use of the park;
6. Construct a new administrative facility near the KXLY equipment storage site;

7. Leverage partnerships with local community not-for-profits and others to assist in the improvements and programs within the park.

Land Classification

No changes proposed in classification for property in existing long-term boundary.

EIS Environmental Review process

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) contains proposed actions for the Commission to consider. Procedurally, the Commission may:

1. Approve the proposed actions as recommended by staff without making any changes. If it does this, then staff will implement the desired direction; or
2. Make minor changes to the proposed actions that result in a similar or lower level of environmental impacts. If it does this, then staff will be able to revise the FEIS as necessary and go forward and implement the desired direction; or
3. Make major changes to the proposed actions. If major changes are made, additional environmental review would be required with the issue brought back to the Commission for further consideration; or
4. Remand the action back to staff for further planning, providing specific instruction as to what portions of the proposal are unacceptable to the Commission.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Appendix 1: Location and Aerial Vicinity Map

Appendix 2: Land Classification and Long-Term Boundary Map

Appendix 3: Major Recommendations of Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan

Appendix 4: Master Facilities Plan

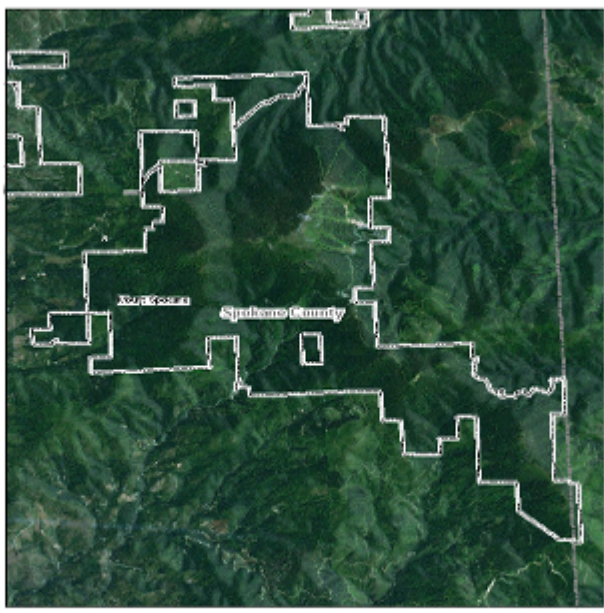
Appendix 5: Final Environmental Impact Statement

REQUESTED ACTION OF COMMISSION:

That the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission:

1. Receive staff's 'Determination of Significance' and subsequent Environmental Impact Statement identifying the significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.
2. Consider the data, views or arguments submitted by any person on the proposed Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities plan and consider those views part of the SEPA record.
3. Approve the staff recommendations as described in the Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities plan and authorize the Director to implement those actions.
4. Affirm that plan adoption is for Commission policy direction only and should not affect private property values, be used as an indication of a property owner's willingness to sell, or be used as a basis for making state or local government regulatory, permitting, or zoning decisions on private land holdings.
5. Further affirm that developing voluntary protection/access agreements with owners of private properties within the long-term boundary may meet desired conservation and recreation goals. Any acquisition of these properties should be on a willing seller basis.

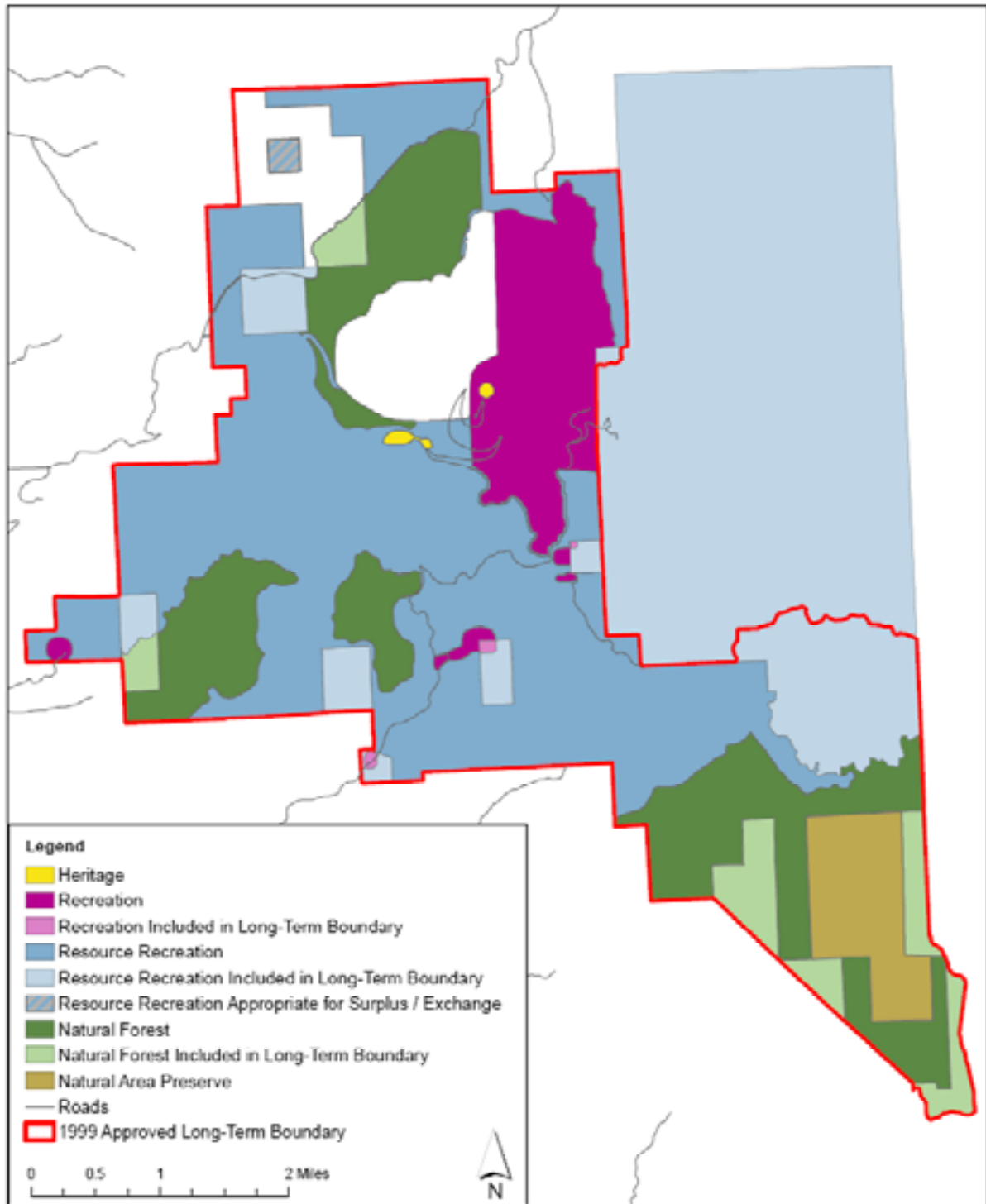
APPENDIX 1 LOCATION AND AERIAL VICINITY MAP



□ Farm Boundary (source: MSP RC)
□ County Boundary (source: WSDOT)

0 2,000 4,000 6,000 Feet
PROJECT: Forest Management Plan, Phase 1, 2011
DATE & TIME: 8:00 AM, 10/11/2011
DATA & MAPS: 8/11/2011
DRAWN BY: J. [Name]
CHECKED BY: [Name]
APPROVED BY: [Name]
PROJECT NO: [Number]

APPENDIX 2
MOUNT SPOKANE STATE PARK LAND CLASSIFICATION AND
LONG-TERM BOUNDARY



APPENDIX 3

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS OF MOUNT SPOKANE STATE PARK MASTER FACILITIES PLAN

Public Information and Interpretation

A general park brochure including a detailed trail map, trail descriptions, and park rules should continue to be readily available to all park visitors. This brochure should be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mount Spokane State Park. A brochure describing the unique ecology of the Ragged Ridge Natural Area should also be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mount Spokane State Park. This brochure should contain a map and other information about the area.

All trails should be clearly marked at junctions and trailheads with the trail number and map section number. Each major trailhead should also feature a bulletin board with relevant, updated park and trail information.

The winter telephone “Snow Line” should be expanded and used year round to provide regular updates on trail conditions, park activities, wildfire risk, temporary closures/restrictions, etc. Internet information is another avenue to provide public information that should be considered. Maintenance and funding of these options must be considered as various avenues of information are explored and implemented.

Summer Trail System Improvements

Mount Spokane has numerous trails that are in various states of repair. The trails are highly used and in fact, a local trail advisory committee has formed as an ad-hoc group of volunteers who advocate for trail improvements and actually build trails in coordination with the Mount Spokane State Park.

Trail	Improvement(s)
Trail 100 East, Trail 100 West	Improve numerous stream crossings to meet current standards. Provide safe sources of drinking water for stock near stream crossings.
Trail 100 East	Reroute near its junction with the east fork of Burping Brook and the Lower Kit Carson Loop Road.
Trail 103	Restore and maintain the upper portion and connect to Trail 100 East. Close the lower, unnecessary portion of this trail to prevent further erosion from the side stream.
Trail 140 (old 115)	Reroute between Smith Gap and the Mount Kit Carson meadows, and close the existing trail to summer use.
Trail 160 (old 170)	Reroute from its junction with Trail 140 (old 115) to the Kit Carson Summit to eliminate the erosion problem.
Lower Trail 140 (old 115)	Reroute portions and improve drainage and water crossings to meet current standards for multiple use.

Trail	Improvement(s)
Trail 130 West	Improve the switchbacks from the summit of Day Mountain to the Upper Kit Carson Loop Road.
Trail 140 (old 135)	Repair and reroute sections of upper trail to eliminate erosion problems and meet current standards.
Trail 101 (old power line)	Reroute the upper portion to provide an alternative connector between Trail 100 East and Trail 130 at Bald Knob, and eliminate current erosion problems.
Trail 191	Provide a single track route from the summit to the Bald Knob Campground.
Horse Mountain Trail 255	Improve and maintain to meet current standards. Close and revegetate the existing Horse Mountain 255A trail.
Ragged Ridge Trail	Improve and maintain from the Quartz Mountain Loop Trail to the 4805' summit to meet current standards. Close and revegetate existing trail south of 4805' summit once ORV and equestrian use has been eliminated.
Trail 100B	Close and revegetate (from Bald Knob to the old power line) and 100F (overgrown short single track).
Quartz/Trail 251	Re-establish existing system of trails on the upper elevations of Quartz Mountain with an emphasis on loop trails, and reroute Trail 251 .
Ragged Ridge	Eliminate ORV Access – Park staff will continue to work with representatives of Inland Empire Paper Company (IEP) to implement additional measures to close Ragged Ridge to ORV and equestrian access.
Other Areas	Eliminate ORV Access to Other Areas – Park staff will work with adjacent landowners to close Hay Ridge and the Kit Carson Loop Road in Section 8 to ORV access.
Mount Kit Carson	Eliminate the fall line trail off through meadow.

New Trail Development

Trail 140 Extension	Create a new trailhead for the bottom of Trail 140 (old 115) by continuing the trail south along the ridge to the park gate.
Trail 141	Connect lower Trail 110 with lower Trail 140 (old 115) just north of the park office and at the southern boundary of the Deadman Creek Natural Forest Area.
Trail 153	Create a new single track, multi-use trail to connect the Lodge 2 parking area with Trail 150.
Trail 180	Create a single track, multi-use trail through the sparse trees atop or adjacent to the ridge just north of the Day Road to create a loop with the Day Road.

Administrative Facilities

The current administrative facility is located on top of a culverted stream and must be relocated. In addition to relocating the administrative structures the currently damaged stream must be rehabilitated and restored to normal function.

Options to be furthered explored include moving park administrative facilities to the KXLY equipment storage area site (“the KXLY shop”) or secondarily near the additional parking proposed by the Selkirk Lodge.

Vegetation Management (Kit Carson Meadow)

Maintain the existing vegetation by periodically removing young native trees and any non-native plants growing into the Kit Carson Meadow.

Changes from the Draft Master Facilities Plan

Based on comments received and additional recommendations from the Mount Spokane Advisory Committee, the following notable changes are included in the FEIS:

Trails

- Add Trail 191, a single track route from the summit to the Bald Knob Campground
- Remove Trail 101 as too steep
- Remove Trail 193 as it crosses property managed by the concessionaire

Lodging

- Eliminate new proposed overnight cabin facilities at Horse Mountain due to poor access

Administration Site

Clarify that the proposed site is located at the KXLY equipment storage site rather than at the KXLY tower located at the summit of Mount Spokane.

APPENDIX 4 MASTER FACILITIES PLAN

Electronic version available for download at: <http://parks.wa.gov/plans/mtspokane/>

Hard copy available on request only. Contact Rebecca Lewis, Parks Development Director's office, P.O. Box 42650, Olympia, WA 98504-2650, call (360) 902-8612, or E-mail: Rebecca.lewis@parks.wa.gov

APPENDIX 5
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Electronic version available for download at: <http://parks.wa.gov/plans/mtspokane/>

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