



Don Hoch
Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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November 14, 2013

Item E-4: Mount Spokane State Park Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area Land Classification Work Plan – Requested Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This item asks the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to authorize staff to begin work developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze potential impacts of classifying lands and allowing additional ski area development in the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA) at Mount Spokane State Park. This item advances the Commission Transformation Strategy: “Provide recreational, cultural, and interpretive opportunities people will want” and with the Agency culture and core values.

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Mount Spokane State Park is the largest park in the state park system at approximately 14,000 acres. Within the park, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has authorized an existing alpine ski area known as the Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park that is currently operated under a concession agreement with a Spokane area non-profit known as Mount Spokane 2000 (MS 2000). The existing ski concession area encompasses 1425 acres or about 10% of the park.

In 1999, the Commission adopted land classifications for the park. However, an approximately 850-acre portion of the park, known as the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA), was left unclassified at that time (Appendix 1). Staff is currently developing classification recommendations for the PASEA. The process will involve considering a range of land classification options. One land classification option for analysis will include a proposal from MS 2000 to construct a new chairlift together with seven new ski trails and accompanying infrastructure in a 279-acre portion of the PASEA. In light of the potential ski area expansion, the agency has determined that the land classification action has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. As a result, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Although the EIS will consider both the land classification *non-project proposal* and the ski area expansion *project proposal* within the same document, these are distinct and separate actions.

EIS Work Plan: Staff believes it is appropriate for the Commission to adopt land classifications for the entire PASEA at the same time. As a result, the EIS will need to analyze a full range of potential recreational use impacts for the entire 850-acre PASEA – including those not related to ski area expansion (e.g., mountain bike and equestrian use). Analysis not related to ski area expansion will be completed by State Parks staff.

MS 2000 has hired a consultant to draft the portions of the EIS relating to potential alpine ski area development. MS 2000 will be responsible for the costs for this analysis. The completed EIS will be issued by the Commission, so materials developed by the consultant will require staff input and review prior to its issuance. Costs for Commission staff review will be borne by MS 2000 pursuant to the fee schedule in Appendix 2.

The anticipated timeline leading to a Commission decision on land classification and ski area expansion is shown below in Table 1. State Parks’ staff will make every effort to provide timely document development and review. However, turn-around time for staff review will depend on the completeness and accuracy of the draft material provided and the urgency of other work requirements. Any due dates for specific tasks must accordingly be agreed upon in advance by both parties.

Table 1. Estimated Timeline for EIS Completion

Activity	Estimated Timeline
EIS scoping notice released	Early November 2013
Mandatory scoping comment period ends	Early December 2013
Preparation of Draft EIS (DEIS)	Winter/early spring 2014
DEIS released	Spring 2014
DEIS comment period	30 days
Preparation of comment responses	30 to 60 days
Final EIS released	Summer 2014
Agency decision	30-day appeal period before any project work could be implemented

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

RCW 43.21C - State Environmental Policy Act

WAC 352-16-020 – Washington State Parks Land Classification System

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Appendix 1: Mount Spokane State Park Land Classification and Long-Term Boundary, 1999

Appendix 2: Staff Fee Schedule for EIS Review

REQUESTED ACTION OF COMMISSION:

That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Authorize staff to begin work developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze potential impacts of classifying lands and allowing additional ski area development in the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA) at Mount Spokane State Park.

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Reviewer(s):

Randy Kline, SEPA Review: Following review, staff has determined that the action proposed for the Commission by staff is exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) pursuant to WAC 197-11-800(19).

Terri Heikkila, Fiscal Impact Statement: Costs associated with this action will be reimbursed by MS 2000 per the fee schedule on Appendix 2.

Jim Schwartz, Assistant Attorney General: October 21, 2013

Peter Herzog, Assistant Director

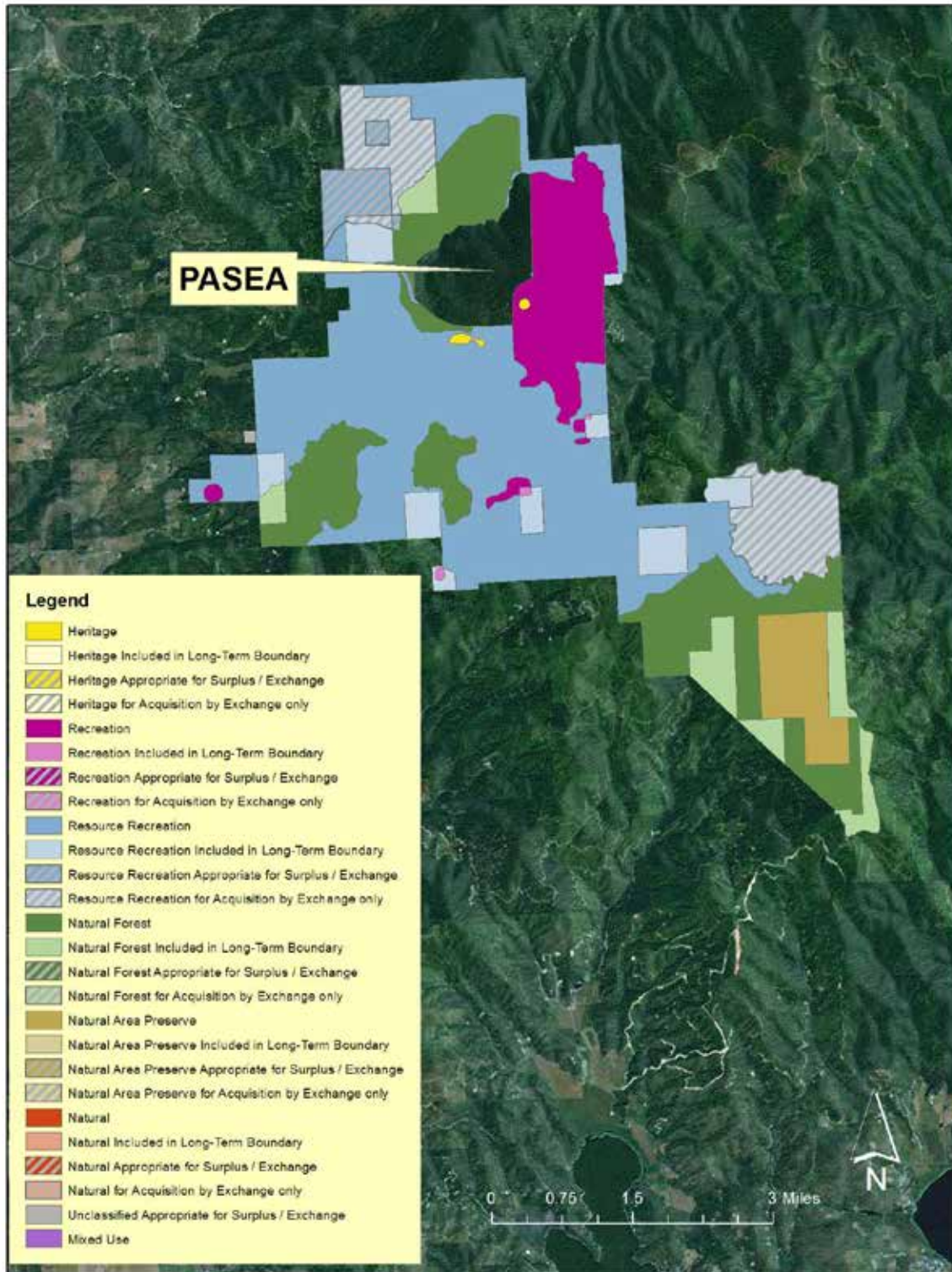
Approved for Transmittal to Commission

Don Hoch, Director



APPENDIX 1

Mount Spokane State Park Land Classification and Long-Term Boundary Approved October 15, 1999



APPENDIX 2

Staff Fee Schedule for EIS Review

Job Classification	Hourly Rate*
Environmental Planner	\$53.46
Natural Resource Scientist	\$55.79
Parks Planner	\$60.82
Program Manager	\$65.99
Assistant Director	\$77.00

*Includes wages, benefits, and indirect costs.

