

Don Hoch
Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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March 27, 2014

Item E-3: Iron Horse State Park – Master Plan Addendum – Requested Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This item asks the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to consider additions to the Iron Horse State Park Master Plan including Land Classifications and a Long-Term Boundary for the easternmost 34-miles of Iron Horse State Park, running from Malden to the Idaho Border. This item aligns with Agency core values and advances the Commission Transformation Strategy, “Provide recreation, cultural, and interpretive opportunities people will want”.

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Acquisition of Iron Horse State Park first began in 1984. The park is a linear property consisting of 212 miles of former railroad right-of-way, running from Rattlesnake Lake, near North Bend, at its western terminus, to the Town of Tekoa, on the Washington-Idaho border to the east. The primary feature of the park is the John Wayne Pioneer Trail (JWPT) developed within and on the roadbed, trestles, and tunnels of the old Milwaukee Road and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads. State Parks ownership is not continuous across the state, but does include a 110-mile continuous stretch from Rattlesnake Lake to the Columbia River, and a 102-mile corridor from Lind to the Idaho border, acquired from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in June 2006. This eastern section is commonly referred to as Iron Horse – Palouse.

In 2000, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) adopted the Iron Horse State Park Master Plan for the trail section between Rattlesnake Lake and the west side of the Columbia River. In 2012, staff began a master plan addendum for the easternmost 34-miles of the Iron Horse-Palouse Section, from Malden to the Idaho border, funded by a Non-highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) grant administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office, and with private funds donated to State Parks from the John Kono estate. Design and construction is scheduled to be completed within the 2013-2015 biennium for the nine-mile trail segment between Malden and Rosalia, using NOVA and privately donated funds. Acquisition of property for the easternmost trailhead, at Tekoa, is funded and scheduled to be completed this biennium.

Proposed Plans

The proposed master plan addendum that would add the Iron Horse - Palouse section to the Iron Horse State Park Master Plan includes a trail inventory, public involvement, level-one environmental assessment, cultural resources assessment, conceptual trail development plans, construction cost estimates, SEPA review, and permit requirements for development of the Malden and Rosalia Trailheads.

As described by the Draft Master Plan (Appendix 2), trail development is proposed to include the following elements:

- trailheads

- new crushed rock trail surfacing
- regrading of steep bridge abutments for trail access where bridges have been removed
- decking and handrail improvements to existing bridges
- pedestrian safety improvements at road crossings
- drainage repair
- elimination of trail detours currently extending outside the trail corridor
- signage

Recreation Experience and Use

The recreation experience along the Iron Horse-Palouse section of the JWPT is highlighted by the rural character of the area's agricultural landscape and active farming operations, geological features from the Ice Age Floods, wildlife viewing, and the small communities of Malden (pop. 203), Rosalia (pop. 555) and Tekoa (pop. 800). Interpretive sign panels along the trail describing the area's geology, cultural features, and a history of the Milwaukee Road are proposed to assist in introducing park visitors to this unique area of the state.

Non-motorized uses include hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mushing, and travelling with llamas and similar animals allowed within Iron Horse State Park. It is anticipated that trail users will come primarily from the Spokane to Lewiston-Clarkston service area, in addition to cross-state trail users, including the John Wayne Pioneer Wagons and Riders Association's annual trail ride from Easton to Tekoa.

Community Involvement

State Parks staff held public meetings in Malden, Rosalia, and Tekoa, with 15-25 area residents attending each meeting, where they were presented conceptual trail plans. Citizens and the business communities in Malden, Rosalia, and Tekoa were supportive of the trail for recreation and economic development purposes. Adjacent landowners in rural areas were concerned with potential trespassing and property damage by trail users.

The following issues were raised during the meetings, along with staff responses:

- Add fences along trail to control trail users and minimize trespassing on adjacent property.
Staff response: State Parks will work with individual landowners to reduce trespassing problems, with fencing as a potential option.
- Improve trail/county road intersections to not allow parking to access the trail.
Staff response: Proposed plans will minimize roadside parking opportunities.
- Rosalia Trailhead - concerns with impacts to adjacent landowners and to emergency services. It was also suggested to explore alternate trailhead sites identified by the public.
Staff response: Staff reviewed the alternate trailhead sites, but none were feasible due to safety issues or distance from the trail.
- Tekoa Trailhead land ownership options: a) acquire property adjacent to the trail or b) partner with the City to use lands at the nearby arena site.
Staff response: State Parks has obtained acquisition funds this biennium to purchase the property along the trail.

A summary of community involvement is included in Chapter 4 of the Draft Master Plan (Appendix 2) and is provided separately in Appendix 3.

Land Classification

For the existing developed western portion of Iron Horse State Park, the Commission has previously adopted land classifications as follows:

Resource Recreation Areas: The trail and all trailheads and camping areas (except listed as Recreation Areas) to ensure a more primitive, remote visitor experience as compared to standard and utility campgrounds permitted in Recreation Areas,

Recreation Areas: Certain trailheads and camping areas with potential for high-intensity recreation use and development including comfort stations (flush toilets, showers), formal picnic areas, standard and utility campground hookups, and potential space for enterprise activity, and

Heritage Areas: The Kittitas Depot area and South Cle Elum Properties, identified on, or eligible to be listed on, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), are classified as Heritage Areas to ensure that any recreation use or development is conditioned to protect the long-range integrity of the area's character defining cultural features.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Master Plan Addendum

The attached Draft Master Plan (Appendix 2) includes existing site inventory, cultural resource assessment, environmental assessment, proposed development and phasing options, proposed land classifications, and a proposed long-term park boundary for the 34-mile portion of Iron Horse State Park between the town of Malden and the Idaho border, as an addendum to the Iron Horse State Park Master Plan. The intent of the master plan addendum is to develop consistency with the developed portion of Iron Horse State Park, while considering the unique characteristics of the Palouse area. Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the master plan addendum as included in Appendix 2.

Land Classifications

Staff recommends that the Palouse section of Iron Horse State Park be classified similarly to the rest of the park. Recommended land classifications Staff recommends that the Commission classify areas between Malden and the Idaho border as follows:

1. Classify the majority of the study area as a Resource Recreation Area to maintain the more primitive, rural character of the park.
2. Classify trailheads at Tekoa, Pandora, Rosalia, and Malden as Recreation Areas, providing the opportunity for more high-intensity recreational use and development including comfort stations and formal picnic areas.
3. Classify trestles, bridges, and structures eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as Heritage Areas. These include:
 - Concrete Rosalia RR Bridge (EE-90B at MP 153.7) listed on NRHP in 1982.
 - Iron Through-Truss Bridge (EE-70A at MP 163.7) recommended for NRHP eligibility in 2013.
 - Steel Tekoa Trestle (EE-62 at MP 171.25) recommended for NRHP eligibility in 2013

Long-Term Boundary

There are three ownership gaps that are recommended to be included within Iron Horse State Park's long-term park boundary. It may be that formal agreements were developed with the landowners when this portion of the trail was managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but these

agreements have not yet been confirmed. It is recommended that State Parks verify whether an existing agreement is in place, and if one is not, work with the landowners to acquire either trail easements or ownership of the following areas:

1. MP 156.9 to MP 157.6, private property (0.66 miles, 5-miles east of Rosalia). This area is identified on DNR maps as having permitted trail access, but verification of a formal agreement is needed;
2. MP 170.4 to MP 171.7, trailhead property in Tekoa (preferred location is both sides of Washington Street)
3. MP 173.8 to MP 174.1, private property (0.3 miles, 3.24 miles from of Idaho border) This area is identified on DNR maps as having permitted trail access, but verification of a formal agreement is needed.

Appendix 1 provides a map of recommended land classifications and long-term park boundary.

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

RCW 79A.05.030 (1) Powers and duties—Mandatory

RCW 79A.05.120 Cross-state trail – Transfer of lands in Milwaukee Road corridor (1-a), the eastern portion of Iron Horse State Park (Iron Horse Palouse) owned by the state between Lind and the Idaho border that were managed by the department of natural resources were transferred to the parks and recreation commission as of June 7, 2006.

RCW 79A.05.320 Milwaukee Road corridor – Duties and RCW 79A.05.325 Milwaukee Road corridor – Additional duties describe Park management and operational responsibilities.

Recreational access within the Iron Horse Palouse Section is currently limited to holders of permits issued by the commission in accordance with RCW 79A.05.325 Milwaukee Road corridor – Additional duties, Item (6) and subject to change by the commission at its discretion.

WAC Chapter 352-16 Naming of State Park Areas and the Land Classification System

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Appendix 1: Draft Master Facilities Site Plan

Appendix 2: Draft Master Plan Addendum

Appendix 3: Summary of Public Involvement Process

REQUESTED ACTION FROM COMMISSION:

That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission:

1. Accept staff's "Determination of Non-Significance" that the proposed action is minor and the environmental effects are not significant.
2. Adopt the staff recommended land classifications for the portion of Iron Horse State Park between the Town of Malden and the Idaho border.
3. Adopt the staff recommended long-term park boundary for the portion of Iron Horse State Park between the Town of Malden and the Idaho border.
4. Approve the conditional activity of mushing/sled dogs in the Recreation Areas, Resource Recreation Areas, and Heritage Areas of the park.
5. Adopt the Iron Horse State Park Master Plan Addendum: Iron Horse Palouse - Malden to Idaho Border (Appendix 2)
6. Delegate to the Director the authority to approve minor changes to the Master Plan.

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Reviewer(s):

Randy Kline, SEPA REVIEW:

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-310 and WAC 197-11-340, staff issued a "Determination of Non-Significance" for the staff recommendation finding that the action proposed by Commission staff was minor and the environmental effects not significant.

Terri Heikkila, Fiscal Impact Statement: Approval of this item does not have a fiscal impact.

Jim Schwartz, Assistant Attorney General: February 24, 2014

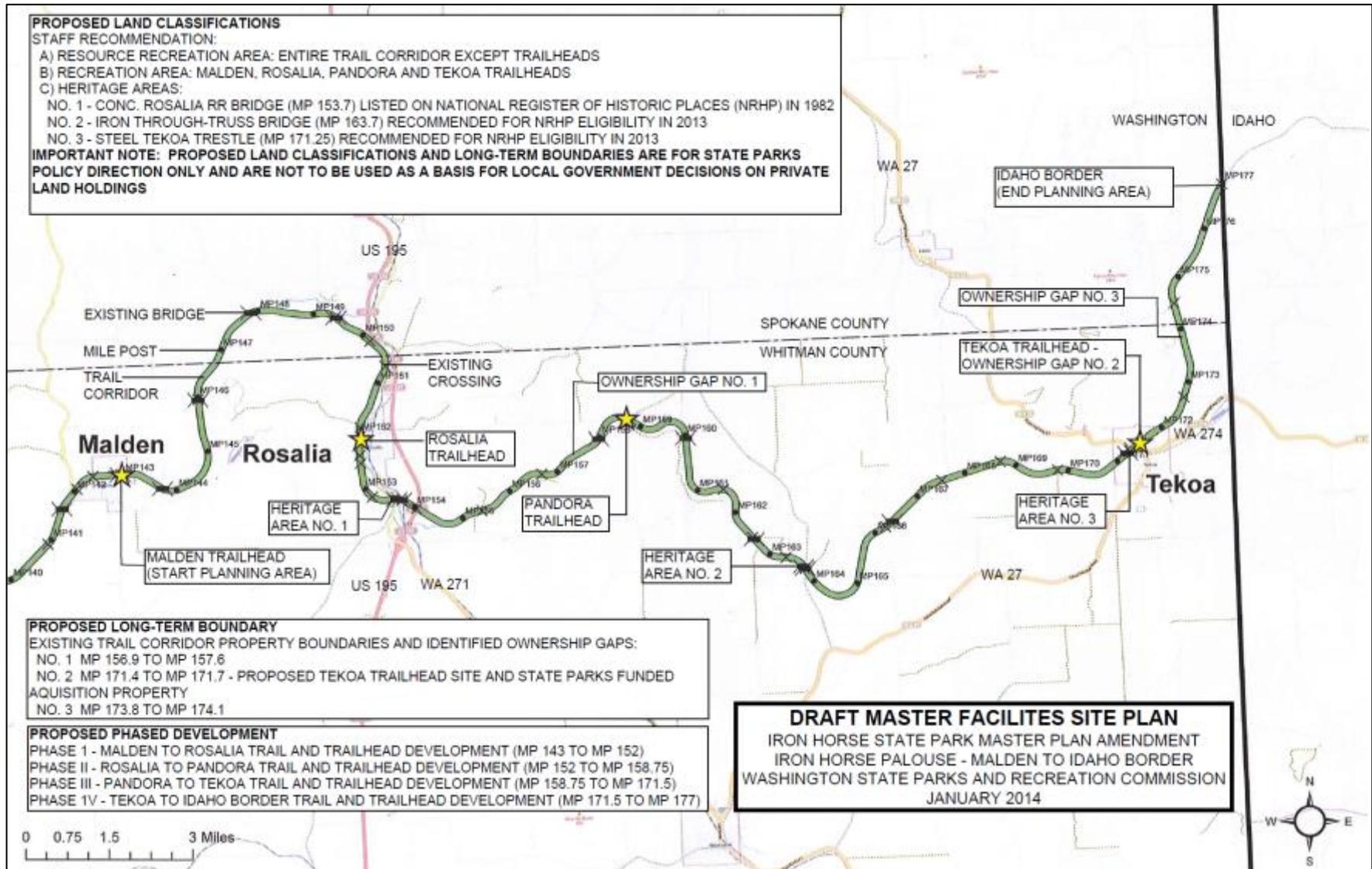
Peter Herzog, Assistant Director

Approved for Transmittal to Commission

Don Hoch, Director

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT MASTER FACILITIES SITE PLAN



APPENDIX 2
DRAFT MASTER PLAN

Hard copy is available upon request by contacting Srey.Ryser@parks.wa.gov or by calling 360-902-8626.

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

Public meetings were held by State Park staff in Malden, Rosalia, and Tekoa on the following dates:

- Malden: October 20, 2012
- Rosalia: October 27, 2012
- Tekoa: November 2, 2012

At each meeting, there were people that supported future trail development; those that questioned whether the trail should be developed, given the state's current economic condition; and adjacent landowners concerned about trespass.

At the meetings, staff explained that the trail corridor had been transferred to State Parks from the Department of Natural Resources, and asked for input on trail development and management issues.. Items presented at the meetings included:

- 1) General orientation to the entire JWPT network, with emphasis on the Malden to Tekoa section,
- 2) Information on the trails network in eastern WA, including the Spokane River Centennial Trail, Spokane's Fish Lake Trail, Columbia Plateau Trail, and Tri-Cities' Sacagawea Heritage Trail,
- 3) Conceptual plans for grading, gates, and bollards to be used at all trail/County Road intersections, and
- 4) Conceptual plans for trailheads at Malden and Rosalia, with options identified at Tekoa (including acquiring former RR property and/or using lands associated with the Tekoa Arena).

Public comments included:

- RR lands should be transferred or sold to original or adjacent landowners,
- With the condition of the State's economy, State Parks should not spend any money on the project,
- Adjacent landowners were concerned about potential fires generated by trail users and wanted clarification on State Parks liability responsibilities,
- No improvements are necessary, the property should remain as is for locals to enjoy,
- Trespass issues in the Rock Lake area and near Rosalia need to be addressed,
- If the trail were to be developed, fences should be installed on both sides of the trail surface to control trail users and minimize trespassing on adjacent landowner property,
- The Malden Trailhead Conceptual Plan was well received and trail supporters supported it's development,
- The Rosalia Trailhead Conceptual Plan had mixed opinions: trail supporters felt proposed development would be good for the trail and the Rosalia community, but others had concerns on the impact to immediate neighbors, the nearby rodeo grounds, and to emergency services,
- At Rosalia, It was suggested to explore a site near the trail, but closer to US Highway 195 for a trailhead facility,
- At Tekoa, because the railroad or DNR sold former depot lands to private landowners, two options were discussed, one, to acquire the former railroad lands to develop a trailhead facility, or two, to

explore with the City the possibility of using lands at the nearby Arena for a partnership trailhead development,

- At Tekoa, Idaho's potential 10-mile trail link to the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes was discussed, but it was identified that Idaho trail developers wanted to terminate that trail at Plummer, and not connect to Tekoa,
- Comments on the plans to improve the trail/County Road intersections suggested minimizing any opportunity for parking along the County Road or on the access to the trail.

Public Meeting Follow-up:

Staff responses to public meeting comments include the following:

- The railroad corridor has major benefits to the State of Washington, and the State does not intend to transfer or sell this property,
- Neighbors can report problems on the trail to a Park Ranger, and all such reports will be taken seriously,
- State Parks intends to be a good neighbor and will work with landowners to develop methods to reduce trespass, with fencing as a potential option,
- Both the Malden and Rosalia meetings were attended by residents near Rock Lake, which is not within the Malden-Tekoa project area. A number of the reported trespass issues were from individuals entering private property directly from Rock Lake, which is not managed by State Parks,
- The suggested alternate trailhead sites in the Rosalia area were inspected and analyzed, but none were feasible sites for a trailhead facility,
- Staff is exploring acquisition of the proposed Tekoa Trailhead Site, whose landowner has indicated a willingness to sell, but if acquisition is not possible, Parks will explore a use agreement to provide parking at the nearby Arena,
- Proposed plans to improve trail/county road intersections will minimize roadside parking opportunities.