

Steamboat Rock State Park CAMP

Existing Conditions Report

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission



STEAMBOAT ROCK STATE PARK

Washington

PREFACE

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission’s number one priority is “fixing up” the state parks that you enjoy today while keeping the future in mind. As the agency moves to meet that commitment it pursues a vision that calls for all state parks to be “*Premier destinations of uncommon quality . . . outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment and learning of all people.*”

A starting point is a public planning process where we reach out to the community and customers. That public process is called a CAMP (Classification and Management Plan). A planning team has been assigned to complete this work. There will be several public workshops and other opportunities for you to participate. After the planning team has listened and considered the opportunities, it will recommend a plan to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The plan will grow as we go through CAMP together, beginning with a discussion of the planning area and overview of the process.



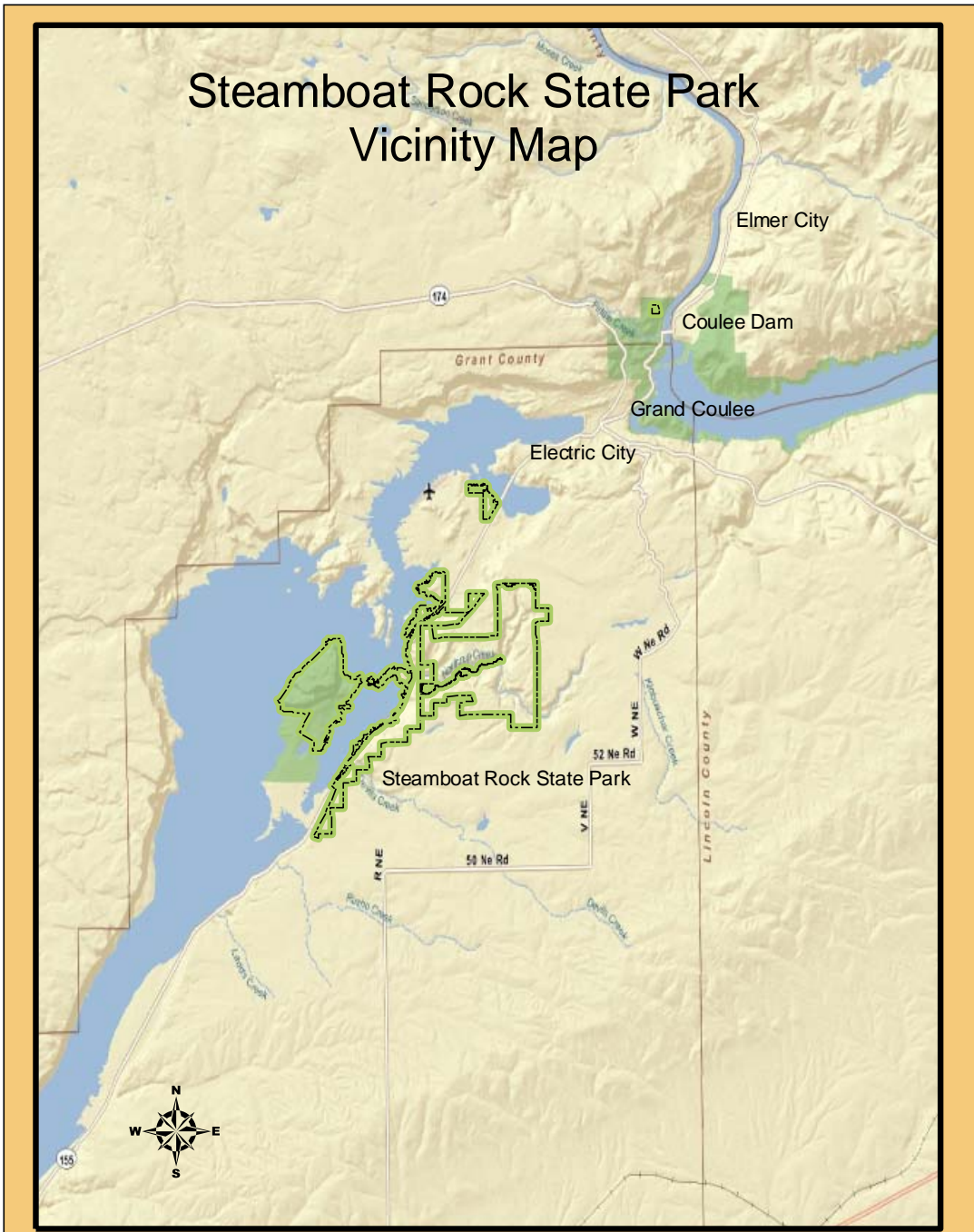


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

Legend

- Park Boundaries
- World Street Map

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission





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INTRODUCTION

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) manages a diverse system of 120 parks located throughout the state. State Parks protect the best of Washington's natural and human heritage, provide access to the great outdoors, and offer learning and inspiration.

The Commission adopted the Centennial 2013 Plan in October, 2003, thereby creating a focus intended to energize and bring together the agency, state leadership and the public. Together we can work toward a parks system all can celebrate as it turns 100 years old and prepares for a second century of service.

Priority No. 1 in the Centennial 2013 Plan "Our Commitment" is fixing up the state parks and recreation services you enjoy today, while looking towards the future. We pursue a vision so that each park will be *Premier destinations of uncommon quality . . . outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment and learning of all people*. One of our goals is to have a land-use plan for all 120 parks, supported by the public and the Commission, by 2013.

It is now time for the Steamboat Rock to join the parks with land-use plans. We will develop our plan through a process that has been used by the Commission since 1996, called CAMP. CAMP is an acronym for Classification and Management Plan.

This plan will grow as we go forward together in the process, beginning with a discussion about the parks and an overview of the planning process in this document. It is an iterative process that continues until the Commission makes its policy decision and the plan is implemented.

The final plan will contain the planning team's recommendations for:

- Land classifications
- Long-term boundaries for the state parks
- A Management Plan that addresses the issues brought forward by the public and park staff.

Information on each stage of the process can be found on State Parks' web page:

<http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/>. Look for the Steamboat Rock hyperlink on the right-hand side of the page. Documents are available in hard copy format upon request.



THE PROCESS

The planning process goes through four stages and people are encouraged to participate in all stages. The process also reflects the standards set out in the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and information collected through the planning effort will be used to satisfy SEPA requirements.

The planning process includes a series of public workshops and will end when the Commission provides its policy direction. The workshops are designed to be open-ended forums to allow the public to help develop the plan. Please note that the dates for public workshops are subject to change. If you provide your contact information, the planning team will provide you updates. E-mail addresses are encouraged to conserve resources.

Stage One – Identify issues and concerns

The purpose of this stage is to understand what is important to the park community and customer, what to change or save in the state park. This helps get a sense of the range and type of issues that need to be considered through the planning process.

The first public workshop will be held from 7-9 P.M October 1, 2008. at Town of Coulee Dam City Hall, 300 Lincoln Ave., Coulee Dam, WA

Stage Two – Exploring alternative approaches

At this stage, the planning team suggests potential alternative approaches to address the various issues and concerns raised by the public and park staff in stage one. No preferred alternative is established; rather this is an opportunity to understand the range of possibilities.

Stage Three – Preparing preliminary recommendations

The best ideas from the alternative approaches developed in stage two are combined into a preliminary plan in this stage. The plan includes recommendations for use and development of the land, changes to property boundaries and ways to address issues raised during the planning process. Another important document completed at this stage is the SEPA checklist that describes environmental impacts of the recommendations (available for public review upon request).

Stage Four – Preparing final recommendations

At stage four, final adjustments are made to recommendations and submitted to the seven-member Parks and Recreation Commission for approval. The public is encouraged to attend the Commission meeting and provide testimony or to provide written comment.

Commission meeting – April 23 2009 at Ellensburg

At first some people get frustrated with the open-endedness of the planning process. By the end, most people feel that they have been truly heard. It is the goal of the planning team to take all concerns into consideration

and respond to issues that arise during the planning process. In the end we will get to the "blueprint" stage. Before then, however, it is important that the community and customers have an opportunity to share ideas and help build the final plan. The goal here is a common vision about what the state parks should become.

Discussion of the long-term park boundary

Determining long-term park boundaries is an often misunderstood aspect of park planning. The purpose of a long-term boundary is to take a big picture look at what lands, independent of ownership, might advance the conservation and recreation mission of the park. This process not only considers whether an adjoining property would make a suitable addition, but also considers whether agency-owned property should be retained or might appropriately be considered surplus to park needs.

Including privately owned property in a long-term boundary does not necessarily mean the agency wants to purchase it. It simply means that use and condition of the property is important to the long-term potential of the state park. The agency and landowners might do one or some combination of the following actions together:

- Seek to formalize an agreement to advance a shared property management goal, such as screening of houses or park facilities.
- Help establish a conservation easement to protect features that are important to the park visitor's experience and to the landowners.
- Accept a donation of all or part of a landowner's property. About 40% of the current Washington State Park system is made up of donated properties.
- Consider exchanging agency-owned property for private property, either in the area or somewhere else in the state.
- Purchase the private property.

Land classification

Within the long-term boundary, land classification is regulated by WAC 352-16-020, which reads:

State park areas are of state-wide natural, cultural, and/or recreational significance and/or outstanding scenic beauty. They provide varied facilities serving low-intensity, medium intensity, and high intensity outdoor recreation activities, areas reserved for preservation, scientific research, education, public assembly, and/or environmental interpretation, and support facilities. They may be classified in whole or part as follows:

- (1) **Recreational areas** are suited and/or developed for high-intensity outdoor recreational use, conference, cultural and/or educational centers, or other uses serving large numbers of people.
- (2) **Resource recreation areas** are suited and/or developed for natural and/or cultural resource-based medium-intensity and low-intensity outdoor recreational use.
- (3) **Natural areas** are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural processes and/or features of significant ecological, geological or paleontological value while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses.



- (4) **Heritage areas** are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of unique or unusual archaeological, historical, scientific, and/or cultural features, and traditional cultural properties, which are of state-wide or national significance.
- (5) **Natural forest areas** are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural forest processes while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses, and which contain:
 - (a) Old-growth forest communities that have developed for one hundred fifty years or longer and have the following structural characteristics: Large old-growth trees, large snags, large logs on land, and large logs in streams; or
 - (b) Mature forest communities that have developed for ninety years or longer; or
 - (c) Unusual forest communities and/or interrelated vegetative communities of significant ecological value.
- (6) **Natural area preserves** are designated for preservation of rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical or similar features of scientific or educational value and which are registered and committed as a natural area preserve through a cooperative agreement with an appropriate natural resource agency pursuant to chapter 79.70 RCW and chapter 332-60 WAC.

Facilities Concept Plans

Given the recommendation for a long-term boundary and land classification, the planning team may use comments from the community and customers to develop recommendations for uses and facilities that should be included. It is important to understand that, although schematic drawings (showing approximate locations of roads, trails, campgrounds, etc.) may be shown for discussion purposes, the Commission may only be asked to approve a conceptual plan. The exact size, location and configuration of facilities depend upon studies that would not be completed until later.

Management Plan

Sometime after the Commission approves the staff recommendations for a long term boundary and land classifications, the agency Deputy Director will be asked to approve a Management Plan that recommends management approaches to address a variety of issues raised by the public and park staff during the planning process.

EXISTING CONTEXT

The Existing Context section describes some of the physical, operational, political and regulatory factors affecting Steamboat Rock State Park. The information can be technical and generally corresponds to a State Environmental Policy Act checklist.

Please note that the information below describes the planning team’s understanding at this stage of CAMP. The planning team expects to learn more and this section to grow as we proceed. Some information will come from the community and customers.

Steamboat Rock State Park

Steamboat Rock State Park is located in Eastern Washington in Grant County. Steamboat Rock is a long-established area landmark, first used by nomadic Native American tribes and then by early settlers. The military currently uses the area for aircraft training missions. The basalt butte rises 800 feet above Banks Lake. It was once an island in the Columbia River bed. When the Columbia returned to its natural course, after centuries of being dammed by ice, the massive rock remained.

There is also a well-engineered road, built in the late 1800s, that winds through and up the south side of Northrup canyon. Once used by stage coaches and freight wagons, it was named after one of the original homesteaders.

Nearby towns include Electric City, Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam, Elmer City, Coulee City and Almira.

Physical Factors

Land area: The following information comes from State Parks’ land inventory:

Name	Acreage	Freshwater Shoreline (feet)
Steamboat Rock	3,522	50,000
Crown Point Vista	13	0

Air quality: Steamboat Rock is currently in compliance with state air quality standards. There is no local clean air agency.

Transportation: Regional access to Steamboat is by SR 155

Public transportation in the area is provided by Grant Transit Authority. There are bus routes that connect Electric City, Coulee City, Soap Lake and Ephrata. No bus routes connect with the state park.



The daily Amtrak passenger service, the Empire Builder, runs between Seattle/Portland and Chicago. The closest depot is 80 miles from the park, in Wenatchee.

Commercial air service is provided by the Wenatchee Pangborn Airport (80 miles) or Spokane (90miles)

The closest municipal airport is Grand Coulee Airport.





CAMP
Washington State Parks
Classification and Management Planning Project

Political Factors

Legislative District: The state parks are within the 12th Legislative District, which is represented by:

12 th Legislative District		
Senator Linda Evans Parlette	Representative Cary Condotta	Representative Mike Armstrong

Jurisdiction: Steamboat Rock is outside city jurisdiction and lies within Grant County

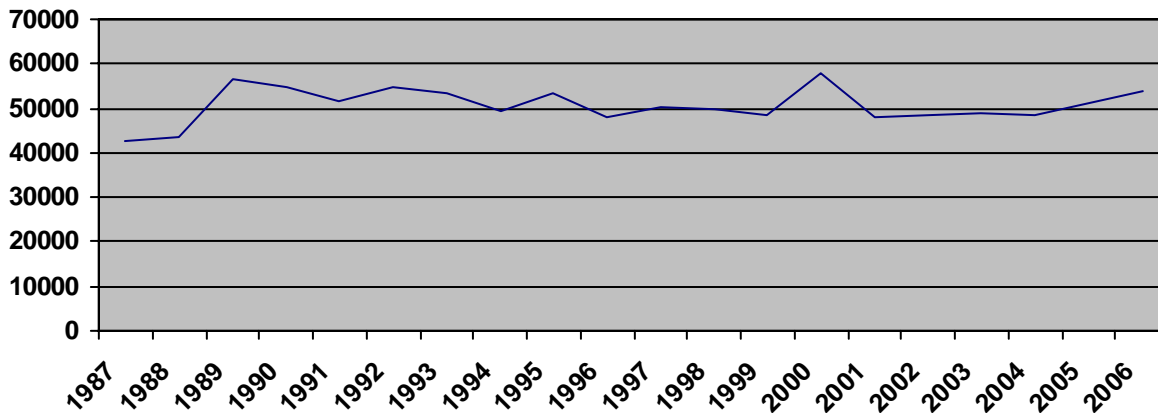
Grant County Board of Commissioners		
Commissioner Richard Stevens	Commissioner LeRoy Allison	Commissioner Cindy Carter
District 1 (Steamboat Rock is in District 1)	District 2	District 3

Electric City		
Mayor Raymond R. Halsey	Council Member Mark Borden	Council Member Birdie Hensley
Council Member Tom Pifer	Council Member Bob Rupe	Council Member Gerald "Jerry" Sands



Community factors

Contribution to local economies: Based on overnight visitors¹ only, the state park's estimated contribution to the local economy of Grant County is over \$32 million between 1987 and 2006. On average, the park contributes \$1.6 million per year.



It is important to note that State Parks are important to local economies in other ways, besides bringing overnight and day visitors to the area. Following are some examples:

- Employees usually live close to the parks and are part of local economies.
- Materials for construction projects in the parks are often purchased locally.
- Materials and supplies for normal operations are often purchased locally.

¹ The estimated daily spending per person for overnight state park campers is \$29.80. Dean Runyan and Associates, "Economic Impacts of Visitors to Washington State Parks, 2002."

Based on 2007 data, the majority of Steamboat Rock’s overnight visitors come from the metropolitan area of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Eastern Washington.

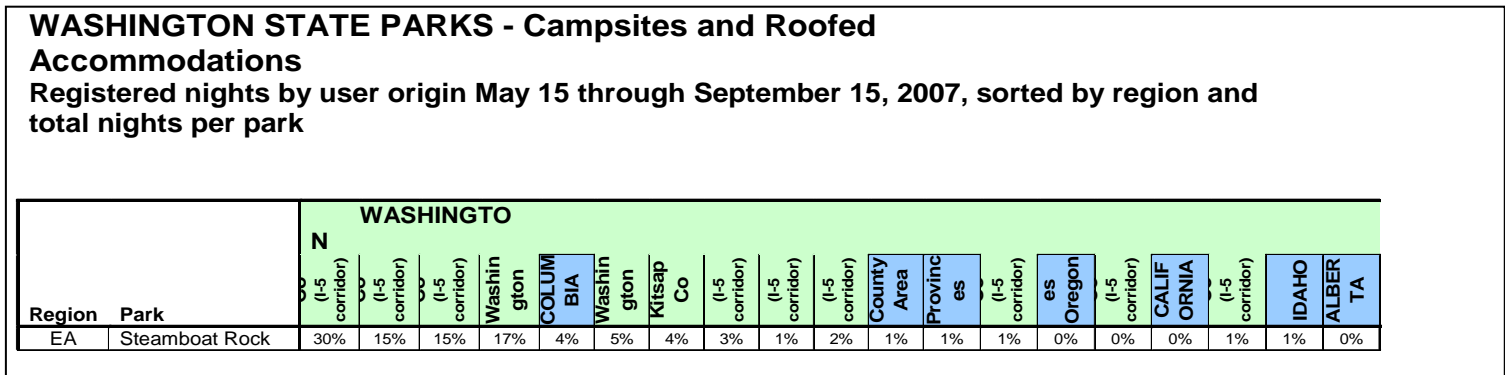


Figure 2: 2007 Source of campers from the central reservation system

Recreational factors

The immediate area surrounding Steamboat Rock is rural, with the nearest services being in Electric City, Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam and Elmer. Recreation includes activities such as fishing, hunting, climbing, water recreation and mountain biking. Recreation is an extremely important part of the local economy.

Existing conditions: Popular activities in the park and local area include a variety of water-based recreation (fishing, boating, water skiing, personal watercraft, and swimming), hunting (not allowed within the state park, but is allowed on adjacent Fish and Wildlife property), biking, equestrian activities, bird watching, rock climbing, and wildlife viewing. The amount of these activities varies by season.

Current camping conditions: Camping is very popular at Steamboat Rock State Park with high usage even in the traditional off season. Camping attendance is linked to the Cascade passes and when the passes become more difficult to cross with snow, attendance slows down.

Boat Launches: Washington State recreational data from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCO) lists boating access as one of the more desired facilities in parks. Washington State projections indicate that motor boating is expected to grow at a slightly lower than average rate, whereas non-motorized boating is expected to grow at a slightly higher than average rate.

Steamboat Rock has 3 boat launch areas. The Washington Recreation and Conservation Office lists 10 boat launch locations on Banks Lake.



Private lodging: There is a private resort on Banks lakes and numerous hotels in Grand Coulee and Coulee Dam

Campgrounds: Private and public developed campgrounds on or nearby Banks Lake, other than the state parks include:

Coulee Playland (65 sites)	Sunbanks Resort (camping and cabins)	Coulee City Community Park (34 hook up sites and 115 tent sites)
Blue Lake Resort (60 sites)	Spring Canyon National recreation Area (50 sites)	



Park specific factors

The following section describes the physical, operational, political and regulatory factors affecting specific areas of Steamboat Rock. Tom Poplawski is the area manager; his office is at Steamboat Rock State Park.

Soils and slopes:

Soil Type #	Soil Type Name and slopes	Acres	Percent
19	Bakeoven-Anders complex, 0- 15 percent slopes	1,614	23
38	Ellisforde silt loam, 5-15 percent slopes	291	4.2
39	Entiat-Rock outcrop complex, 25-65 percent slopes	1223	17.5
97	Quincy fine sand, 2-15 percent slopes	356	5.1
120	Rubble Land-Rock outcrop complex	730.3	10.4
148	Strat stony loam, 0-25 percent slopes	368	5.3

Physical features: The area has gray-green scrub and lush green lawns. It's an oasis in desert surroundings. Dramatic poplar trees and a huge lake mark the terrain.

Temperatures range between 80 to 100 degrees in the summer. The park averages 11 inches of annual rainfall and six inches of snowfall.

Water: The park is adjacent to Banks Lake (managed by The Bureau of Reclamation). Emergent wetlands are present on the lake and Northrup Canyon. Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands are present in Northrup Canyon. (USFWS database January 2008).

The timing and magnitude of reservoir fluctuations impedes the development of wetland and riparian vegetation along the lake margin, and, therefore, limits fish and wildlife habitat.

Northrup Creek flows through the park.

Parts of Northrup Canyon and Northrup creek are listed by The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the 100 year flood plain.

Water quality: The Department of Ecology website² Banks lake as exceeding total National toxins criterion for PCBs in Whitefish and Rainbow Trout samples (Seiders, 2004)

² Based on a 303(d) database search on October 30, 2007

Plants: A rare plants survey of Northrup canyon was completed in 2001 by Beck and Arnette. Constricted Douglas' Onion *Allium constrictum* was found, which is listed by the DNR as Sensitive (Vulnerable or declining and could become Endangered or Threatened in the state).

The Natural Heritage Program³ database administered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources lists the following plants in its priority data base; Wilcox's Penstemon, Valley Sedge, Constricted Douglas' Onion, Dwarf Evening-Primrose, Common Snowberry, Stiff Sagebrush, Wyoming Big sagebrush, Thyme Buckwheat, Suksdorfs Monkey Flower, Threetip Sagebrush, Creeping Spikerush,

Habitat: The NHP database lists the following as important habitat within Steamboat Rock State Park; channeled scabland, Ponderosa– Snowberry, shrub steppe and wetlands for Mule Deer. Basalt cliffs combined with lake for raptors, birds and bats. Shrub Steppe for Sage Grouse.

Northrup Canyon has the only forest in Grant County and is an important wintering area for Bald Eagles.

Animals: The following animals are present at or near the park:

Mammals	Birds	Fish & Sea Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bears • Bobcats • Coyotes • Deer or Elk • Muskrats • Rabbits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crows or Ravens • Doves or Pigeons • Ducks • Eagles • Geese • Gulls • Hawks • Herons • Hummingbirds • Jays • Owls • Pheasants • Quail • Swans • Turkeys • Woodpeckers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bass • Perch • Trout • Walleye

The Priority and Habitat Species (PHS) database⁴ administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lists the entire area as priority habitat for Mule Deer year round range range. Other species listed in the database are; Sage Grouse, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Racer, Sagebrush Lizard, Western Grebe and Bald Eagle.

³ Based on a November, 2 2007 review.

⁴ PHS Database search, December 15, 2007.

Environmental health: The Facilities Site Atlas administered by the Washington Department of Ecology lists one potential hazardous materials site on HWY 155 operated by WSDOT. No well head protection zones are listed. The location of this site appears to be outside the park boundaries.

Noise: The park is affected by some noise from watercraft and aircraft flying training missions.

Land and shoreline use: The site is used as a park and adjacent properties are used for residences, farming and a commercial resort. The park has not been recently used for agriculture.

Facilities in park:

100 hook up sites, 26 standard sites and 74 primitive sites	4 comfort stations with showers 14 CXT (pit)	56 picnic sites / tables
Playground equipment	Workshop	7 Boat launches at 3 locations
3 residences	Amphitheater	Contact station / Office
320 ft of dock	Volley ball field	Reservable day use area
Trailer dump	13.1 miles of hiking and biking trails	10 miles of horse trails

A facilities assessment about five years ago rated most of the park structures as good. Some would require upgrade in the near future and 2 buildings required replacement.

Zoning: Federal Land

Comprehensive plan designation: Open Space and rural remote

Shoreline master program designation: Grant County - “A Rural Environment”

Housing: Three residences within the park (one is uninhabited and needs repairs and upgrades)

Aesthetics: Structures are no taller than 25 to 30 feet (ground to the roof ridge). Exterior building materials generally are wood or cement-board (e.g. Hardiplank) construction.

Lake views are available from the state park.

Light and glare: Some light from building and vehicles illuminates the park at night

Recreation: Picnicking, camping, boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, horse riding, rock climbing and playground activities.

Historical and cultural preservation: No sites are registered on the national or state historic preservation registers.



There are reported archaeological sites in or around the park.

Public services: The park is served by the Grant County Sheriff's Department Electric City and Grant County Fire District 14.

Utilities: The state park is served by on-site septic systems and a lagoon. Water is provided from wells. Grant Co PUD provides electricity to the park.

Business development: A concession-operated store provides services to park visitors.

Nearby public land: Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management and WA Dept. Fish and Wildlife.

Water: The park is adjacent to Banks Lake. Wetlands are present⁵.

⁵ Based on a National Wetlands Inventory search, October 29, 2007



Crown Point State Park Heritage Area

Crown Point is located 2 miles North of Grand Coulee Dam just off State Route 174 in the Northeast corner of Douglas County. The physical facilities are 150 car parking area, a viewpoint vista dome, 1 restroom (CXT).

The total area is 13 acres.

The site provides views of the Columbia River, Grand Coulee Dam and the town of Coulee Dam and its surrounding countryside.





LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

This is the stage of the planning process where we gather community and customers about their hopes and concerns for the Steamboat Rock State Park. In similar processes, State Parks received hundreds of comments. The planning team is hoping to have that level of participation as well.

If you are interested and want to participate, you can do so in two ways.

1. You are invited to a workshop from 7-9 P.M October 1, 2009. at Town of Coulee Dam, City Hall, 300 Lincoln Ave., Coulee Dam, WA

2. You can send an e-mail with ideas for making improvements to or concerns about the state parks. Please be specific about which park you are commenting upon. The planning team will record your ideas and review them. Comments received before October 2, 2008 will be reviewed by the planning team at its next meeting.

Thank you very much for helping us bring the Steamboat Rock State Park to Centennial 2013 standards. Please direct written correspondence to:

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