

Steamboat Rock State Park

Stage Three – Preliminary Recommendations



CAMP
Washington State Parks
Classification and Management Planning Project

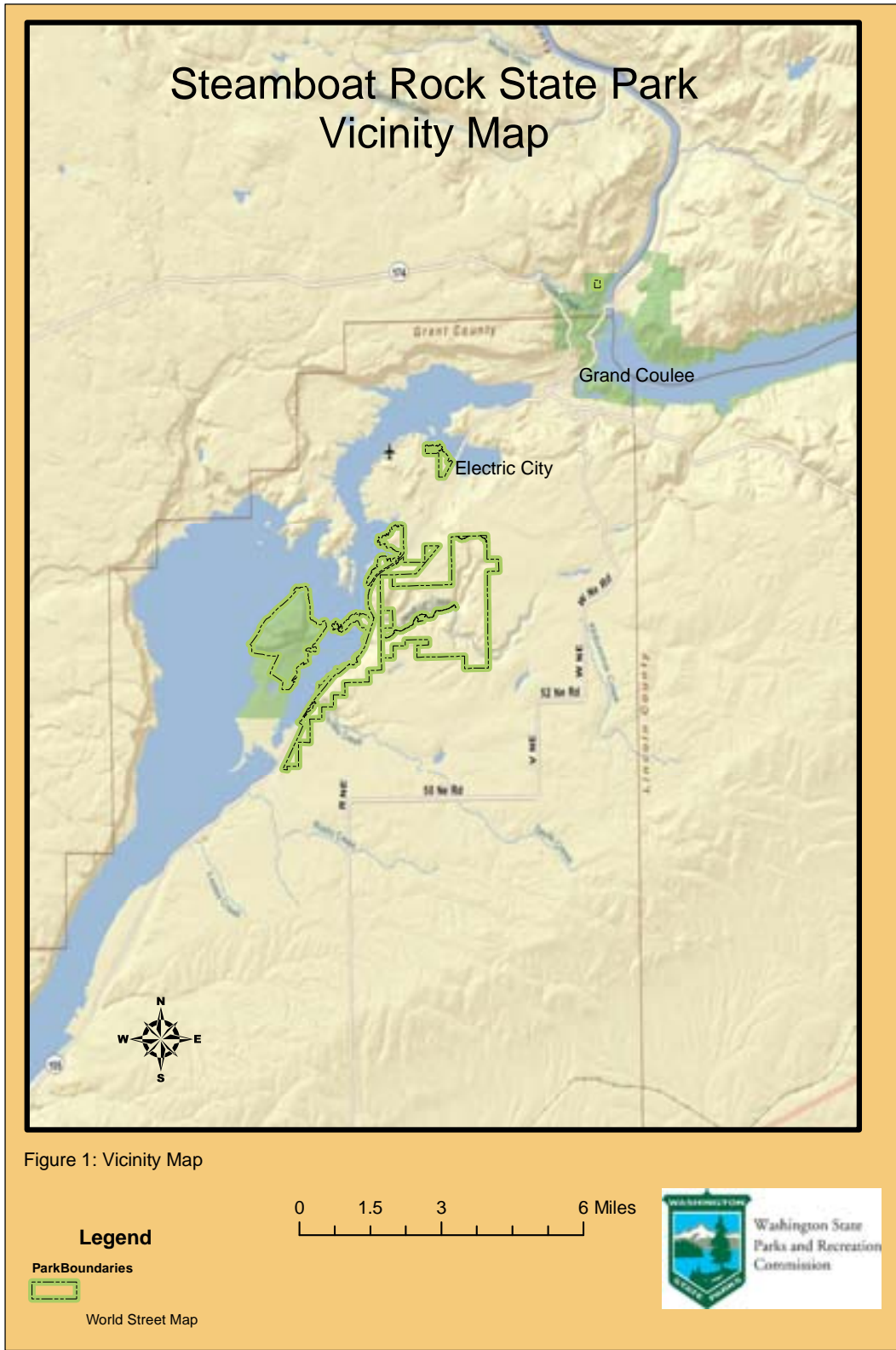


Figure 1



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Introduction

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (the Commission) manages a diverse system of parks located throughout the state. In 2013, Washington State Parks will celebrate its centennial. Therefore, in October of 2003, the Commission adopted the Centennial 2013 Plan to create a focus to energize and bring together the agency, state leadership, and the public as we prepare for another century of service. The primary goal of the Centennial 2013 Plan is to work together to create a park system of “*premier destinations of uncommon quality...outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment and learning of all people.*”

The number one priority of the Centennial 2013 Plan is to renovate the state parks and recreation services you enjoy today, while keeping the future in mind. To achieve this commitment, we have set the goal of having land-use plans for all parks that are supported by the public and Commission. The preliminary recommendations contained in this report represent the third of a four-stage process to develop a Classification and Management Plan (CAMP) for Steamboat Rock State Park. Through our CAMP process, we have worked hard to listen and maximize outreach to park users and surrounding community members by:

- sending approximately 6,000 e-mails to park users and interested parties,
- mailing correspondence to over 300 park neighbors and other stakeholders,
- distributing news releases to local newspapers and outreach publications.

This report represents the planning team’s effort to incorporate the hopes and concerns identified by park users and community members during the first two stages of this planning process. All project documents, including verbatim comments received to date, can be found on our web page: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans>. Hard copies are available upon request.

We want to receive your comments on the preliminary recommendations found in this report. You are invited to a public workshop from 6pm to 8pm., Grand Coulee City Hall, Grand Coulee, Washington. If you cannot attend, please send your comments via e-mail, U.S. mail or by phone. Contact information can be found in the “Let Us Know What You Think” section found near the end of this document.



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 inclusive of all stakeholders 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 with updates. E-mail addresses are encouraged to conserve resources.

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.

Stage One – Identify issues and concerns

The purpose of this stage is to understand what is important to the park community and customer **and** 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 was held from 7-9 P.M, October 1, 2008 at the City Hall in the town of Coulee Dam City, 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

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

Commission meeting – November 18th, 2010, Olympia.

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 to have 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 and government 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 a combination of the following actions together:

- Seek to formalize an agreement to advance a shared property management goal, such as visual 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.

Having land included in a long-term boundary can be confusing. The planning team will make every effort to contact affected landowners. Unfortunately, because we get information from public records, we usually do not have phone numbers for potentially affected landowners. If you are one of those landowners included within a long-term park boundary, please contact Andrew Fielding. Contact information can be found at the end of this document.

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 that 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.



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Issues and Preliminary Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to present the planning team’s preliminary recommendations, which are based on comments received in the previous planning stages. As with earlier stages, your comments are welcome.

Please note that the sum total of all the preliminary recommendations represents a significant workload to staff, and may also create high expectations among agency staff and park stakeholders. At this time, completing, or in some cases even beginning to implement recommendations is not feasible with existing resources. Therefore, the following preliminary recommendations should be understood as a potential “to do” list. Further comment and review of subsequent final recommendation items and/or actions will be prioritized as staff and financial resources permit.

Management Objectives

Management objectives serve to define the vision and purpose of each state park. They must be consistent with laws, policy and the mission statement of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission;

THE WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ACQUIRES, OPERATES, ENHANCES, AND PROTECTS A DIVERSE SYSTEM OF RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND NATURAL SITES.

THE COMMISSION FOSTERS OUTDOOR RECREATION AND EDUCATION STATEWIDE TO PROVIDE ENJOYMENT AND ENRICHMENT FOR ALL AND A VALUED LEGACY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Likewise, the Centennial 2013 Plan gives guidance to what state parks should be as the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission begins its second century of service.

IN 2013, WASHINGTON'S STATE PARKS WILL BE PREMIER DESTINATIONS OF UNCOMMON QUALITY, INCLUDING STATE AND REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT NATURAL, CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES THAT ARE OUTSTANDING FOR THE EXPERIENCE, HEALTH, ENJOYMENT AND LEARNING OF ALL PEOPLE.

The following draft management objectives are presented here for your review. It is important to hear your comments on the management direction for Steamboat Rock State Park.

Steamboat Rock State Park

Draft Management Objectives

Natural Resources

- Monitor, protect and restore native plant and animal communities and natural features in coordination with local, state, and federal agencies, Indian tribes and interested groups

Cultural Resources

- Identify, monitor and protect Native American archeological sites and other cultural and historical resources associated with area land use
- Model responsible stewardship in the management of day to day operations

Recreational Resources

- Provide an array of uncommon quality day use and overnight facilities and services that are compatible with natural and cultural resource management objectives
- Provide a full range of accessible park experiences and opportunities

Sustainability

- Identify and implement economically sustainable practices and actions that protect the environment and meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations
- Promote and demonstrate the responsible and wise use of public resources

Trail Management

- Routinely coordinate with user groups and agency staff to address ongoing trail network maintenance and safety needs and concerns
- Identify and reduce natural and cultural resource impacts resulting from trail use
- Develop and maintain effective orientation to trail network routes, rules and conditions
- Identify and maintain safe trail standards and conditions for all users

Interpretation and Outdoor Education

- Utilize interpretation as a tool to enhance visitor experience, understanding and stewardship of natural, historical, and cultural resources
- Provide year round interpretive and outdoor learning programming and opportunities

Community Partnerships

- Actively engage community participation and partner with stakeholder groups including biking and hiking communities to implement park management objectives
- Work with local and state agencies, tribal groups and non-profit organizations to support regional open space, biodiversity and watershed conservation efforts
- Recruit and manage a volunteer corps of park neighbors, users, and resource stewards to assist park staff in service and maintenance needs

Visitor Safety

- Provide and support coordination of law enforcement services
- Support coordination of local and regional emergency response systems

Park Enterprise

- Explore alternatives to increase overnight occupancy during non-peak use periods. Increase appropriate revenue opportunities.

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Recreational Resources

Issue	Recommendation
Shade in the campground	Develop a tree planting plan that incorporates the new campground and with a consideration for native species has an emphasis on native trees.
Make more trails available and improve some of the existing ones	<p>Improve and evaluate formal trails system to avoid “social” trails being created. Expand trail system on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) managed land using a management agreement to utilize current roads that are being damaged by illegal use.</p> <p>More trails would encourage people to walk and bike and help with sustainability goals.</p> <p>Evaluate Northrup Canyon trails to allow for continued recreation and provide protection to important historic and natural areas. Any expansion shall be sensitive to cultural resources.</p> <p>Develop a master trail plan for the park</p>
More interpretive opportunities on trails	Provide additional educational information on the park. Continue with interpretive signs and interpretive kiosks for visitors

Recreational Resources

Issue	Recommendation
Boats on beach Boats on certain areas of the beach conflicted with some users	To lessen the impacts of this issue, additional moorage slips (up to 52 slips) are proposed, located adjoining the proposed campground expansion areas and existing day use/boat launch area.
Tent pad size	Tent areas are incorporated in the defined use areas of each campsite to accommodate the appropriate number of people.
Demand for boat launch exceeds capacity	Work with the Recreation and Conservation Office and State Parks capital development to establish demand versus boating capacity of the lake. Participate in a regulatory analysis of boating access/limitations on parking.
Increase open lawn areas for group activities	Utilize existing lawn areas rather than create new lawn or expand lawn areas, resulting in increased demand on water and resources. No net gain on lawn areas.
Create a dog off-leash area	Off-leash areas will not be provided on Parks land. WAC 352-32-060 requires dogs be on leash and under physical control at all times. . At this time state parks have decided not to provide off leash areas.
Roads on West side of park are being used illegally	Parks will retain public access to these roads, however, Parks will enforce closure to vehicles. Work with WDFW to help protect area – incorporate as an issue into a comprehensive trail plan.
Boat / canoe/ kayak concessionaire needed	Parks will continue to evaluate opportunities for an on-site concession. Off-site concessionaires currently rent boats and commercial use permits are available for these to operate in the park.
Boat use will increase in lagoon adjacent to day use area when new campground is built	Allow park manger to control access at certain times of the year to protect riparian area.

<p>Improve Horse trails in Northrup Canyon</p>	<p>Continue to work with Back Country Horsemen and develop a comprehensive trail plan.</p>
<p>Primitive backcountry camping at Northrup Canyon</p>	<p>Evaluate and possibly develop a plan to allow limited camping in designated areas. Limited permits, i.e. 10 per year with guidelines for users April 15 – June 1st</p>

Natural Resources

Issue	Recommendation
Aquatic weeds in lake	Approximate quantities and locations of milfoil needs to be evaluated. This could be done at next draw down.
Erosion of ground at horse camp	Seed with native drought-tolerant grasses. Look at other options for prevention of erosion.
Wetland damage in Northrup Canyon	Evaluate if damage is ongoing or the result of historic use (i.e. grazing). Consider restoration options.
Noxious weeds in Northrup canyon – (especially knapweed in previously cultivated areas)	Evaluate and map weed problem –find way to access the area in front of homesteads. Apply chemicals/weed control via aerial application in remote or hard-to-access areas then follow up with hand control methods. Plan for follow up and long term - Identify options; burning, vehicle access, aerial, oats or other
Geese waste on lawn	Addressed in the Parks’ Integrated Pest Management Plan.
Mosquitoes	Continue to work with mosquito control board and other area agencies to resolve this regional issue.

Facilities

Issue	Recommendation
Number of camp sites cannot meet demand	Approximately 64-75 additional camp sites are in the permitting stage.
Request for play structures and swimming pool	Encourage use of current swimming facilities and make access to the play and swim areas easier with trails. Development of swimming pools is not consistent with the goals of Parks.
Overnight moorage	Moorage expansion is proposed in the future. There are 5 existing buoys that can be used for overnight moorage.
Improve group camp facilities	Group camp location has changed – the new location needs some development. Evaluate future locations and facilities.
Showers / restrooms	Additional showers will be provided with the new campground. Two comfort stations with showers are included in the proposed new campground.
Campground layout and site privacy	Any trail plan development should address the issue by encouraging people to not walk through camp sites – the proposed new moorage will also help with this issue. Access locations to the shore will be defined.
Irrigation and grass	Plans for park expansion include more sustainable drought-tolerant plantings. No net gain of irrigated grass.
Picnic shelter	Construct a picnic shelter for large groups and community use at the day use area.

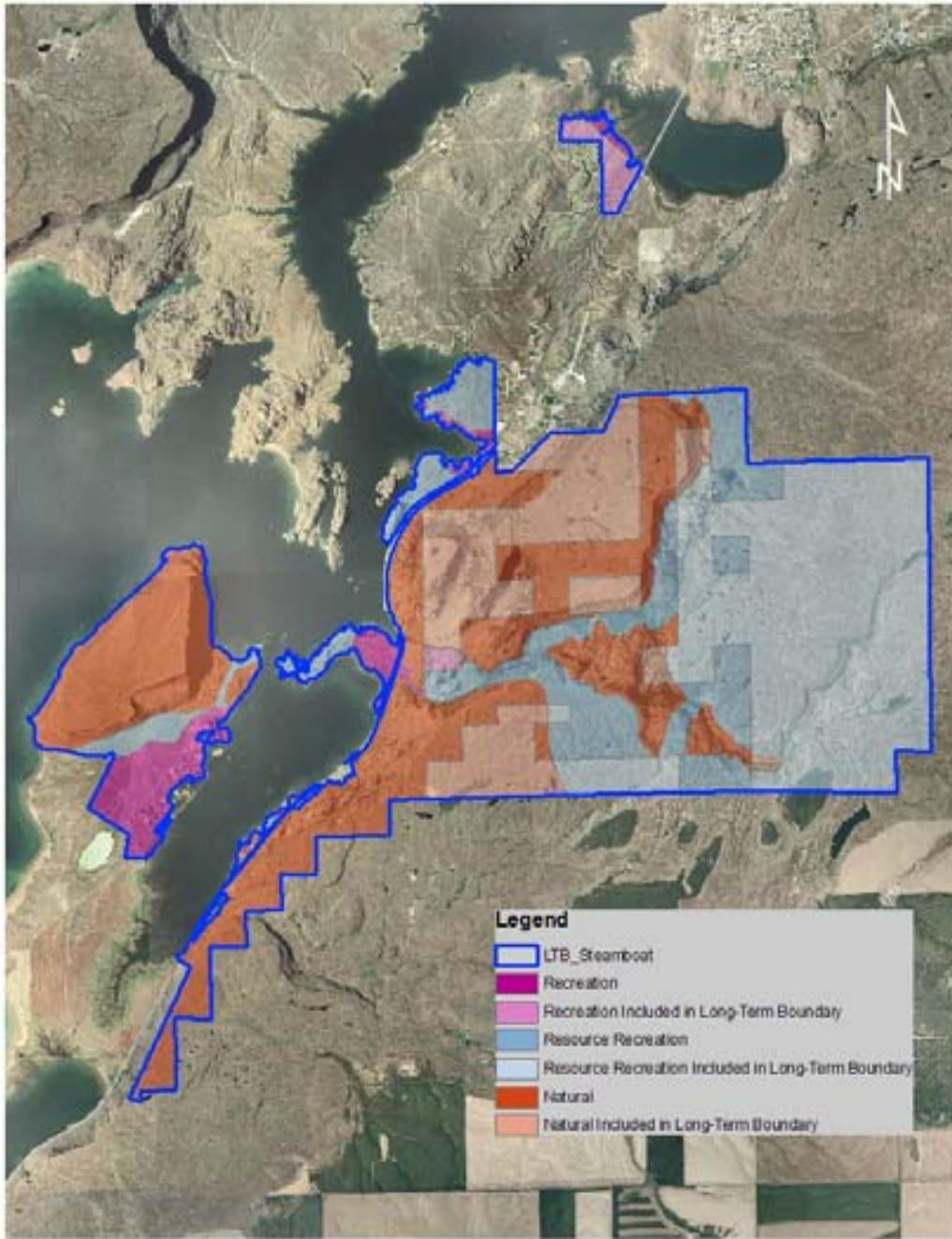
Facilities *Continued*.....

Issue	Recommendation
Recycling program	Attempt to secure grant money to expand recycling program.
Northrup Canyon Rd Ownership / plowing issue	Continue with county plowing of road.
Trash around Banks Lake	Park staff have coordinated volunteer days to clean up around the lake (most trash is beyond park boundaries)
Sand on boat launch	Currently removed twice a year. Remove more during draw down.
ADA access for fishing and beach	Ongoing issue – the local Rotary Club has been working on this issue.
Park office capacity	Expand office within current footprint and include a store.
Concession location is too far from the campgrounds	The proposed trail will provide a direct route from the campground to the concession. Another option would incorporate a concession or store with a new office at entrance.
Roads	Roads will need some new paving in the near future. Work cooperatively with WDFW to manage the road proactively.
Use of house in Northrup Canyon	Explore possibility of use. Evaluate cost to develop as a vacation house – hike in only or other use such as volunteer steward location.
Ornamental vegetation	Develop a vegetation plan. Remove juniper.

Administrative

Issue	Recommendation
Law Enforcement of water issues	Work cooperatively with other agencies to improve visitor safety – provide education for water safety. Douglas County Sheriff’s office is the primary law enforcement agency.

Steamboat CAMP - Proposed Land Class and Long Term Boundary



Please let us know what you think!

There have been lots of ideas generated during the planning process, and staff feels confident that they have been listening to what the community and customers want at Steamboat Rock State Park. Be assured that every idea brought forth during the process was carefully considered by the planning team- whether it ended up being incorporated in the Preliminary Recommendations or not.

We are now getting close to the time when the team must make its recommendations to the Commission, based on the best available information. This document is the **preliminary** recommendations. Your comments are still most welcome and will be considered when we draft the **final** recommendations.

There are several ways for you to give us your thoughts or to get more information. Contact Andrew Fielding:

-by mail: 270 9th St N.E., Suite 200, East Wenatchee, WA 98802

-by email: andrew.fielding@parks.wa.gov

-by telephone: 509-665-4312

You may also visit the website: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/>

Next steps and final decision making

Staff intends to present final recommendations for final consideration and action by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission at its scheduled November 18, 2010 meeting in Olympia, Washington. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) environmental review forms an integral part of the planning process and is also available for public comment upon request.

We hope that you find this process interesting and that you choose to remain actively involved in planning for Steamboat Rock State Park and the implementation of the plan. With your help, we can hand this park down to our grandchildren as a lasting legacy and a treasure of which we can all be proud.