Schafer State Park Campground Relocation Concept Plan

Prepared for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

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2. Alternatives Analysis 12.10.18
3. Final Concept Plan Environmental Impacts,
   Regulatory Implications & Mitigation 05.22.19
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Introduction

Schafer State Park is a 120-acre camping park located in Mason County in southwest Washington on the East Fork Satsop River, midway between Olympia and the Pacific Ocean. The park is popular with visitors due to its proximity to the river and the recreational opportunities it provides including camping, picnicking, community gathering, wildlife viewing, fishing, and boating. However, the park’s existing 41 campsites are located within the 100-year floodplain of the East Fork Satsop River and annual flooding of the park results in seasonal closures of the campground and damage that requires extensive repair and maintenance. This Campground Relocation Concept Plan was developed in an effort to protect park facilities and reduce flooding.

Rivers are dynamic and change over time; this project addresses seasonal flooding by respecting the river and collaborating with nature. The following Concept Plan merges the dynamic river with the interests and desires of the recreation community in a resilient and engaging new design for Schafer State Park. This plan provides a preliminary design for the park; however, it is not intended to commit Washington State Parks to a particular course of action or to limit the choice of reasonable alternatives. Any future decisions and actions based on this plan will be dependent on additional site analysis, environmental review and available funding.

Highlights of the new plan include:
- New campsites located outside of the floodplain to replace frequently flooded existing campsites.
- Improved campsites with larger areas, power, water and privacy planting
- New cabins
- New group camp areas
- A new welcome center
- Conversion of the existing office building back to its original function as a picnic shelter
- New flood-tolerant day use amenities such as fishing, trails, wildlife viewing locations, informal play meadows and picnic areas in a redesigned river floodplain
- Ecological restoration of shoreline and riparian habitat
- A balance between outdoor recreation and preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- Forest, riparian and wetland habitat enhancement
- Interpretation and education amenities
- Added and improved trail loops
- Renovation of historic entry gateways into pedestrian park gateways
- New picnic plazas at the renovated historic kitchen shelters

The following summarizes the site investigation, goals and objectives, public input, and preliminary alternatives evaluated. It is followed by a detailed description of the proposed plan and its implementation strategy.
Mission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission’s Mission Statement sets the tone and guides this project.

• Care for Washington’s most treasured lands, waters, and historic places
• Connect Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage
• Provide memorable recreational and educational experiences

Project Goals

The goals guiding this Concept Plan are built upon Washington State Park’s overarching goals tailored to the specific issues facing Schafer State Park:

• Create a sustainable state park that allows enjoyment and appreciation of the river while being resilient to flooding
• Develop a design that protects the environment and restores ecological value
• Celebrate the unique history of Schafer State Park
• Create a mix of activities that draw people to Schafer State Park, extend visits, and inspire returns
• Develop a concept plan that is consistent with the September 2010 Washington State Parks Classification and Management Planning Project, Lake Sylvia and Schafer State Parks Management Plan (CAMP)
• Create a State Park that can be funded, implemented, and managed by Washington State Parks