Mount Spokane Summit (Hub #2)

During the summer and early fall, the paved route to the summit of Mount Spokane provides great opportunities for an organized interpretive auto tour—including traditional day use, hiking and viewpoint opportunities. Orientation to this route should be incorporated into the Summit Road Sign Plan (see page 15) and the Burping Brook Gateway (see page 18).

The proposed auto corridor to the summit of Mount Spokane provides access to five interpretive sites, described below and shown in Figure 5.3. The idea of an organized network of day use destinations along the route is not new. The 1940 Mount Spokane State Park Master Plan, developed by National Park Service planning staff, identifies site-specific facility plans along the route. Some facilities were established in later years, while some concepts were never used.

Therefore, recommendations for each proposed interpretive site have been drawn from a combination of historic and modern interpretive planning concepts.

Mount Spokane Summit Orientation Station
Mount Spokane is a year round destination. The proposed Mount Spokane Summit hub is comprised of two distinct destinations (interpretive sites 1 and 2 in Figure 5.3) separated by the existing trailhead and informal parking area.

A primary interpretive hub, as well as a trail network orientation kiosk is proposed at the terminus of the summit road (Trailhead #140). The development of an “arrival” orientation station is recommended to provide visitors with basic orientation and service needs (restrooms, interpretive hub and trail network information, and seasonal messages). Currently, trail and route orientation for the ski concessionaire is in place. Orientation station design and related interpretive media should be produced in coordination with the concessionaire, Mount Spokane 2000. Winter snow conditions are a major factor influencing year round signing and outdoor interpretive media in this area.
Figure 5.3 – Summit Auto Corridor Concept Map
Vista House
The Vista House is a major park attraction. The site is perched on the margins of an eroding granite block field that dominates the landscape, and creates logistical challenges for visitor access. Arguably, the panoramic views from this location are unrivaled within the Spokane area. The interior and exterior of the building is an artifact with great capacity to connect visitors with this place and the park’s heritage. A variety of interpretive elements and story points are proposed for this site. Refer to Figure 5.4 for interpretive story points within this vicinity.

Site Accessibility
A major constraint related to interpretation at the Vista House is the lack of universal access. Improvements to accessibility are encouraged through consultation with the Historic Preservation program. All proposed improvements must adhere to the agency’s Cultural Resource Management Policy.

Alternatives to provide “like experiences” and other accommodations should also be explored within the parking area vicinity.

Building and Landscape Considerations
As a historic structure within a cultural landscape, the placement and use of interpretive media should also be consistent with the agency’s Cultural Resource Management Policy. This includes the posting of maps, photos and use of window, wall and ledge spaces for exhibits and announcements.

On-Site Interpretive Programming
Despite access issues, the site is a good location in the park to conduct interpretive programming. Currently, seasonal roving and interpretive programming does occur and should continue. A cost/benefit assessment of scheduled versus roving interpretive programming should be conducted.
Figure 5.4 – Summit Area Interpretive Hub Concept Map
Hub Related Story Points

Native Land Use
The summit of Mount Spokane is a strategic place. The viewshed from the summit is vast and unobstructed. This site and situation remains important to native cultures. Interpretive messages and resulting media related to native land use should be provided through consultation with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Coeur d’Alene Indian Tribe.

Related Theme:
• The Mount Spokane area is important to the traditional life ways and customs of Native Peoples.

Fire Lookouts of the Summit
Prior to construction of the Vista House a fire lookout was constructed on nearly the same viewpoint. A fire watch tower was also located near the modern South Overlook. Even with a lookout station built into the Vista House in 1933, an additional second manned-lookout station was maintained on the south summit from 1948 until 1994.

Visitor access to the fire lookout portion of the Vista House is dependent on the reestablishment of the historic stairway. Based on the compatibility of risk management assessment outcomes, historic preservation objectives and modern building code requirements interpretation within the lookout station may be feasible.

This fire heritage story point is broader than this hub location and can be conveyed at other locations in the park where fire-related forest health implementation is occurring.

Related Themes:
• This landscape has a long history of fire. (The General Land Office survey in 1880s identified many burned areas)

• A fire lookout was not in the original plans for the Vista House. (For $570 the fire lookout was added to the design and construction of the Vista House)

• In August of 1939, a forest fire started on the east slope of Mount Spokane that burned all the way to Spirit Lake.

• A series of towers replaced the stone Vista House as the primary lookout (south):
  1948: 85’ wooden live-in tower (fell down the next winter)
  1950: Built a 45’ pole tower with L-4 cab
  1963: Replaced with 40’ timber tower
  1979: Replaced 40’ timber live-in tower (dismantled in 2001 and moved to nearby Quartz Mountain in 2004)

Visitor access to the fire lookout portion of the Vista House will provide visitors a unique interpretive experience.
Construction of Vista House
Mount Spokane became a state park in 1927. However, due to multi-year vetoes of the entire state parks budget from 1929-1932, few improvements were made. Finally, in 1933, a budget was allocated and new park improvement projects began. One of those projects was construction of the Vista House. The contract for construction of the granite structure was awarded to E.O. Fielstad for a total cost of $5,262—including $570 for the addition of the lookout station. The construction of the house began in late summer of 1933. It was erected quite rapidly. The structure was built between August and November of 1933 for use during that winter.

Related Themes:
- Although constructed rapidly, the Vista House remains a long-lasting icon of the Mount Spokane landscape.
- The Vista House was constructed of native materials—ancient stone. *(which proved to be a superior material to logs)*
- The Vista House was constructed by local craftsman during the Great Depression.
- Preservation of the Vista House is necessary to maintain this unique structure for future generations to enjoy.

Two Mica Granite
The summit of Mount Spokane is home to an ancient batholith of igneous rock, referred to as two-mica granite. When this bedrock is shattered and broken apart by frost action, the result is a jumble of angular stone accumulating at the surface—also known as a block field.

Related Themes:
- Over millions of years the granite rock on this summit has frozen and thawed into block-sized rock fragments—referred to be geologists as a block field.
- This type of rock is believed to be over 100 million years old, and has proved to be a long-lasting building material.
- Some forms of two-mica granite contain Uranium which has been mined from the Mount Spokane area.

Looking east at the Vista House and Spirit Lake, circa 1940. Note the presence of the original lookout adjacent to the Vista House, and what appears to be evidence of the August 1939 fire that burned to Spirit Lake (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
South Overlook
The southern slope of the mountain’s broad summit has served many important uses—all in close proximately to each other. Through the years, various monuments, fire lookouts and communications stations have come to call this rocky slope home. Today, a mosaic of modern television and radio communications towers and artifacts from several community-led initiatives and aspirations await visitors to this landscape. Not visible are the crowds who have gathered at this location to reflect and promote the future of this land as a place of preservation.

Vehicle Access
The summit road actually ends at the South Overlook. This circulation pattern is sufficient for current visitation levels and site weather conditions. Based on the evaluation of future visitor trends, limited access to the summit turnaround could provide a pedestrian zone for interpretive programming and enhance self-guided interpretive opportunities during summer months when weather conditions are pleasant.

Site Accessibility
Any modifications or relocation of parking access should take into account accessibility. The site is fairly level and provides potential for barrier free access to viewpoints and interpretive media.

Summit Interpretive Trail
Summer and winter trails exist in this vicinity. The organized development of interpretive media along a route that allows the visitor to experience the summit as a broader landscape is recommended. The route should consider parking access and connect the Vista House and the South Overlook as a network. Story point media should be thematic and complement not duplicate related messages at other hubs along the corridor. See Figure 5.4 for story point locations. Due to winter conditions and varied time periods of visitor attendance, a variety of media options should be considered, including: seasonal exhibit panels (removable), radio broadcasts of interpretive messages, and self-guided digital tours/corridor tours. Roving interpretation along the route should be considered, as well as schedule walks from the Vista House.

View looking northeast from the South Overlook. Viewing tubes along the South Overlook identify visible lakes in the landscape. Some of these lakes were formed by the deposition of Ice Age Floods deposits in the Spokane Valley.
Hub-Related Story Point Sites

A Gathering Place (Monument Area)
Many ceremonies and special events have taken place at this location.

Related Themes:
- Prior to 1912, this sentinel of the Selkirks was referred to as “Old Baldy” and identified as Mt. Carleton on maps and surveys. That all changed when Francis Cook, who had ownership of 280 acres surrounding the summit, successfully changed the name to Mount Spokane.
- In 1922, the land once owned by Francis Cook was dedicated as a County Park—signaling the future of Mount Spokane as a public park for all to enjoy.
- In 1925, a memorial was established to honor Spokane County soldiers and sailors killed as a result of World War I.
- In July 1927, the mountain was dedicated as a state park.
- On Father’s Day in 1930, the summit was the location of a tribute ceremony to bless Mount Spokane as Father Mountain. The origin of Father’s Day started in Spokane in 1929 through the initiative of local resident Mrs. John Bruce Dodd.
- On Father’s Day of 1932, a copper Sun Ball was dedicated by the Spokane Federation of Women’s Organizations at this site to commemorate the George Washington Bicentennial (born February 22, 1732) in the state named in his honor.

Many Visible Lakes
From nearly any place along the proposed summit trail one can view multiple lakes nested in lower elevations of the landscape. A series of view tubes were installed at the overlook sometime before 1933 to allow visitors to easily recognize up to eight different lakes. The original view tubes have been replaced, but have remained here relatively free of vandalism. The lake viewpoint idea was conceived by Frank Guilbert in 1916, in an effort to showcase the unique views from the summit in order to gain support for the development of a National Park at Mount Spokane.

Lake Pend Oreille (general location of glacial Lake Missoula ice-dam) and four lakes created by the Ice Age flood deposits are visible from here. General interpretation of this connection to the Ice Age floods story and larger Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail is recommended.

Related Themes
- The summit of Mount Spokane provides unobstructed views of several lakes.
- Spirit, Twin, Hauser and Newman lakes were formed during the last Ice Age when flood gravel bars blocked their outlets.
- Lake Pend Oreille, visible from here, was the location of the ice-dam that created Glacial Lake Missoula.

The Sun Ball located at the South Overlook, circa 1935 (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
Paradise Camp Wayside
Francis Cook was a man of vision. His vision of Mount Spokane as a recreation destination started at what he called Paradise Camp. This site provided commanding views and opportunities for relaxation, but more importantly, a fresh source of water in the form of a nearby mountain spring. In 1909, he constructed an auto road up the western slopes of the mountain that still exists today (now part of the Day Mountain and Mount Kit Carson road system). He then built a cabin and launched a marketing campaign to make this location a summer destination of the Inland Empire. Until his death in 1919, he operated his camp as a private resort.

Fortunately, Cook’s 280 acres of land, which included much of the mountain summit, was not sold to another entrepreneur. In 1919, it was purchased by Spokane County as a public park. By 1927, it was transferred to the hands of Washington State Parks and for two decades (from 1933 to 1952) this area was the core facility hub of the park. Today, it stands as a relic of the past with little to no information to relate to visitors the significance of this landscape in the shaping the park as an alpine skiing destination.

Parking Access
The great potential of this wayside is limited by current levels of access. A narrow parking area is located across the summit road to the east. Prior to the scoping and development of interpretive media and associated trail opportunities within this hub, an assessment of short-term (wayside) and day use parking should be conducted. Opportunities to enhance existing conditions and increase pedestrian safety should be explored.

Historic Resources
Several features of this site no longer exist; however, historic archaeological features are likely present. Therefore, the development and placement of interpretive media should be done in accordance with the agency’s Cultural Resource Management Policy.

Aerial view of Cook’s Cabin circa 1934. Note the site of Cook’s original cabin in left of photo in relationship to the Caretaker’s Lodge located in center of photo (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
Interpretive Opportunities
Two forms of interpretive experience should be explored at this hub. First, is the development of an auto wayside that provides strategic orientation and a brief interpretive overview to visitors en route to the summit. A range of interpretive media can be used to serve a wayside function. Examples include a radio broadcast (tuned to a specific frequency), digital podcasts (or other summit tour related media), and traditional outdoor exhibit panels (removable during winter).

The second is a self-guided interpretive trail that thematically links the various story points of this site to the adjacent interpretive hub at the CCC Camp Cook (see Figure 5.5). The site is also accessible by trail. Trail network orientation signing should highlight interpretive opportunities of this site.

Hub-Related Story Point Sites

Cook’s Cabin
The location of Cook’s original cabin is not precisely known. Interpretation of the site should be done in context with the Caretaker’s Lodge—both virtual features in the story of the landscape.

Related Theme
- Nearly one hundred years later, virtually no evidence remains of the birthplace of recreation at Mount Spokane.

Paradise Spring
The spring at Paradise Camp is a natural and cultural resource. Interpretation should be balanced to communicate its significance as a vital natural resource and in ceremonial uses.
- The spring at Paradise Camp was essential to development of the site.
- The CCC utilized the spring to serve the ski lodge and Camp Francis Cook.
- The spring is a cultural resource and was important to Native Peoples and early visitors to the park.

Francis Cook’s original cabin photographed on August 1, 1933 (WSPRC).
Figure 5.5 – Paradise Camp and CCC Camp Cook Interpretive Hub Concept Map

Mount Spokane State Park / Interpretive Plan / October 2009
Caretaker’s Lodge
The Caretaker’s Lodge was the original alpine skiing destination of Mount Spokane. The rustic log structure was designed by H.C Bertlesen and constructed by local craftsman in the fall of 1933. Like the Vista House, the cabin was constructed rapidly in a matter of weeks. Almost instantly, the site became a popular destination for local and regional skiers. It was most active from 1934 to 1940 until a larger lodge was constructed nearby. In the 1960s, it was renovated as a summer group camp as the attention of skiers shifted to the east slope of the mountain. After nearly half a century of use it was finally demolished in 1980. One option for media at this site is to provide a “point of view” image that reveals the location of the lodge with the remaining woodshed visible in the photo.

Related Themes
- The Caretaker’s Lodge was constructed by local craftsman prior to CCC activity in the park.
- From 1934 to 1940, the lodge was a regional skiing destination.
- The Caretaker’s Lodge was demolished in 1980 after nearly 50 years of use.

Woodshed
The woodshed is the only remaining structure from the former Caretaker’s Lodge complex. The granite and wood structure was constructed by the CCC as a winter storage facility. The structure still exists today, although in disrepair. Yet it has the potential to tell a unique story. Due to the potential for vandalism and unintentional harm, programmed access to the site needs to be evaluated, as well as the placement of media.

Related Themes
- The woodshed was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934.
- The woodshed was located next to the Caretaker’s Lodge once located nearby.

Looking west at the Caretaker’s Lodge circa 1950. Note the location of the woodshed visible in the right background of photo (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
Latrine
The most visible link to the heritage of Paradise Camp is the remaining stone latrine. Constructed by the CCC, it stands as a symbol of past land use and enduring construction materials and methods. Interpretation should support historic preservation strategies for this resource.

Related Theme

- Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees built this structure from local granite.
- Help us preserve a link to the past—with your help we can preserve these resources for future generations to experience.

Mount Spokane Lodge
Perhaps the most impressive structures in the park was the original Mount Spokane Lodge. The lodge was constructed by local contractors with supplies provided by the CCC. The lodge was a highly popular destination. In response to growing demand an addition was undertaken in the early 1950s. However, great misfortune struck in January of 1952, when an explosive fire burned the iconic structure to the ground—days before its renovation was to be complete.

Related Themes

- The tragic fire of January 23, 1952 ultimately resulted in the gradual shift of skiing from the west to the east slope of the mountain.
- The cause of the fire was an explosion that took the life of Rulon Downard.
- Evidence of the stone masonry and concrete retaining walls are all that remain of the lodge today.

The original Mount Spokane Lodge circa 1940. The lodge was located on the west slope of the mountain in the vicinity of Paradise Camp (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
Camp Francis Cook
In 1916, Frank Guilbert campaigned endlessly to promote Mount Spokane as a candidate for a National Park. Ironically, his vision was partially realized nearly two decades later during the height of the Great Depression. Federal work relief programs under the New Deal looked to the National Park Service to lead efforts to design and develop Civilian Conservation Corps projects on public lands—including Mount Spokane State Park. The camp at Mount Spokane was established in the spring of 1934, and named Camp Francis Cook in July of that year in honor of the Spokane pioneer. Camp Francis Cook was spike camp, or seasonal camp, that housed up to 200 enrollees for six month periods.

The camp was active for most of the 1930s. Enrollees were involved in a variety of park development projects including; road and telephone line construction, surveying, and the development of springs and other park facilities. National Park Service plans to develop the camp as a park facility was never realized. As a result, the site of the former camp remains fairly intact and serves as a great resource for future generations to connect to and understand this heritage.

Accessibility
The campsite is located nearly one mile from a trailhead at the summit auto road and several miles from other park trailhead access points. However, the gravel road leading to the site is fairly level and does provide some level of general accessibility. Currently, a primary issue facing access to the site is amount of Paradise Camp trailhead parking, which has a low capacity to serve groups.

Historic Resources
Many character-defining features of CCC campsite are in place and in a state of preservation. The placement of interpretive media and related use patterns should be monitored to assess any potential changes to existing resources and uses.
Interpretive Trail Opportunities
The primary interpretive opportunity at this site is trail-based, self-guided interpretation. The remoteness of the site and view shed impacts should be considered in the placement of orientation and interpretive media. The site provides a good opportunity to pilot virtual tour media. For specific locations of story points refer to Figure 5.5.

Limited Facilities
The semi-remote location of the camp presents some opportunities for use as an outdoor classroom and historic preservation training site. However, the lack of water and electricity is a limiting factor for enticing future uses the site.

Hub-Related Story Points

Site Orientation
The site is accessible from two entrance trailheads. Therefore, orientation media should be consistent, and provide distinct themes at each interpretive trailhead.

Related Themes:
- For over 75 years, park visitors have benefited from federal work relief programs from the Great Depression.
- A major accomplishment of the CCC included the enhancement and establishment of new roads.
- This CCC camp was known as one of the best organized camps in the entire CCC program.

Living at 5,000 feet
The CCC was a federal program and many enrollees were not from the region or state. Each camp period lasted six months, which meant enrollees experienced the hot summer days and the chilling nights of late spring and early fall at 5,000 feet. Within view of the level tent landings is a good location to convey this message through images and oral histories, if available.

Related Theme:
- Many of the enrollees were from out of the region and each had to adapt to the sub-alpine climate at 5,000 feet.
Then and Now
The use of historic images to convey to visitors the changes, or lack of changes, to the landscape can be highly effective. Several images of the flagstone steps and cabin exist and should be further researched for comparison with modern viewpoints.

The Unplanned Cabin
Not everything goes according to plan. The dedication of the camp in June of 1934 included the rapid construction of the headquarters cabin—which was not planned. With less than two weeks to complete the project, local craftsmen were brought in to complete the job. Ironically, the agency has struggled to come up with a successful use of this remote structure in modern times. The site does serve as a winter warming hut and should consider year round interpretive media options. Other options include use as a day use outdoor learning station.

Related theme:
- The CCC did not build the original camp cabin—it was constructed rapidly by local craftsmen in less than two weeks in preparation for the camp dedication.

Unfinished Work
Not all the CCC projects were completed. The unfinished latrine is a unique story point, as it highlights the changes that occurred within a camp and provides opportunities to connect visitors with identifiable life experiences.

Related Theme
- The planned development of this area as a park day use area was never finished.

Looking east at the entrance to Camp Francis Cook circa June 1934. Note the unfinished cabin in background. A modern image from this viewpoint could serve as an effective story point (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).
The Bald Knob day use area receives year round trail use. Therefore, year round trail orientation media should be considered, specifically for routes originating or passing through the northwestern portion of the park (e.g. routes 110, 130 and 100 west).

Interpretive Opportunities
From mid June through October the site offers potential to serve as an interpretive wayside along the summit road corridor. Ample parking, restrooms, and a covered shelter constructed in the early 1950s currently provide individuals and groups with access to passive outdoor activities. However, no interpretive media was noted at this site. Seasonal interpretive opportunities should be explored. Options include removable or interchangeable self-guided exhibits, interpretation along a future accessible route to the kitchen shelter, and special event programming (see Figure 5.6). Modifications in the summit corridor road signing should be considered to make visitors aware of this wayside opportunity in their ascent and decent from the summit area.

Adjacent to the day use area is the park’s only campground. With a maximum occupancy of 12 parties, limited opportunities for evening programming exist for this site. However, the campground is located along the Burping Brook watershed divide and could serve user groups in the park for environmental learning purposes.

Hub-Related Story Point Sites
For detailed locations of story points see Figure 5.3.

A CCC-Built Road
The paved road from the park entrance to Paradise Camp was established by the CCC during the Great Depression. Making visitors aware of the CCC-theme should be subtle as no significant CCC resources beyond the road are visible from here.

Welcome to Sub-Alpine Country
Once the visitor arrives at Bald Knob they can begin to see and feel the variation in vegetation and climate from this elevation (approximately 5,100 feet). Many trails in the vicinity provide opportunities to experience a sense of this sub-alpine environment.

Related Themes
- Sub-alpine forests have adapted to areas with heavy snowfall and short growing seasons.

The Bald Knob kitchen shelter was constructed in the 1950s. Opportunities exist to develop interpretation on-site.
Figure 5.6 – Bald Knob Vicinity Interpretive Hub Concept Map

Mount Spokane State Park / Interpretive Plan / October 2009
Sheet #5 from 1940 NPS Master Plan for the Bald Knob vicinity. The lodge shown may be the former location of the Spokane Ski Club Lodge. No other structures were construction projects until the 1950s. Not shown is the Big Spring Wayside constructed nearby at a later time.

Summit Road Waysides

Big Spring Auto Wayside
Along the summit corridor the Big Spring wayside provides an opportunity for short duration, passive recreation. The site is along a spring issuing from the granite bedrock of the slope. Interpretation suitable for site conditions is recommended. This could be in the form of self-guided media on-site or as a cue along a radio or digital audio tour. A major constraint is limited parking (see figure 5.6).

Related theme:
- Water can flow above and below ground—these headwater springs are supported by underground runoff from the summit of Mount Spokane.
- High-elevation springs provide highly valuable habitat for wildlife.

Scenic Overlook Auto Wayside
The development of a scenic overlook along the Summit Corridor near Deadman Creek is planned in conjunction with current road improvements. Concept designs identify three outdoor interpretive panels to be placed along a stacked granite ledge (see Figure 5.7)

Related theme:
- A Lasting Legacy—Mount Spokane became a state park in the 1920s and today is the largest found in the Pacific Northwest.
- The automobile route up Deadman Creek was constructed by the CCC during the Great Depression.
- There are several interpretive opportunities along the Summit Corridor.
Figure 5.7 – Mount Spokane Road Scenic Overlook Conceptual Development Plan (WSPRC, 2009).