<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I prefer to keep off road access as is stated in plan 3, in other word no changes. ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a general comment, from a family that stays at Wanapum Recreation Area at least 2-3 times annually, while we're rock climbing just across the river: we love this campground! We've introduced it to friends and even youth outdoor groups, who've stayed there with us and found its amenities to be a wonderful relief at the end of a day of climbing. When it's not too cold, jumping in the river is a major bonus. Campground staff have always been knowledgeable and helpful. I'm not sure what we would change, other than expanding the campground if that's possible (as it often fills up), but it's a place that's dear to our hearts and the source of many of our fondest memories. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support Alternative 1 (&quot;Heritage&quot; concept) for Ginkgo Petrified Forest. Protecting our natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations is important, and it is one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to maintain our natural resources. As a restoration ecologist, I understand that once natural areas are damaged, it is extremely expensive and difficult, if impossible, to return ecosystems to their pre-damaged state. I would support WA State Park in limiting vehicle access in the park to protect rare or at-risk species, and natural features, and maintain the shrub-steppe plant communities that are becoming increasingly limited in Washington state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning effort. ³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks for the opportunity to review the planning documents for the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park and Wanapum Recreation Area. As someone who has visited this area dozens of times over the last 40 years, I have strong opinions about the options. In particular, I think that option 2 (which allows primitive camping in the Rocky Coulee area) is far superior to the other two options. This land is a unique asset in the state, in that it's one of the last places where one can do remote camping at low elevations in eastern WA. As such, it is a treasure for those of us who like open spaces and the opportunity to get out into nature, away from the buzz of human activities, and to be able to do so regardless of the season. Indeed, the Ginkgo area is a place that draws many to botanize, watch birds, study lichens, observe pollinators, etc., and because of its low elevation and unique ecosystem, is a prime go-to spot for naturalists in early spring, when the rest of eastern WA is largely still dormant. Furthermore, large areas of sagebrush-dominated habitat are scarce (other than the off-limits areas of Hanford and the Yakima Firing Range) in the state, and this remains one of last places where one can get that unique feeling that camping in an expansive arid ecosystem can provide. Limiting camping only to developed sites would be a dreadful mistake that would relegate this area to being just another park that one could not fully experience. Camping in the desert and hearing nothing but the wind and great horned owls and coyotes serenading the moon is something that one can't experience at a developed campground. Please don't deprive future generations of this unique experience. ⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should also have mentioned that there are many sites currently used for dispersed car camping to the N and W of Rocky Coulee...typically wide spots or green dot pullouts. It would be good if the adopted plan permitted such dispersed camping. ⁴b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dec 7, 2020

Hello. I offer my comments re the Gingko Stage 2 planning document as a 40+ year user of nearly all of the various facets of Gingko Park, with my predominant use being access to the Quilomene / WhiskeyDick Wildlife areas for hiking and upland bird hunting, via the Primitive Road accessed from Recreation Drive. I strongly encourage consideration and implementation of Alternate 3 as the plan which would offer the most versatile park usage for the widest array of users, while preserving the natural wonders and historical structures that make this such a special and unique component of the State Parks system. In my view, the top benefits of Alternate 3 include:

1) Maintaining seasonal access to the Primitive Road off Recreation Drive via the current self-registration and call-in code gate system. My observation over many years has been that this access is relatively lightly used, and almost exclusively by users who dutifully observe the park rules. The recent improvements to the self-registration system and gate access are working as intended, and seem to be very effective at promoting responsible use of this area. Having an alternate egress point for access to the lower-elevation portions of the Quilomene / WhiskeyDick Wildlife areas is critical when the primary higher-elevation access roads become difficult or impossible to navigate during inclement fall / winter weather. As well, limiting or eliminating vehicular access via the primitive road would preclude use of the inner reaches of North Gingko to all but a very few extremely able-bodied users, depriving many others of the joy of this desolate but rich bit of geography;

2) Creation of a trail from the Cove to a new Iron Horse / Palouse to Cascades Trail access point. This will encourage and facilitate greater use of this world-class “rails to trails” amenity;

3) Classification of the lands adjacent the Interpretive Center and Trailside Museum as Resource Recreation, and the subsequent expansion of the trail systems within. This will presumably open some underutilized areas of interest to a greater array of users.

Thank you to State Parks staff for the well-prepared presentation of planning alternates.

As a WA resident, I would like you to continue ORV travel through just like it is now.

I received a letter from Melinda Posner directed to "Selected Owners of Properties Adjacent to Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park". I own approximately 36 acres to the north west of The Cove. I have two homes on this property. I have a easement through The Cove to access my property. The information and map that was mailed to me did not show any impact whatsoever to my property. It appears however that the information sent to me was grossly misleading regarding actual proposed alternatives which would significantly affect my property. Alternative 2 and 3 show a Park trail/road traversing my property adjacent to my homes and connecting to a Department of Defense Road leading to a connection to the Palouse to Cascade Trail.
A connection of The Cove Recreation Area to the Palouse to Cascade Trail seems like a very good idea. I have traveled this trail several times on my mountain bike from Kittitas to The Cove. Respectfully the connection proposed in Alternative 2 and 3 is profoundly misguided. A road/trail already exists at the south east end of The Cove which connects to the Palouse to Cascade Trail. I know this because I have done it several times. Why in the world would this connection not be use, its more direct, doesn't cross private land and is ALREADY THERE. Alternative 2 and 3 as it relates to The Cove would negatively impact the quite enjoyment of my property and I object to it in the strongest possible terms.  

I support Alternative 3 that allows for existing ORV use to travel through the park. It is important to retain linkages to other adjoining routes and trails.  

Alternative 1: National Heritage Theme - This is the best alternative overall for Ginkgo. Ginkgo is best managed as a natural/heritage area with emphasis on the geological and Native American features that are preserved in the park. However, I think that Recreation Drive should remain open to through traffic for a limited number of LOCAL users, given that access to WDFW lands on the Colockum can be difficult for Vantage hunters to access at certain times of the year. I am a hiker, but can live with a limited amount of traffic on that road. One of the most vital features of Alternate 1 will be the acquisition of the Stockdale parcel north of Rocky Coulee and the WDFW parcel adjacent to the parcel containing the last remaining standing stone so as to provide a protective buffer from further vandalism at that site.  

Alternative 2: Expanded Recreation Theme - No matter what, this alternative needs to include the acquisition of the two parcels mentioned above. I like the idea of linking the Cove with the Palouse to Cascades Trail and shifting management to State Parks. In general, mountain bikes should not be allowed on the sensitive soils of the Park, particularly in their current extremely vulnerable condition due to recent wildfires. If limited trails can be constructed to provide access between the Trailside Museum and the Palouse to Cascades Trail, that would be great. And no camping north of I-90 other than the PUD boat ramp, please. Campers in the desert seem to be careless of their surroundings and should be confined to waterside areas.  

Alternative 3: Trail Emphasis Theme. I'm not in favor of Alternative 3, with its de-emphasis of Natural Area Preserves. Again, the landscape of Ginkgo is highly susceptible to wildfire and associated damage and increasing the density of trails will only exacerbate this problem. The Cove to PtoC connection is a great idea. Recreation Drive access needs to be limited to through traffic for Vantage residents only.  

Hello,  
Please allow motorized access on the historic 2 track roads in the planning area. These roads could be part of a motorized access route from Vantage to the Colockum Pass area. This will help the campgrounds and fuel stations in Vantage by allowing users to camp there and recreate up on the WA State DNR Green Dot roads to the SE.  

I certainly the appreciate the efforts to enhance and preserve the Gingko Petrified Forest State Park. It is a wonderful area and access to it is greatly appreciated. My primary use of this area is motorized vehicle pass-thru for camping, hiking, hunting and general recreation multiple times a year. Adopting the ALT1 Alternative Approach would make it significantly more difficult to access the areas to the north. Access has already been significantly impeded by the Wild Horse Wind Farm restrictions and this would be one more step to cutting off access to these areas.
My overall preference would lean towards adopting the ALT3 Alternative Approach but I certainly understand that it would not appreciably enhance the ability to better preserve this natural resource. I respectfully recommend the ALT2 Alternative Approach with a condition for convenient yet specialized motor vehicle pass-thru permits.

Thanks so much for your consideration.  

Melinda & Scott, Andrew & Parks Staff,  
A note of thanks for all your work putting together the public virtual meeting and presentation of the Alternative Approaches.  
It was well organized and managed. A good forum for public participation.  
Thanks for your efforts.  

Melinda,  
Please see attached document. The bike/hike access from The Cove to the Iron Horse aka Palouse to Cascade Trail should be on the old Doris Road. A trail head should be located where Doris Road intersects Huntzinger Road. The existing double wide should be removed, it is not used, and a restroom should be built, utilities and septic already exist.  
Please let me know what you think.  

Attachment  

As a state park it’s critical that the park remain accessible to vehicles. First, state parks need to be accessible to all people period. Closing the park to vehicles limits park access to the beauty and serenity to only a select few who can take advantage. Second, travel through the park to surrounding private property is critical for safe, year round access. Those traveling through are not degrading the surrounding areas and have a truly vested interest in keeping the area healthy. I’m more concerned about encouraging mountain bikers who are more inclined to go off road. Please keep the park open to vehicles. Thank you!  

After reading the information provided in the Ginkgo Proposals, I support and am in favor of Proposal III.
I along with my family have visited and recreated in the Colockum for almost 5 decades for both hiking and OHV use. Use of the road from the old Vantage Highway through the Park is important for all levels of abilities for hiking, mt.biking and for accessing the green dot road system. It is very evident that all of the current users respect the area and do not deviate from the current roads or disrupt wildlife or habitat.

Opportunities for the physically challenged, elderly and persons with disabilities would be short changed the chance to view the Big Horn sheep, deer and elk that frequent the area. Numerous times over the years we have been within less than 50 yards from grazing sheep and easily able to view the other animals within short distances.

I would like to see the CCC trail that runs north of Vantage to the site of the petroglyphs resurrected as far as possible. The rock work that was done to create the trail in locations should be shared.

Having a trail that connects Vantage to the Palouse to Cascade Trail would also benefit all campers and bicyclist by not having to ride Huntzinger Rd. The truck and orchard traffic is very dangerous throughout the summer months.  

All area identified in Alt. 1 as Natural Area Preserve designated NAP. Washington State has lost over 50% of the shrub-steppe ecosystem. We must protect what remains. This park piece is an important connector between other pieces of this habitat to the north and south. In addition, vehicle access has been causing theft of petrified wood - not acceptable.

Trailside Museum designated “Natural”. Seek National Register of Historic Places designation for CCC structures.

Iceburg Pass should be restricted due to the potential impact on sensitive resources found there. Opening this area to the public would cause increased theft, vandalism and other undesirable activity.

Interpretive Center designated “Natural” or whatever it takes to keep camping and other recreational development out of this location. RV sites at this location are incongruent with the safety of resources and the educational nature of the site.

Area south of I-90 and west of Huntzinger should also be designated Natural Area Preserve (not “Natural” as shown in Alt. 1).This area hosts sensitive, rare plants and other important features of shrub-steppe.

Area south of I-90 and east of Huntzinger should be designated as Natural. Shoreline habitat should be protected.
Current camping area at Wanapum should be “Recreation” and/or “Resource Recreation” and should be the location of any expansion of camping or other high impact recreation in the park. No camping should be permitted at any other locations, including all area north of I-90. 17
Comments on the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Alternative Plans

WSP failed to respond to any public comments made from the 1st meeting. 

**Natural area preserve** is too restrictive of a land use and should not be used anywhere in the park. The supporting documentation provides no rare or vanishing features that could not be protected under the Heritage land use.

The existing maps are at too small scale to be useful.

Adjacent land ownership should be identified: WDFW, GPUD, BOR, private.

No data supporting any alternative presented has been provided to the public. WSP provides no evidence supporting their themes of national heritage, expanded recreation, trail emphasis.

WSP provides no existing facilities inventory or site plans

What current usage by RCO activity data does WSP have for the park?

What are the current high existing recreational needs of the project?

With the soon completion of Vantage Bay and 180 homes to the Vantage Area, there is a high existing need to expand Boat ramp parking, day use/swim beaches and trail opportunities. Expanded camping is already a documented high existing need.

What items are the current maintenance backlog and cost at the park?

What capital projects and costing are being considered?

WSP participated in the Recreation Group for Priest Rapids Project and in a letter to FERC (May 27, 2005) stated WSP $8,000,000 expectations. **WSP did not receive a single benefit from the relicensing order.** Rocky Coulee was added later.
May 27, 2005

Magalie R. Salas, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street NE
Washington DC 20426

RE: Project No. 2114-116
Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County
Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project

COMMENTS:
On behalf of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, State Parks' staff has participated in the Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County (PUD), Priest Rapids Hydroelectric Project relicensure effort. State Parks has primarily been involved with, and this letter focuses on, the draft recreation management plan.

We felt that the PUD's process was quite open and collaborative. The assessment of current recreation facilities and future recreation needs was an excellent example of a broad regional evaluation, that in turn focused on current recreation impacts within the project and used regional information to predict future demands and impacts on project lands, as well as other lands adjacent to waters within the project.

The PUD's use of "limits of change", in which levels of use at existing recreation sites within the project provide the trigger for development of the next phase of facilities, was well done.

We would like to see greater clarification of the role of the PUD in the development of additional recreation facilities and the associated Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of those facilities.
During technical working group sessions, it was State Parks' staff's understanding that the PUD would develop the new facilities. The PUD anticipated contracting with public agencies or private operators for O&M. For public agencies this might consist of payment by the PUD for net costs (total site costs, less revenues generated at the site).

When the draft Recreation Resource Management Plan was issued, it lacked Exhibit #2, but Table #4 and Exhibit #1 indicated Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission "as operator of the site, to provide annual O&M for the term of the new license once the site is developed," at Airstrip Site, Getty's Cove Group Site, and Wanapum Recreation Area – John Wayne Pioneer Trail. It first must be understood that legally State Parks cannot commit to costs beyond the current budget authority, as approved by the legislature. Secondly, it becomes unclear what commitment the PUD is making to provide recreational opportunities, if the government agency identified to provide annual O&M, in Exhibit #1, is unable to do so.

When the license application was submitted, State Parks reviewed Exhibit #2 for the first time. It indicated a $6.8 million cost sharing commitment by State Parks, which equates to 40% of the total cost at the associated projects. Again, it is unclear what the level of commitment is by the PUD, if the partnership agency shown in Exhibit #2 is unable to meet the cost share commitment shown.

RECOMMENDATION:
In order to establish a clear understanding of the PUD's commitment to develop specific recreation facilities and assure their operation, State Parks respectfully requests consideration of the following license requirements:

**Facility Development**

**Option #1**  
PUD makes available to State Parks $8 million, within the first eight (8) years following issuance of the new license, to be applied to the development of the new recreation facilities, identified in the recreation resource management plan. This option allows State Parks to apply for grants and other funding assistance, to leverage the number of facilities provided with PUD funding. It does not commit State Parks to a specific cost share and identifies a specific action by the PUD.

Or

**Option #2**  
The PUD commits to all costs associated with the development of specific recreation facilities. State Parks would determine what additional facilities it would desire to seek construction funding for.
This $8,000,000 perception gap contrasts sharply with the WSP and Chelan PUD long relationship under FERC rules with Lincoln Rock, Daroga and Confluence state parks. All are owned and built by the Chelan PUD but operated by WSP.

There are many shared interests of WSP and GPUD as Licensee of the Priest Rapids Project and having an approved FERC Project Recreation Plan. The Licensee public access and other responsibilities change within the project boundary based on ownership and inclusion in the recreation plan. The recreating public could greatly benefit from cooperation between WSP and GPUD.

Lincoln Rock owned and developed and paid for by Chelan PUD
Confluence owned and developed and paid for by Chelan PUD

Daroga owned and developed and paid for by Chelan PUD
Items I would like to see included in the plan:

1. Multipurpose shoreline trail, with parking lot off of Huntzinger road and going down the hill from the Airstrip to the Wanapum state park. This is a photo of the pull off trail head parking. WSP recently changed the sign to allow parking at this spot. Great access to hill side viewpoint and trail to down to the Columbia river. Possible addition to FERC Project Recreation Plan
2. The wanapum boat launch and swim beach (which is owned by GPUD and inside the project boundary) be included in Priest Rapids Recreation plan. Possible addition to FERC project recreation plan. Project related recreation sites and funding is provided by licensee.

Day use parking expanded east 37 feet, would need to remove trees, for up to 60 additional cars.

Park project boundary be expanded to include the 20 of these spaces reserved for walk in camping on GPUD land to the south, with an addition of 20 primitive campsites. The beach area improved and a vault toilet provided. Possible addition to FERC Priest Rapids recreation plan.
Path to beach from day use parking lot. Trail on GPUD land
Great interpretation
GPUD land and beach south of existing Wanapum Day use area.
Expand day use parking with 60 spaces, add 20 walkin campsites to south of current day use and 30 big rv sites north of boat ramp.
3. 30 BIG RVS campsites be constructed on the bluff north of the Wanapum boat launch. Where the trail and turnaround are. Current location of well.

4. Rocky Coulee is an example of a Project related recreation site. Even through WSP owns ½ the site WSP paid nothing for the $601,649 capital improvement, nor does WSP pay anything to maintain it. The campground and parking, has enhanced stewardship in the area and should be continued.
5. Park project boundary be expanded to include the parking lot and road to Doris. Future multi use trail to connect Huntzinger road to P2C trail.

6. Park project boundary expanded to include vantage boat launch area, additional parking and river beachfront access. Currently weekends experience a overflow of over 200% with 80-90 trailers parked on county or state land. Only the vantage boat launch is a Project recreation site. Make the beach area in front of boat launch a dogs only beach. And the one at marina a people beach. People with dogs can be referred to this exclusive area for their dogs. Entire area could be managed by WSP.
7. Ginko State Park area north of Recreation Drive should be reduced by exchange or sold to WDFW. The access road is better suited as a green dot trail and animals should be managed with one authority. Currently Big Horn sheep are coming into Vantage.
Domestic sheep carry a pathogen that causes pneumonia in bighorns and reduces lamb survival rates for years. Once disease is in a bighorn herd, it can cause low lamb survival for a decade, and members of that herd can easily transmit the disease to nearby bighorn herds. There is no cure or vaccine.

In October, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife killed 12 bighorns from the Quilomene herd due to a domestic ewe commingling with the herd. Less than two weeks later, WDFW found the disease within the Cleman Mountain herd.
Getty?, great as a parking lot and road to doris. Too many conflicts for any trail as proposed. WSP not a land owner, no funding, starts no where and trail leads no where, YTC conflicts, private property conflicts
Huntzinger boat ramp? Currently is a great FERC project recreation site. How would WSP involvement improve it one iota?
Great idea
Example of property ownership map that would allow for better planning. 18
Alt 1:
- Like the concept of higher protection of landscape with Natural Preserve. Human impacts can take years to recover here. Surrounding lands show signs of what happens with multi-use to please noisy stakeholders (BLM, WDF, DNR). Seems Parks has a clear mission to protect not get the most out of the resource.
- Support idea of reducing vehicle access to lands outside park, unless they have a legal easement to use the road.
- Don't understand how Natural and Natural Preserve are going to be managed differently. Seems making all one or the other south of I-90 would be easier to understand (same for Alt 2)
- Support concept of Heritage but don't understand how this is determined (who decides what is significant and from what cultural perspective is this based)? Seems tribal heritage is not being considered?
- Camping next to museum is a bad idea. This place has some much character now why mess it up with RVs, etc. How are you going to secure the petrified wood and tribal art in the middle of the night.

Alt 2:
- Confused as to why the logs in the ground are not considered Natural versus Resource blue. These are abused by visitors and need higher level of protection. I never see staff there.
- Support the idea of more trails around the museum near the river. I have been going here for decades and always wish there was more to do from here (same for Alt 3)
- support the idea of doing something more with the PUD land south of campground. The location is underused and sheltered from brutal winds along the main shoreline.

Alt 3:
- Support idea of linking to the old Milwaukee Road.
- Don't like idea of too many one-way trails without places to do loops (why I use the log trail mostly). Have you considered loop trail options from single points of entry. 19

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the development of the Gingko State Park management plan. I appreciate the shrub steppe habitat and rare plants that are found on the park and feel it is essential that those resources are protected. I enjoy the low impact recreation opportunities that this park provides, especially in the northern portions of the park, north of I-90. I understand that there is history of motorized use in portions of the park. I support the designation of Natural Area Preserve that is provided in Alternative 1 and 2. Alternative 1 provides the best protection of the sensitive plant and animal species and that would be the scenario I would support the highest. With the history of motorized use along Recreation Drive, I understand it would be difficult to not allow future motorized use along that road. Because of this, I would also support the scenario in Alternative 2. This still allows limited motorized use along Recreation Drive, while still protecting the sensitive plants and animals with a NAP designation. I am not in support of adding any additional motorized access in the northern portions of the park. There are already plenty of other areas people can drive off road and use ORVs, we don't need to disturb any more shrub steppe habitat.

I look forward to seeing the draft plan and continuing to be a part of this process. 20
As a Vantage local I have a hard time understanding why any changes need to occur. The idea that this area needs to stay "relevant" is out of touch. Folks come here for a variety of recreation needs such as hunting, hiking, birding, equestrian use, and, motorized use. From what I have seen in my years of residence, each user group has a relatively friendly relationship with each other. Changes to the motorized use area, either way, jeopardize the integrity and health of the Hell's Kitchen ecosystem. Already there is a struggle to keep multiple motorized vehicles out of the restricted area. Hell's Kitchen has been a focus for native plant rehab - it would be a waste of state resources to throw that natural area into the frying pan... pun intended. Wanapum is a spectacular campground that has turned the natural landscape into a gross misrepresentation, which is something the people want, fair enough. Ginkgo Petrified Forest is an adventurous wonderland that inspires school kids, Washingtonians, and visitors alike. It would be a sad loss of history, culture, and the already dwindling shrub-steppe ecosystem to transform the interpretive center area into any sort of campground. 21
PUBLIC COMMENT: GINKGO PETRIFIED FOREST STATE PARK
AND WANAPUM RECREATION AREA

Ginkgo State Park CAMP Alternative Concepts

To Ginkgo Petrified State Park Planning Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alternative Concepts for Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park of Washington, in this second stage of the CAMP process. Our family is comprised of conservationists, naturalists, hunters, fishers and horticulturalists – Overall, passionate visitors of the Park. We care deeply about the integrity of this landscape and are invested in fostering respect for and stewardship of it for generations to come.

We appreciate the diligence of the Park’s staff and we will do whatever we can to support them. The comments submitted for inclusion in the CAMPS process are grounded in experience, practicality, a deep love and respect for the flora and fauna found at Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park as well as our relationships with others in the Park community and their knowledge use of the parks.

Each of the Alternatives presented in the Concepts has positive elements we hope to see applied to the ultimate management plan. We’re aligned with Washington State Park’s Mission to connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage in this precious landscape. We appreciate how the park is currently used and that people from all walks of life are welcome.

WANAPUM RECREATION AREA
We’re in support of Alternative Three offering an expanded footprint to this camping area, allowing for more access to water and trail-based recreation. We believe this area as a camping site is also important to climbers who enjoy Frenchman’s Coulee, across the river. As populations increase and outdoor enthusiasts seek places to experience what they love, it seems suitable to expand camp-grounds already well-loved and used.

TRAILSIDE MUSEUM
We appreciate aspects of the Expanded Recreation Theme of Alternative Two, and Trail Emphasis Theme of Alternative Three. For instance, protecting the structures at the Trailside Museum under the Heritage land classification, and Resource Recreation classification along the petrified wood trail, allows for “future expansion and renovation.” This is a benefit to future park planning, for as population and ultimately visitors increase, there may be a need to reprogram the user experience while retaining the robust history. Additionally, development of trail systems, including interpretive trail for ADA access as illustrated in Alternative Three, is a major plus!
GINKGO NORTH
We support the continuation of monitored/controlled access via sign-in and publicly-attainable code at the locked gate off of Recreation Drive. Alternatives Two and Three both appear to be in support of this; we appreciate that Alternative Three highlights the continuation of vehicular access as it is currently managed. With ease and enjoyment of Park use for a variety of means including vehicle access, the Discover Pass will remain a significant source of revenue for agency operations.

We believe that locked gates and monitoring of pass-through vehicles is important for the safety of visitors and for the landscape. The park, while mysteriously beautiful, can also be dangerous. Predator animals (rattlesnakes, cougars, bears, etc.), primitive road conditions, and weather extremes in any season (heavy rains, extreme heat/fires, snowfall, etc.) are reasons enough to account for individuals entering the territory—particularly those with less experience.

We’re also proponents that it’s important for people to have positive, memorable experiences in the park. Thus, all citizens should feel welcome, regardless of their age or physical ability. Recent improvements of signage and ease of use of the gates command attention and respect (Thank you, Parks!) Additionally, keeping the pass-through roads of the park primitive minimizes traffic. At the entry off of Recreation drive, we believe the reader-board, sign-in sheets, phone number to call for combo, and new gates, creates an atmosphere of accountability of the user. We wonder if the combo being changed more frequently would infuse users with a sense of greater supervision, which is a positive. We trust Park leadership and other invested folks understand that accessing this area of the park via bike, horseback, or simply on foot, is not an option to everyone. For those who pass-through by vehicle, the Park’s current measures appear to be successful in commanding sufficient respect to the landscape.

Supporting, organizing, and participating in volunteer groups to be on-the-ground advocates to provide clean up, maintenance, etc., would be welcomed by the community. As Washington Parks encourages support for one another to translate mission into reality, we encourage the notion that many hands make light work. We try, as we’re able, to clean the roadsides of invasive weeds species and trash every time we pass through. We’d like to nurture ideas of volunteering and help facilitate such efforts.

We’ve enhanced our lives through practicing preservation and conservation of these lands under planning review. In order to successfully do so for generations to come, access by way of foot, bike, horse, or motorized vehicle must continue to be permitted. Like you, we know the unique landscape of the Ginkgo Petrified Forest is precious. Seeing is believing, and it must be believed-in to be stewarded and sustained. Thus, it is incumbent on us all to sustain access through responsible and inclusive means.

Our sincere thanks to Parks Department Staff for the opportunity to comment. Best wishes to the Parks for success in this effort in the coming New Year.

Sincerely,
Kruse and Duleba Families
We utilize Ginkgo State Park for enjoying the flora and fauna of the shrub steppe. We hike in the area and have used the Recreation Drive Motorized Access for over 20 years. The primitive motorized road allows us to enjoy more of the park and to pass through to DNR, DFW, BLM, and private lands.

We purchase two Discover Passes each year to enjoy our public lands. We are law-abiding citizens who want to enjoy our public lands. The Discover Pass brochure dated 10/12 stated: “The Discover Pass helps preserve public access to recreation lands managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Discover Pass provides access to millions of acres of parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas, and water-access sites.” The Discover Pass brochure dated 01/13 stated: “The Discover Pass provides access to millions of acres of Washington state-managed recreation lands – including state parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas and water access sites.” The Discover Pass website states: “Today, when you buy the Discover Pass, you are helping to keep the state’s wonderful outdoor recreation sites open and accessible to the public.” The promises have changed through the years, but it feels like our support of state lands is not valued. We feel strongly about our rights to access our public lands.

We are opposed to Alternative 1 and 2 in regards to Recreation Drive Motorized Access. The only viable option in regards to Recreation Drive Motorized Access is Alternative 3 to leave it status quo for public enjoyment. There is one thing that needs to clarified about Alternative 3 “status quo”. Currently registered people with a Discover Pass can pass thru recreation drive OR park along the road in the park and go for a walk, hike, or ride mountain bike on the road. In Alternative 3 recreation activities are listed as “hiking, mtn biking, motorized pass-thru”. That is not “status quo” if motorized vehicles can only pass thru, not park and enjoy the area. Although we only pass thru, I have seen families (with young children) parked and walking or riding mountain bike along the road. It would be a shame to not allow parking along the route, as most people and especially young children cannot walk or mountain bike to the distant areas within the park that the motorized access reaches. Alternative 3 Recreation Activities status quo should be “hiking, mtn biking, motor vehicle use”.

From 2012 through 2014 there was an extensive Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation and Access Planning process that involved agencies, citizens, users, interest-groups, neighbors, and staff. In that plan (published January 2015), the Recreation Drive motorized access was designated to “provide motorized vehicle access along the eastern perimeter road of the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Unit during the winter”. The Recreation Drive motorized access connects to the Quilomene road, to remain open during the winter closure from February 1 to April 30, when all other motorized roads in the area are closed to motorized vehicles. The Recreation Drive motorized route has been the only access during winter to DFW, DNR, BLM, and recreational lands (as well as private lands), as the higher roads become impassable due to snow, ice, and drifts. The published Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation and Access Plan document is a live document, with standing for 10-15 years into the future. The Cooperative Road Management Area Map provided by DNR and DFW shows the road as “Green Dot Road remains open during winter closure.

Ginkgo State Park officials refer to theft of artifacts, damage to artifacts, and damage from off-roading. In our 20 plus years of traveling the Recreation Drive Motorized Access we have not seen evidence of these activities. The only off-road tracks we have seen were a result of fire fighting efforts during a
mega fire over more than park lands. If theft, damage, and off-roading are a problem what prevention has been done? Extra patrolling? A record of citations, arrests? We would like to see the evidence and preventative efforts that back up the claims. Currently only motorized vehicles are required to register. If theft and damages are a big concern, other users (hiker, bicycler, horseback rider, etc.) should also register.

Historically what is now called Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park had other owners. What is now called Recreation Drive Motorized access was an early road (as shown in Metsker’s Atlas of Kittitas County Washington 1934) to public and private land holdings, leading to Scammon’s Landing at the mouth of Skookumchuck Creek on the Columbia River. The Scammon family operated a ferry to cross the Columbia river. Needless to say, early travelers (the public) used this road. The public should continue to be allowed to use what is now called the Recreation Drive Motorized Access.

We are also opposed to Alternative 1 in regards to the park boundary expanding by acquiring Section 1 of DFW property which is currently used for hunting. We are opposed to reducing current vehicle access, as this route is used to reach large tracts of public land. We are opposed to State Parks acquiring any more land because of their focus on restricting many recreational uses.