**Vision:**
The vision of the park is one where visitors can experience quiet contemplation and appreciation of the landscape and its cultural and geologic history. This vision includes renaming the park as a State Park Heritage Site recognizing the significant cultural significance and geologic history of the Palouse River canyon. To accomplish this vision, the park will become a scenic overlook park, where visitors can experience passive recreational opportunities to view the falls and landscape at multiple viewpoints, and view and learn from interpretive displays about the history and cultural significance of the park. As such, it is proposed that the existing primitive camping area be converted to additional day use. In addition, because of increased visitation and popularity, methods will be considered to manage visitor use at the park with the aim to support a high-quality visitor experience, protect public safety, and protect natural resources. Potential visitor use management methods could include a future online registration, reservation and/or permit system. Increased public information and education will be critical for managing visitor use, which will be facilitated in part with a proposed orientation center that visitors enjoy before entering the formal park grounds.

**Land Classification:**
Staff recommends that the Commission classify Palouse Falls as a combination of the land classifications proposed below, and as graphically illustrated on the maps on the next several pages.

**Recreation and Recreation-Long-Term Boundary (pink and light pink)** classification allows for the highest intensity use within the park boundary. The primary parking is envisioned to be outside of the existing developed footprint of the park, west of the railroad tracks. This area would support parking expansion (along with the potential for designated RV parking) as well as a comfort station or vault toilet. Trails developed here will offer interpretive opportunities and more expansive distances, offering a walk-in option to the park by connecting new trails on the undeveloped side of the railroad tracks to existing and future trails and viewpoints in the existing developed footprint of the park. The two-mile county road is also included in the long-term boundary and classified as Recreation to allow for future co-management of the road with Franklin County.

The black circle near the state highway indicates consideration of a future orientation center located just off the county road. This would provide park visitors with a location to purchase discover passes, receive current safety messaging, and enjoy interpretive activities prior to visiting the formal park grounds. Since this is conceptual at this time, a specific location has not been determined. A facility of this kind would be classified Recreation-Long-Term Boundary.

**Heritage (yellow)** encompasses the existing developed footprint of the park, which includes the road, three parking areas, three existing viewpoints and pathways to the viewpoints, picnicking, vault toilet, primitive camp sites and several existing small storage structures. The heritage classification will allow for existing uses to continue. However, the existing campsite area will be converted to expanded day-use. The heritage classification extends across the top of the bluff,
allowing for a loop trail to be developed and provide additional strategically placed viewpoints with interpretive opportunities. The remaining area of the bluff would be restored. In this classification visitors will be able to enjoy passive recreational opportunities including a short hike around the bluff trail loop, walk to viewpoints, picnicking, interpretive activities, wildlife, and scenic viewing, as well as connecting to newly developed trails on the other side of the railroad track, as discussed in the previous classification.

**Heritage- Long-Term Boundary (light yellow)** extends west of the railroad tracks to the top of the plateau and would provide for viewshed protection and the option of developing additional trails providing a variety of views and experiences of the canyon while also potentially providing ways to access the parking area above on the plateau.

**Natural Areas (orange)** classification applies to all current park ownership to the north of the bluff, including the upper falls area, base of the cliff to the top of the main falls, east of the Palouse River and south. This classification protects the natural resources of the shrub-steppe habitat, allows for restoration activities, and recognizes the geologic significance of the landscape while respecting the TCP. This classification would limit public access on the north and south ends of the park until a safe, accessible trail can be developed and the trespass issue with the railroad is resolved, and potentially could be limited to “permit only” access. In the Castle Rock area and plunge pool, as referenced in the body of the report, will be permanently closed to public access.

**Natural Area- Long-Term Boundary (light orange)** is for viewshed protection to protect the visitor experience within the park at the various viewpoints and honor the TCP. The long-term boundary is proposed to extend to the northwest on the other side of the railroad tracks, east across the Palouse River and south, down the canyon. There is no public access to be provided in this area.

**Conditional Activities**
Activities conditionally permitted under the agency’s land classification system may be permitted at specific sites only with the concurrence of the Commission. Staff recommends the Commission not permit any conditional activities at Palouse Falls State Park.

**Name Change:**
Staff recommends that the Commission change the name from Palouse Falls State Park to Palouse Falls State Park Heritage Site. The name change is consistent with the vision for the park and is consistent with the Commission’s naming policy, (Appendix 6).
Commission Policy
72-14-1 Naming of Parks, Structures and Features within State Park Areas

Commission Policy 72-14-1 supersedes POL 72-78-1 Naming of Parks, POL 72-06-1 Naming Features within State Parks, and POL 72-65-1 Naming of Structures

See Also:
RCW 79A.05.030 Powers and duties
WAC 352-16-010 Naming and classification of state park areas
Cultural Resource Policy 12-98-1
Donor Recognition Policy 37-06-1

1. Policy

The authority to provide an official name for a state park and state park areas within a park rests with the Commission (WAC 352-16-010). In naming of state park sites, Commission priority shall be given to geographic locations, cultural significance or geologic features. State park sites may be named for a living person or family if the site has been donated by the individual or family. Where it is desirable to give recognition to a living person or family for their contribution to the state park system, it is permissible to name for them individual or human-made features within a park. State Parks may not be named for a corporation or commercial entity.

For the purpose of naming constructed features (roads, trails, buildings, etc.), landscapes, or natural features, the Commission delegates this authority to the agency Director; provided that the Commission retains the authority to name anything for a business, a family name, or a person living or deceased. In exercising the delegated authority, the Director should give preference to geographic locations, culturally significant events and places, or geologic features. The Director may also consider names using botanical or biological references. All naming shall be consistent with Cultural Resources Policy (12-98-1) and the Donor Recognition Policy (37-06-1).

Definitions

When creating or changing a name of a state park area, the following categories will be used in public information and applied in the calculation of the number of distinct sites in the state park system:

**State Park:** A state park area, generally greater than 10 acres in size, managed to protect and conserve significant scenic, natural and cultural features and to provide public access, facilities, or programs that through recreational, educational, and interpretive experiences connect visitors with those features.

**Historical State Park:** A state park area meeting the definition of a state park, and possessing historical and/or cultural features that are its primary public attractions or purpose. The significance of the historic properties within a Historical State Park is of statewide or national significance.

**Marine State Park:** An island state park area, meeting the definition of a state park, typically accessible only by a boat or aircraft, with opportunities for recreational access and activities.
**State Park Trail:** A linear state park area, distinct from other units of the state park system, and designated primarily for non-motorized recreational trail activities (e.g., hiking, cycling, horseback riding, etc.).

**State Park Heritage Site:** A state park site, possessing structures or assemblage of features, with significant natural, cultural, historical or scenic attributes that are preserved and interpreted for the education and enjoyment of the public. State Park Heritage Sites can be stand-alone properties or designated sites within a State Park. Often, these sites are less than 10 acres in size.

**State Park Conservation Area:** A state park site defined by statute as a conservation area. A State Park Conservation Area may contain an assemblage of differently categorized state park areas.

**State Park Property:** A state park area which is held for future development or is otherwise inconsistent in form, features or developments from any of the named state park areas listed above.