

Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan



Washington

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I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CONTACTS

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission gratefully acknowledges the many stakeholders and the staff of Mount Spokane State Park who participate in public meetings, volunteer to develop and implement facility improvement projects and make Mount Spokane a better park because of it.

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Aerial view of Mount Spokane looking northeast circa 1935 (Oestreicher Collection, WSPRC).

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II. INTRODUCTION

Mount Spokane State Park is the largest state park in Washington State. The park is an important community asset as well as a significant natural and recreational resource in the State. Formally known as Mount Carlton or Old Baldy, Mount Spokane has also been recognized as Father Mountain, the ever-watchful sentinel of Spokane. It is a notable destination with a long and significant history.

Mount Spokane State Park is located approximately 22 miles northeast of the City of Spokane. With nearly 14,000 acres, the park features a wide range of year round recreation opportunities. The park has a large and diverse community of supporters and user groups.

The Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan is designed to enhance recreation in the park, while carefully balancing the impacts of new facility development and improvements in a park that has areas of high natural and/or cultural resource value.

This plan builds upon Mount Spokane State Park Comprehensive Management Plan adopted by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission in 1999. A Comprehensive Plan for Interpreting Resources and a Cultural Resources Plan were adopted in July, 2009. This Master Facilities Plan integrates these plans and it provides a framework for new facilities development within the established land use classifications in the park.

The Master Facilities Plan does not address the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA). This area will remain unclassified, pending receipt of information from Mount Spokane 2000 (MS 2000), the not-for-profit that operates the ski concession at Mount Spokane State Park. Any proposed expansion of its facilities onto the western portion of Mount Spokane will require a decision by the Commission on the proposal. Existing uses of area and trail corridors will continue in this area. A map of the PASEA is found in figure 2, page 11.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THIS PLAN

This report arranges planning information into five principle areas:

Park-Wide Concepts addresses the park's guiding philosophy, current conditions, and provides recommendations to guide facilities development and resource restoration activities throughout the park.

Area-Specific Concepts addresses individual areas within the park and recommends development of specific facilities, related resource restoration activities, and other site-specific provisions.

Financial Considerations describes an overall approach to financing and phasing park improvements and outlines area-by-area cost estimates, financing strategies, potential partners, and timing considerations.

Planning Process recounts activities of the work of agency staff and the State Parks and Recreation Commission that led to proposal of this plan for agency adoption.

Appendices provide supporting documentation or links to supporting information directly associated with this plan

IV. MOUNT SPOKANE STATE PARK FACILITIES PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The specific objectives of the Master Facilities Plan include the following:

- *Preserve areas of high natural or cultural resource values while providing for public recreation.* Mount Spokane State Park is rich in natural, cultural, and historic resources. A core value for Washington State Parks is the protection and stewardship of these resources via a number of management prescriptions.

This plan recognizes the need to balance the accommodation of increasing visitation with the need to protect and preserve the park's significant natural and cultural resources. Spokane County is experiencing continued population growth; the state Office of Financial Management forecasts the population will increase from the 2000 census level of 417,939 to 489,623 in 2020 and to 529,451 by 2030 – increase of 17% and 21.0% respectively. Continued improvement in the park facilities will ensure on-going access to quality recreation opportunities.

- *Provide a long-term program for facilities development.* As the largest state park in Washington State, new and improved facilities are needed to replace outmoded and deteriorating facilities, protect sensitive resources, improve the quality of visitor experiences, improve park manageability, and respond to projected recreation demand. Over the past several years, a wide variety of trail projects have been proposed for funding from various sources. This plan provides for a coordinated program of facilities development. Without a Master Facilities Plan, WSPRC is handicapped in assessing whether proposals for new facilities are consistent with the Park's long-range management objectives.
- *Enhance the visitor experience through an improved and full spectrum of interpretative facilities and trail improvements.* A variety of new and improved interpretive facilities and services are needed to provide a high-quality visitor experience. A comprehensive program of interpretive opportunities integrated into this plan will enhance visitor appreciation of the area's history and natural and cultural resources.

A primary objective of the Master Facilities plan is to formalize the Mount Spokane State Park trail improvement program. Trails within the park are a core element of the recreational infrastructure to provide numerous year-round recreational opportunities and user experiences.

- *Assess operations and maintenance needs to improve management capabilities.* An underlying objective of the Master Facilities plan is to make park management easier and more efficient. This is especially critical with increasing visitation and declining state revenues.

V. PARK-WIDE CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Winter Recreation

Mount Spokane State Park is known for its winter recreation opportunities and dry powder snow. Parking for winter recreation is limited therefore parking improvements are considered a vital element of future facility development. Mount Spokane State Park is located close to the urban area of the city of Spokane which makes it an easy 45 minute drive to ample snow activities.

Parks staff will coordinate with the local alpine ski area staff, both Nordic and alpine volunteer ski patrols, the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club, the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation and other designated volunteers to monitor potential snowmobile impacts on natural and cultural resources, as well as risks to visitor safety and the quality of the non-motorized, winter trail experience.

Summer Recreation

A number of trails in Mount Spokane State Park date back to an era when trail standards and public expectations were different. Since their inception some trails have begun to be used for recreation in ways not originally intended. Over time State Parks recognized that some trails need relocation, repair, re-establishment or closure in order to protect natural resources or provide better recreational experiences. Fifteen trails or trail segments fall into the category of needing re-routing or other improvements or closures.

VI. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Mount Spokane State Park property was acquired in 60 parcels primarily through donations, the first in 1927 and the last in 1977. It encompasses 13,643 acres located 22 miles northeast of Spokane on U.S. Hwy 2 and State Route 206.



Natural Resources:

Mount Spokane supports a host of natural resources including rare, fragile and/or high quality examples of vegetative communities, associations and species. The park is home to a diverse population of fish and wildlife that utilize various corridors and habitat areas within the long-term boundary. The park also features geologic formations related to the up-thrust of the Selkirk Mountains, where quartz, uranium and other valuable ores are found.

Historical Background

The area became the first Washington State Park east of the Cascades and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) completed the first improvements in the park. By 1950, the mountain had become popular as a skiing area. Shortly before the dedication of the new \$250,000 wing to the ski lodge on January 23, 1952, fire demolished the structure. In the years between 1958 – 1970, new skiing areas and related facilities were constructed. The park, as well as the city, river, and many other features of the area, derive their name from an Indian word “Spokane” which most experts agree means “sun”.

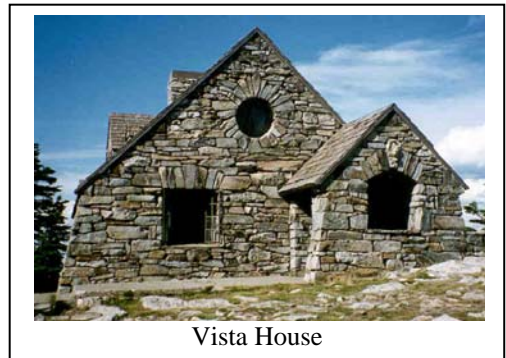
Cultural Resources

Mount Spokane has always been a destination. For Native Americans, the mountain was the goal of spiritual pilgrimage, and it remained the destination for pilgrimages of a different sort when the Spokane Valley filled with Euro-American settlers. Once admired for its prominence in the landscape and its quality as a natural viewpoint, early recreational skiers galvanized the future of Mount Spokane as a winter playground, valued more for its slopes than its summit.



Francis Cook's original cabin photographed on August 1, 1933 (WSPRC).

It is important to respect and acknowledge the cultural resources in the park.



Vista House

There are three types of cultural resources located in the park boundary: Cultural landscapes that are geographic areas associated with an historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values; archaeological sites that contain the material evidence (artifacts or objects) of a culture that can add to our understanding of a people, either historic or prehistoric; and traditional cultural

properties are associated with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in that community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. Buildings and structures are constructed features, typically habitable, but not always.

A full inventory of cultural resources and historic development is the topic of the Mount Spokane Cultural Resources Management Plan listed on the resource list in **Appendix 1** of this document. Five primary cultural resource surveys have been performed at Mount Spokane to date. These surveys resulted in relatively few cultural resources, although some historic resources were recorded in the survey completed in the year 2000.

Today, members of the Colville Confederated Tribes continue to visit Mount Spokane in the summer and fall to harvest bear grass and other plants. Bear grass is used to weave baskets, and various containers. The antiquity of plant harvesting on Mount Spokane is likely great. Hunting and other economic activities continued generally until the first killing frost, when people would return to their riverine villages and prepare for winter.

The initial phase of park development is considered to be from 1890 to 1932. The story of Mount Spokane State Park as we know it today cannot be told without mentioning Francis H. Cook, a newspaper man, delegate to the territorial legislature, real estate developer, street railroad promoter and visionary. Cook lost a significant portion of his fortune during the Depression of 1893, but he did own land. Much of the land he owned is now part of the Mount Spokane State Park we know today.

In 1909, Cook began the construction of a road to a site on the mountain he called Paradise Camp. It was on this road that Cook ensured the renaming to Mount Spokane which received attention by putting together a "christening" ceremony at the summit. A seven car convoy carried the Governor, the Spokane Mayor, Miss Spokane, Margaret Motie, and other notables to the ceremony.

Other significant improvements related to the initial park development include Boy Scout Monument, Sun Ball Site, Memorial to the Spokane County War Dead and viewing tubes used to view the expansive horizon.

Although the park was dedicated in 1922, it was not until 1933 that the Vista House was completed. The Vista house is a rustic but beautiful stone building with green sill windows and rough wooden beams. It is used by skiers and other winter enthusiasts as a warming hut where they can purchase hot beverages from a local ski club who runs a concession there.

VII. MOUNT SPOKANE LAND CLASSIFICATIONS AND LONG-TERM BOUNDARY

Figure 2, below, shows the land classifications and the long-term boundary adopted by the Commission for Mount Spokane State Park on October 29, 1999. The adopted land classifications provide policy guidance for appropriate use and development intensities in specific areas of the park. The adopted classifications also represent the park's desired long-term boundary, i.e., properties either desired for acquisition or surplus to park needs. Direct ownership of lands may not be necessary, in fact management goals may be reached through cooperative agreements, easements, and other management tools which benefit both parks and neighbors.

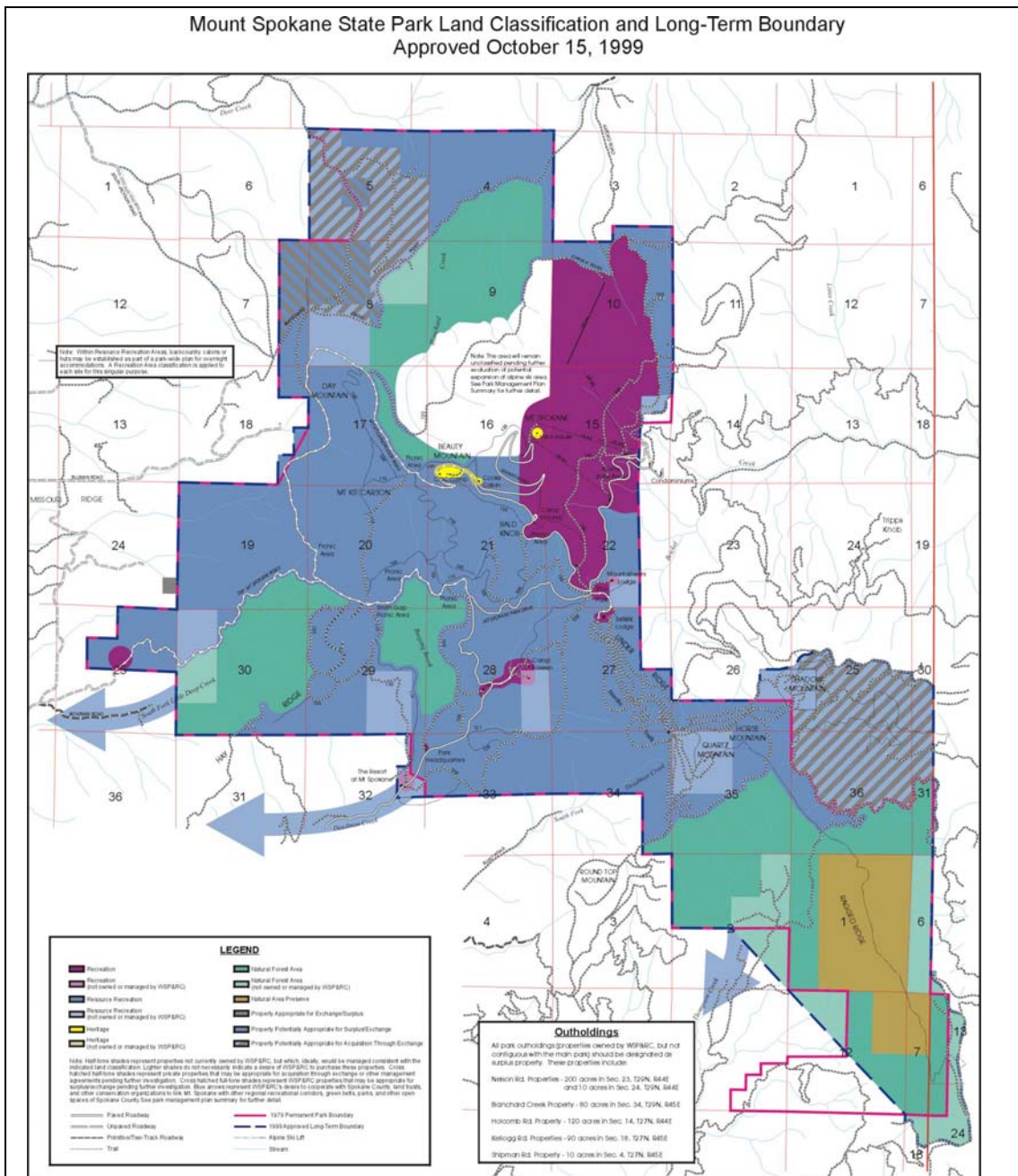


Figure 2 - Land Classifications and Long-Term Boundary

VIII. RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Mount Spokane State Park provides a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities for all seasons.

Winter and spring recreation opportunities including winter use trails for Nordic track skiing, ungroomed cross-country skiing, snow machines, and dog mushers. Downhill skiing, snowboarding, tubing and other alpine events are especially popular because excellent slopes which often feature dry powder snow are located just 45 minutes from the city of Spokane.



Snowmobile riding is a popular activity in the park.

Summer and fall recreation is highlighted by the use of overnight facilities including utility, standard, primitive, and group camping. A fire watch tower once owned and operated by the Department of Natural Resources is now used as an overnight rental unit for park guests with advance reservations. The expansive 360 degree views make this hike-in facility a favorite among park visitors. Summer trails are also very popular for use by equestrians, bicyclists and hikers for rich day use and overnight experiences. There is also ample picnicking; fishing; wildlife viewing; mushroom and berry harvesting; orienteering; interpretive activities; and a variety of group activities. Mount Spokane State Park offers some type of outdoor opportunity for almost anyone. A full inventory of existing facilities is listed in **Appendix 2**.



IX. AREA SPECIFIC CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Information and Interpretation

A general park brochure including a detailed trail map, trail descriptions, and park rules should continue to be readily available to all park visitors. This brochure should be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mount Spokane State Park. A brochure describing the unique ecology of the Ragged Ridge Natural Area should also be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mount Spokane State Park. This brochure should contain a map and other information about the area.

All trails should be clearly marked at junctions and trailheads with the trail number and map section number. Each major trailhead should also feature a bulletin board with relevant, updated park and trail information.

The winter Snow Line should be expanded and used year round to provide regular updates on trail conditions, park activities, wildfire risk, temporary closures/restrictions, etc. Internet information is another avenue to provide public information that should be considered. Maintenance and funding of these options must be considered as various avenues of information are explored and implemented.

Summer Trail System Improvements

Mount Spokane has numerous trails that are in various states of repair. The trails are highly used and in fact, a local trail advisory committee has formed as an ad-hoc group of volunteers who advocate for trail improvements and actually build trails in coordination with the Mount Spokane State Park. (see trail map next page)

Park staff will continue to work with representatives of the Inland Empire Paper Company to implement additional measures to close Ragged Ridge to illegal outdoor recreational vehicle and equestrian access. Illegal access also occurs on Hay Ridge and the Kit Carson Loop Road. Washington State Parks staff will work with the adjacent landowners to close these access points.

Winter Recreation

This plan includes a recommended re-alignment of the existing snowmobile route on Linder Ridge Road to a roughly parallel corridor north and below the existing location to provide separation from Nordic skiers at the trail head. This route will continue to provide access to the extensive snowmobile trail system that exists on Inland Empire Paper company property in Washington and Idaho.

Nordic trail improvements are also planned by adding a new groomed Nordic trail connection from the back of the Selkirk Lodge to the bottom of the drain field area and Linder Ridge Road. The Linder Ridge Road would then be groomed for Nordic skiing. Additional connecting trails

on the IEP property may also be opened for groomed Nordic skiing. The existing groomed snowmobile trails may be accessed via the Condo Road.

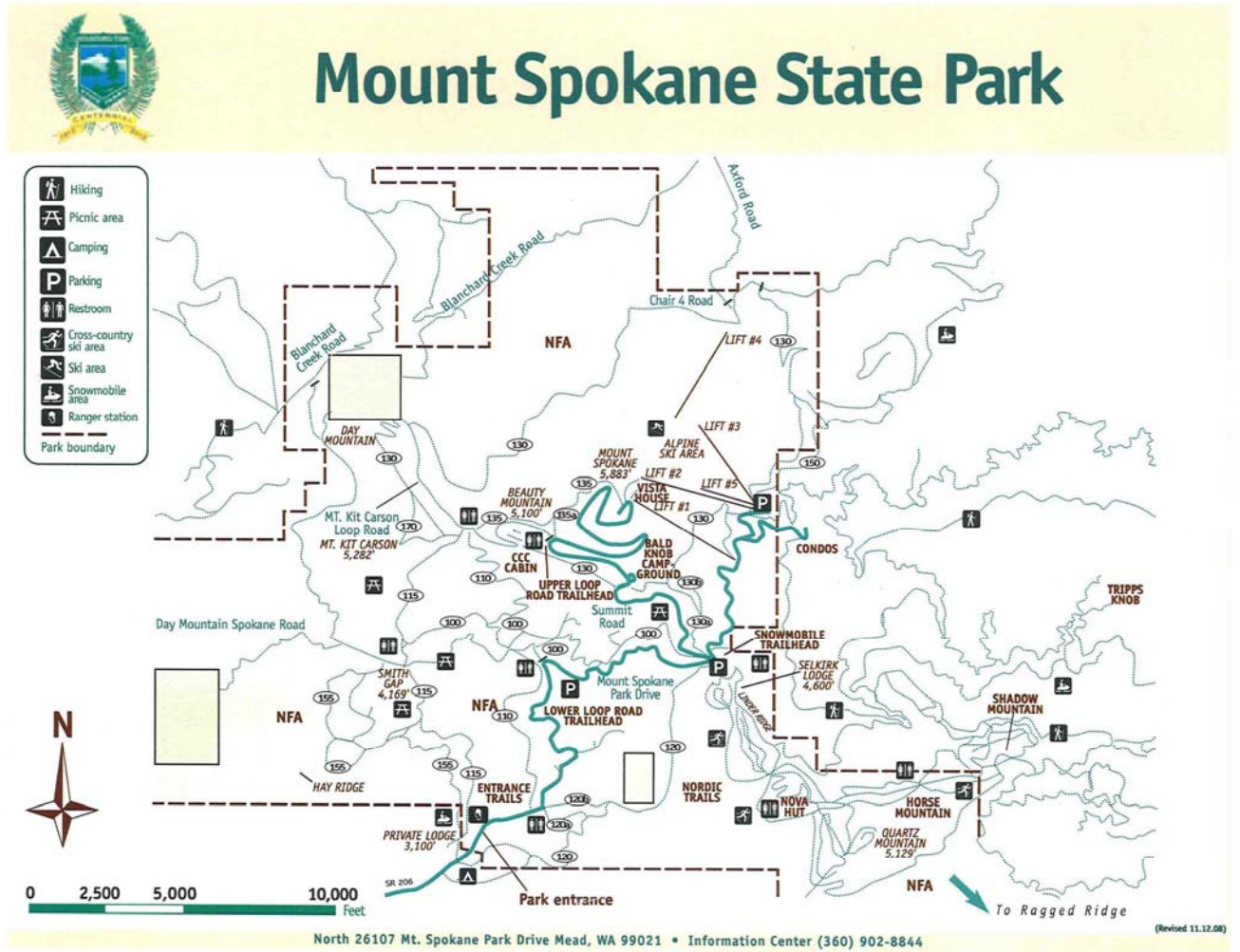


Table 1 - Recommended Trail Improvements

Trail	Improvement(s)
Trail 100 East, Trail 100 West	Improve numerous stream crossings to meet current standards. Provide safe sources of drinking water for stock near stream crossings.
Trail 100 East	Reroute near its junction with the east fork of Burping Brook and the Lower Kit Carson Loop Road.

Trail	Improvement(s)
Trail 103	Restore and maintain the upper portion and connect to Trail 100 East. Close the lower, unnecessary portion of this trail to prevent further erosion from the side stream.
Trail 140 (old 115)	Reroute between Smith Gap and the Mount Kit Carson meadows, and close the existing trail to summer use.
Trail 160 (old 170)	Reroute from its junction with Trail 140 (old 115) to the Kit Carson Summit to eliminate the erosion problem.
Lower Trail 140 (old 115)	Reroute portions and improve drainage and water crossings to meet current standards for multiple use.
Trail 130 West	Improve the switchbacks from the summit of Day Mountain to the Upper Kit Carson Loop Road.
Trail 140 (old 135)	Repair and reroute sections of upper trail to eliminate erosion problems and meet current standards.
Trail 101 (old power line)	Reroute the upper portion to provide an alternative connector between Trail 100 East and Trail 130 at Bald Knob, and eliminate current erosion problems.
Trail 193	Designate and mark a summer route, down the Northwest Passage alpine ski run to the Roulon and B-29 runs and to Lodge 2.
Horse Mountain Trail 255	Reroute and improve upper portion of Horse Mountain Trail. Change trail number from 255A to 256.
Ragged Ridge Trail	Improve and maintain from the Quartz Mountain Loop Trail to the 4805' summit to meet current standards. Close and revegetate existing trail south of 4805' summit once ORV and equestrian use has been eliminated.
Trail 100B	Close and revegetate (from Bald Knob to the old power line) and 100F (overgrown short single track).
Quartz/Trail 251	Re-establish existing system of trails on the upper elevations of Quartz Mountain with an emphasis on loop trails, and reroute Trail 251 .
Ragged Ridge	Eliminate ORV Access – Park staff will continue to work with representatives of Inland Empire Paper Company (IEP) to implement additional measures to close Ragged Ridge to ORV and equestrian access.

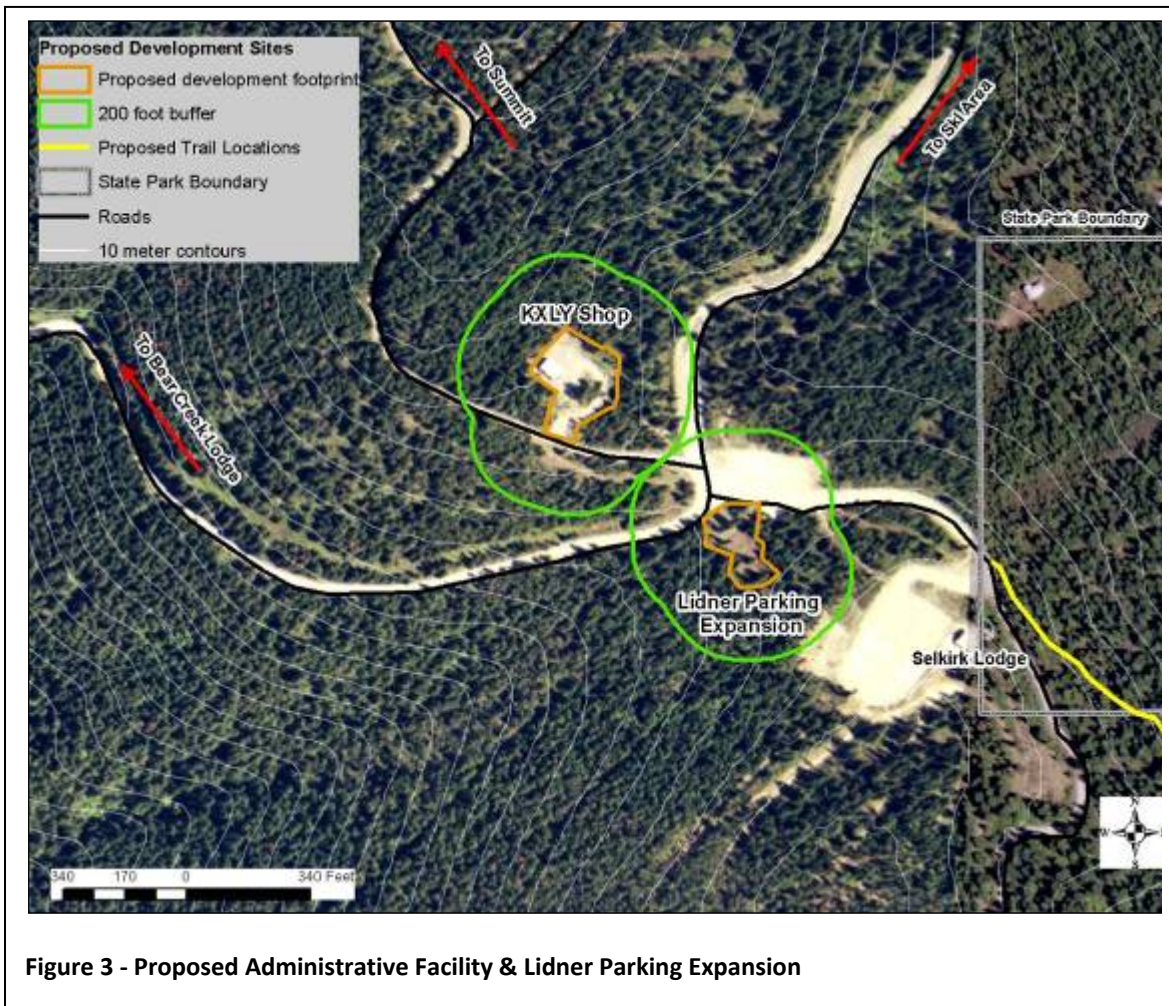
Trail	Improvement(s)
Other Areas	Eliminate ORV Access to Other Areas – Park staff will work with adjacent landowners to close Hay Ridge and the Kit Carson Loop Road in Section 8 to ORV access.
Mount Kit Carson	Eliminate the fall line trail off through meadow.

Table 2 - New Trail Development

Trail	Development
Trail 140 Extension	Create a new trailhead for the bottom of Trail 140 (old 115) by continuing the trail south along the ridge to the park gate.
Trail 141	Connect lower Trail 110 with lower Trail 140 (old 115) just north of the park office and at the southern boundary of the Deadman Creek Natural Forest Area.
Trail 153	Create a new single track, multi-use trail to connect the Lodge 2 parking area with Trail 150.
Trail 180	Create a single track, multi-use trail through the sparse trees atop or adjacent to the ridge just north of the Day Road to create a loop with the Day Road.

Administrative Facilities

The administrative facility (shop and park office) for Mount Spokane State Park are located on top of a culverted stream. This plan calls for the relocation of the current administrative facility and the restoration of the stream channel to normal function. An option for the location of a new administrative facility is the KXLY equipment storage area site (“the KXLY shop”).



Were this site to be chosen some clearing of native and non-native vegetation may be required to fit all new maintenance and park office structures and park vehicles onto the new site.

Parking

Park Entrance: Day-Mount Spokane Trailhead

The Day-Mount Spokane Trailhead parking lot is proposed to be constructed along the western boundary of Mount Spokane State Park, just west and uphill of the existing park boundary gate along the Day – Mount Spokane Road. This site is nearly .4 miles from where the proposed Trail 180 departs the Day – Mount Spokane Road, and trailhead users would have to utilize the portion of the Day – Mount Spokane Road not open motorized vehicles (behind the gate) to access the beginning of the 180 trail from the proposed trailhead parking area.

The developed area footprint of the Day-Mount Spokane Trailhead parking lot is slightly less than 0.25 acres. The trailhead parking lot is proposed to be cleared of all vegetation and surfaced with packed earth or gravel. The site currently has approximately 20% slope from its highest point down to the Day – Mount Spokane Road. Excavation and grading is expected to

occur to make the parking site adequate in size for use by pickup trucks pulling horse trailers. The parking area is proposed to be large enough to accommodate around 20 normal size vehicles at maximum capacity and designed so that horse trailers would be able to safely access and maneuver within the parking area. Access to the proposed parking area would require that a short access road be constructed through the existing road bank. Restroom facilities are also proposed to be constructed within the parking area to accommodate park visitors.

New Linder's Ridge Parking Area

The Linder's Ridge parking expansion site consists of a proposed development footprint three quarters of an acre in size just northwest of the Selkirk Lodge in the Linder's Ridge area figure 3.

Development of the site as proposed would require the complete removal of all vegetation within the proposed development footprint, as well as removal of some top soil, and creating a parking lot surface of either compacted earth or gravel. The new parking area would be constructed within an existing clearing created by previous human activities. The clearing is adjacent to (and south of) the Linder's Ridge snowmobile parking area, and is accessible by existing roads that are currently closed. A public toilet is already located next to the proposed development footprint, and the proposed development site is very near and just west of the existing Selkirk Lodge parking area.



Currently closed roads will be used to access the Lindner Ridge parking area.

X. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the State Parks' Centennial 2013 Plan, the agency had anticipated requesting almost \$250 million from the Legislature for facility maintenance, park upgrades, and new park development projects during the next three biennia. The recent recession and declining state revenues make this funding proposition difficult. While a significant capital investment must be made to continue to serve a large population over time it may take longer than anticipated to reach the park's full potential as envisioned in this plan.

The Washington State Parks and Recreation is committed to using a combination of funding approaches to fund the projects called out in this plan. Sources of applicable financing for projects at Mount Spokane include:

- State capital appropriation
- State and federal grants
- State certificates of participation (COP)
- Development partnerships with the other federal, state and local governments
- Development partnerships with non-profit organizations and businesses

With a creative combination of all possible funding sources and accepting that redevelopment may take two to twenty years, this plan can realistically be realized.

Park Enterprise:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission fund some public services by providing compatible revenue generating programs and projects within state parks. Revenue generating operations must enhance the park experience for visitors, minimally impact park natural and cultural landscapes, and serve to increase park-generated income and thereby upgrade park fiscal capacity. Such enterprise efforts may include commercial facilities and programs, and off-site advertising. Parks staff will continue to identify appropriate opportunities for enhanced public services through concession operation.

Project Phasing

The state of Washington like most states across the nation, are challenged by declining revenue and limited capital budgets. It should be recognized that implementation of the improvements outlined in this plan are dependent upon funding and the use of strategic partnerships.

It is also recognized that because of the large cost involved, redevelopment of an entire park is usually phased over several funding cycles. Phasing of facility development and resource protection measures embodied in the Master Facilities Plan is dependent upon funding. As such, there are certain elements that would be developed simultaneously, and other elements that would not be developed until other actions have been completed.

Partnership Opportunities

One of the most needed, exciting yet challenging aspects of park facility development today is the expansion of partnership opportunities. With less money available it becomes necessary to develop greater and more diverse partnerships. To be successful Washington State Parks will need to expand its program of partnerships by building even greater community support for the future of Mount Spokane State Park.

People love their state parks, particularly the ones in their own community. With this comes an opportunity to reach out and provide people and organizations with a way to become involved in their park. Volunteerism has also resulted in recognition by the public that state parks are essential public facilities that provide ties to the natural environment and facilitate greater public health.

Mount Spokane State Park already features an outstanding group of volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort to support trail planning and building. Spokane has an extraordinary history of making positive changes to their community through volunteer efforts of all kinds. Recognizing the park's importance in the economic and social life of the greater Spokane area, Washington State Parks will continue to work actively with Mt. Spokane Friend's Group, and other community-based organizations and interested parties, to meet the needs of the metropolitan community to enhance this destination recreation and natural area.

XI. INTERPRETATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has combined the resources and skills of State Parks staff with local and statewide organizations and individuals specializing in resource education and interpretation to provide educational programs to schools and the community. Mount Spokane State Park has been used as a facility to provide a destination for environmental education and interpretation. It is possible that these educational opportunities could expand further through the development of new community partnerships.

XII. PERMITS/APPROVALS REQUIRED

In addition to tribal consultation requirements, a variety of federal, state and local permits, licenses and other entitlements would be required in order to implement the Mount Spokane State Park Master Facilities Plan. Key permitting requirements are identified in **Table 3** ⁽¹⁾.

Table 3 - Required Permits for Master Facility Plan Implementation

Permit Type	Issuing Agency	Area Addressed by Permit/Plan
Critical Areas Permit/and/or Land Alteration and Drainage Ordinance Application	Spokane County	Activities within Critical Areas
Joint Aquatic Resources Permit (JARPA)		Activities in or near shorelines, wetlands and other waters.
Hydrologic Project Approval	WDFW	
Section 401 Certification	Ecology	
Aquatic Resource Use Authority	DNR	
Section 404 Permit	ACOE	
Biological Opinion/ Section 7 Incidental Take Permit	USFWS	Effects of ACOE permitting action on federally-listed species
Building Permits	Spokane County	All construction activities

⁽¹⁾ Includes key permits; additional permits may be required.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission approvals that would be required include:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Action
- Project-specific SEPA documentation

XIII. APPENDIX 1 - RESOURCE LIST

CAMP (Land Classification and Management Plan)	October 1999
Management Plan	September 2003
Interpretive Plan	October 2009
Cultural Resources Management Plan	July 2009
Comprehensive Trail Plan	September 2009

XIV. APPENDIX 2 - MOUNT SPOKANE COMPREHENSIVE EXISTING FACILITIES INVENTORY

Vista House

South Overlook Paradise Camp Wayside

CCC Camp - Francis Cook

Nordic (NOVA) Warming Hut

Quartz Mountain Fire Look out

Day Road Entrance – Cook’s Auto Road

60 miles of hiking, equestrian and bicycle trails,

49 miles of back roads

15 miles of groomed Nordic ski tails,

50 miles of groomed snowmobile trails in and adjacent to the park

Concession-operated ski area with 32 ski runs

5 chair lifts

Selkirk Lodge (including restaurant, lounge, ski school, equipment rentals)

Ski patrol building

Various administrative support structures

12-unit campground

Day-use picnic areas with 85 picnic sites