
II-D. INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Introduction and Main Message

An interpretive approach is central to the development of the Master Plan for Nisqually-Mashel State Park Site. Central to the interpretive approach is the development of a main message, that statement that if able to be repeated by the park visitor, means they “got it,” they understand what makes this place special. Along with establishing the primary message that permeates all aspects of the design and character of the park, the Interpretive Plan defines education and interpretive themes in the park and includes conceptual interpretive goals and media strategies.

The main message for the Nisqually Mashel State Park Site is much more than about information taken away, it is a statement about the importance of this place culturally and environmentally and a goal for future cultural reconciliation—its purpose for being.

Message

Edges meet, lines merge, circles touch.... this point of connection is a tangent.... This park site is a dynamic tangent, where regenerated woodlands push against camas meadows, restored salmon runs leap against rushing waters, where two different cultures meet to hear each other’s stories and come away changed.

Meaning

These prairie and river edges are the ancestral homes of the Nisqually Indian Tribe, who have in turn been hosts to other nations, tribes, bands and the “Bostons.” It is here where the new pioneering culture clashed with the indigenous culture; where volunteer soldiers of the then Washington Territory engaged a small number of Nisqually in a skirmish now known as the Mashel Massacre.

Purpose

At this site, Washington State Parks and Southern Coast Salish peoples join to demonstrate and honor the story of these restored landscapes and cultures. Through the act of restoration, they reconcile past differences with new understandings, and with respect for both the land and people. This restoration and reconciliation is the purpose of this state park, and the message it will convey to its visitors.

Park as Destination

What would make people want to visit the Nisqually-Mashel State Park Site? What would make it a destination (one of the master plan goals)? To identify and support the characteristics of a destination park, the interpretive approach focuses on understanding the Park’s physical attributes and its cultural connections; this is the activity of finding the site’s “spirit of place.” It is the essence of the cultural landscape—the geology, geography, ecology of a place and how they informed the associated prehistoric, historic and contemporary cultures.

For the Nisqually-Mashel State Park Site, an outstanding and unique element is the long history of use by the Squalli-Absch people: specifically the Nisqually Tribe and as a crossroads for the Puyallup and Yakama. This is not only a story of past events and relationships but of a strong and living culture that continues through the present and will reach far into the future. It is the story that can be best told by members of the Nisqually Tribe as aboriginal Native Americans who, as environmentalists and scientists, will help to make this new park a destination.

Interpretive Voice and Point of View

An interpretive experience is delivered in many ways, from the subtle presence of a boardwalk that demonstrates the importance of protecting an environment by reminding the visitor to stay on the path, to an audiovisual presentation that transports the visitor to another time in history. Each piece of “media” speaks with or reflects the point of view of the supporting organization or institution.

For the Nisqually-Mashel State Park Site, the Interpretive Plan establishes two voices. First is the *authentic voice*, which comments from experience. This speaker lives in the world being interpreted—that of the Nisqually and Salish speaking people. A second, equally important voice is *authoritative voice*, whose comments are based on scholarly experience, speaking as one who studies the world being interpreted. This second voice is also sometimes described as the voice of the scientist, or in the case of Washington State Parks, the forester and biologist.

Interpretive Themes and Content Topics

Three themes – *culture, conservation and renewal* – tie the interpretive plan together, and will be woven through all efforts to bring the interpretive messages to the park visitors.

The main message is expressed in the theme of *Culture*, which focuses on Northwest Native American life-ways and history at the park site. The People’s Center, proposed as a signature feature in the master plan, establishes the centrality of this Southern Coast Salish story with a focus on the life-ways of the Nisqually people and will play a crucial role in making the park a unique and compelling destination. Other formal and informal interpretive elements will provide opportunities for Nisqually Tribal Partners to share their culture and communicate this primary theme.

The main message is expressed in the theme of *Conservation*, manifested in the stewardship ethic that will inform all physical development on the site and be interpreted for visitors by way of formal environmental education and informal interpretation. Conservation is an umbrella theme that includes preservation, restoration, and an exploration of our values as a culture.

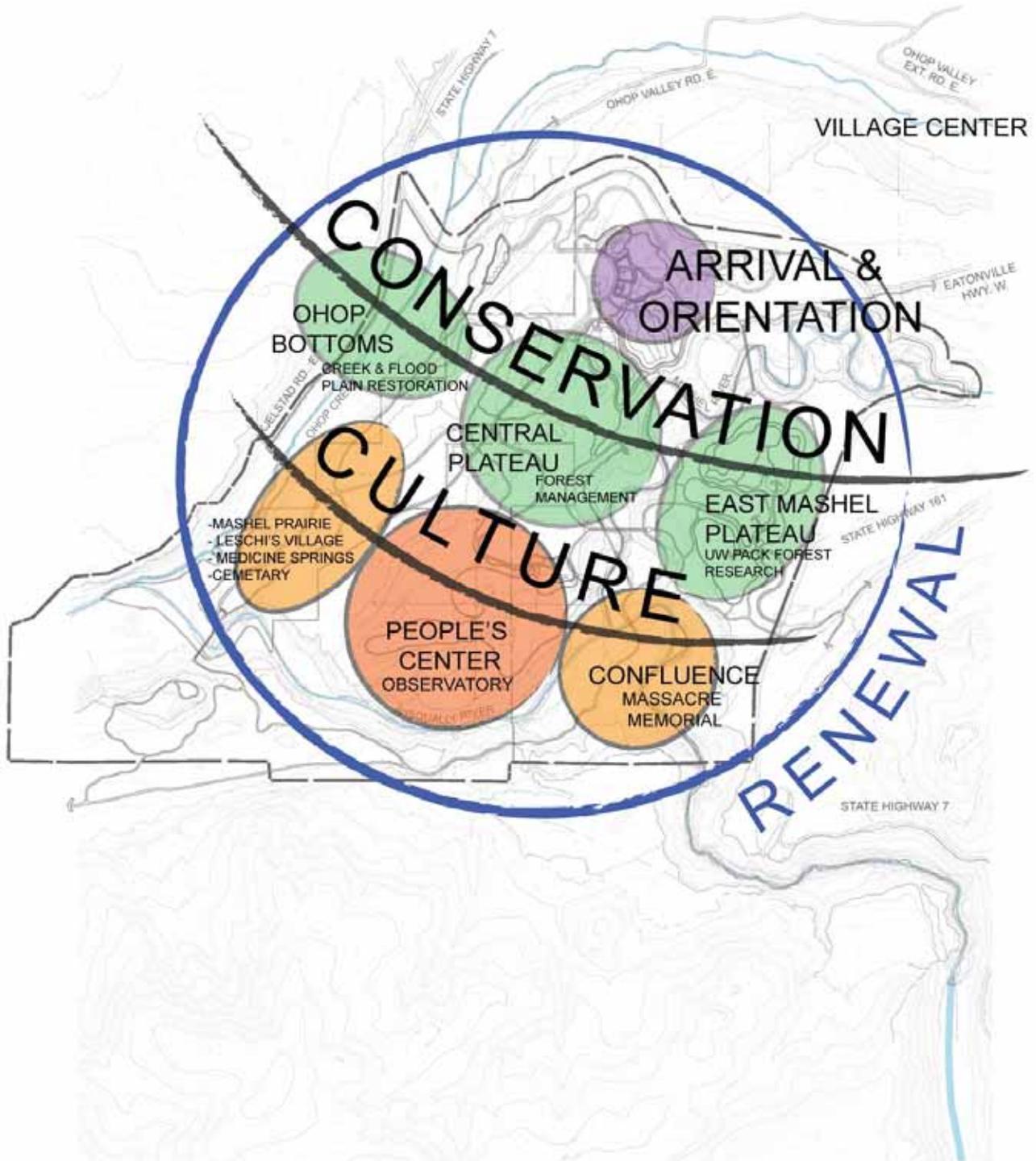


Figure D-1: Interpretive Emphasis Areas

The main message is expressed in the theme of *Renewal* referring to the physical and spiritual restorative experience of being in nature; further it is the restoration of Nisqually cultural practices at this place. The Park will provide, and highlight through interpretation, opportunities for compelling nature-based experiences, from crossing the Mashel River Gorge high in the canopy of old growth trees to watching salmon spawn in the gravel stream bed of the Nisqually. A strong focus on the Renewal theme will serve to intensify visitors' memories of the park, reinforce the stewardship ethic and help visitors understand their, and the Nisqually's, relationship with the natural world.

Culture

This park is one of a group of Nisqually Tribal camps that tells the larger story of a people. "We did not practice any agriculture. The abundance of cedar (with endless uses) and salmon (which could be preserved through smoking) gave us the resources needed for trading, accumulating wealth, and developing a sophisticated society."

~NISQUALLY TRIBAL INPUT DOCUMENT

The content elements supporting the cultural theme focus initially on Northwest Native Americans and specifically on Nisqually life-ways related to this site. Topics emphasize the fact that the Nisqually occupied, and still occupy, this watershed.

1. A Living Culture – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
 - a. Nisqually Tribe from the beginning
 - b. Nisqually Tribal ties to the Puyallup and Yakama
 - c. Salish Tribes of the Nisqually watershed
 - d. Tribes of the Medicine Creek Treaty
 - e. Historic use of this land
2. Lushootseed, Salishan Language of the Northwest Coast
 - a. Role of story in culture
 - b. Cultural differences in the documentation of history
3. Historic Resource Use and Future Management by the Tribe
4. Tribal Restoration, and Protection of the Land and Resources, as an Integral Aspect of the Culture
 - a. Fishing/hunting
 - b. Water/the rivers/salmon
 - c. Forests/the cedar
5. Whulge to Tacobet (Sound to Mountain)
 - a. This is the center of the watershed
 - b. Pre-contact life
 - c. Nisqually spiritual relationship to *Tacobet*

6. Mashel Massacre Story
 - a. "Ownership" of the land
 - b. Governor Isaac Stevens and the Indian Wars
 - c. Chief Leschi, last chief of the Nisqually
7. A Living Culture, Reconciliation and Rejuvenation
 - a. Washington State reinstatement of Chief Leschi's honor
 - b. The creation of this park site

Conservation

For hundreds of years this land has provided resources to a living, growing community. Through research and study, the structure of this forest, meadow and watershed is being recreated and protected. It was different 100 years ago. In 100 years it will be different still. It has evolved over time and will continue to evolve in the future. We can affect that evolution.

This content focuses specifically on conservation, defined as "management for maximum benefit over a sustained period of time." Topics consider historic and current uses of the land, benefits of conservation, and information about the desired outcomes of current management practices with geology as an introduction.

1. The Formation of this Land
 - a. Plate tectonics
 - b. Glaciers and the ice age floods
 - c. Beneath your feet
2. River, Salmon and Steelhead Restoration and Recovery
 - a. Water source and points of pollution
 - b. River restructuring goals, plan and form
 - c. Salmon and seasonal stream access restrictions
3. Forest Structure and Succession
 - a. Logging practices
 - b. Succession research
 - c. Forest age today
4. Environmental Context and Impacts
 - c. Geology
 - d. Agriculture
 - e. Logging
 - f. Suburban growth
 - g. Wetlands

Renewal

Meadow, wooded edge, glade lit by a shaft of light. We are alone in a group. Imagination is informed by the senses—sight, sound, touch. Rushing water and the odor of damp. Experiences with nature become deeply ingrained memories of this place, memories that for some go back before time. It is a time to renew an understanding of nature's place and make a new understanding of this place.

This theme is more emotional and experiential than informational. Its topics are those moments — accidental and structured — that reinforce an experience in nature and are physically restorative. Content may be more poetic and inspirational than educational or didactic.

1. Re-creation, Rejuvenation, Refuge, Spiritual Renewal – Experiences of a Special Place
 - a. Eagles soaring
 - b. Feet in the creek
 - c. At the edge of the glade and meadow
 - d. In the tree canopy
 - e. “Fly” through the trees, over the water
 - f. Getting to the summit
 - g. Seeing stars dark night
2. Revealed Views: Unfolding, Sequenced, Surprise
 - a. *Tacobet* (Mt. Rainier)
 - b. Olympic Mountains
 - c. River below
 - d. Bluff above
3. Walk, Hike, Wade
 - a. Boardwalks along an edge or out over the edge
 - b. Decent to discover the water
 - c. Ascent to the summit
 - d. Scale, high and wide, low and intimate
4. Pause
 - a. Just listen, smell, feel
 - b. Consider all who have lived here before you...and all who will come after

Interpretive Objectives

In developing an informal learning experience, it is valuable to divide interpretive objectives into three elemental categories: **learning outcomes**, **emotional impact**, and **behavioral impact**. At a master planning level the description of these objectives is naturally broad. In later phases these objectives are refined and made more specific to the project at hand.

Learning Outcomes:

1. The visitor will know that the park is located on the ancestral lands of Nisqually Tribe and that the tribe is still here.
2. The visitor will know that forests change over time and that understanding this change enables us to better conserve and manage them as a resource.
3. The visitor will know that the rivers and creek in this park are a part of the Nisqually River watershed and require protection.

Emotional Impact:

1. The visitor will understand the Nisqually Tribe's connection to this place and their relationships with other nations, tribes and bands of Native Americans.
2. The visitor will feel positive about the forest and stream reconstruction efforts of Washington State Parks, the Nisqually Tribe and the University of Washington Center for Sustainable Forestry.
3. The visitor will feel wonder at the diversity of the prairie meadow, forest and grassland environments.

Behavioral Impact:

1. The visitor will be supportive of the renewal of the Nisqually Tribal culture and the reconciliation efforts of the state of Washington.
2. The visitor will support the expansion of the protected parklands through the contribution of time or money.
3. The visitor will support forest and stream conservation – politically, financially and through the visitor's own actions.
4. The visitor will want to return for future programs, and will spread the word about the wonderful qualities of the Park.

Interpretive Media

Studies have demonstrated that visitors take away a very limited amount of information from any informal learning experience. It is often quoted that; "The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation" (Freeman Tilden, *Principles of Interpretation, Interpreting Our Heritage*). Successful interpretation generally enables the visitor to take away one important, provocative message. This message is the basis for the interpretive approach; the themes and topics outlined to support and reinforce the message are the base material for the content and storyline of the plan. This message laid out at the start of this section is one of challenge, change, restoration and reconciliation; a story told from many points of view.

At the Master Plan phase, the plan identifies media that are likely suitable to the various themes and messages. A variety of media, in a number of locations and featured throughout the Park, will convey the themes outlined above and support the goals for learning, emotional affect and behavior. Repetition is a proven device for learning, so the main message and its supporting themes and topics will be presented in multiple forms

using the voices described earlier. Following is an outline of media elements organized by theme and Park location.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Story / Media</u>
Throughout the park	Story Trees, cut from timber salvaged from the park site with interpretive graphic panels, address each theme connected to that spot on the site. This multifaceted form allows the display of multiple topics and points of view.
<u>Culture Theme</u>	
The People's Center	Squalli-Absch as living culture – yesterday, today, and tomorrow – presented in an interpretive center using audio, visual and didactic exhibits to introduce the full range of themes and topics.
Observatory	Celestial Observatory Story Circle at the high point of the site. A place to learn about Southern Coast Salish life-ways, tell camp stories, or simply lie in the grass and look at clouds, birds or stars.
Woodland/Meadow	Journey to Leschi's Village from the People's Center and Observatory. This is a seasonally recreated village used by the Tribe for interpretive programs and experiences including Nisqually use of seasonal materials, salmon, cedar and camas.
Traditional Knowledge Camp	Set above the southern banks of the Nisqually River. This is a reserved site and facility for use by the Tribe for traditional education. It may be open by invitation to others for special programs run by the Nisqually Tribe.
Confluence	From the east end of the South High Bridge over the Mashel River down to the confluence of the Mashel and Nisqually Rivers, down to the confluence itself, the story of the Mashel Massacre is told. Interpreters from the Tribe are supported by Story Poles at significant locations.
View to <i>Tacobet</i> (Mt. Rainier)	Views to the mountain are staged and framed to direct the visitor's view to this top of the watershed ("mother of waters") and icon for the Pacific Northwest.
Cultural Sites	Leschi's Village is the departure point for other cultural sites including the Shaker Cemetery, Medicine Springs and others. At these locations there is the opportunity to interpret the story of contact between the Nisqually and immigrants.

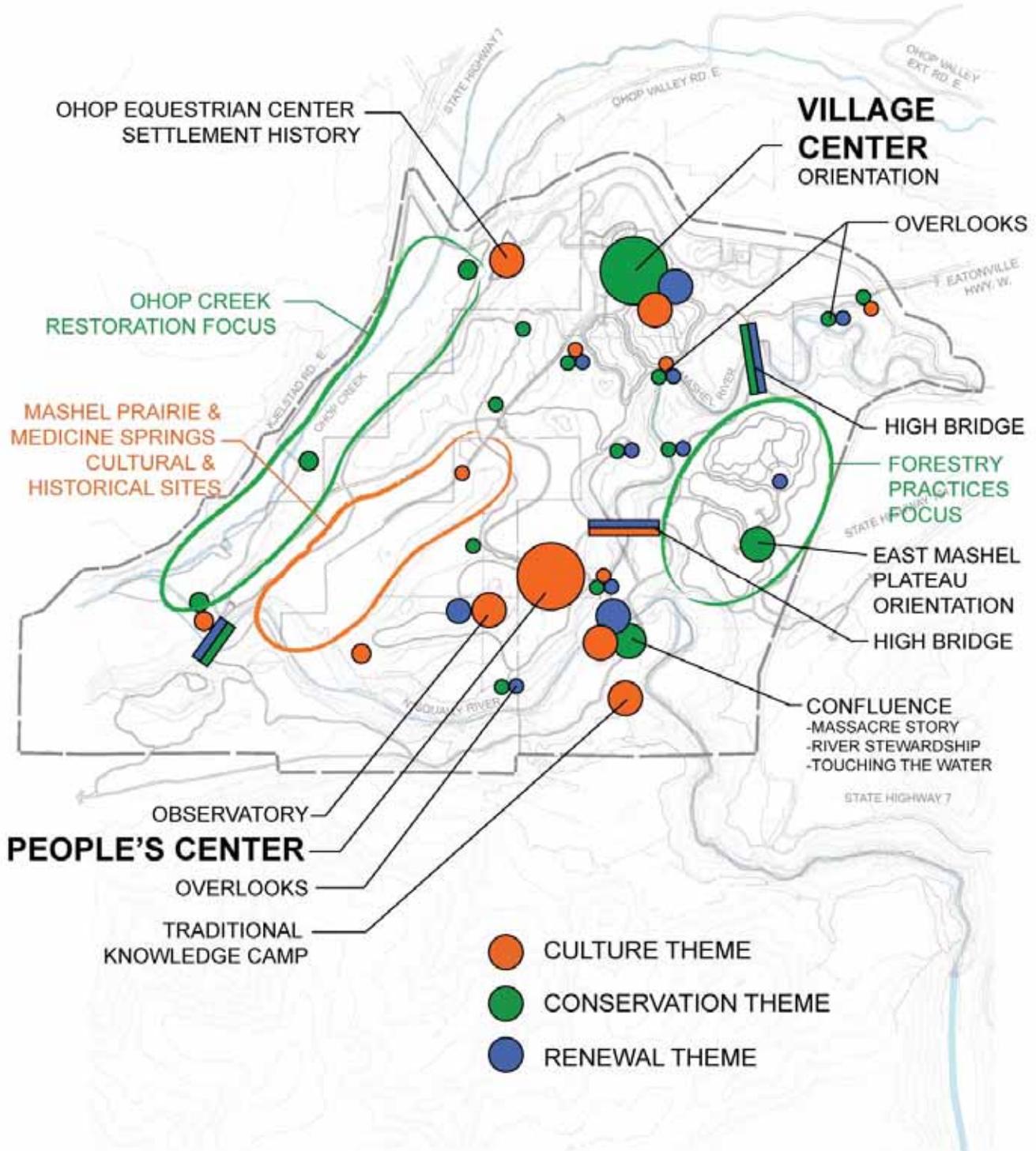


Figure D-2: Interpretive Locations

Conservation Theme

Park Entry

Orientation to the Park and its unique offerings using traditional elements such as interpretive graphics, event notifications, murals and large format maps. The park amphitheater is located here at this concentration of services. Programs here focus on the conservation theme, support the renewal theme and introduce the culture theme.

East Mashel Plateau

Access to the adjacent University of Washington Center for Sustainable Forestry at Pack Forest. Etched basalt and granite cairns describe meadow, forest succession and river restructuring. These cairns track from the grasslands at Ohop Creek across the site to Pack Forest.

Renewal Theme

Observation Platforms

At select points along the bluffs overlooking the rivers and creek, framed views reveal the lands and waters below. Each is selected to interpret a cultural or conservation theme, while always supporting the renewal theme. It is at these locations Washington State Parks and their Partners initiate the documentation of the next 100 years of change.

Canopy Bridge(s)

Extended, raised canopy bridges provide opportunities to walk through the old growth canopy at the edge of the eastern bluff, affording a canopy view of actual forest succession. Primary supports for the renewal theme, the bridges are also a platform for the conservation theme. The high bridge nearest the confluence of the Nisqually and the Mashel can also be a location to tell the story of the Mashel Massacre as part of the culture theme.

Walks and Rides

Personal encounters with nature are necessary for health. A walk in the woods or along a stream is an important part of experiencing the renewal theme. Trails of different scales are available for people, horses and bikes. ADA-compliant portions of the trail system ensure that the State Park is available to visitors of all abilities.

Adjacent Interpretive Opportunities

In immediate proximity to the Nisqually Mashel State Park are two existing facilities that offer interpretive programming. Their programs are supportive of the main message and interpretive themes outlined here for the Park. Great opportunities are possible regarding teaming with these neighbors.

University of Washington, Center for Sustainable Forestry at Pack Forest

According to their website, the University of Washington's Center for Sustainable Forestry at Pack Forest

“...provides a field location for faculty, staff, and students from the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources to teach, study, conduct research, and demonstrate modern forest management.

The interpretive program at Pack Forest provides a number of opportunities to learn about forest ecology, forest management, new ideas in forestry, and what the University of Washington is doing at Pack Forest today. These opportunities range from self guided trails, and displays in the gatehouse, to naturalist-led trail walks and a curriculum on forest ecology for elementary to middle school students.

Pack Forest also provides opportunities for the public to hike, bike, horseback ride, stroll or roll along a barrier-free self guided trail, or hunt during hunting season.”

Pioneer Farm Museum and Ohop Indian Village

The Pioneer Farm Museum and Ohop Indian Village provides interpretation of the experience of settlers homesteading in Washington State in the 1880s. A seasonal “Indian Village” interprets the Native American history of the area.

