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Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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December 6, 2012

Item E-2: Deception Pass State Park - Kukutali Preserve Master Plan – Requested Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This item asks the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to adopt a master plan for Kukutali Preserve, a unit of Deception Pass State Park. This item complies with our Centennial 2013 Plan element, “Our Commitment –Stewardship” and with our core values.

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Kukutali Preserve is co-owned and co-managed by the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (Tribe) and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks). When the property was acquired in June 2010, the Tribe and State Parks signed intergovernmental agreements to co-own and co-manage Kukutali Preserve for conservation and research, public education, and limited recreational use. The Kukutali Preserve Management Board, consisting of three members appointed by the Tribe and three members appointed by State Parks, makes management recommendations and oversees day-to-day operations of the property. All Board decisions are made by consensus.

Long-Term Management Planning

After the acquisition of Kukutali Preserve, the Management Board developed an interim management plan for the property, which was approved by the Tribe and State Parks in August 2010 and approved with minor modifications in May 2011. The interim management plan restricts public access to pre-scheduled tours only, as the property has no facilities, and it has both natural and cultural resources that need to be protected. A master plan has been needed, but funding limitations delayed its initiation. Without this planning work, seeking funds for limited development and public access have not been possible. However, in early 2011, the Tribe made an initial planning investment by hiring a landscape architect to begin a master plan. In addition, in June 2012, the Recreation and Conservation Office allowed State Parks and the Tribe to use a portion of the remaining balance from a 2009 acquisition grant to develop a stewardship and management plan for the Preserve.

The Management Board agreed on a planning process for the Preserve. In the first step, Board members presented draft management options at a public meeting in Anacortes on June 21, 2012. (Additional information on the planning stages can be found at the Kukutali project web site at <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/kukutali/>). In addition, the Board members explained that long-term management options are strictly limited by the grants used to acquire Kukutali Preserve, the intergovernmental agreements, and state budget constraints. Comments from the public meeting were then used to develop preliminary recommendations that were distributed to the meeting attendees and posted on the agency website. Comments on the preliminary recommendations

were used to complete final recommendations. The Tribal Senate is scheduled to consider adopting these recommendations at its November 6, 2012 meeting.

Key Management Board Recommendations:

The final recommendations, which are included in Appendix 2, represent the Management Board's best effort to incorporate the hopes and concerns of community members into a master plan that provides appropriate public use consistent with intergovernmental agreements and deed restrictions on the property. Key recommendations include:

- Kukutali Preserve will be made available for public day-use, with no overnight facilities.
- General access will no longer be strictly limited to guided tours. Access to Flagstaff Island will continue to be prohibited to protect fragile plant communities, until proper protective measures are implemented that may allow limited guided tours.
- Limited day-use amenities will be constructed in phases, as funds are available. Facilities will include trails, a vault toilet, non-motorized boat landings, picnic area, and a small parking lot on Snee-oosh Road.
- Vehicles will be limited to a parking area next to Snee-Oosh Road. All other access by land will be pedestrian only.
- Access to the Kukutali Preserve for the general public other than by advance reservation tours will not be available until the day-use amenities have been constructed.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Appendix 1: Kukutali Preserve Location and Vicinity Maps

Appendix 2: Final Recommended Master Plan for Kukutali Preserve

REQUESTED ACTION OF COMMISSION

That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission:

1. Adopt the Final Recommended Master Plan for Kukutali Preserve that is included in Appendix 2.

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Reviewer(s):

SEPA Review: Pursuant to WAC 197-11-704, staff prepared a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and issued a "Determination of Non-Significance" for the staff recommendation finding that the action proposed by Commission staff was minor and the environmental effects not significant.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Implementation of the master plan appears to consider limited funding available. Capital improvements, including day-use amenities will seek appropriate funding as available.

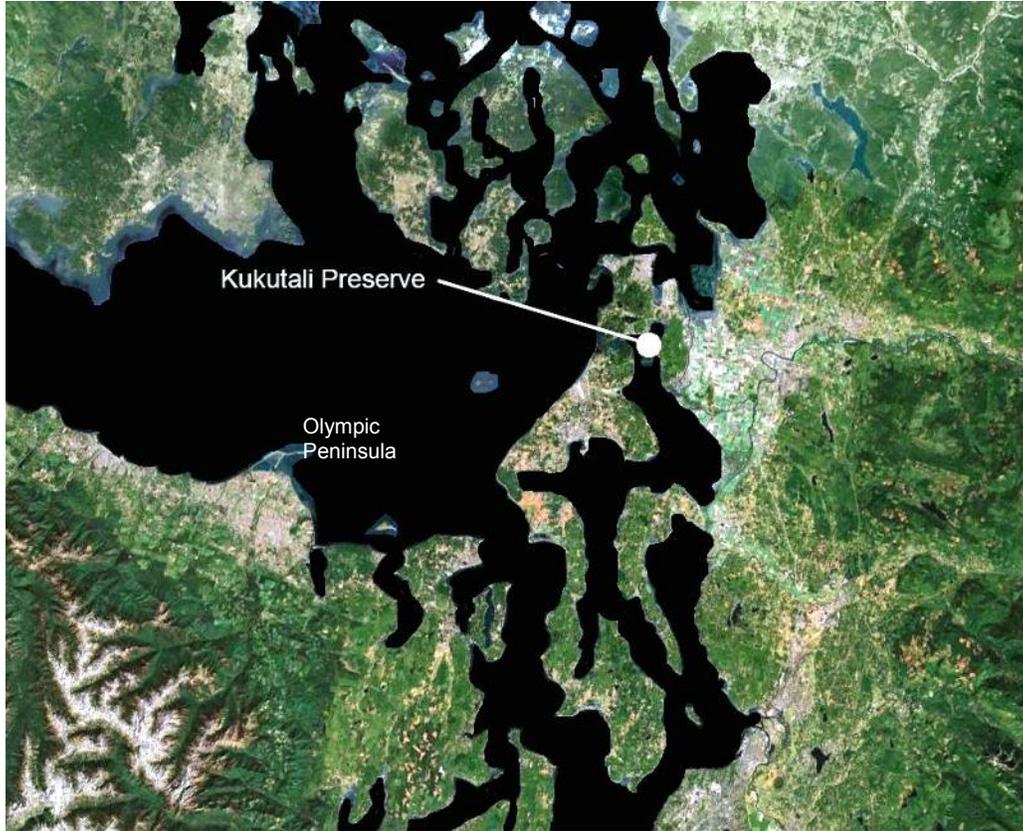
Assistant Attorney General: November 2, 2012

Larry Fairleigh, Assistant Director

Approved for Transmittal to Commission

Don Hoch, Director

Appendix 1 Kukutali Preserve Location and Vicinity Maps





Appendix 2

Final Recommended Master Plan for Kukutali Preserve

Background

Kukutali Preserve is co-owned and co-managed by the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (Tribe) and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks). When the property was acquired in June 2010, the Tribe and State Parks signed intergovernmental agreements to co-own and co-manage Kukutali Preserve for conservation and research, public education, and limited recreational use. The Kukutali Preserve Management Board, consisting of three members appointed by the Tribe and three members appointed by State Parks, makes management recommendations and oversees day-to-day operations of the property.

Kukutali Preserve includes 84 upland acres on Kiket and Flagstaff islands and about nine upland acres on Fidalgo Island. The Preserve has more than two miles of nearly intact shoreline, with native eelgrass beds and diverse populations of fish and shellfish. Kukutali Preserve is home to numerous endangered or threatened species and has a broad spectrum of habitats, including mixed deciduous and conifer forests, with significant old-growth trees. Flagstaff Island supports a rare type of environment called a “rocky bald,” which has a fragile, thin soil that hosts a unique community of native plants not found elsewhere. Cultural resources important to the Tribe also are present on Kukutali Preserve.

The Tribe and State Parks used federal and state grants, as well as private donations, to purchase Kukutali Preserve. All of the funds used to acquire the property were restricted in their use and could only be spent to acquire environmentally sensitive lands. These funding sources prioritize long-term preservation, protection, and conservation of those lands and allow appropriate limited public use.

Management and development options are strictly limited by the grants used to acquire Kukutali Preserve, the intergovernmental agreements, and state budget constraints. After the acquisition of Kukutali Preserve, the Management Board developed an interim management plan for the property, which was approved by the Tribe and State Parks in August 2010 and approved with minor modifications in May 2011. Since that time, the Management Board has been working on a long-term plan that includes a small amount of development to accommodate limited day-use recreation consistent with the protection, restoration, and enhancement of the natural and cultural resources at Kukutali Preserve. (More information on the planning process and public input can be found at the Kukutali project website at <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/kukutali/>).

Management Board Master Plan Recommendations

After considering comments made during the public planning process, the Management Board developed the following master plan recommendations:

- Kukutali Preserve should be made available for public day-use, with no overnight facilities.
- General access should no longer be strictly limited to guided tours. Access to Flagstaff Island should continue to be prohibited to protect fragile plant communities, until proper protective measures are implemented that may allow limited guided tours.

- Vehicles should be limited to a parking area next to Snee-Oosh Road. All other access by land should be pedestrian only.
- Limited day-use amenities should be constructed in phases (Table 1, Figures 1-3), as funds are available.
- The Dunlap residence on Kiket Island needs to be evaluated for historic significance. Final decisions about the future of the house and associated day-use developments at the house site need to be postponed until the research is complete.

Table 1. Proposed Development Phases for Kukutali Preserve.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Conduct ecological status monitoring of the Preserve	Construct small parking area, adjacent to Snee-Oosh Road	Develop beach walk trail	Implement ecological restoration project(s), which may include replacing the current road revetment between Kiket and Fidalgo islands with a bridge to facilitate natural shoreline processes
Develop south (utility corridor) trail	Install gates to restrict vehicular access	Construct boardwalk and viewing platforms in wetland near parking area	
Install vault toilet	Install kiosk and directional signs		
Install barrier at Flagstaff Island to restrict public access	Develop additional day-use facilities*		
Construct non-motorized boat access areas on the northwest and southwest sides of Kiket Island; access point on the northwest side of the island would be closed seasonally to protect forage fish spawning areas	Develop north trail, including scenic viewing area on northwest side of island		
<i>*Day-use development to include picnic facilities and possible shelter. Exact location and phasing will be determined after research on Dunlap house site is completed.</i>			

Figure 1. Proposed master plan elements for Kukutali Preserve development phase 1.



Figure 2. Proposed master plan elements for Kukutali Preserve development phase 2.



Figure 3. Proposed master plan elements for Kukutali Preserve development phases 3 and 4.

