

Don Hoch  
Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

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**DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE**  
STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

**Description of proposal:** Washington State Parks is in the final stages of completing a land-use planning project for Larrabee State Park located approximately 10 miles south of Bellingham in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The planning project, also known as Classification and Management Planning (CAMP), addresses overall visitor experiences, natural and cultural resource management, long-term property boundary decisions (acquiring and/or surplus land), defining use and upgrading of existing park facilities, and other topics of interest to the community and park visitors. This nonproject proposal seeks Commission approval of:

- 1) Specific land classifications for the existing park and for the long-term boundary of Larrabee State Park. The purpose of land classification is to provide general policy guidance for staff on appropriate management and use of land holdings in Larrabee State Park for recreational activities and development. State Park's land classification system is codified under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 352-16.
- 2) A long-term park boundary for Larrabee State Park. The long-term boundary for the park represents areas which the agency deems desirable for management consistent with the park's mission.

**Proponent:** Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

**Location of proposal, including street address, if any:** Larrabee State Park is a 2,683-acre camping and day-use park located in northwest Washington State, 10 miles south of the City of Bellingham in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The park address is 245 Chuckanut Drive, Bellingham, WA 98229.

**Lead agency:** Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued under 197-11-340 (2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date below. Comments must be submitted by **July 1, 2014** or they may not be considered.

Responsible Official: Randy Kline  
Position/Title: Environmental Program Manager  
Phone/Email: (360) 902-8632/[randy.kline@parks.wa.gov](mailto:randy.kline@parks.wa.gov)  
Address: P.O. Box 42650, Olympia, WA 98504

Date: June 16, 2014

Signature: 

"All Washington State Parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all persons regardless of age, sex, creed, ethnic origin, or physical limitations." There is no agency SEPA appeal; however all comments are welcome and will be thoroughly considered.

## **WAC 197-11-960 Environmental checklist.**

### ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

#### *Purpose of checklist:*

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

#### *Instructions for applicants:*

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

#### *Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:*

**IN ADDITION, complete the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D). Note that pursuant to WAC 197-11-315(e) Part B of the checklist has not been used for review of this nonproject proposal.**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:**

Larrabee State Park Classification and Management Plan (CAMP)

#### **2. Name of applicant:**

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

#### **3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:**

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

1111 Israel Road SW

Olympia, WA 98504-2650

**4. Date checklist prepared:**

June, 2014

**5. Agency requesting checklist:**

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

**6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):**

This checklist contains non-project SEPA analysis, which includes preliminary recommendations for land classifications and long-term boundaries for Larrabee State Park. This is the first phase of SEPA environmental review on the proposed Classification and Management Plan (CAMP). Subsequent SEPA environmental review will be conducted for specific project actions at such time developments or other actions are proposed. Future phases may include capital projects, implementation of management plan objectives, and other facility improvements. Washington State Parks held three public workshops during the planning process for this proposal.

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) will take action on a staff recommendation for long-term boundaries and land classifications at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 24, 2014. Individuals interested in commenting on this action may do so through this SEPA document, or may provide comments directly to the Commission at the meeting. The July Commission meeting will be held in Bellingham, Washington. Commission meetings are scheduled to begin at 9:00 am, but the proposed items have not been allotted a specific time on the agenda.

**7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.**

Yes. This SEPA checklist analyzes the foreseeable impacts associated with the Commission's adoption of the proposed staff recommendations for the land classification plan and long-term boundary for Larrabee State Park. The Commission's decision will provide policy direction to staff, and begin the agency's focus on completing tasks identified by that direction.

Any future project actions are dependent upon securing adequate funding and regulatory approvals. Additional SEPA documentation will be prepared for any specific project actions at such time developments are proposed.

**8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

The CAMP process sought input from the public including members of the local community, organizations, governmental agencies located in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tribes, other entities and organizations, and State Parks staff. Through public meetings different land classification and long-term boundary alternatives were evaluated and a preliminary recommendation was developed.

- A June 10, 2014 *Stage Three – Preliminary Recommendations Report* was prepared (see attached).
- A literature review for historic and archaeological surveys and significant sites for Larrabee State Park was conducted.
- A 2004 *Rare Plant and Vegetation Survey of Larrabee State Park* was reviewed.
- Individual SEPA checklists have been prepared for various projects within the park.

**9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

The Commission will be applying for a Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant for purposes of constructing a pedestrian overpass above the existing BSNF railway. The goal of this project will be to provide beach access from the existing Lost Lake Trailhead and associated trail improvements.

**10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

Approval by the Commission is required for this non-project action.

**11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

Washington State Parks is in the final stages of completing a land-use planning project for Larrabee State Park located approximately 10 miles south of Bellingham in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The planning project, also known as Classification and Management Planning (CAMP), addresses overall visitor experiences, natural and cultural resource management, long-term property boundary decisions (acquiring and/or surplus land), defining use and upgrading of existing park facilities, and other topics of interest to the community and park visitors. This nonproject proposal seeks Commission approval of:

- 1) Specific land classifications for the existing park and for the long-term boundary of Larrabee State Park. The purpose of land classification is to provide general policy guidance for staff on appropriate management and use of land holdings in Larrabee State Park for recreational activities and development. State Park's land classification system is codified under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 352-16.
- 2) A long-term park boundary for Larrabee State Park. The long-term boundary for the park represents areas which the agency deems desirable for management consistent with the park's mission.

**Land Classification-**

Within the long-term boundary, staff has developed recommendations for classification. Land classification is like internal zoning for the parks. Land classification is regulated by WAC 352-16-020. Although all land classifications were considered for the park, as described in WAC-16-020 the classifications proposed for the park include:

- (1) **Recreational areas** are suited and/or developed for high-intensity outdoor recreational use, conference, cultural and/or educational centers, or other uses serving large numbers of people.
- (2) **Resource recreation** areas are suited and/or developed for natural and/or cultural resource-based medium-intensity and low-intensity outdoor recreation use.
- (3) **Natural** areas are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural processes and/or features of significant ecological, geological or paleontological value while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses.
- (4) **Heritage areas** are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of unique or unusual archaeological, historical, scientific, and/or cultural features, and

traditional cultural properties, which are of statewide or national significance.

Appropriate land classifications were identified by State Parks staff with assistance of the public planning process. The preliminary recommendations for the parks were chosen to provide a high level of protection to the park's natural and cultural resources while considering current and future recreational uses and opportunities.

**Important note:** Proposed land classifications and long-term boundaries are for State Parks policy direction only. Those land classification have never been, and should not be, used as a basis for local government decisions on private land holdings within the proposed long-term boundaries.

Maps of the vicinity and preliminary recommendations for the land classification and long-term boundary for Larrabee State Park are attached. Please note that the color coding of the classification types is as follows: Recreation (purple color), Resource Recreation (bluish color), and Natural (orange color). The half tones of those colors describe the land classification for lands that are not owned by State Parks, but will be included in the final staff recommendation to the Commission (or park lands that may be appropriate for surplus/exchange).

To see maps showing the long-term boundary and land classification, please see the attached June 10, 2014 *Stage 3 – Preliminary Recommendations*. For more information, please see the planning webpage: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/268/Planning-Public-Input>.

**12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

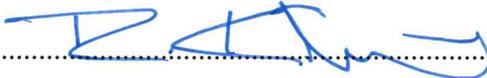
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**B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS -** Note that pursuant to WAC 197-11-315(e) PART B of the checklist has not been used for review of this nonproject proposal.

**C. SIGNATURE**

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

**Signature:**

**Date Submitted:**  .....

**D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS**

(do not use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment. When answering these questions, be aware of the extent

the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

**1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?**

State Parks considered impacts to water and air, and impacts caused by the production of noise when classifying Larrabee State Park. State Parks staff realizes that if recreational uses are not properly managed it is possible that environmental impacts would increase in areas classified as *Recreation*. Additional development could result in a net increase in impervious surfaces associated with buildings, hard trails and parking areas. Such development could cause a localized increase in stormwater discharges. Likewise, it is likely that increased motorized uses would cause a minor localized increase in emissions. Increased human use of the park could cause a net increase in human waste, emissions, and noise levels above that which currently exists.

**Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:**

Land classifications will serve to guide existing and continuing development and use of the Park. Management planning will be required to minimize impacts associated with development. Future projects will include appropriate location, sustainable design, and energy conservation measures consistent with Washington State Parks Sustainability Policy, the agency's Sustainability Plan, and park specific Integrated Sustainability Plan. In general, any future developments on State Parks property will be designed and sited out of sensitive floodplains, and/or so that stormwater runoff is directed to grassy swales for biofiltration and infiltration. All future development will be in compliance with local government stormwater regulations, Commission policies, and Washington Department of Ecology's Best Management Practices.

**2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?**

State Parks considered impacts to plants, animals, fish and marine life when classifying Larrabee State Park. There are no threatened or endangered plant species. One priority habitat type, *Rocky Balds*, exists within the park. There is one Bald Eagle (currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act) nesting territory within the park boundaries.

**Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:**

Finding the optimum balance between the protection of the above mentioned natural systems and public recreational access to those natural systems is the basis for developing land classification and management planning. The staff recommendation recognizes the importance of preserving the quality of the natural resources within the park while allowing for appropriate levels of human use. Efforts will be made to minimize habitat loss by locating future developments in areas previously disturbed or in areas with low habitat value. Continuing consultation with WFDW Area Habitat Biologists and DNR's Natural Heritage Program staff will reduce potential for site-specific impacts to wildlife and plant species through implementation of management recommendations. This could help support regional protection efforts for important migratory corridors and linkages for wildlife.

**3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?**

The proposal is unlikely to have a direct effect on the depletion of energy or natural resources.

**Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:**

Existing activities and future proposed actions will include energy conservation measures consistent with Washington State Parks Sustainability Policy, the agency's Sustainability Plan, and park specific Integrated Sustainability Plan(s). Land classifications and long-term boundaries generally support the establishment of local corridors and linkages to other regional open spaces and parks. Such corridors could serve as transportation routes for non-motorized travel. As stated above, any future proposed actions will be consistent with Washington State Parks Sustainability Policy, the agency's Sustainability Plan, and the park specific Integrated Sustainability Plan.

**4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?**

Larrabee State Park land classifications were considered for environmentally sensitive or significant resource areas that would be impacted by intensive recreation, or for the purpose of providing a high level of stewardship and resource protection within the parks. The Whatcom County Critical Areas map shows area designations of geologic hazard, flood hazard, sensitive marine and freshwater areas within the park.

**Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:**

One goal of the proposed land classification is to preserve quality natural, cultural, and historic resources. While land classifications do not authorize a particular development for a given area, they do specify the types of developments and uses which could be allowed. Land classification will set the stage for future developments and uses which may have the potential for causing negative impacts to a sensitive species and environmentally sensitive areas; such as, habitat loss, disturbances, increased competition, loss of forage or prey resources, etc. The proposal will designate certain areas of the parks as Resource Recreation to protect quality natural systems, as well as priority habitat and species by restricting high intensity recreational uses from those areas. It will restrict development activities from wetlands and other sensitive areas. Development and use of the park will provide access to certain lands and shoreline areas, but will only do so as approved and/or conditioned by local shoreline and land use ordinances. Only permitted development will be constructed.

**5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?**

Land classification designations for the parks incorporate the consideration of sensitive environments including shorelines. The proposed classifications for areas adjacent to the water bodies described above provide a high level of protection to the parks' sensitive shoreline environments while considering existing recreation use and opportunities. Future project actions may occur within 200 feet of the above-noted water bodies. Any future project actions will be consistent with the designated land class for such areas and permitted uses outlined in the Washington State Parks Land Classification and Use Matrix.

**Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:**

State Parks will work closely with federal, state and local government agencies to assure compatible management objectives on all State Parks owned and/or managed lands.

**6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

No increase in these services is directly contemplated by this proposal. Future project actions such as campground expansions or improvements may increase the number of parking of daily and overnight

visitors to the park causing an increase in demands for parking, public transit access, public services, and utilities. All elements will be examined and thoroughly analyzed prior to approval. Land classifications and long-term boundaries reflect existing and previously planned development patterns.

**Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:**

Any proposed use activity or development requiring additional transportation, utilities, and/or public services must be consistent with Parks Integrated Sustainability Plan. Park rangers will continue to patrol the park on a routine basis and provide emergency response and law enforcement when in the area.

**7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.**

The proposal does not appear to be in conflict with any known local, state or federal laws or requirements for protection of the environment. Future developments will be compliant with local, state, and federal requirements and regulations.