



Washington State  
Parks & Recreation  
Commission

*Item E-2*  
**Cama Beach  
State Park  
Requested Action**

Presented by: Michael Hankinson  
Planning Program Manager  
October 10, 2024







# Presentation

1

**Significant events in 2024**

2

**Park description**

3

**Which facilities failed and why**

4

**Public comments**

5

**Other factors influencing Commission decision**

6

**Requested action**







# 1 Events in 2024



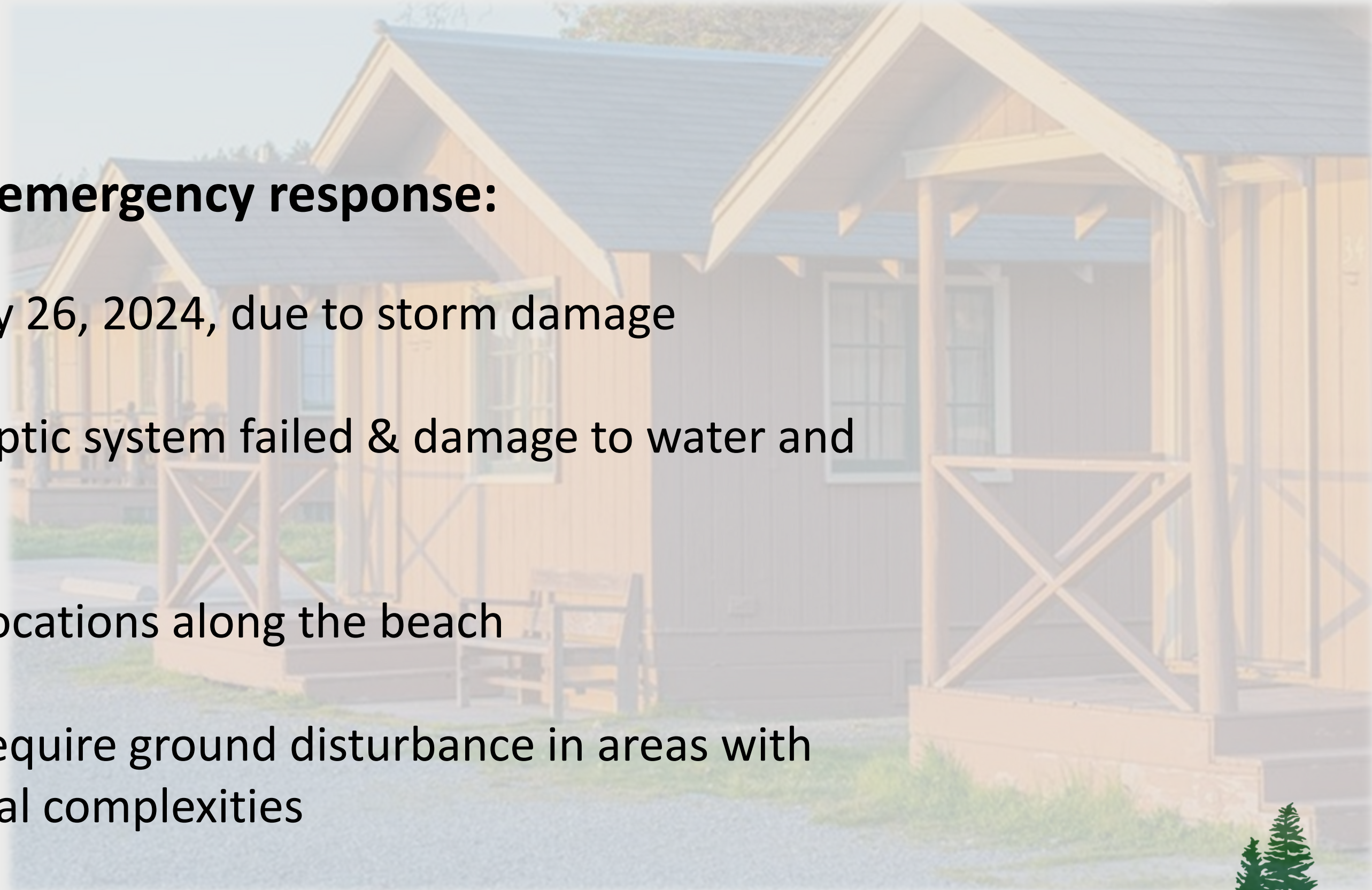




# Project Summary

## Storm damage led to an emergency response:

- Cabins closed on February 26, 2024, due to storm damage
- Significant parts of the septic system failed & damage to water and electric
- Seawall failed in several locations along the beach
- Digging to repair would require ground disturbance in areas with environmental and cultural complexities







# Project Summary

## Planning process began in Spring 2024:

### Part 1 included:

- Information gathering
- Analysis of data
- Special Commission meeting on July 15, 2024
- Public Comment
- Commission meeting October 10, 2024

### Part 2 sets stage for long-term planning at the park:

- Public engagement process that will determine future of overnight experiences at the park







2

## Park description







Source: Esri

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES







# Development of the resort

"This place has a magic to it" former owner Sandra Risk Worthington



AERIAL VIEW - CAMA BEACH - CAMANO ISLAND - WASH 8101





# The resort becomes Cama Beach State Park



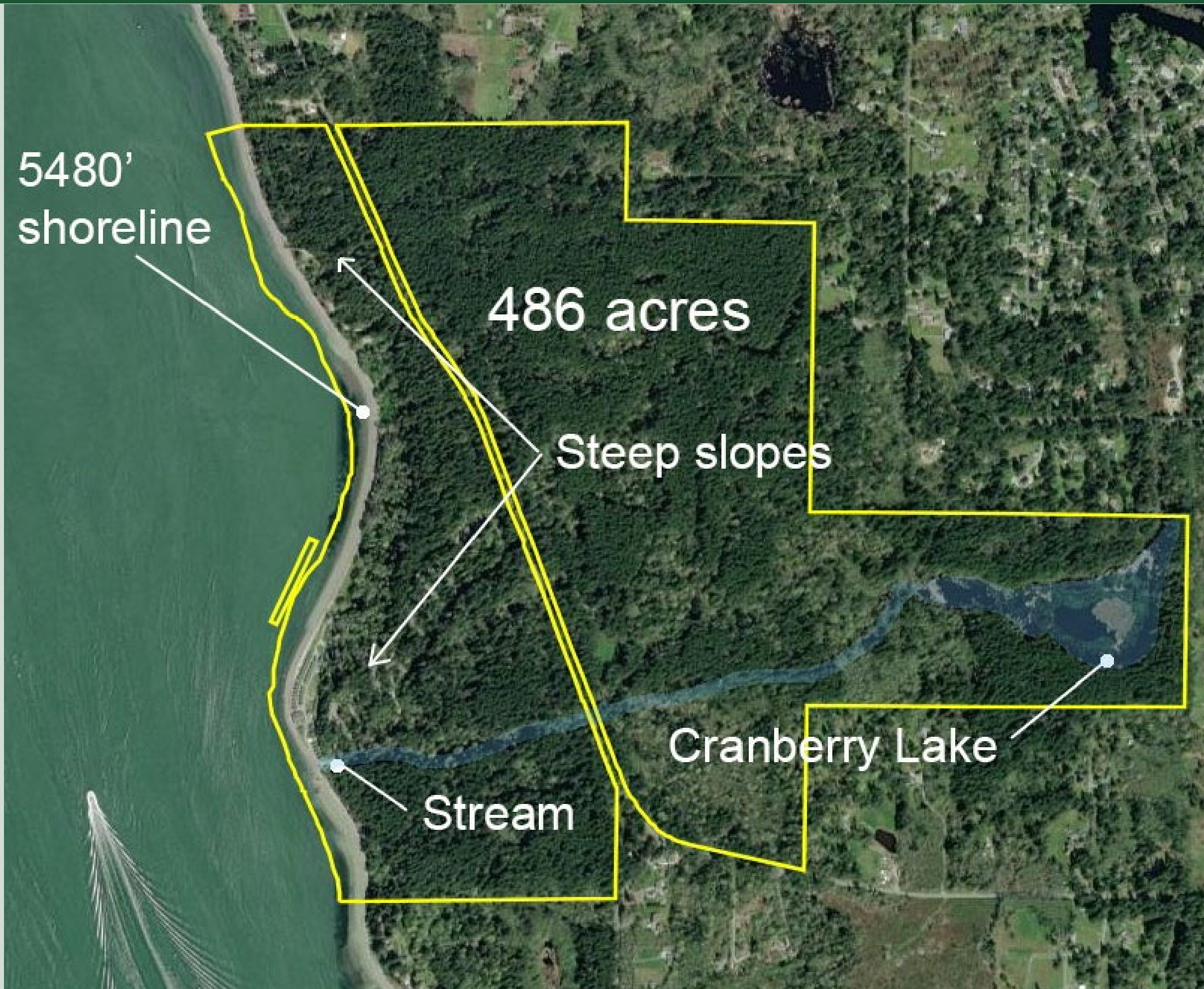




# Visitors love the park







# Natural Environment





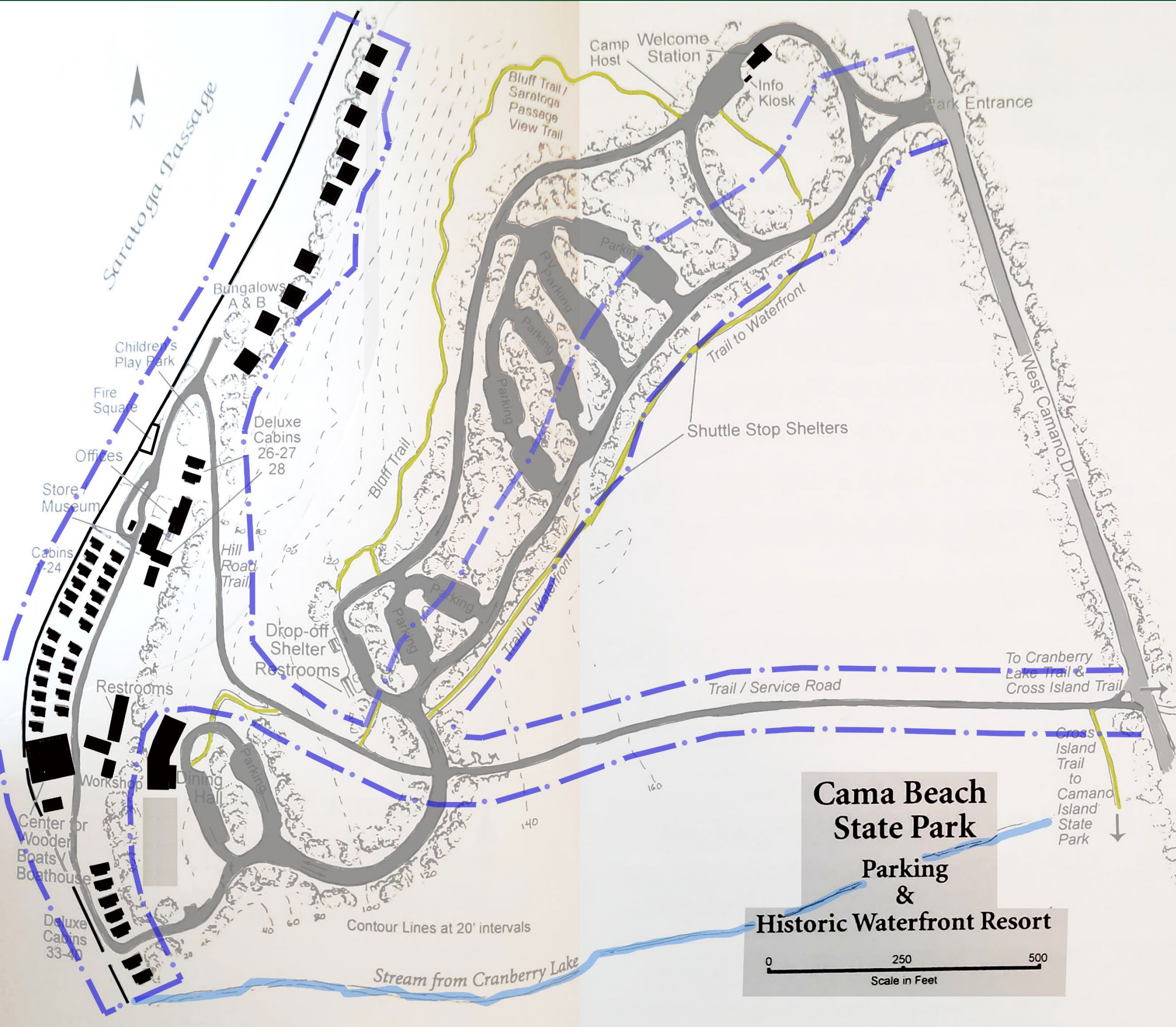
# Two landscapes on National Register of Historic Places

## Pre contact site:

- 13 acres
- **Period of Significance 2,000 years**
- Areas of Significance:
  - Archaeology
  - Ethnic heritage

## Cama Beach Resort:

- 38 acres
- **Period of Significance: 1932-1953**
- Areas of Significance:
  - Entertainment/Recreation
  - Architecture
  - Landscape architecture





# Precontact Site



## Available public information since 2005

### **Everett Herald**

"The state Parks and Recreation Commission plans to open a park there next year, but the project has been halted since March, after crews excavating utility trenches to provide power for rental cabins unearthed the remains of four people in January and February."

### **Seattle Times**

"...archaeologists in 2005 uncovered human remains and other Native American artifacts that date back 1,600 years."

### **Spokesman-Review**

"The discovery of ancient human remains at the old Cama Beach fishing resort has brought state development of the site to a temporary halt..."

### **Wikipedia**

"The discovery of human remains and artifacts in the early 21st century threatened to scuttle the creation of a state park at the site."

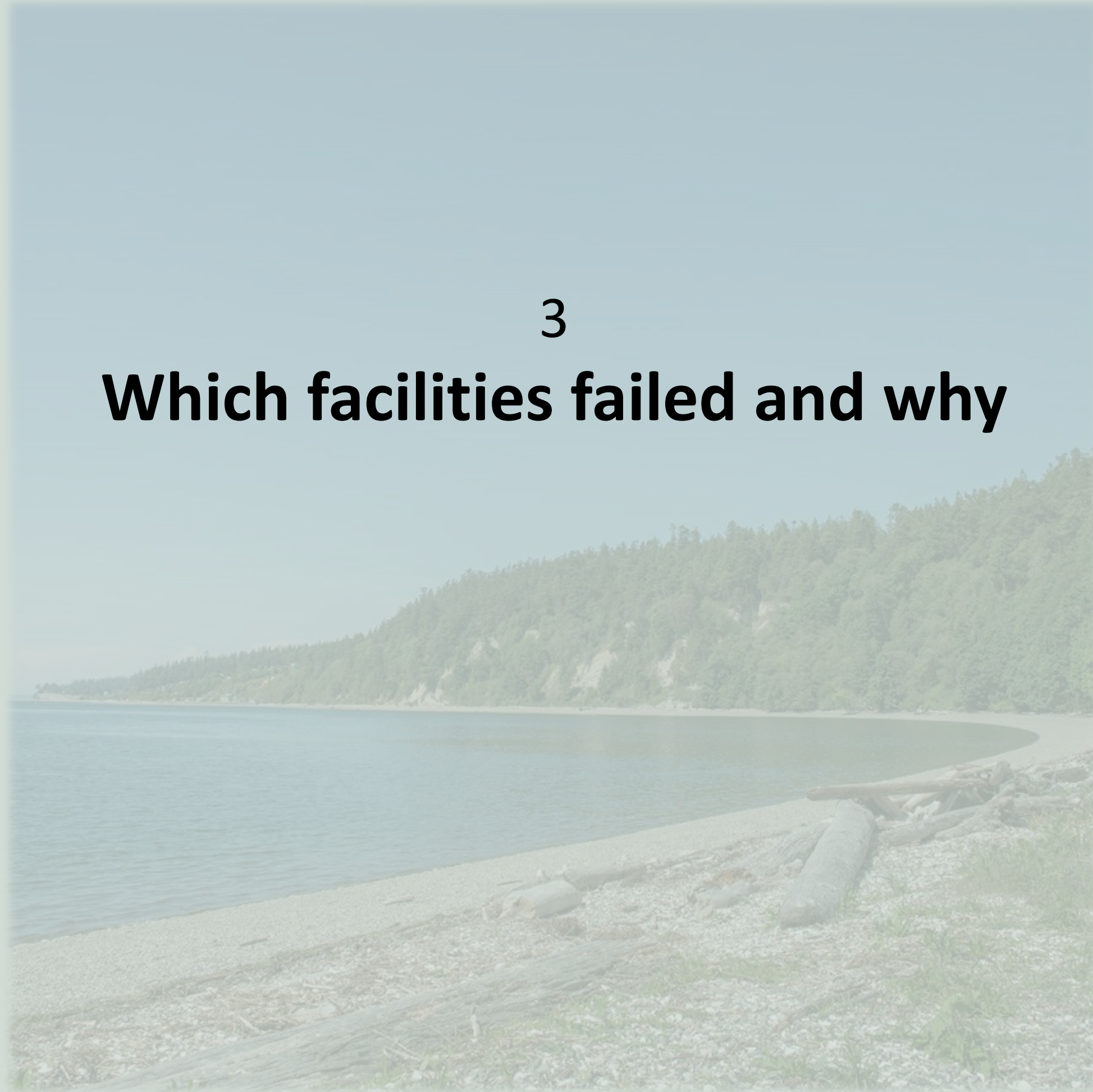






3

## Which facilities failed and why





# Failure of several systems

Repair requires digging in an area with serious environmental and cultural complexities



- Sewer system

- Seawall

- Water & electric







# Built Environment at beach

- ✓ Visitation 2023  
272,888
- ✓ Park Revenue  
2023: \$979,000
- ✓ Cabin Revenue  
2023: \$789,761
- ✓ Expenditures  
2023: 1.3 million







4

## Public comments on cabins







# Public comments

## Since July:

- 1,500 supporters signed petition to reopen cabins
- As of September 15, more than 185 public comments submitted



Well over 100 attendees at Special Commission Meeting







5

## Other factors influencing Commission decision







- **State Parks Mission**
- Laws and Governor directives
- Commission policies
- Coastal vulnerability of the built environment
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Historic significance
- Cultural significance



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)







# Washington State Parks Mission

2013

*The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives.*





- State Parks Mission
- **Laws and Governor directives**
- Commission policies
- Coastal vulnerability of the built environment
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Historic significance
- Cultural significance



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)





# Declaration of policy – Lands for public park purposes (RCW 79A.05.305) (1984)

Lands for public park purposes to be acquired and managed to:

- *Maintain our parks, their aesthetics, protect/restore habitat, provide recreation*
- *Protect cultural and historical resources, locations, and artifacts*
- *Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to the public*
- *Preserve and maintain habitat to protect and promote plants and animals of conservation concern*





## **Intent. Indian Graves and Records(RCW 27.44) (1989)**

- *Native burial grounds and historic graves are finite, irreplaceable, and nonrenewable*
- *Legislature recognizes importance of respecting all graves*
- *There has been careless indifference in cases of accidental disturbance of graves and burial grounds*
- *Indian burial sites and historic graves on public and private land are to be protected*





## Governor's Executive Order 21-02 (2021)

*State agencies shall take all reasonable action to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to archaeological and historic archaeological sites, historic buildings/structures, traditional cultural places, sacred sites or other cultural resources.*





# Increasingly complex environmental laws



Photo: Elaine Thompson



Photo: Conrad Gowell



Photo: Wild Orca







- State Parks Mission
- Laws and Governor directives
- **Commission policies**
- Coastal vulnerability of the built environment
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Historic significance
- Cultural significance



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)







# Commission cultural resources management policy 2008

*The Commission will protect all human remains, locations of graves, grave sites, and cemeteries. When, as a result of ground disturbing activities, it is not possible to protect the human remains the preferred treatment will be to relocate to a site adjacent to the original grave/cemetery location*







# Commission climate change resolution (2015)

*That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Hereby directs that actions taken at all levels of the agency shall be evaluated in the context of climate change*

## Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Coastal Facilities Vulnerability Assessment: Implications for Sea Level Rise and Coastal Hazard Planning







# Commission critical areas policy (2003)



*The first and generally preferred agency response to a threat by a natural land change process, such as landslides or coastal erosion, shall be retreat...*







- State Parks Mission
- Laws and Governor directives
- Commission policies
- **Coastal vulnerability of the built environment**
- **Climate change and sea level rise**
- Historic significance
- Cultural significance



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)







# Built environment vulnerable to coastal flooding and erosion

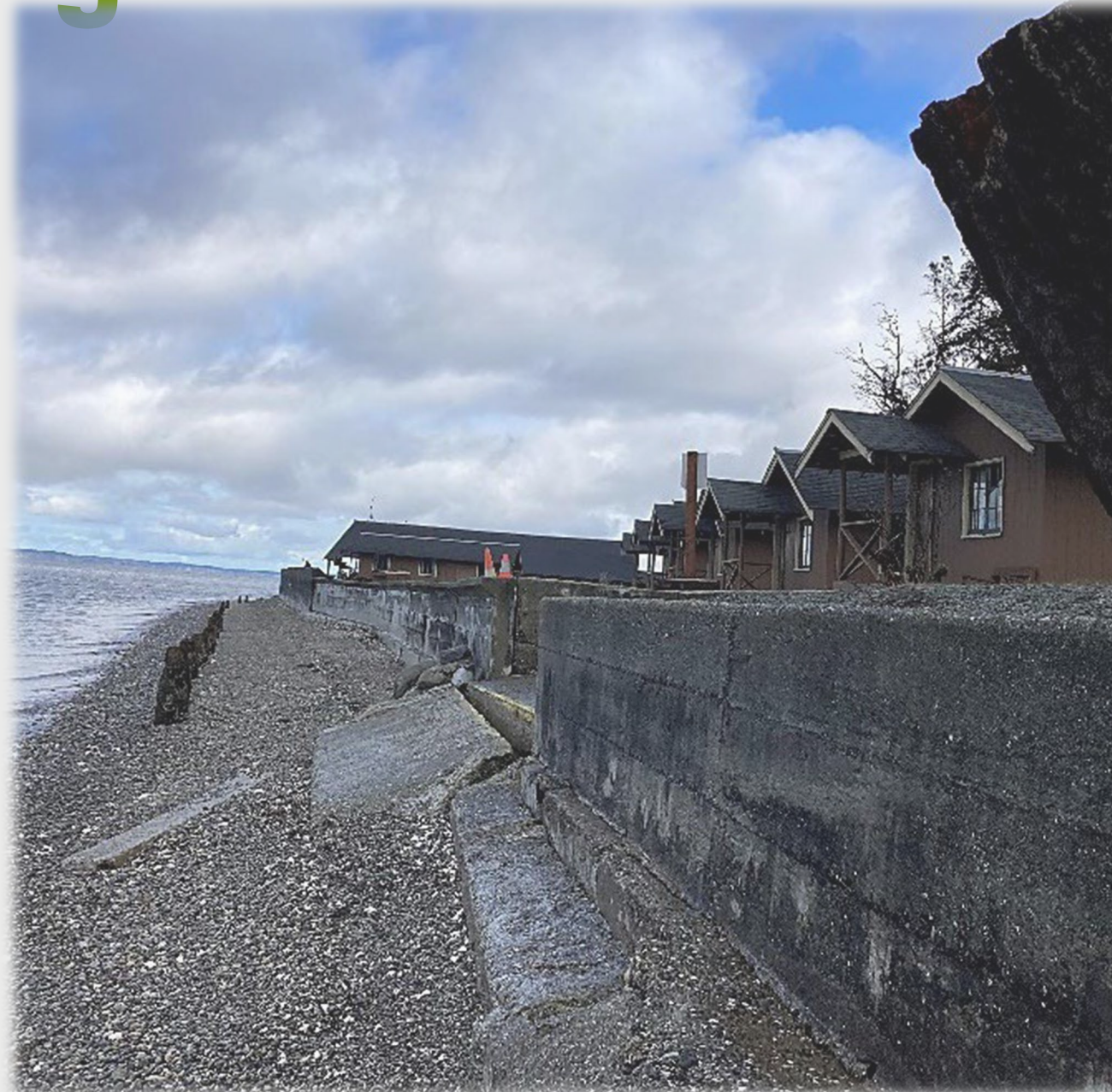


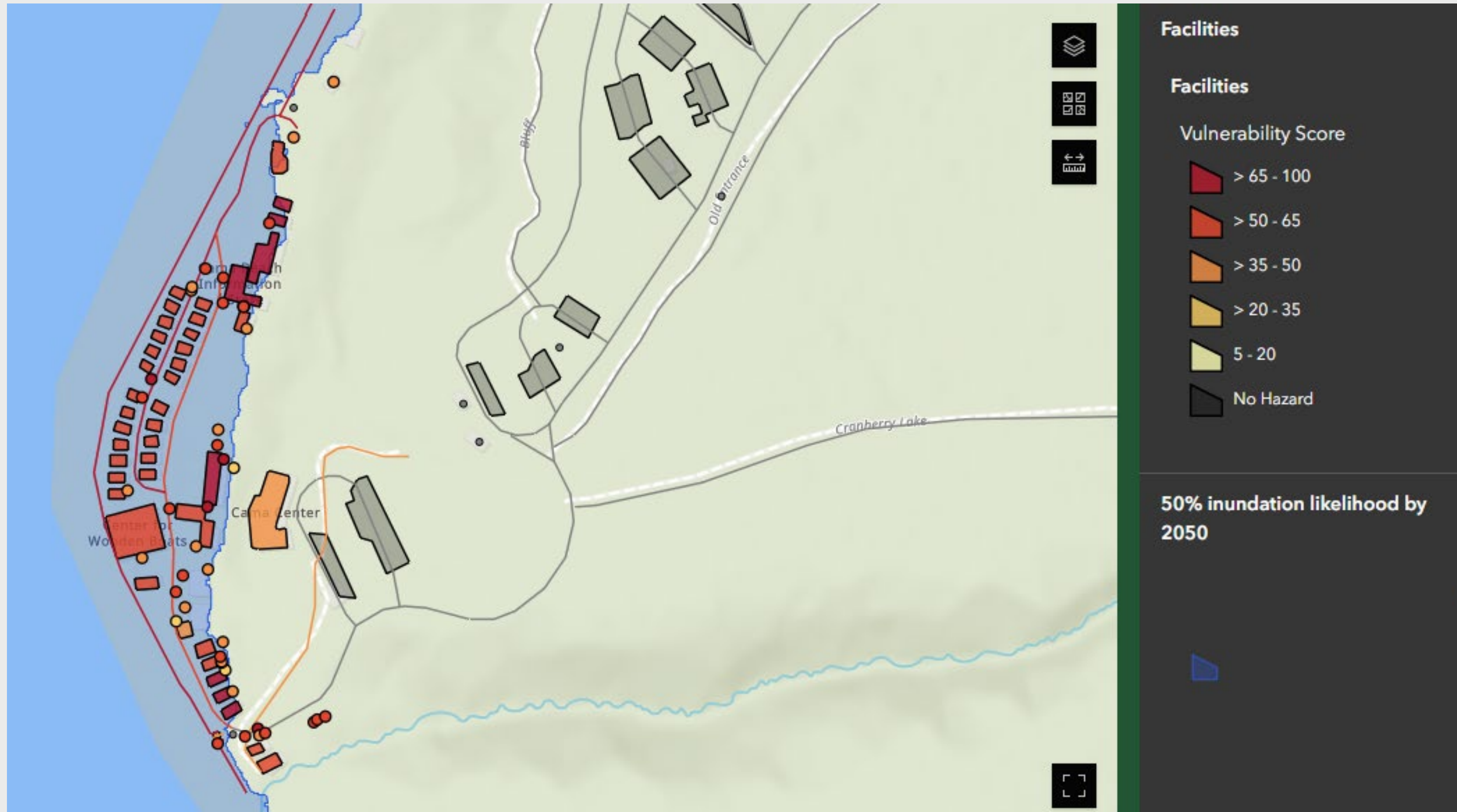
photo by j custer  
high tide was +12.9 at 8:14 AM

- Seven 50-year storms in last 20 years





# Climate impacts will get worse







- State Parks Mission
- Laws and Governor directives
- Commission policies
- Coastal vulnerability of the built environment
- Climate change and sea level rise
- **Historic significance**
- Cultural significance



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)





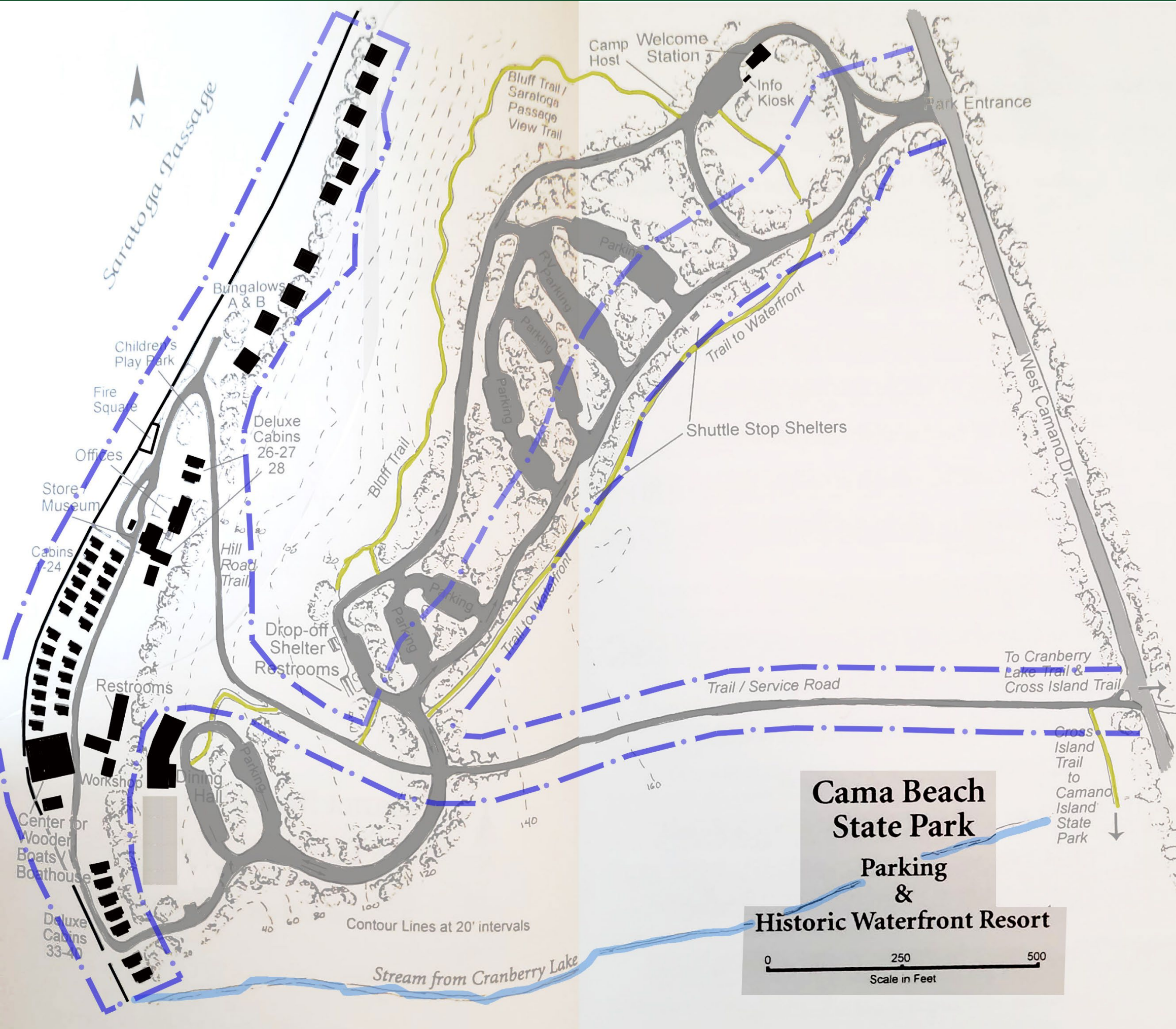
# Two landscapes on National Register of Historic Places

## Pre contact site:

- 13 acres
- **Period of Significance 2,000 years**
- Areas of Significance:
  - Archaeology
  - Ethnic heritage

## Cama Beach Resort:

- 38 acres
- **Period of Significance: 1932-1953**
- Areas of Significance:
  - Entertainment/Recreation
  - Architecture
  - Landscape architecture







# Precontact Site







# Historic resort



Cama Beach Resort circa 1930s



Contemporary photograph of Cama Beach cabins







# Analysis of two separate properties on the National Register of Historic Places

- ✓ Competing interests
- ✓ Robust laws meant to protect human remains
- ✓ National Register offers guidelines on how to treat historic properties, but are not laws







- State Parks Mission
- Laws and Governor directives
- Commission policies
- Coastal vulnerability of the built environment
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Historic significance
- **Cultural significance**



[soundwaterstewards.org](http://soundwaterstewards.org)





# Cultural significance







6

## Requested action of the Commission





# Ultimately, we must balance:

Impacts to  
pre-  
contact  
site

Climate  
change

Public  
access

Good use  
of public  
dollars







# Staff Recommendation

- **Staff recommends against the Commission taking an action to reopen the cabins where they currently sit.**
- **Instead, staff proposes to continue planning the future of Cama Beach State Park**
- **New opportunities for overnight experiences will be analyzed to determine their feasibility**







## Requested Action of the Commission:

***Direct staff to continue with a planning process that will determine the future of the park, including the potential for relocating existing cabins or providing other overnight accommodations, without reopening the cabins at their current location.***





# Questions?

