

# SEPA Non-project Review Form

## PART I - FRAMEWORK

### 1) Background

a) Name of proposal, if any, and brief description.

Proposal to adopt the findings of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Recreation Drive Trail in order to finalize and adopt the Classification and Management Plan (CAMP) for Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park (Ginkgo).

The EIS will analyze environmental impacts, recreational impacts, and management options associated with the CAMP for Recreation Drive Trail within the northern portion of the park.

b) Agency and contact name, address, telephone, fax, email

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Chelsea Harris, Environmental Planner

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East Wenatchee, WA 98802

[Chelsea.harris@parks.wa.gov](mailto:Chelsea.harris@parks.wa.gov)

c) If the agency and contact persons have separate addresses and phone numbers, it is useful to provide both.

See above.

d) Designated responsible official

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Hannah Ross, Environmental Planner

PO Box 42650

Olympia, WA 98504-2650

[Hannah.ross@parks.wa.gov](mailto:Hannah.ross@parks.wa.gov)

e) Describe the planning process schedule/timeline

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) is conducting simultaneous processes for the adoption of the CAMP and the review of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The four stage CAMP process began in 2021. During the early stages of this process, State Parks recognized the need for additional analysis through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) associated with the area of

Recreation Drive Trail. Parks solicited comments from stakeholders and members of the public during stages one and two of the CAMP process.

The CAMP-EIS planning process was paused in late 2021 due to State Parks staffing changes. State Parks will reengage with partners, stakeholders, and members of the public during 2024 to present the alternatives under consideration, and will hold public meetings to receive comments prior to the selection of the recommended alternative.

CAMP Stage 1 – Identify issues and concerns	2019-2021
CAMP Stage 2 – Explore alternative approaches	2022-2023
CAMP Stage 3 – Prepare preliminary recommendations	2023-2025
CAMP Stage 4 – Propose final recommendations	2025

f) Location - Describe the jurisdiction or area where the proposal is applicable. (Attach a map(s) if appropriate)

Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park (Ginkgo) is located just outside of Vantage, Washington and extends both north and south of Interstate 90 along the west bank of the Columbia River. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the park, and Figure 1-2 shows the land within the park that will be affected by this proposal.

This proposal will apply to “Recreation Drive Trail” and 150 feet on either side of its approximate centerline, as shown in Figure 1-2. Recreation Drive Trail is a gated, unpaved route extending north from Recreation Drive, connecting to adjacent land north and west of the park which is owned by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The Kittitas County GIS server shows that the portion of Recreation Drive between the State Park entrance and the trailhead is a non-County road, owned by Ginkgo.

g) What is the legal authority for the proposal?

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 352) details the authorization and policy goals of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC). The WAC also sets the administrative procedures approved by the legislature to create plans and perform actions to achieve those goals. Portions of the code most relevant to this action are included below. These portions of the code provide the authority to classify areas within State Parks, to regulate motorized vehicles and non-motorized vehicles on State Parks Lands.

**i. Authority to Classify Areas within State Parks to Priority Specific Policy Goals**

Chapter 352-16 [WAC](#) allows the Commission to name and classify state park areas so that particular parks, or locations within a park, can be designated to prioritize types of park use or protection of park resources. This allows, for example, recreation to be prioritized in some locations, while protection of cultural resources is prioritized in other locations. The administrative code details what types of uses or resource protections should be considered in the classification, as excerpted below.

[WAC 352-16-020](#) *Land Classification System:*

State parks are of statewide natural, cultural, and/or recreational significance and/or outstanding scenic beauty. They provide varied recreational facilities serving low, medium, and high intensity outdoor recreation activities, areas reserved for preservation, scientific research, education, public assembly, environmental interpretation, and support facilities. They may be classified in whole or in part as follows:

- (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 recreational 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.
- (5) Natural forest areas are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural forest processes while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses, and which contain:
  - (a) Old-growth forest communities that have developed for one hundred fifty years or longer and have the following structural characteristics: Large old-growth trees, large snags, large logs on land, and large logs in streams; or
  - (b) Mature forest communities that have developed for ninety years or longer; or
  - (c) Unusual forest communities and/or interrelated vegetative communities of significant ecological value.
- (6) Natural area preserves are designated for preservation of rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical or similar features of scientific or educational value and which are registered and committed as a natural area preserve through a cooperative agreement with an appropriate natural resource agency pursuant to chapter 79.70 RCW and chapter 332-60 WAC.

## **ii. Authority to Regulate Vehicle Usage**

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) provides the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) the authority to regulate the use of motorized and non-motorized vehicle use of roads and trails in State Parks, as excerpted below.

*WAC 352-20-020 - Motor vehicles on roads and trails.*

- (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle on a trail in any state park area unless such trail has been specifically designated and posted for such use.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, no person shall operate a motor vehicle within the boundaries of a state park area except on roads, streets, highways, parking lots, parking areas, ATV areas or snowmobile trails and areas authorized for such use.

(3) No person shall operate a motor vehicle on any identified winter recreation groomed or ungroomed trail during official winter closures except snowmobiles on authorized snowmobile trails.

(4) Except as provided in WAC [352-20-070](#), any violation of this section is an infraction under chapter [7.84](#) RCW.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter [79A.05](#) RCW. WSR 19-04-075, § 352-20-020, filed 2/1/19, effective 3/4/19. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#) and [43.51.180](#)(7). WSR 92-19-098, § 352-20-020, filed 9/17/92, effective 10/18/92; Order 29, § 352-20-020, filed 1/26/77; Order 9, § 352-20-020, filed 11/24/70; Resolution filed 12/11/67.]

*WAC 352-32-075 - Use of nonmotorized cycles or similar devices.*

(1) Whenever used in this section, nonmotorized cycle or similar device shall mean any wheeled, operator-propelled equipment that transports the operator on land, including cycles, in-line skates and skateboards, but not including wheelchairs or other devices utilized by persons with disabilities.

(2) Operation of nonmotorized cycles or similar devices shall be permitted upon public roads in state park areas.

(3) No operation of nonmotorized cycles or similar devices shall be permitted on trails in any state park area, except where designated and posted to specifically or conditionally permit such activity, or as specified in (b) of this subsection.

(a) The director or designee may open or close trails to such use. This decision shall include an evaluation of factors including, but not limited to, the degree of conflict with other park users, public safety, and damage to park resources and/or facilities related to these devices. This evaluation shall include a reasonable effort to involve interested trail users of the park in question, including, at a minimum, one public meeting advertised and conducted in the region where the park is located.

(b) No existing trails open to use by nonmotorized cycles or similar devices prior to January 1, 1999, shall be closed to such use without an evaluation of use suitability following the criteria and process of (a) of this subsection; except for temporary closures by the park manager due to emergency health, safety, or resource protection considerations.

(4) No operation of nonmotorized cycles or similar devices shall be permitted off trails in any state park area, except where authorized by the commission and posted to specifically or conditionally permit such activity.

(5) Use of nonmotorized cycles or similar devices is prohibited in the following state park areas:

(a) Within designated natural areas, natural forest areas, or natural area preserves: Provided, that relocation of existing nonmotorized trails into natural areas or natural forest areas may be permitted upon a finding by the director or designee that such relocation is for the purpose of reducing overall resource impacts to a state park area.

(b) Upon designated special use trails such as interpretive or exercise trails.

(c) Upon docks, piers, floats, and connecting ramps.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [79A.05.030](#), [79A.05.035](#), [79A.05.055](#), and [79A.05.070](#). WSR 05-01-069, § 352-32-075, filed 12/9/04, effective 1/9/05. Statutory Authority: Chapter [79A.05](#) RCW, including RCW [79A.05.030](#), [79A.05.035](#), [79A.05.055](#), and [79A.05.070](#). WSR 00-13-070, § 352-32-075, filed

6/16/00, effective 7/17/00. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#), [43.51.045](#), [43.51.050](#), [43.51.060](#)(1), [43.51.061](#) and [43.51.395](#). WSR 99-15-030, § 352-32-075, filed 7/13/99, effective 8/13/99. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#). WSR 98-04-065, § 352-32-075, filed 2/2/98, effective 3/5/98. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#)(1), [43.51.]045, [43.51.]050, [43.51.]060(1), [43.51.]061 and [43.51.]395. WSR 96-01-078, § 352-32-075, filed 12/18/95, effective 1/18/96. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#) and [43.51.180](#)(7). WSR 92-19-098, § 352-32-075, filed 9/17/92, effective 10/18/92. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.51.040](#) and [43.51.060](#). WSR 89-01-034 (Order 108), § 352-32-075, filed 12/13/88.]

- h) Identify any other future non-project actions believed necessary to achieve the objectives of this action.

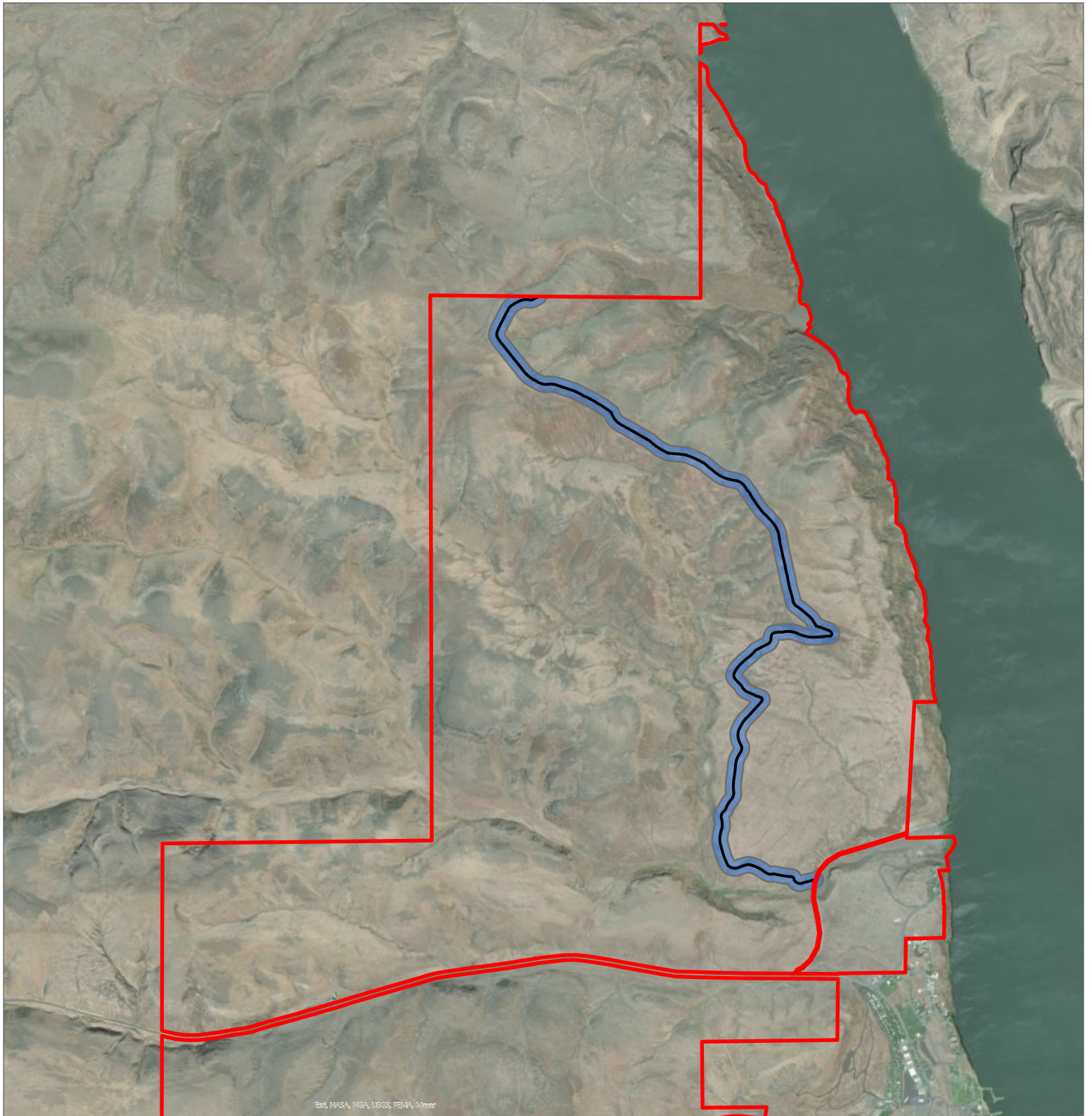
No non-project actions are necessary to achieve the objectives of determining the appropriate classification of Recreation Drive Trail.



Figure 1-1. Location of Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park

Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park  
SEPA Non-Project Review  
Vantage, Washington  
PBS Project 40525.085

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
PO Box 42650  
Olympia, WA 98504-2650



Src: NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Myer

## Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park

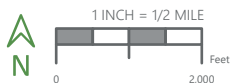
### Recreation Drive Trail

Date: July 2024 | Project: 40525.085

Figure: 1



- Park Boundary
- Recreation Drive Trail
- 150 foot buffer on each side of Recreation Drive Trail



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. Users of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.

## 2) Need and Objectives

- a) Describe the need for the action. (Whenever possible this should identify the broad or fundamental problem or opportunity that is to be addressed, rather than a legislative or other directive.)

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) is directed by the legislature to protect natural, paleontological, and cultural resources that are located on their lands.

Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park is the location of nationally significant “in-place” petrified trees, and provides recreational opportunities for camping, picnicking, guided hikes, an interpretive center, and recreational boating access to the Columbia River. It also includes historical resources that are recognized on the National Register of Historic Places and locations of Native American cultural resources.

In 1965, Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park was designated a National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service. However, due to the misuse and vandalism the very features the park was established to showcase and protect are being degraded and disappearing. Staff must determine how to protect these resources while supporting the overall mission and goals set forth by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Park’s natural and cultural resources can be damaged from both natural phenomena, such as wild fire or landslides, and by human activities, such as ground disturbance from trampling or vehicle traffic, vandalism, or theft. The CAMP-EIS process has been initiated to protect natural and cultural resources while providing recreational and educational experiences for park visitors. Three main areas of impact to Park resources have been identified in recent years, described below.

- During some periods of the Park’s history, “cut-through” motorized vehicle traffic has been permitted, with administrative controls, on Recreation Drive Trail to access Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) land north of the Park. The trail surface is not improved, and deterioration of the tread has made it impassible to all but high-clearance vehicles, which impedes emergency and administrative access to this portion of the Park. The Park needs to reduce or prevent further damage to the tread in order to preserve emergency and administrative access to the northern portion of the park.
- Local recreationists are advocating to allow public motorized use of Recreation Drive Trail to allow cut-through access to WDFW land adjacent to the Park and to provide motorized recreation opportunities within the Park itself. Providing motorized access across park lands to other locations is not a legislative goal or mandate of WSPRC. However, determining the appropriate recreational uses within the boundaries of state park lands is a mandate of WSPRC. The agency needs to determine the potential effects of limiting or allowing certain recreational opportunities via the land classifications process for Recreation Drive Trail.
- The park is experiencing significant damage to geological and natural resources, including the theft of irreplaceable petrified wood, cultural and historical artifacts, vandalism, and destructive off-trail use by vehicles trying to gain unauthorized access to adjoining lands.

- b) Describe the objective(s) of the proposal, including any secondary objectives which may be used to shape or choose among alternatives.



WSPRC's mission statement encapsulates the overall objectives of this proposal. "The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission [WSPRC] 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."

The objective of this proposal is to protect the in-place fossil resources for which the park was established, and the co-occurring cultural (archeological) and biological resources that occur along Recreation Drive Trail, while providing for appropriate visitor recreational and educational use. WSPRC has established specific policies regarding natural and cultural objectives. These are summarized below.

### **73-04-1 Protecting Washington State Parks Natural Resources (as amended September 2021)**

#### ***Recreation***

State Parks has a mission of protecting resources of the system while providing for recreational use by the public. Given the need to balance these goals, State Parks' staff will carefully analyze on a system-wide and / or park specific basis the long-term impacts to natural processes and resources resulting from facilities development, concessionaire practices, and recreational uses. A Commission-approved land classification will be developed for all parks to preserve the integrity of significant natural resources through the identification of appropriate recreation uses and developments.

New developments will seek to minimize the impact of recreational activities to the natural resources of a park. Where existing recreational developments or uses are believed to degrade natural resources of regional or statewide significance, or the overall experience of visitors to a park, the agency will collaborate with recognized authorities in governmental and non-governmental institutions to alleviate the impacts by limiting, removing, relocating, or mitigating the recreational activity. Habitat restoration efforts (including temporary or permanent closures and monitoring for results) and possible changes in land classification will be considered where resource values have been severely threatened or degraded by recreational use.

Guiding references: RCW 79A.05.165, RCW 79A.05.195, RCW 79A.05.335, RCW 79A.05.380, RCW 79A.05.600, RCW 79A.05.700, RCW 79A.05.725, RCW 79A.05.750, chapter 352-16 WAC, chapter 352-20 WAC, chapter 352-32 WAC, chapter 352-37 WAC, chapter 352-68 WAC, chapter 352-75 WAC

Supporting documents: Commission Policies 65-70-1 and 72-99-1, Agency policies 15-16 and 65-3, Procedures 65-701, Directive O-72-11

#### ***Land Classification***

The Commission's 1995 land classification system provides management guidance for appropriate use and development intensities in specific areas of a park and the desired long-term boundary for that park parcel. Areas of a park containing natural resources of regional or statewide significance, unusual and /or sensitive habitats (*e.g.*, bald eagles), or a species of concern should be classified restrictively to allow only low-intensity uses and minor facilities development.

Typically, one of three natural area classifications should be applied to such areas (Natural Areas, Natural Forest Areas, or Natural Area Preserves), although the "Resource Recreation" classification also provides a relatively high degree of resource protection and may offer the best option to address conflicting use issues at a specific site.

Guiding references: RCW 79A.05.305, RCW 79A.05.335, RCW 79A.05.600, RCW 79A.05.700, RCW 79A.05.725, RCW 79A.05.750, chapter 352-16 WAC, chapter 352-28 WAC, WAC 352-32-010, WAC 352-32-095, WAC 352-32-15001

Supporting documents: Commission Policy 72-69-1 (Underwater Marine Parks), Procedure 72-1, Director's 1995 Land Classification and Management Guidelines Matrix.

### ***Interpretation and Education***

State Parks recognizes that an informed public, knowledgeable of natural and cultural resource values and management issues, is well-positioned to assist the agency in the management and protection of its natural resources. The agency will strive to provide interpretive opportunities in all developed parks. Agency staff will work to integrate information on resource management, natural resource issues, and the composition and function of native habitats into interpretive and education programs, printed materials, and electronic media. In addition to informing park visitors, staff will seek to engage and educate neighbors and local officials in issues and approaches to eliminate threats confronting the natural resources of the park and its surrounding landscape.

Guiding references: RCW 79A.05.335, RCW 79A.05.340, RCW 79A.05.345

In addition to the detailed natural and cultural resources policy objectives excerpted above, Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 352-11-665 (1)(b)(iv) describes how Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) should engage with the SEPA process with respect to cultural resources:

“The Commission shall use all practicable means... to the end that the state and its citizens may preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage;”... [Archeological sites]... are non renewable resources. They cannot be replaced if damaged or destroyed. For this reason, their stewardship is an important objective for State Parks.

- c) Identify any assumptions or constraints, including legal mandates, which limit the approach or strategy to be taken in pursuing the objective(s).

Due to the presence of cultural resources on and immediately adjoining Recreation Drive Trail, paving or otherwise improving the tread to ensure continued emergency and administrative access is not under consideration, as such paving or grading would destroy cultural resources on the trail.

- d) If there is no legislative or other mandate that requires a particular approach, describe what approaches could reasonably achieve the objective(s).

Both the CAMP and the SEPA processes (which are being undertaken in unison for this proposal) include the solicitation of input from Tribes, partners, and stakeholders such as park users, neighbors, advocacy groups, and the public at large. This input has been used to develop a range of alternatives that includes varying levels of recreational uses and protective land classifications for Recreation Drive Trail and the park as a whole.

### **3) Environmental Overview**

Describe in broad terms how achieving the objective(s) would direct or encourage physical changes to the environment. Include the type and degree of likely changes such as the likely changes in development and/or infrastructure, or changes to how an area will be managed.

Achieving the objective of protecting the Park's paleontological and cultural resources would likely coincide with reduced erosion and vegetation damage, from reduced on-trail and illicit off-trail vehicle travel compared to recent historical conditions.

Future infrastructure improvements resulting from this proposed classification will focus on appropriate locations in the park such as the campground, river access points, interpretive trails, and visitor center. The park is minimally developed, and would likely remain so in any of the alternatives under consideration, including the no-action alternative.

#### 4) Regulatory Framework

- a) Describe the existing regulatory/planning framework as it may influence or direct the proposal.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's (WSPRC) is following the CAMP and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) regulatory and planning framework.

The CAMP process is described under Chapter 352-16 . The Classification and Management Plan Framework involves designating state park lands as recreation, resource recreation, natural area, heritage area, natural forest area, and natural area preserve Land classification decisions are based on existing site conditions, features, and management strategies.

[RCW 43.21C.030](#) is the statutory authority of the SEPA rules (Chapter 352-11 WAC), which directs that, when setting policies, state agencies use a "systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which may have an impact on the environment." This law and subsequent guidance documents outline the process for identifying and analyzing the relevant interdisciplinary information and likely impacts of policies in order to inform decisions.

- b) Identify any potential impacts from the proposal that have been previously designated as acceptable under the Growth Management Act (GMA), chapter 36.70A RCW.

No impacts regulated by the Growth Management Act are associated with this proposal.

## 5) Related Documentation

- AECOM. 2021. Wildlife Habitat Assessment, Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Kittitas County, Washington. July.
- AECOM. 2019. Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park Vegetation Survey Report, Kittitas County, Washington. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. January.
- Dancey, W.S. 1973. Prehistoric land use and Settlement Patterns in the Priest Rapids area, Washington. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Washington.
- DNR (Washington Department of Natural Resources). 2005. Geologic Map of Washington State. Washington Division of Geology and Earth Resources. Geologic Map GM-53.
- Ecology (Washington Department of Ecology). 2024. Air Quality Monitoring Program.
- Ecology. 2018. State Environmental Policy Act Handbook, 2018 Updates.
- Johnson, Matt. 2018. A Zooarcheological Analysis of Hole-in-the-Wall Canyon (45KT12) and French Rapids (45KT13) Sites: Ginkgo State Park, Washington. Master's Thesis, Central Washington University.
- Karlson, Ryan Charles. 2006. Investigation of Ice Age Flood Geomorphology and Stratigraphy in Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park, Washington: Implications for Park Interpretation. Master's Thesis, Central Washington University.
- Munsell, 1968. The Ryegrass Coulee site. Masters Thesis. University of Washington.
- National Park Service. 2001. Ice Age Flood, Study of Alternatives and Environmental Assessment: Following the Pathways of the Glacial Lake Missoula Floods. February.
- USGS (United States Geological Survey). 2024. Topozone Historical USGS Map Viewer. Available from <https://www.topozone.com/>
- WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2024. Priority Habitat and Species Web Server. Available from <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/phs/>
- WSPRC (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission). 2023a. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park Planning update presentation for Kittitas County PLAC. October 16.
- WSPRC. 2023b. Summary of Alternatives to be Developed for Recreation Drive Trail.
- WSPRC. 2021. Protecting Washington State Parks' Natural Resources, A Comprehensive Natural Resource Management Policy, August 11, 2011. Policy 73-04-1. Revised September 2021.
- WSPRC. 2010. Cultural Resources Management Policy 12-91-1 (amended 11-19-2010)

## 6) Public Involvement (Optional)

- a) Identify agencies with jurisdiction or expertise, affected tribes, and other known stakeholder groups whose input is likely to be specifically solicited in the development of this proposal.

### Federal Agencies:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- National Park Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

### Tribal Offices:

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Wanapum Tribe

### State Agencies:

- Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
Cultural and Historical Resources
- Washington Department of Ecology  
Environmental impacts
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Owns portions of and manages the adjacent Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area Unit
- Washington Department of Natural Resources  
Owns portions of the adjacent Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area Unit
- Washington Department of Transportation  
Adjacent property owner

### Local Governments and Agencies:

- City of Cle Elum
- City of Ellensburg
- City of George
- City of Kittitas
- City of Roslyn
- City of Wenatchee
- Kittitas County
- Grant County Public Utility District

### Stakeholder Groups:

- Adjacent property owners
- Residents of Vantage, WA and nearby areas

- Arid Lands of Washington
- Association for Archeology in Washington
- Audubon Washington
- Back Country Horsemen of Washington
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Washington Chapter
- Ducks Unlimited
- Eastern Washington State Historical Society
- Eastern Washington University Archeology and Historical Services
- Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
- Ice Age Floods Institute
- Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce
- Kittitas County Historical Society
- Kittitas Environmental Education Network
- Kittitas Field and Stream
- Northwest Geological Society
- Northwest Trail Alliance
- Outdoor Alliance Washington
- The Nature Conservancy of Washington
- The Northwest Paleontological Association
- Washington ATV Association
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Native Plant Society
- Washington Off Highway Vehicle Alliance
- Washington State Historical Society
- Washington Trails Association
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition

b) Briefly describe the processes used or expected to be used for soliciting input from those listed. [Examples: ad hoc committees, tribal consultations, interagency meetings, public workshops or hearings, newsletters, etc.]

Tribal consultations for this project began in 2019 at the onset of the CAMP process. Engagement has continued in person and by email updates.

Email and postal notifications of the SEPA action will be sent to the above stakeholders. Organizations and individuals who expressed interest during the CAMP process will be re-notified at this stage in the process. User advocacy groups listed above will be added to the project notification list.

Public meetings and comment solicitations have been held in Kittitas County and additional meetings are planned beginning in 2024.

State, national, and local agencies with known or potential interest in the project have been or will be notified by State Park officials as the SEPA analysis continues.

Information on the Action will be posted on the State Parks website with a link to provide inputs.

Signage will be installed at the trail gate and Park visitor center with information on the project and links to provide comment and obtain additional information.



## PART II – IMPACT ANALYSIS AND ALTERNATIVES

### 7) Affected Environment

Generally describe the existing environmental landscapes or elements (e.g., character and quality of ecosystem, existing trends, infrastructure, service levels, etc.) likely to be affected if the proposal is implemented. Include a description of the existing built and natural environment where future “on the ground” activities would occur that would be influenced by the nonproject proposal.

**Note:** When complete, this section needs to provide information on existing conditions for the elements of the environment discussed in sections 8 and 9. A list of the built and natural elements of the environment is in WAC 197-11-444, and is included at the end of this form.

⇒ The response to this question will vary depending on both the nature of the anticipated nonproject action and the jurisdictional constraints. For example, a nonproject action covering all contaminated sites should broadly describe whether or not most or many sites are in urban areas, near water bodies, in industrially developed areas, etc. A nonproject action for a one hundred-acre rezone will contain considerably greater detail to the degree that the reader can visualize the area.

The following should be included, as appropriate:

- Primary physical features
- Development level and infrastructure
- Percent impervious surfaces (approximate)
- Unique features, including historic and cultural sites, potential or existing critical areas, resource lands
- Endangered or threatened species in or near the area

Recreation Drive Trail is a gated, unsurfaced trail that spans approximately 4 miles from Vantage Highway at its southern end to the north boundary of the Park. It was constructed sometime between 1927 and 1939 (USGS 2024).

The trail bed was graded in some locations during its establishment but has not been graveled or paved. The ground is naturally impermeable where bedrock is near or at the surface and consists of soft sand and silt in other portions.

There is no impermeable pavement. The trail is gated at both ends but is otherwise without above-ground structures or drainage features.



Photo 1: Gate and trailhead at the southern end of Recreation Drive Trail



Photo 2. Grading and stony surface of Recreation Drive Trail, overlooking the Visitor Center and Columbia River.



Photo 3. Sandy silt portion of Recreation Drive Trail with a puddle in the low spot. View is toward the south.

The park habitats consist of open sagebrush and grasslands with variations due to topography and historical land uses (AECOM 2021).

There are significant cultural features located within the project area, such as archaeological evidence of stone tool making within the prism of Recreation Drive Trail (Munsell 1968), as well as populations of plants traditionally managed and harvested by tribes. Some, but not all, of these sites have been surveyed and recorded with the Washington Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation (DAHP). Cultural resource site information is protected from public disclosure and therefore not detailed in this document.

Unique natural features are also visible from the project area. Glacial erratic boulders can be viewed from the first 1.5 miles of the route (Karlsen 2006). The Park is part of the Washington Ice Age Floods Trail, and these boulders allow visitors to visualize the extreme depths of flooding that occurred at the end of the most recent ice age.

In 1965, the Park was designated as the Ginkgo Petrified Forest National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service. It is internationally known for in-situ petrified wood that includes rare species no longer found naturally in North America.

Washington Priority Habitats are designated Critical Areas in Kittitas County. The following Priority Habitats coincide with Recreation Drive Trail (WDFW 2024):

- Cayuse Creek deer winter range concentration area
- Quilomene elk winter range
- Quilomene deer winter range
- Kittitas County Shrubsteppe
- Columbia Plateau Regional Biodiversity Area

The following endangered or threatened species have been identified in the Park and may occur in or immediately adjacent to the project area (AECOM 2021).

**Table 7-1. Special Status Species Found in or near the Park.**

Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status	Federal Status	Identified in Park
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	Endangered	This population delisted	Yes
Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>	Candidate	Threatened	No
Washington Ground Squirrel	<i>Urocitellus washingtoni</i>	Candidate	Not listed	No
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Endangered	Threatened	No
Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Candidate	Threatened	Yes
Monarch Butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Candidate	Candidate	No
Striped Whipsnake	<i>Masticophis taeniatus</i>	Candidate	Not listed	Yes
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	Threatened	Not listed	Yes
Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Sensitive	Not listed	Yes
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Endangered	Not listed	Yes
Greater sage-grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	Threatened	Not listed	no
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Candidate	Not listed	yes
Sage Thrasher	<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>	Candidate	Not listed	yes
Sagebrush Sparrow	<i>Artemisiospiza nevadensis</i>	Candidate	Not listed	yes
<b>Plant Species</b>				
Snowball Cactus	<i>Pediocactus nigrispinus</i>	Sensitive (S2)	Not listed	Yes
Gray Stickweed	<i>Hackelia cinerea</i>	Sensitive (S1)	Not listed	Yes

## 8) Key Issue Assessment

List the identified key issues or areas of controversy or concern and include a brief statement of why each is a key issue. For each item listed:

- a) Identify alternative options or solutions for the objective or concern.
- b) Describe the environmental and cultural considerations/impacts relevant to each of the alternatives identified in 8.a.
- c) Describe reasonable mitigation measures for the adverse impacts identified
- d) Identify those alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis.
- e) Briefly describe why those alternatives rejected from further consideration were not carried forward.

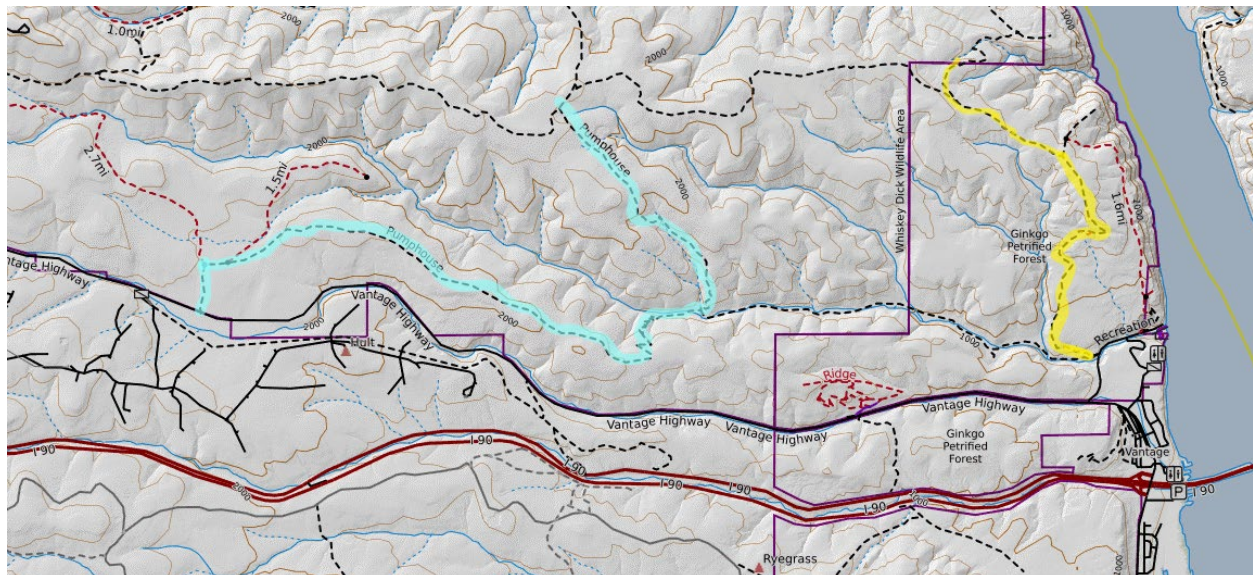
⇒ Key issues are those issues where the solution may limit the range of alternatives or commit the agency to take a particular direction, and that could have an adverse impact on the environment.

**Key Issue 1.** Nearby residents and local governments have requested that increased motorized use of Recreation Drive Trail be allowed so that:

- Hunters may access adjoining Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife land to the north of the State Park.
- Recreationists not physically able to walk for longer distances would be able to sightsee in this portion of the State Park.

Ginkgo State Park is mandated by the Washington legislature to protect cultural and paleontological resources in the track of and immediately adjoining Recreation Drive Trail.

The nearest access route to adjoining WDFW land that does not involve a cut-through on the Recreation Drive Trail is Pumphouse Road, located approximately 7.2 miles west of Vantage. Figure 8-1 shows the location of this road with respect to Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park.



**Figure 8-1** Recreation Drive Trail shown in yellow, with Pumphouse Road access to WDFW shown in blue.

Section 9, below, discusses the alternatives that have been developed in response to this key issue. Potential impacts of each alternative, mitigation, costs, and public interest are summarized. No alternatives have yet been eliminated from consideration. A preferred alternative or range of alternatives has not yet been identified to carry forward to recommendation for the Parks Commission.

Analysis of impacts and mitigation measures will be fully developed in a planned SEPA Environmental Impact Assessment for this project.

## 9) Proposed Nonproject Action or Alternative Actions

Describe a range of reasonable alternatives or the preferred alternative that will meet the objective(s). For each alternative, answer the following questions, referring again to the list of the elements of the environment in WAC 197-11-444:

If this alternative were fully implemented (including full build-out development, redevelopment, changes in land use, density of uses, management practices, etc.), describe where and how it would direct or encourage demand on or changes within elements of the human or built environment, as well as the likely effects on the natural environment. Identify where the change or affect or increased demand constitutes a likely adverse impact, and describe any further or additional adverse impacts that are likely to occur as a result of those changes and affects.

Examples of likely impacts include:

- Increased need for infrastructure or public services,
- Removal or degradation of native or aquatic vegetation,
- Degradation and theft of cultural resources including archaeological materials and treaty-protected root foods,
- Increased impervious surfaces,
- Limitations to aquifer recharge, and
- Encroachment on riparian corridors, floodway zones, or other setbacks/buffers.

### Alternatives

#### ***Alternative 1. No Action.***

**Trail Corridor Land Classification:** Not Classified

**Allowable Recreation Activities:** Vehicle Access Restrictions Trail limited to administrative, scientific activities, agency issued access permit for properties owners and OPDMD (other power-driven mobility device), hiking, mountain biking, equestrian, No vehicle weight Limit.

**Non-allowable Recreation Activities:** Public motorized access.

**Management needs:** Resource monitoring; traffic counter consistency, fencing replacement, South gate and fencing replacement; placement of Carsonite posts to deter trail widening and off-trail use; call-in phone number for gate access

Under Alternative 1, incremental degradation of cultural and paleontological resources would likely continue at the current rate. Ongoing damage to the track would degrade access to emergency and administrative purposes. Recreational access for visitors unable to walk, cycle, or ride horses would not be possible.

#### ***Alternative 2. Limited Access.***

**Trail Corridor Land Classification:** Natural Area

**Allowable Recreation Activities:** Low intensity; administrative vehicle access only; scientific activities; tribal treaty access; hiking; snowshoeing; mountain biking.

**Non-allowable Recreation Activities:** Public motorized access; equestrian use.

**Management needs:** additional staff required; cultural and natural resources monitoring to support timely adaptive management; adaptive management; traffic counter at each end of trail; fencing replacement; south gate and fencing replacement; trail improvements including signage; robust permitting system.

Under Alternative 2, incremental degradation of cultural and paleontological resources would improve over current rates. Lower levels of damage to the trail would preserve accessibility of the trail to emergency and administrative purposes. Recreational access for visitors unable to walk, or cycle would not be possible. Addition expenses over current conditions would be incurred to support more robust permitting, staff time for monitoring, and the cost of physical improvements such as new signs, traffic counters, fencing, and gates.

***Alternative 3. Permitted Conditional Access.***

**Trail Corridor Land Classification:** Resource Recreation

**Allowable Recreation Activities:** Low-medium intensity permitted vehicle access. Equestrian, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, interpretive; vehicle weight limit.

**Non-allowable Recreation Activities:** Non-permitted access.

**Management needs:** additional staff required; cultural and natural resources surveys and condition monitoring to support timely adaptive management; adaptive management; condition access; traffic counter at each end of trail; fencing replacement; south gate and fencing replacement; trail improvements including signage; robust permitting system; permit fees to fund trail maintenance.

Under Alternative 3, degradation of cultural and paleontological resources would increase over current rates due to treadway maintenance activities. Tread maintenance would improve the accessibility of the trail to emergency and administrative purposes. A wider variety of recreationists would be able to use the trail. Overall use of the corridor could increase, which could lead to damage to adjoining natural areas and potential conflict between types of users. However, the introduction of use fees to support tread maintenance could deter potential users. Additional expenses over current conditions would be incurred to support more robust permitting, staff time for monitoring, enforcement costs, and the cost of physical improvements such as new signs, traffic counters, fencing, and gates.

***Alternative 4. Seasonal Access.***

**Trail Corridor Land Classification:** Resource Recreation

**Allowable Recreation Activities:** Medium-high intensity; limited OHV and vehicle access; through-access to WFWS land for hunting; scientific, administrative, permitted property owners, OPDMD, equestrian, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, interpretive; vehicle weight Limit.

**Non-allowable Recreation Activities:** Vehicle access outside of open season.

**Management needs:** additional staff required; cultural and natural resources survey and monitoring to support timely adaptive management; adaptive management; traffic counter at each end of trail; fencing replacement; south gate and fencing replacement; trail improvements including signage; robust permitting system; new WAC for enforcement; dynamic annual planning based on needs.



Under Alternative 4, incremental degradation of cultural and paleontological resources would likely increase over current rates and relative to Alternatives 1-3. Increased motorized use of the trail would further impact trail accessibility to emergency vehicles and for administrative purposes. Recreational access for visitors unable to walk, or cycle would be possible during hunting seasons. Additional expenses over current conditions would be incurred to support more robust permitting, staff time for monitoring, and the cost of physical improvements such as new signs, traffic counters, fencing, and gates.

- a) Identify potential mitigation measures for the adverse impacts identified in 9.a and describe how effective the mitigation is assumed to be, any adverse impacts that could result from the use of the mitigation, and any conflict or concern related to the proposal objectives and/or key issues identified.

Adverse impacts identified center on damage to non-renewable cultural and fossil resources that are located in and near the Recreation Drive Trail corridor to be classified under this proposal, and the potential to degrade the trail to the point that emergency or administrative vehicles can no longer access this portion of the State Park. Damage to cultural artifacts and fossils cannot be mitigated once it occurs; these resources are non-renewable. Tread improvements or maintenance such as re-grading can mitigate the impacts of increased motor vehicle use to the accessibility of the trail to emergency vehicles. However, grading or paving has the potential to increase impacts to the non-renewable cultural and natural resources located on the trail.

- b) Identify unavoidable impacts and those that will be left to be addressed at the project level.

Any use of the Recreation Drive Trail incurs some small impacts to cultural or natural resources located on its surface. The rate or amount of impact may be increased or lessened depending on the final alternative selected.

Providing a range of recreational access is an important part of the mission of State Parks. Increasing the protection levels for natural and cultural resources would restrict the types of recreational use available in this section of the park.

Deliberate theft or vandalism of the natural and cultural resources on and near the trail has been an ongoing problem; as has off-trail cross-country travel by motor bikes and OHV drivers. These impacts cannot be entirely prevented or mitigated by administrative land classifications. Addressing these issues effectively will depend upon increased staffing, structural improvements at each end of the trail, and increased signage and awareness of the regulations covering trail use. Specific strategies to mitigate these problems will be left to be addressed at the project level.

- c) Describe how the proposal objectives will or will not be met if the impacts described in 9.c were to occur.

Balancing goals such as recreational access and protection of park resources is the purpose of the CAMP process. This proposal will allow the park to fully consider how these objectives may best be met on Recreation Drive Trail. Ginkgo State Park is large and provides a variety of recreational opportunities including developed camping, river access, primitive trails, paved roadways, and interpretive exhibits. The Park also includes a mosaic of natural habitats with special status species; specific locations of historical and cultural importance, and irreplaceable fossils that are unique in the nation. Overall goals of resource protection and recreational access may be balanced by instituting differing levels of access and protection in specific areas of the park.

**Note:** Alternatives may be rejected at any point in the process if: they have no environmental benefit, are not within existing authority, are determined unfeasible, or do not meet the core objectives.

## **PART III – IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS**

### **10) Consistency of the proposal with other plans, policies and laws.**

- a) Internal consistency - If there are internal inconsistencies between this proposal and your agency's previously adopted or ongoing plans and regulations, identify any strategies or ideas for resolving these inconsistencies.

No internal inconsistencies between this proposal and the previously adopted plans and regulations of Washington State Parks Recreation Commission (WSPRC) have been identified.

- b) External consistency - If there are external inconsistencies between this proposal and adopted or ongoing plans and regulations of adjacent jurisdictions and/or other agencies, identify any strategies or ideas for resolving these inconsistencies.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which manages the land north and west of GSP, has identified Recreation Drive Trail as an ingress/egress route from its property in a proposal dated December 2023. No advance notice of this proposal was provided to WSPRC.

## 11) Monitoring and Follow-up

- a) Describe any monitoring that will occur to ensure the impacts were as predicted and that mitigation is effective, including responsible party, timing, and method(s) to be used.

Park Staff live onsite and regularly monitor use of Recreation Drive Trail. Natural Resource and Cultural Resource surveys of the Park are ongoing and updated as staff resources and changing conditions allow. Recently completed Natural and Cultural Resource studies will provide a baseline for conditions to be monitored in the future.

- b) Identify any plans or strategies for updating this proposed action based on deviation from impact projections or other criteria.

No specific plans or strategies for updating this action have yet been proposed.

## **WAC 197-11-444, Elements of the Environment**

### **Natural Environment**

#### **a. Earth**

Geology; soils; topography; unique physical features; erosion/enlargement of land area

Soils along Recreation Drive Trail vary topographically but all are relatively shallow soil layers overlying rock. Underlying geology consists of tertiary volcanic rocks of the Columbia River Basalt Group (DNR 2005). Topography in the area comprises rolling hills. The route of Recreation Drive Trail generally follows the high ground of one such north-south trending hill. The Columbia River is located to the east of this ridge and there are unique cliffside habitats there.

The underlying topographic land surface is relatively stable, but erosion of soil and rock from the surface of the trail has been an ongoing issue which has been accelerated in locations that were recently impacted by wildfire.

#### **b. Air**

Air quality; odor; climate

Recreation Drive Trail is located in an open, sparsely populated region of central Washington. Air quality is generally good (Ecology 2024). The area experiences hot dry summers and relatively cold and dry winters.

#### **c. Water**

Surface water movement/quantity/quality; runoff/absorption; floods

No permanent surface water is found along the route, which sticks to high ground in a relatively dry region. Flooded ground is not typical. Occasional strong spring or wet winter storms may cause runoff, but the lack of observed erosion gullies suggests that most precipitation is readily absorbed.

#### **d. Plants and animals**

Habitat for and numbers or diversity of species of plants, fish, or other wildlife; unique species; fish or wildlife migration routes

A 2021 habitat assessment of the Park (AECOM 2021) identified the following habitat types traversed by Recreation Drive Trail, listed from most to least prevalent:

- Weed-dominated
- Stiff sagebrush/sparse/cheatgrass
- Big sagebrush/native grasslands
- Stiff sagebrush / lithosol
- Native grasslands

#### **e. Energy and natural resources**

Amount required/rate of use/efficiency; source/availability; nonrenewable resources; conservation and renewable resources; scenic resources

No lighting or heating facilities are present along Recreation Drive Trail, and none are proposed under any of the alternatives.

Non-renewable resources that may be impacted by the proposal include significant cultural resources and paleontological resources. Both are present on or immediately adjacent to Recreation Drive Trail and cannot be renewed or replaced if damaged or removed.

No proposed alternative is likely to impact the scenic resources of the area.

## **Built Environment**

### **a. Environmental health**

Noise; risk of explosion; releases or potential releases to the environment affecting public health

No environmental health concerns relating to noise, risk of explosions, or potential releases to the environment affecting public health have been identified in the area.

### **b. Land and shoreline use**

Relationship to existing land use plans and to estimated population; housing; light and glare; aesthetics; agricultural crops

Creating a CAMP for Recreation Drive Trail is in keeping with existing State Parks land management regulations and plans. No impacts from or to population size, housing, light and glare, aesthetics, or agricultural crops are anticipated.

### **c. Transportation**

Transportation systems; vehicular traffic; waterborne, rail, and air traffic; parking; movement/circulation of people and goods; traffic hazards

The proposed action would formalize the types and frequency of traffic permitted on Recreation Drive Trail. No impacts to waterborne, rail or air traffic would occur. Currently there is limited parking at the entrance gate to Recreation Drive Trail, and no parking along the route.

Alternatives that increase vehicle access on Recreation Drive Trail would increase traffic hazards as the track is narrow and does not allow for passing or crossing vehicles. Alternatives that reduce vehicle access on Recreation Drive Trail would likely result in increased vehicle use of Pumphouse Road to the west, or may reduce overall trips to the area by hunters or recreationists who wish to use Recreation Drive Trail.

### **d. Public services and utilities**

Fire; police; schools; parks and other recreational facilities; maintenance; communications; water/storm water; sewer/solid waste; other governmental services or utilities.

Public services such as police, schools, communications, water, and sewer are not present along Recreation Drive Trail and do not use it. None of the proposed alternatives would impact these services.

Recreation Drive Trail is an important access route for fire responders. The sagebrush and grassland ecosystem of the region experiences wildfire regularly. Having a passable entry route for equipment and fire response personnel during fire emergencies is an important safeguard for park visitors, infrastructure, and surrounding public and private lands.