# Mount Spokane State Park

**Master Plan** 

# Draft Preferred Alternative

# **Table of Contents**

| Oraft Preferred Alternative                  |    |
|--|----|
|  |    |
| Purpose                                      |    |
| Community Engagement Summary                 | 3  |
| Draft Preferred Alternative Introduction     | 4  |
| Preferred Alternative Vision                 | 4  |
| Preferred Alternative Project List & Phasing | 6  |
| Phase 1                                      | g  |
| Phase 2                                      | 10 |
| Phase 3                                      | 11 |
| Summit Road                                  | 12 |
| Appendix                                     | 13 |
| Projects Eliminated in Preferred Alternative | 13 |
| Maps   | 14 |
|  |    |

### **Draft Preferred Alternative**

### Purpose

The Mount Spokane State Park Master Plan was initiated by the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission ("Washington State Parks") in Spring 2024 to update the park's long-term (20-year) vision, including its long-term boundary, land classifications, and recommended project actions, including facility and trail enhancements. Much of the park's planning efforts over the past 30 years have occurred with a singular focus rather than a comprehensive approach. This project will combine these discrete actions/efforts into a unified, comprehensive plan ("Master Plan") and integrate the Classification and Management Plan ("CAMP"), the Trail Plan, and the Master Facilities Plan into one document. The Draft Preferred Alternative ("Preferred Alternative") follows several previous reports documenting the process towards the development of and soliciting input for the Mount Spokane State Park Master Plan, including:

- Alternatives Stage Public Input Summary (August 2025)
- Alternatives Report (May 2025)
- Workshop Summary Notes (October 2024)
- Community Event Comments (June 2024)

These reports and more can be found on the Future Planning for Mount Spokane webpage.

## Community Engagement Summary

The Preferred Alternative is a culmination of earlier steps in the planning process including the first public open house held in June of 2024 to learn from the community and other interested parties what characteristics they love about the park (and want to see change) versus characteristics they want to see changed. In September 2024, a planning workshop was held with over 30 community members representing different park interests and entities to consider the June 2024 input, park-specific contextual information, and identify various project actions to be further considered.

Out of that workshop, the planning team organized the project actions into two alternative scenarios for the park: "Community Mountain" and "Recreation Destination." "Community Mountain" included projects that collectively preserved many of the park's current characteristics while also considering select investments that could be generally characterized as "maintain what you have." "Recreation Destination" included projects that collectively expanded recreational opportunities within the park that could be generally

characterized as a "go big" approach. An open house was held in June 2025 to solicit feedback and the two alternative visions as well as individual project actions. As a companion to the open house, a separate online survey was sent to the project's distribution list to seek additional feedback on the future of Bear Creek Lodge.

Along the way, the planning team has worked closely with Washington State Parks staff of various disciplines, held one-on-one meetings and conversations with interested parties, and broadened outreach to included groups not typically engaged or "plugged in" to Mount Spokane State Park. In addition, in coordination with Washington State Parks Tribal Relations Division, the planning team has engaged with applicable Tribes, including the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville to seek input and feedback throughout the various stages of this process.

### **Draft Preferred Alternative Introduction**

As was foreshadowed in the Alternatives Report and at the subsequent public meeting in June 2025, the Preferred Alternative presented here includes a blend of features from both alternatives. In some cases, the Preferred Alternative includes projects regardless of their popularity if they are necessary to successfully support a larger project and/or approach; similarly, some projects are excluded regardless of their ranking if they are contingent on unsupported project actions.

The Preferred Alternative includes and integrates Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park projects, to be generally funded and led by the concessionaire, Mount Spokane 2000 ("MS 2000"). These projects have been determined by the planning team to be consistent and compatible with the Preferred Alternative and Washington State Parks mission.

The projects identified in the Preferred Alternative are conceptual projects proposed by those engaged in this effort. While the planning team has reviewed projects to assess general feasibility (e.g. legal, physical, financial over a 20-year period, etc.), the Preferred Alternative and the projects associated with it will be assessed collectively through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). In addition, Tribal engagement is active and ongoing. Thus, project actions identified herein could ultimately be removed or included with certain conditions to recognize budgetary, environmental, Tribal, and operational inputs and constraints.

### Preferred Alternative Vision

Mount Spokane State Park is well-known as a local destination providing a diversity of beginner and advanced passive and active outdoor recreational experiences. Despite its

proximity to the second largest urban population in Washington State and the abundance of recreational opportunities it affords, the park exhibits a remote and wild character that is cherished by the community. The park retains much of its historic character contributing to a distinct sense of place, but the park is neither historical nor intended to be a relic frozen in time. While the addition of some limited overnight accommodations is identified in the Preferred Alternative, it should be noted that Riverside State Park is seen as the "other half" of Mount Spokane State Park: its proximity to the park allows Washington State Parks to consider and provide complementary facilities and programming serving the same community. The park thus continues its focus as a day-use "trails park."

Speaking of trails, while several new trails are envisioned in the Preferred Alternative, these trail projects generally fall into two categories: improving functionality of the trail system and addressing accessibility. Complete with signage upgrades and select trailhead parking improvements, the Preferred Alternative envisions a trail system that actively creates the opportunity for positive trail experiences to first time visitors and seasoned park veterans alike.

Creating the opportunity for positive park experiences starts with the park entrance. The Preferred Alternative envisions a new park entrance that welcomes visitors more clearly and is anchored by a new visitor center to serve as a hub for park information and visitor interaction with park staff. The Bear Creek Lodge site would be reconfigured to serve as a park gateway and day use area complete with improvements that support a family-friendly passive snow play area (replacing the current tubing hill), parking improvements, and other features that support current and future park programming.

Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park's envisioned improvements and operations will complement and be consistent with the park, providing the family-friendly, low-key community-ski-hill-feel that many locals have come to love. A "Keeping up with the Joneses" long-term strategy isn't an option for this operation given its context within a state park, the non-profit status of the concessionaire, and absence of resources typically available to for-profit operations to fund and finance operations and capital improvements, including real estate and other revenue generating activities. Washington State Parks' goal through this Preferred Alternative is to facilitate improvements that support a sustainable operation into the future.

Maintaining the "remote and wild" character loved by the community includes retaining much of the park in a primitive state. In doing so, the Preferred Alternative utilizes a combination of land classifications and long-term boundary project actions. More restrictive land classification adjustments are prescribed in the Preferred Alternative where

ecological values are high and recreational use is limited and not foreseen. Long-term boundary adjustments are focused on positioning Washington State Parks to act on willing seller opportunities to preserve existing recreational uses that occur outside of the current park boundary through private landowner agreements. In additional to these select long-term boundary expansions, the Preferred Alternative envisions a broader "conservation buffer" that expresses Washington State Parks support for regional conservation efforts that collectively help preserve the park's connection to wildlife corridors to support the park's significant biodiversity.

Lastly, the Preferred Alternative recognizes that changing climate may mean a shorter winter recreation season with less predictable snow lower on the mountain, longer shoulder seasons, and a summer season that may peak and fade sooner as hot temperatures reduce visitation. As such, project actions generally limit winter-only investments lower on the mountain and create the opportunity for additional shoulder season use.

### Preferred Alternative Project List & Phasing

The Preferred Alternative includes a draft project list and recommended phasing strategy (See below) that initially focuses on the lower elevations of the park and then gradually works its way up the mountain. This is by design. The park entrance and site of the Bear Creek Lodge is the main focus of Phase 1. Other Phase 1 projects support this significant investment, including trail system and signage improvements. Selkirk Lodge is the focal point for Phase 2 investments and Phase 2 trail system improvements support that facility. Phase 3 focuses on Bald Knob with Phase 3 trail system improvements higher on the mountain to support that investment.

The Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park investments generally don't align with the above strategy and instead mirror a combination of the concessionaire's ("MS2000") priorities as well as community feedback. It's envisioned that these investments will be further scoped and coordinated with Washington State Parks and consistent with the Concession Agreement. These improvements would likely be self-funded by MS2000 outside of the Washington State Parks Capital Budget process.

This phasing strategy includes four project implementation phases including the "0" phase. These are grouped by Phase and color and represent different timeframes. The "0" Phase projects are land classification and long-term boundary actions which will be acted upon together at the time the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission approves the final master plan, anticipated in 2026. Each phase is envisioned to be approximately three biennia or six years with overlap anticipated (e.g. funding obtained Phase 1 could result in

construction work occurring in Phase 2). Projections for project actions farther out in the future are more difficult to predict and are subject to change based on funding, how and when other projects are implemented and agency capacity.

Note: The cost estimates included in the table below were developed by the planning team and should be construed as "ballpark" figures subject to change.



| Proposed Action   | Phase | Program  | Cost Estimate |
|---|-------|----------|---------------|
| Expand LTB to include portion of Nordic Ski Area currently outside of the LTB   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Expand Recreation around Bear Creek Lodge   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Designate a "conservation buffer" around Mount Spokane State Park   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Resource Recreation to Natural Area to match inventoried meadow on Horse Mountain  | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Expand LTB to include entirety of Bear Creek Lodge acquired in 2023   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Retain current inholdings (Riley Creek, Camp Fosseen, and Mountaineers properties in LTB) and prioritize their acquisition  | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Resource Recreation designations to Natural Forest Area designations to better align with Ecological Integrity Assessment Data   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Designate LTB-5 properties as Resource Recreation   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Designate Conservation Buffer   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change select LTB-2 properties from Natural Forest to Resource Recreation   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Clarify and clearly define Heritage designation around CCC Heritage Area  | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Recreation designation south of Lodge 1 and east of Trail 130 to Resource Recreation   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Natural Forest Area to Resource Recreation near Trail 140 / Trail 110 to allow realignment flexibility.  | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Recreation designation currently applied on West Summit Meadows to Natural Area.   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Revise "Exchange Only" designated properties for acquisition and surplus designations in NE corner of park and include in the LTB boundary without conditions. Remove any reference to "surplus." | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Surplus 40-acre Elk parcel  | 0     | Planning | N/A           |
| Change Riley Creek Inholding west of Trail 170 from Resource Recreation to Natural Forest   | 0     | Planning | N/A           |

### Phase 1

| Proposed<br>Action   | Phase | Program          | Project Description   | Cost<br>Estimate |
|--|-------|------------------|---|------------------|
| Bear Creek Lodge Demolition, Gateway, and Visitor Center Development | 1     | Capital          | 1. Demolish Bear Creek Lodge & salvage select material to incorporate into new gateway & visitor center. Demolish garage w/ living unit above. Eliminate former campground.  2. Develop new park gateway features, including park entrance sign / monument, lighting, and associated landscaping improvements; include parking reconfiguration.  3. Upgrade utilities for services to new gateway / visitor center, including water, sewer and electrical.  4. Develop new visitor center (~4,000 ft2) to include front desk/lobby, small park store, interpretive space, and park office. Site improvements could include outdoor spaces for programs and group use (e.g. shelter, hardscaping).  5. Convert tubing hill to active snow play area. Consider associated improvements to support family use including shelter with electrical (for ceiling heating units), pedestrian bridge replacement, and other related site improvements.  6. Develop new ABA/family trail loop with interpretive elements outside of visitor center.  Note: Bear Creek Lodge site has served as a staging area for snowmobiling. In the Preferred Alternative, the staging area would be eliminated, shifting snowmobile access/staging to Lower Selkirk Trailhead where the higher elevation will provide more predictable and consistent snowpack. | \$4,000,000      |
| Develop a Forest<br>Health Strategy                                  | 1     | Stewardship      | Focus on the SW portion of the park, park boundary lands and areas of high public use.  | \$150,000        |
| Develop an emergency evacuation plan                                 | 1     | Operations       | Signage should potentially mark each evacuation route; coordination with other emergency responders.  | N/A              |
| Demolish and remove existing maintenance shop.                       | 1     | Capital          | Demolish and remove existing maintenance shop and complete riparian and habitat restoration work.   | \$1,332,000      |
| Phase 1 MS 2000<br>Package   | 1     | MS2000 / Capital | <ol> <li>Replace Vista Cruiser Chairlift with modern chairlift that allows for limited summer operation, pedestrian only (subject to Concession Agreement update).</li> <li>Develop water storage capacity near Lodge 2. This project could include construction of appurtenant facilities (electrical service, service road) and be dependent on water right being obtained from Department of Ecology.</li> </ol>   | \$3,500,000      |

| Proposed<br>Action                              | Phase | Program                                    | Project Description   | Cost<br>Estimate |
|---|-------|--|---|------------------|
| Phase 1 Trails<br>Package                       | 1     | Trails /<br>Operations                     | 1. Develop a new, bi-directional mountain biking-only trail generally parallel to the park road from Entrance Trailhead to Lower Selkirk Trailhead. (Professionally built)  2. Develop a new multi-use trail on the northside of park road between Bear Creek Lodge and Entrance Trailhead the connects the lodge, Trail 140, Trail 110, and Entrance Trailhead.  3. Realign Lower 140 Trail to encourage safe, multi-use while also considering MTB needs. | \$175,000        |
| Phase 1<br>Wayfinding<br>Enhancement<br>Package | 1     | Communications<br>/ Operations /<br>Trails | <ol> <li>MS2000 Entrance &amp; Road Signage (MS2000)</li> <li>Add clear signage at each trailhead identifying the trailhead name and design to be seen clearly from the road.</li> <li>New park gateway signage (See Bear Creek project package)</li> </ol>   | \$95,000         |

### Phase 2

| Proposed Action                           | Phase | Program                 | Project Description  | Cost<br>Estimate |
|---|-------|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| Modernization & Enhancement Selkirk Lodge | 2     | Capital                 | <ol> <li>Modernize electrical, renovate restrooms, expand foot print to include classroom space for facilitating lessons and events. Accessibility improvements.</li> <li>Expand and enhance parking.</li> <li>Integrate new interpretive elements in and around lodge.</li> </ol>                 | \$975,000        |
| Develop Day Road<br>Trailhead             | 2     | Capital /<br>Operations | This trailhead would provide increased capacity for access to the newly constructed Trail 182 and Day Road. Due to topographical constraints, this trailhead may only be able to accommodate passenger vehicles only (i.e. no horse trailers).   | \$575,000        |
| Phase 2 MS 2000<br>Package                | 2     | MS2000 / Capital        | <ol> <li>Expand parking capacity for Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park.</li> <li>Replace Parkway Express Chairlift w/ non-summer operable lift.</li> <li>Expand Learning Area &amp; Terrain (MS2000)</li> <li>Remodel and expand Lodge 2 to include new indoor spaces and facilities</li> </ol> | \$5,500,000      |

| Proposed Action                              | Phase | Program                                    | Project Description   | Cost<br>Estimate |
|--|-------|--|---|------------------|
| Phase 2 Trails<br>Package                    | 2     | Trails /<br>Operations                     | <ol> <li>Develop a new, multi-use trail through / around Linder Ridge (Lower Selkirk Trailhead to Quartz Peak / Horse Mountain).</li> <li>Develop a sustainable trail to Horse Mountain that mitigates impacts to meadow community.</li> <li>Realign Trail 100 East.</li> </ol>   | \$235,000        |
| Phase 2 Wayfinding<br>Enhancement<br>Package | 2     | Communications<br>/ Operations /<br>Trails | 1. Update and upgrade kiosks to include more information about trail experiences and potentially customize zoom extent to include areas together (e.g. Bald Knob and CCC Heritage Area) as one "unit."  2. Add enhanced trail information at trailheads, including accessibility info, grades, widths, etc. using HETAP.  3. Create and implement an updated naming convention for trail system. Potentially retain some historic trail numbers or include together with new names. | \$115,000        |

### Phase 3

| Proposed Action   | Phase | Program                  | Project Description   | Cost<br>Estimate |
|---|-------|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| Bald Knob Day Use &<br>Campground<br>Renovation                         | 3     | Stewardship<br>/ Capital | <ol> <li>Selectively thin trees at Bald Knob Day Use Area to re-establish historic viewpoint from the picnic shelter.</li> <li>Expand Bald Knob campground to provide additional hike-in/bike-only sites.</li> <li>Develop interpretive components for Bald Knob and CCC heritage area.</li> <li>Slightly expand, renovate parking lot.</li> <li>Develop ABA/Accessible loop trail around Day Use Area.</li> <li>Historically renovate picnic shelter.</li> </ol> | \$1,950,000      |
| Develop overnight accommodations at current location of "Jerry's House" | 3     | Capital                  | Demolish Jerry's House and replace with up to five "all season" cabin / yurts with a common comfort station, associate site improvements, and trail access.   | \$2,075,000      |
| Expand and reconfigure Upper Kit Carson Trailhead                       | 3     | Operations               | This project would expand and reconfigure this trailhead to better function as a turnaround and increase capacity to better accommodate current and future  | \$375,000        |

| Proposed Action            | Phase | Program                | Project Description   | Cost<br>Estimate |
|----------------------------|-------|------------------------|---|------------------|
|                            |       |                        | use. Include clear signage / tie-ins with CCC Heritage Area and Cooks cabin areas.  |                  |
| Phase 3 MS 2000<br>Package | 3     | MS2000 /<br>Capital    | New Vehicle Maintenance Building & Cat Storage (MS2000)     Replace Hidden Treasure Chairlift (non-summer operable)     Replace Beginner's Luck Chairlift (non-summer operable)   | 3,500,000        |
| Phase 3 Trails<br>Package  | 3     | Trails /<br>Operations | <ol> <li>Develop a "round-the-mountain" trail at the 5,000' contour in phases that replace or become the new Trail 130. To be professionally built.</li> <li>Develop new, hiker-only trail from Bald Knob to Summit. To be professionally built.</li> <li>Upper Trail 140 Realignment. To be professionally built.</li> </ol> | 1,750,000        |

### **Summit Road**

The Preferred Alternative envisions Washington State Parks continuing to seasonally operate the Summit Road (between Upper Kit Carson Trailhead and the Summit) for public vehicle travel until such time that a significant investment is necessary to continue operating the Summit Road for public use. At such time, Washington State Parks should consider numerous options, including but not limited to:

- Making significant investments to upgrade the roadway, including the incorporation of modern safety features.
- Closing the road to public vehicle access permanently and partner with MS2000 to operate a summer seasonally lift for pedestrian access only (re: no mountain bike shuttle access).
- Closing the road and operating a shuttle to provide public access to the summit.

Additionally, this draft Preferred Alternative acknowledges a commitment to reconstruct Mount Spokane Park Drive from Linders Road to the Snowblaze Condominiums turnoff.

# **Appendix**

### **Projects Eliminated in Preferred Alternative**

Designate LTB 10 property as Natural Forest Area

Designate LTB-3 properties as Resource Recreation

Designate LTB-4 properties as Resource Recreation.

Designate LTB-7 properties as Natural Forest in Alternative A and Resource Recreation in Alternative B

Designate LTB-8 properties as Resource Recreation

Develop a new campground at Camp Fosseen contingent upon property being acquired (See LTB 1)

Develop backpacking camping sites on Linder Ridge near Eagle Crest Trail

Develop downhill, lift served mountain biking / hiking trails within the Concession Area served by Parkway Express Lift

Develop new multi-use trail from Summit east to Trail 130 (Lamonga Pass)

Develop overnight huts (ski-in/out) w/ CXT on Round Mountain contingent upon property being acquired (See LTB 3)

Develop trail along powerline corridor running between Lower Selkirk Trailhead and lodges 1 and 2

Develop unique park branding for marketing purposes that includes both the park and downhill ski area

Expand LTB near park entrance to include adjacent commercial timberlands that could be in danger of conversion

Expand LTB to include "Larch Mountain" ridge line NE of the summit.

Expand LTB to include Hyssing Spring

Expand LTB to include Round Mountain in LTB

Expand LTB to include the Warner property between current LTB and Newman Lake

**Expanded Summer Lift Capacity -** Replace Vista Cruiser Chairlift with modern chairlift that allows for summer operation\*, replace Parkway Express\*\*, replace Hidden Treasure, and Beginner's Luck lifts. (MS2000)

Facilitate hang gliding use

Identify and develop additional areas for expanded backcountry camping beyond BE-12.

Modernize Vista House

Phase out winter-dependent activities in climate-impacted areas.

Promote summer use of the park.

Redesignate Trail 130 east of Bald Knob to KC Loop from "Trail 130" to "Fire Road."

Rename Bear Creek Lodge to Linder Lodge

Retain and enhance tubing hill at Bear Creek Lodge

**Ropes Course** 

Selectively remove trees to create treed beginner ski area (MS2000)

Skijoring

Summit-to-Base Cat Track / Fire Road (MS2000)

Thematically and visually connect Bald Knob and CCC Heritage Areas through signage and architectural treatments.

Trail Management Objective for Trail 100 East to change from multi-use to hiker-only

Upper Trail 110 will remain multi-use.

### Maps

See following pages for maps, including:

- Draft Preferred Alternative Land Classification and Long-term Boundary
- Existing Land Classification and Long-term Boundary
- Draft Preferred Alternative Trails









