

Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park

Background

Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park (Ginkgo) is located 30 miles east of Ellensburg in Kittitas County. Established in 1935, the park is nearly 7,124 acres and located along the west side of the Columbia River. The park includes 27,000 feet of shoreline impounded by Wanapum Dam in 1963. Ginkgo State Park supports multiple rare and vanishing biological and geological features; in 1965, the National Park Service designated the park as a National Natural Landmark. The site has also been recommended for designation as a Natural Area Preserve. (See appendix)

Primary Features

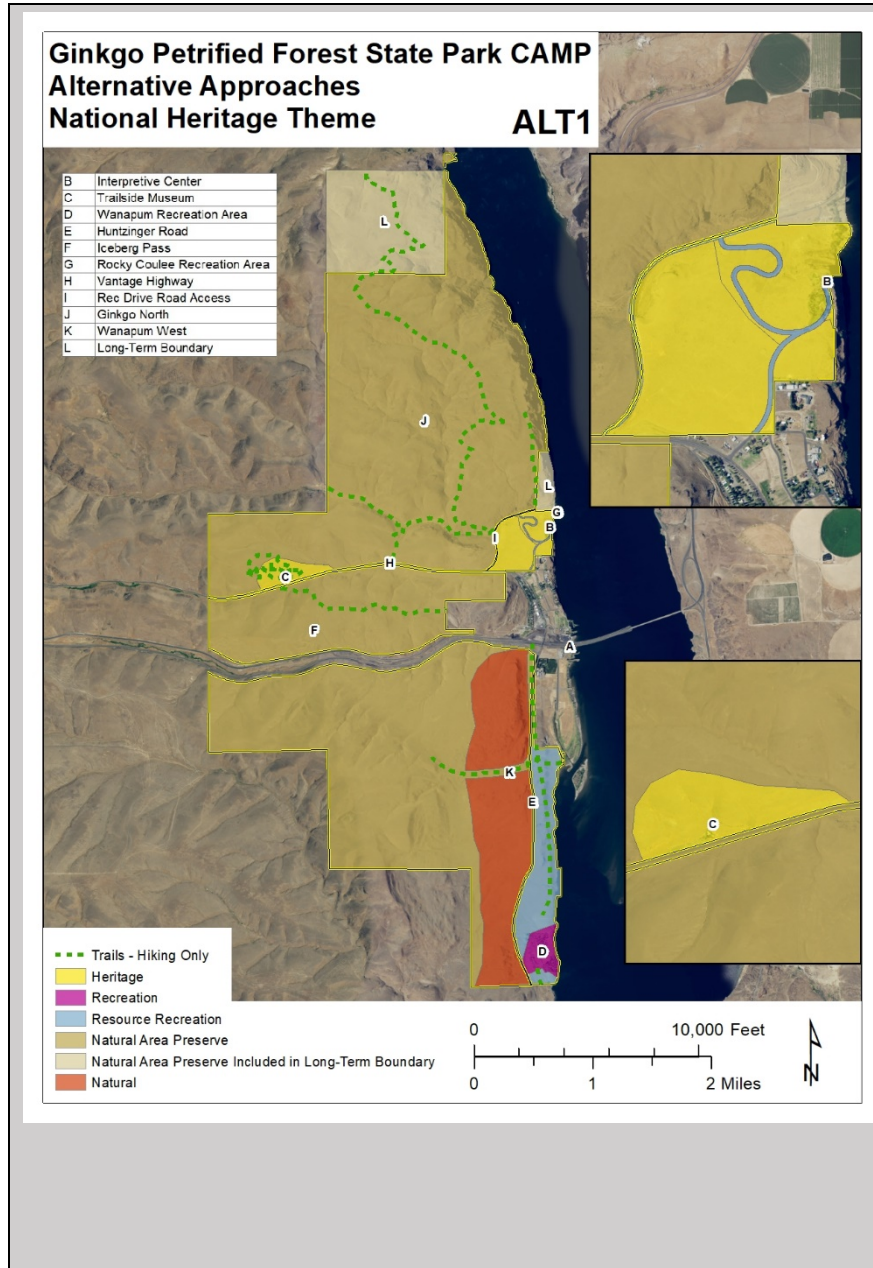
Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park is owned and managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and includes three primary locations:

- **Wanapum Recreation Area** hosts a campground, boat ramp and ample day-use area with a swim beach.
- **Ginkgo Petrified Forest Interpretive Center** offers day-use picnic areas, exterior displays and an interpretive facility.
- **The Trailside Museum and Trees of Stone Interpretive Trail** include signage about the petrified wood and 1.25 miles of trail that weave through petrified logs in their original setting. A total of 3 miles of hiking trails are at this site. You also can see ice-rafted erratic rocks remaining from Ice Age floodwaters thousands of years ago.

Historical Information

The park is home to the Vantage Forest, one of the most diverse groups of petrified wood species in North America. Professor George Beck was the first to fully recognize the site's significance. Upon his 1932 discovery of a rare petrified Ginkgo log (*Ginkgo biloba*), Beck led efforts to set aside this remarkable forest for preservation. In 1935, as part of a grand vision to establish the site as a National Monument, Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park was born. It is believed that the petrified logs formed when the Ginkgo lava flow, one of many such flows in this area, covered and entombed water-saturated trees. The trees had fallen into an ancient lake which protected them from the extreme heat of the lava. Encased in basalt for over 15 million years, minerals trapped in the water slowly changed the wood into the petrified logs we see today. Over time, natural forces have exposed some of the logs found close to the surface.

During the midst of the Great Depression, emergency work relief funds were used to protect and develop the park. Between 1935 and 1938, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees, as well as local emergency work relief laborers, built much of the park infrastructure we see today, including ranger residences, an interpretive center, a trail-side museum, and a trail system. In 1965, the park was formally registered as a National Natural Landmark. Construction of the Wanapum Dam in 1963 silenced the waters of the adjacent Columbia River. To enhance public access, state park management was expanded in 1974, and most recently in 2012, to provide overnight and day-use facilities along the shores of the Wanapum Reservoir.



ALT 1: National Heritage Theme

The **National Heritage Theme** recognizes the rare and vanishing biological and geological features found at Ginkgo including several high priority plant and animal species, a petrified forest of over 40 tree species preserved in lava flows, and Ice Age flood deposits. The park’s designation as a National Natural Landmark in 1965 reflects federal recognition of these resources. Ginkgo is also the site of important cultural resources, including an extensive petroglyph collection recovered from the banks of the river before the Wanapum Dam was built on the Columbia River and historical structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). As such, the park is provided the highest level of protection with a majority of the landscape classified as *Natural Area Preserve (NAP)*.

The *NAP* land classification allows restoration activities and limited public access in the form of interpretive and hiking trails, the latter of which generally follow the existing primitive road network. All proposed trails allow self-guided hiking except for the Iceberg Pass area.

The Trailside Museum, log trail and the Interpretive Center are classified as *Heritage*, protecting the historic and cultural values of these sites and providing active recreation for visitor appreciation and education. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the CCC buildings at the Trailside Museum site is pursued, protecting the structural and historic integrity of the sites for generations to come. Hiking, picnicking, interpretive activities and limited camping are the primary recreation opportunities here.

On the south side of I-90 and west of Huntzinger Road, an area classified as *Natural* allows hiking; while across the road, *Resource Recreation* allows for parking, picnicking and other trail-based recreation.

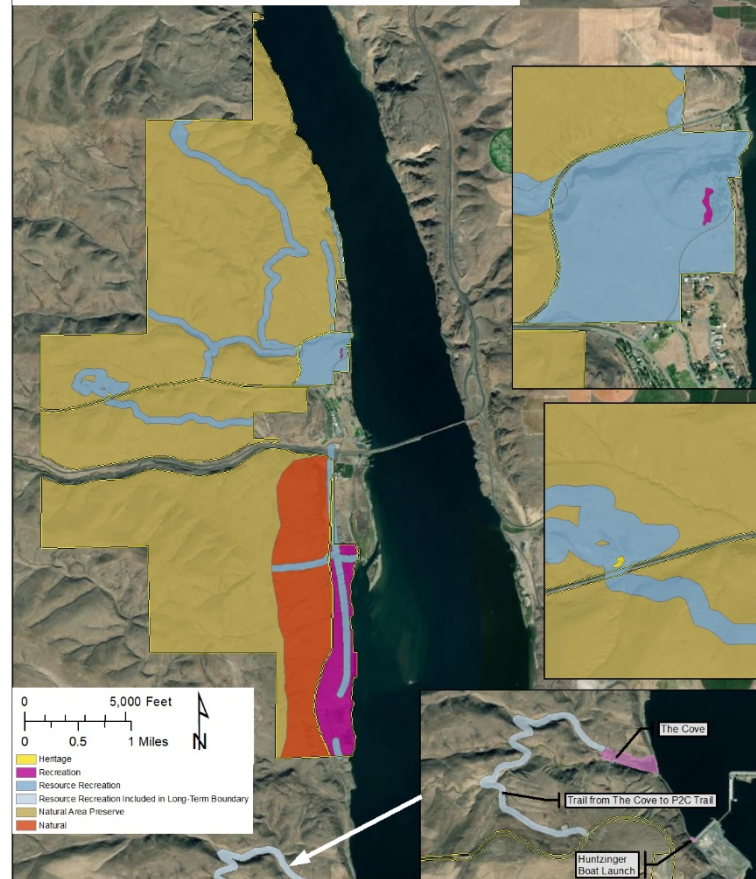
Wanapum Recreation Area is classified as *Recreation*, supporting the existing full-service recreation facilities including camping, swimming, boating and other active recreation.

This theme includes two long-term boundary areas (L) to maintain the contiguous landscape and protect significant natural resources.

Area	Features	Recreation Activities	Land Classification
Trailside Museum (C) * Petrified Wood Log Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heritage Area</i> includes the historic features of the area including the CCC structures and petrified log trail • Seek National Register of Historic Places designation for CCC structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking on established trails • Interpretation 	Heritage
Interpretive Center (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heritage Area</i> includes the historic CCC facilities • Retains existing limited RV camping • Includes primitive campsites at Rocky Coulee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited RV and primitive camping • Hiking 	Heritage
Iceberg Pass (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource protection with <i>NAP</i> classification • Protects viewshed and natural resources • Staff-led public access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided walking and interpretive tours 	NAP
Ginkgo North (J)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking on established trails 	NAP
Rec Drive Motorized Access (I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking on established trails • No motorized vehicle access 	NAP
Wanapum Recreation Area (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain active recreation areas within current footprint - camping, boating and day-use • Expand trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping, swimming • Day-use, hiking, bicycling 	Recreation Resource Recreation
Wanapum West (K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking on established trails 	Natural NAP
Long-Term Boundary Area (L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes two properties: one is north of the Rocky Coulee Recreation Area and one is north of current boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking on established trails 	NAP LTB

* Letters (A) correspond to these areas on the alternative concept maps.

**Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park CAMP
Alternative Approaches
Enhanced Recreation Theme ALT2**



ALT 2: Expanded Recreation Theme

The **Expanded Recreation Theme** includes new and enhanced active recreation areas while providing protection for the area’s significant natural and cultural resources.

The Interpretive Center and surrounding area are classified as *Recreation* and *Resource Recreation*, allowing for some expansion of camping on the north side of I-90.

A significant portion of the landscape is protected with the *Natural Area Preserve (NAP)* land classification. Within the *NAP*, trail routes are classified as *Resource Recreation*, which will more developed hiking trails vs. more primitive trails in Alt 1. Mountain biking is allowed on trails, except the Petrified Wood Log Trail and Iceberg Pass.

A smaller area of *Heritage* is used to protect the CCC structures at the Trailside Museum but doesn’t extend to the petrified wood log trail, which is classified as *Resource Recreation* and allows for future expansion and renovation of the existing petrified wood log trail. The area around the Interpretive Center is classified similarly as *Resource Recreation*, which will support more trail development and redevelopment of existing facilities should that be desirable in the future.

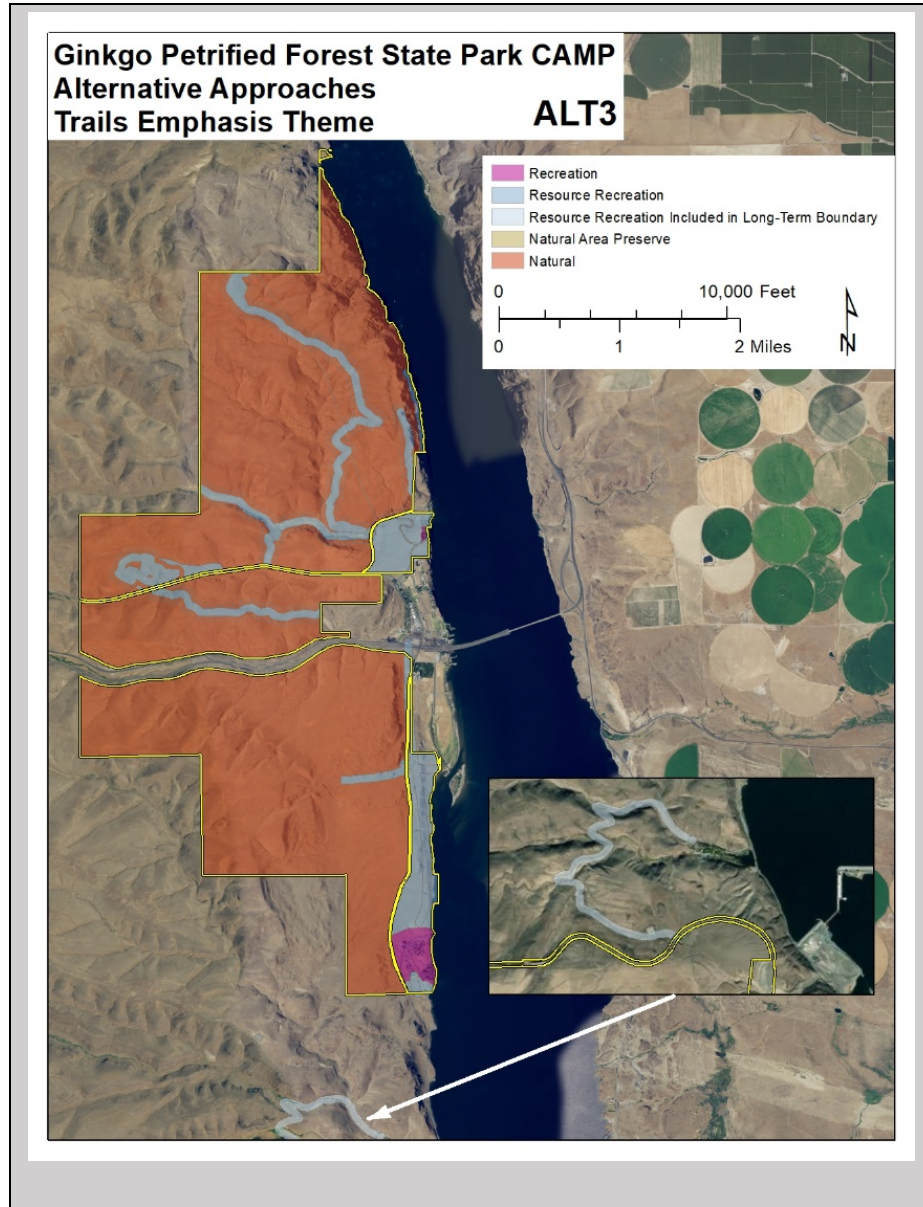
The existing primitive road off Recreation Drive allows pass-through motorized access only and on a more restricted basis.

On the south side of I-90 and west of Huntzinger Road, an area classified as *Natural* allows for hiking. On the east side of Huntzinger, including Wanapum Recreation Area, the land is classified as *Recreation*, allowing for additional active and trail-based recreation including a multipurpose trail from Wanapum to Vantage and other recreation facilities to address additional demand from the Vantage Bay Development.

The Cove and Huntzinger Boat Ramp are managed as active recreation areas for camping, day-use, water access and trail connection to the Palouse to Cascades Trail.

Area	Features	Recreation Activities	Land Classification
Trailside Museum Petrified Wood Log Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserves main CCC structures including residence and garage Seek National Historic Register designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation 	Heritage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail and interpretive exhibits improved – nonpaved, potential for limited ADA access where slope permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking only on established trails No mtn biking 	Resource Recreation
Interpretive Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking, day-use, comfort stations and improved Interpretive Center Expanded camping Interpretive trail consistent with 2006 Interpretive Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping Picnicking Interpretation Hiking and biking on established trails 	Recreation
Rocky Coulee Recreation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primitive campsites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping 	Resource Rec
Iceberg Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New trailhead and parking area Self-guided walking tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking only on established trails No mtn biking 	NAP
Ginkgo North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking Mountain biking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking and biking on established trails 	NAP
Recreation Drive Motorized Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass-thru only; restricted to specific times and/or more stringent permit requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited motorized use 	Resource Rec w restrictions
Wanapum Recreation Area and Wanapum North (on east side of Huntzinger Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded RV and tent camping Cabin development Off-road multipurpose trail north and south Expanded water-oriented recreation along Columbia River New parking area and day-use on east side of Huntzinger, across from Wanapum West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping, cabins and other overnight accommodations Swimming, boating Parking 	Recreation
Wanapum West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New trailhead, parking and designated hiking trail in the <i>Natural Area</i> Viewpoint at top of ridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking only on established trails No mtn biking 	Natural NAP

The Cove Huntzinger Boat Ramp	The Cove and the Huntzinger boat launch, which are owned by the Grant County PUD, would be managed by State Parks under a management agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camping, boating, day-use, hiking and mtn biking	
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ALT 3: Trail Emphasis Theme

The central feature of the **Trail Emphasis Theme** is a comprehensive trail plan that formalizes the existing primitive roads, which are classified as *Resource Recreation*. Most of the landscape is designated *Natural*, instead of the more restrictive *Natural Area Preserve*, which recognizes the park’s significant natural resources and allows for more active recreation primarily in the form of trail access.

The trail plan includes a route linking the Cove and Wanapum Recreation Area to the Palouse to Cascades Trail. This will provide convenient access to the Beverly Bridge (when completed in 2021) and to further points east, as well as west to Ellensburg over the Renslow Trestle in the future. This supports the agency’s interest in promoting long-distance cross-state trail use.

Similar to Alt 2, this theme classifies the Trailside Museum structure as *Heritage* to protect its history and structural integrity. The petrified log trail and parking lot are designated as *Resource Recreation*, allowing for improvement and expansion. The Interpretive Center is classified as *Recreation* with lands directly adjacent being classified as *Resource Recreation*, which supports development of a more extensive trail system in this area, including an interpretive trail designed for ADA use.

Resource Recreation is used for development of a new trailhead across the road from the Trailside Museum, trailhead and parking on the west and east side of Huntzinger Road.

Motorized access on the primitive road off Recreation Drive is allowed with the existing permit system.

Wanapum Recreation Area includes an expanded footprint classified as *Recreation* and *Resource Recreation*, offering the potential for expanding water-and trail-based recreation, including a continuous off-road trail from Wanapum to Vantage.

Area	Features	Recreation Activities	Land Classification
Trailside Museum Petrified Wood Log Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main CCC structure preserved – residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation 	Heritage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petrified Log trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking 	Resource Rec
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand parking lot and improve Vantage Highway crossing for trail users on both sides of Vantage Hwy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking 	Recreation
Interpretive Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive center, day-use and existing camping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping, interpretation, day-use 	Recreation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop interpretive trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA trail 	Resource Rec
Iceberg Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new trailhead and hiking trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking 	Resource Rec Natural Area
Ginkgo North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail development and expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking, mtn biking 	Resource Rec Natural
Recreation Drive Motorized Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking, mtn biking, motorized vehicle pass-thru 	Resource Rec
Wanapum Recreation Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand tent and RV camping Develop cabins in area northwest of boat ramp Expand trails to north and south Expand trails for water access and water views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping, cabins, boating, swimming, other day-use, hiking, mtn biking 	Recreation Resource Recreation
Wanapum West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New parking area, trailhead and hiking trail development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking, hiking, mtn biking 	Resource Recreation
The Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cove, which is owned by the Grant County PUD, would be managed by State Parks under a management agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping, boating, day-use, hiking and mtn biking 	Recreation

Appendix 1 - Natural Heritage Features Present at Onion Ridge Potential Natural Area Preserve (Washington Department of Natural Resources, 2018)

Ecosystem Element	Plant Association	Natural Heritage Plan Priority	Representation within natural areas
Stiff sagebrush/Sandberg’s bluegrass Shrub Grassland ¹	Artemisia rigida/Poa secunda Shrub Grassland (G4S3S4)	3	Beezley Hills, Cleveland Shrub Steppe NAP, Marcellus Shrub Steppe NAP, The 2-Steppe NAP, Quincy Breaks PRNA
Wyoming big sagebrush/Bluebunch wheatgrass Shrub Grassland ¹	Artemisia tridentata spp. wyomingensis / Pseudoroegneria spicata Shrub Grassland (G4S3)	3	Beezley Hills, Castle Rock, NAP, Rattlesnake Hills RNA, The 2-Steppe NAP, Quincy Breaks PRNA
Stiff sagebrush/Bluebunch wheatgrass Shrub Grassland ¹	Artemisia rigida/Pseudoroegneria spicata Shrub Grassland (G3S2)	*	
Plant Species Element	Note	Natural Heritage Plan Priority	
Snowball cactus (Pediocactus nigrispinus, G3S2)		3	
Animal Species Element			
Striped whipsnake (Masticophis taeniatus, G5S1)	Source: WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Data	1	
Greater sagegrouse (Centrocercus urophasianus phaios, G3G4T3QS1)	Source: WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Data	1	
Loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus, G4S3B)	Source: WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Data	3	
Rare and High-Quality Geologic Features			
Petrified forest deposits			
Ice-age flood deposits			

Priority Status * indicates the occurrence qualifies as a element occurrence using NatureServe/Natural Heritage Methodology, but was not considered in the 2018 State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan.