

Comments for Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park Classification and Management Planning

We utilize Ginkgo State Park for enjoying the flora and fauna of the shrub steppe. We hike in the area and have used the Recreation Drive Motorized Access for over 20 years. The primitive motorized road allows us to enjoy more of the park and to pass through to DNR, DFW, BLM, and private lands.

We purchase two Discover Passes each year to enjoy our public lands. We are law-abiding citizens who want to enjoy our public lands. The Discover Pass brochure dated 10/12 stated: “The Discover Pass helps preserve public access to recreation lands managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Discover Pass provides access to millions of acres of parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas, and water-access sites.” The Discover Pass brochure dated 01/13 stated: “The Discover Pass provides access to millions of acres of Washington state-managed recreation lands – including state parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas and water access sites.” The Discover Pass website states: “Today, when you buy the Discover Pass, you are helping to keep the state’s wonderful outdoor recreation sites open and accessible to the public.” The promises have changed through the years, but it feels like our support of state lands is not valued. We feel strongly about our rights to access our public lands.

We are opposed to Alternative 1 and 2 in regards to Recreation Drive Motorized Access. The only viable option in regards to Recreation Drive Motorized Access is Alternative 3 to leave it status quo for public enjoyment. There is one thing that needs to be clarified about Alternative 3 “status quo”. Currently registered people with a Discover Pass can pass thru recreation drive OR park along the road in the park and go for a walk, hike, or ride mountain bike on the road. In Alternative 3 recreation activities are listed as “hiking, mtn biking, motorized pass-thru”. That is not “status quo” if motorized vehicles can only pass thru, not park and enjoy the area. Although we only pass thru, I have seen families (with young children) parked and walking or riding mountain bike along the road. It would be a shame to not allow parking along the route, as most people and especially young children cannot walk or mountain bike to the distant areas within the park that the motorized access reaches. Alternative 3 Recreation Activities status quo should be “hiking, mtn biking, motor vehicle use”.

From 2012 through 2014 there was an extensive Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation and Access Planning process that involved agencies, citizens, users, interest-groups, neighbors, and staff. In that plan (published January 2015), the Recreation Drive motorized access was designated to “provide motorized vehicle access along the eastern perimeter road of the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Unit during the winter”. The Recreation Drive motorized access connects to the Quilomene road, to remain open during the winter closure from February 1 to April 30, when all other motorized roads in the area are closed to motorized vehicles. The Recreation Drive motorized route has been the only access during winter to DFW, DNR, BLM, and recreational lands (as well as private lands), as the higher roads become impassable due to snow, ice, and drifts. The published Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation and Access Plan document is a live document, with standing for 10-15 years into the future. The Cooperative Road Management Area Map provided by DNR and DFW shows the road as “Green Dot Road remains open during winter closure.”

Ginkgo State Park officials refer to theft of artifacts, damage to artifacts, and damage from off-roading. In our 20 plus years of traveling the Recreation Drive Motorized Access we have not seen evidence of these activities. The only off-road tracks we have seen were a result of fire fighting efforts during a

mega fire over more than park lands. If theft, damage, and off-roading are a problem what prevention has been done? Extra patrolling? A record of citations, arrests? We would like to see the evidence and preventative efforts that back up the claims. Currently only motorized vehicles are required to register. If theft and damages are a big concern, other users (hiker, bicycler, horseback rider, etc.) should also register.

Historically what is now called Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park had other owners. What is now called Recreation Drive Motorized access was an early road (as shown in Metsker's Atlas of Kittitas County Washington 1934) to public and private land holdings, leading to Scammon's Landing at the mouth of Skookumchuck Creek on the Columbia River. The Scammon family operated a ferry to cross the Columbia river. Needless to say, early travelers (the public) used this road. The public should continue to be allowed to use what is now called the Recreation Drive Motorized Access.

We are also opposed to Alternative 1 in regards to the park boundary expanding by acquiring Section 1 of DFW property which is currently used for hunting. We are opposed to reducing current vehicle access, as this route is used to reach large tracts of public land. We are opposed to State Parks acquiring any more land because of their focus on restricting many recreational uses.