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## **Introduction & Background Information**

### ***History***

In 1991, Skagit County purchased a 726-acre portion of the former Northern State Hospital from the State of Washington for the purpose of developing a major regional recreation facility for the citizens of Skagit County and beyond. The site, now called the Northern State Recreation Area (NSRA), is located on the eastern edge of the urban growth area of Sedro-Woolley in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains.

NSRA has a diverse range of natural, cultural and topographical features. There are significant wetlands on site as well as large areas of dry meadow and forested uplands. Hansen Creek, a significant salmon stream slated for restoration, flows through the site. Prior to closing in the 1970's, NSRA was the working farm associated with the Northern State Hospital. Perched on a plateau overlooking the southern meadows are the abandoned dairy barns from the farm operations, built in 1921.

Some preliminary planning for NSRA occurred in 1993-94 that included a resource classification study and a conceptual master plan for development. However, between 1994 and 1998, the site received little attention due to county staff being fully committed to other projects and minimal public involvement in the site. That changed in 1998 when a group of citizens formed the Northern State Task Force (NSTF) to work on implementing some of the development plans on the property. In support of the NSTF efforts, the County Board of Commissioners earmarked three million dollars in December 1999, as seed money to get development started.

### ***Rationale for Revised Plan***

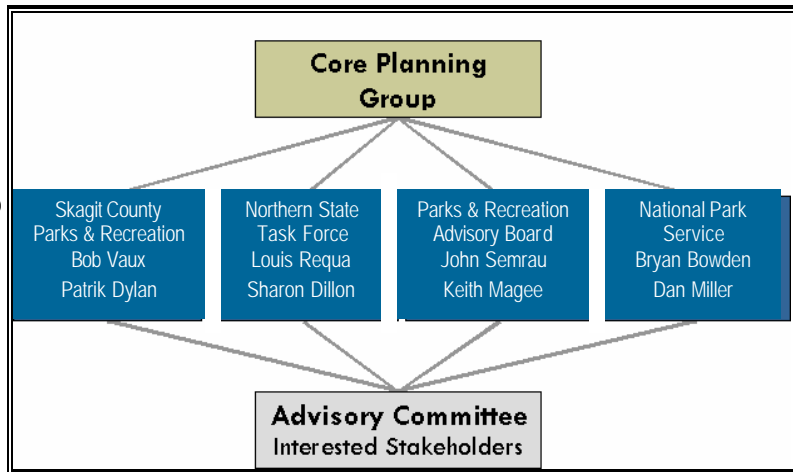
It was evident that a revised plan was required to update the 1994 conceptual master plan because a number of significant changes had occurred since 1994. These included:

- Wetland delineation and mapping (completed in 2000 on the southern half of the site) revealed significantly less land available for development than originally thought.
- A new high school, originally included in the 1994 plan, was no longer slated for location on the site.
- Considerable planning had occurred for the restoration of Hansen Creek that needed to be factored into the new master plan.
- Critical area ordinances requiring buffers around streams and wetlands had changed a great deal over six years.

**Request for National Park Service Assistance**

In August of 2000, Skagit County Parks and Recreation submitted a request to the National Park Service for planning assistance from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program for technical help in organizing and conducting a public planning project to prepare a revised master plan for NSRA. The project was accepted and planning began in January 2001, when two groups were formed. The 'Planning Team' was organized to assume lead responsibility for organizing the planning process, informing and providing opportunities for public comment and involvement, conducting research, and writing the plan. This planning team was represented by several existing community action groups in Skagit County, specifically the Northern State Task Force and Skagit County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Equal representation from the Skagit County Parks Department and National Park service completed membership of the Planning Team.

The 'Advisory Committee' was organized to represent key stakeholder groups throughout Skagit County and was asked to meet with the Planning Team as required to provide advice and consultation on the various stages of the planning process. Many different community action groups found representation on this committee.



Planning Organizational Diagram

**The Planning Process**

A project timeline was developed that organized the project into the following four stages: 1) Information Gathering; 2) Analysis; 3) Design Charette; and 4) Writing/Plan Production.

Information Gathering

The first objective was to acquire, develop, and organize background information relative to the project. This included researching natural and cultural resource information, conducting a countywide mail survey, preparing a recreation needs assessment, and developing project vision and goal statements with the advisory committee. The information gathering stage concluded in June of 2001 with a public open house held on site at NSRA.

### Analysis and Development of Design Elements

In the analysis phase, the planning team reviewed and discussed all of the background information collected. Then, through a consensus driven process, a draft list of design elements was developed for the types of facilities to include at NSRA that reflected the desires and needs of the general public and key stakeholders. This list was presented to the citizen advisory committee and was enthusiastically supported and adopted by this group in July of 2001. (See Appendix C - Design Elements)



Design team hard at work during the October Charette

### Design Charette

The cornerstone event in the planning process occurred over a three-day weekend in October 2001, when a design charette was conducted. Approximately 50 participants (see Appendix B – Charette Participants) from the local community representing user groups, regulatory agencies, natural and cultural resource interests, and other interested citizens were teamed with volunteer design professionals from throughout

the state. Five different teams were organized and tasked with developing graphic ideas for the following design elements:

- Trails
- Ball Fields and Play Areas
- Campgrounds
- Equestrian & Multi-Use Events Center
- Environmental Education and Interpretation

### Writing/Plan Production

The final phase of the project was the writing and production of the new master plan for NSRA. This document is a summary of that plan. This updated master plan is consistent with the current Parks Comprehensive Plan as well as the Skagit County Comp Plan as the list of elements on the current plan is a reduced version of the list elements on the Comp Plan referenced 1994 master plan. In addition this new plan includes a repositioning of the remaining elements on the site in a manner that maximizes protection and enhancement of the natural features and processes present on and intrinsic to the site.

### ***Public Participation***

A public involvement component was included to complement and parallel the planning process. It was designed to accomplish two functions: 1) inform people about the project at key stages, and 2) provide opportunities for comment, reaction, and participation in the process. Public participation was accomplished in the following ways:

- A citizen advisory committee was formed at the beginning of the planning process to guide in the development of this plan
- Newsletters were mailed out at key points in the planning process.
- A survey was mailed to every household in Skagit County
- An open house was held on-site at NSRA that included site tours and information booths
- Citizens and community professionals were recruited to participate in the design charette
- A public meeting was held at the conclusion of the charette to report on the results

Following is a summary table of the actual public review process and opportunities implemented for this master plan update.

### ***Next Steps***

The next step in this project will be to prepare an addendum to the existing SEPA Determination of Non Significance (DNS) with a new SEPA checklist for this project. This decision was supported by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners who unanimously voted to move forward with the planning and permitting process for the entire project on December 11, 2001.

**Table 1 – Summary of Public Participation, Review Process, and Comments**

<i>Public Review/Comment Opportunity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>How Advertised</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Supportive Comments</i>	<i>Opposition Comments</i>
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #1</b>	January 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	County courthouse Hearing Room B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing sent to 200 people</li> <li>• Press Release published in Skagit Valley Herald</li> <li>• See County Web site</li> <li>• Syndicated Press Release on National Public Radio</li> </ul>	Approx 60 People	“Glad to see something started”	“Concerned that the County is not interested in public input”
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #2</b>	March 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	Burlington Fire Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing sent to 60 people who showed up to first meeting and approx 20 new names</li> <li>• Press Release published in Skagit Valley Herald</li> <li>• Listed on County Web-Site</li> </ul>	Approx. 45 people		
<b>Newsletter # 1</b>	Winter 2001		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Mailing</li> </ul>	Mailed to 200 people		
<b>Community Wide Survey</b>	Mailed: May 1st, 2001 Returned: May 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2001		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertised in newsletter</li> <li>• Referenced in press release</li> </ul>			
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #3</b>	March 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	Anacortes Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing sent to 60 people who showed up to first meeting and approx 20 new names</li> <li>• Press Release published in Skagit Valley Herald</li> <li>• Listed on County Web-Site</li> </ul>	Approx 25 people		
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #4</b>	June 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	Sedro-Woolley Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing sent to 60 people who showed up to first meeting and approx 20 new names</li> <li>• Press Release published in Skagit Valley Herald</li> <li>Listed on County Web-Site</li> </ul>	Approx. 11 people		
<b>Newsletter #2</b>	Summer 2001		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mailing</li> </ul>	Mailed to 350 people		
<b>On Site Open House</b>	June 16th		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertised in newsletter</li> <li>• Referenced in press release</li> <li>• Advertised on Radio</li> <li>• 200 posters throughout the county</li> </ul>	Approx 100 people	“Great ideas, please restore as much of the barns as possible”	

<i>Public Review/Comment Opportunity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>How Advertised</i>	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Supportive Comments</i>	<i>Opposition Comments</i>
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #5</b>	July 24th, 2001	Burlington Fire Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing sent to 60 people who showed up to first meeting and approx 20 new names</li> <li>• Press Release published in Skagit Valley Herald</li> <li>• Listed on County Web-Site</li> </ul>	Approx. 35 people	"List of Program Elements seems like a good mix"	"Disappointed that farming will not be a part of final plan"
<b>Design Charette Results Open House</b>	October 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2001	Sedro-Woolley Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertised in newsletter</li> <li>• Referenced in press release</li> <li>• Advertised on Radio</li> <li>• 200 posters throughout the county</li> <li>• Provided door prizes as incentive to attend</li> </ul>	Approx 75 People	"Great Ideas, thanks for doing all this work"	
<b>Newsletter # 3</b>	Winter 2001		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct mailing</li> </ul>	Mailed to 500 people		
<b>Advisory Committee Meeting #3/Public Information Meeting</b>	February 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2002	County courthouse Hearing Room C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertised in newsletter</li> <li>• Referenced in press release</li> <li>• Advertised on Radio</li> <li>• 200 posters throughout the county</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Concerned that the park will be built without proper law enforcement present"</li> <li>• "Opposed to idea that trails on the site would connect to trails off the property; specifically the Cascade Trail as individual believes this trail to be an illegal government 'take'."</li> <li>• "Believes that soccer fields need to be present even if needs assessment says not."</li> </ul>
<b>Service Clubs Presentation</b>	January, February, March, 2002	Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes		Between 25-50 people per event		

## Resource Significance

### *Natural Resources*

Both the Hansen Creek Watershed and the NSRA contain a diverse array of natural resources. Upland landcover on NSRA includes forested areas, pasture, and some existing developed areas and buildings. Aquatic habitats include stream channels of Hansen Creek and numerous tributaries. There are also beaver pond complexes and wetlands associated with the streams on the site. Both resident and anadromous fish salmonids (trout and salmon) utilize these habitats. Reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds also inhabit the upland, wetland, and aquatic habitats throughout the site.



Beaver pond & associated wetlands, tributary of Hansen Creek

### Wetlands

A wetlands delineation of the southern half of the site was completed in the summer of 2000. The northern portion of the site has not been delineated but preliminary survey work indicates areas where wetlands are probable. Overall, roughly 500 acres of Northern State are designated as wetlands and are considered as being prohibited to development (see Map 2 – Wetlands Delineation Map).

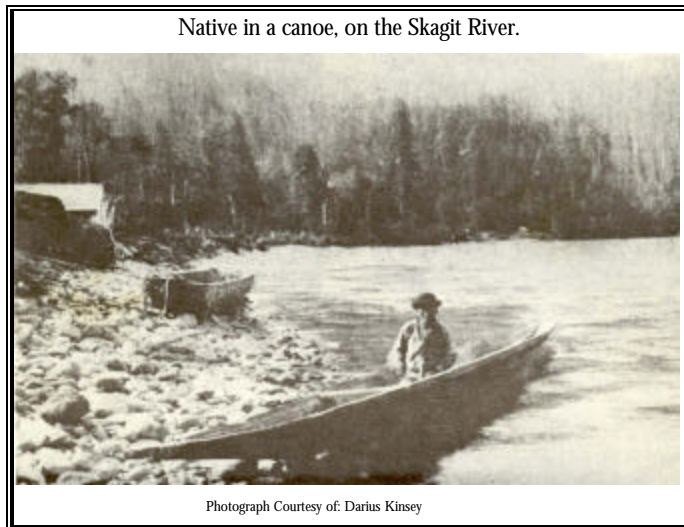
### Hansen Creek Restoration

The Hansen Creek Management Plan was developed to decrease flooding and improve fish habitat associated with Hansen Creek and its tributaries. The Management Plan proposes to restore and improve existing delineated wetlands as well as restore Hansen Creek's historic alluvial fan that allowed sedimentation and floodwater to diffuse over a large area (rather than the current man-made channelized creek). The management plan recommends four alternatives for the alluvial fan restoration including a heavily engineered (the smallest fan and requiring constant maintenance), and small, medium, and large sized fans. In theory, the larger the fan, the more effective in flood reduction as well as providing fish and wildlife habitat. (See Map 3 – Hansen Creek Restoration Alternatives).



Red Creek Alternatives

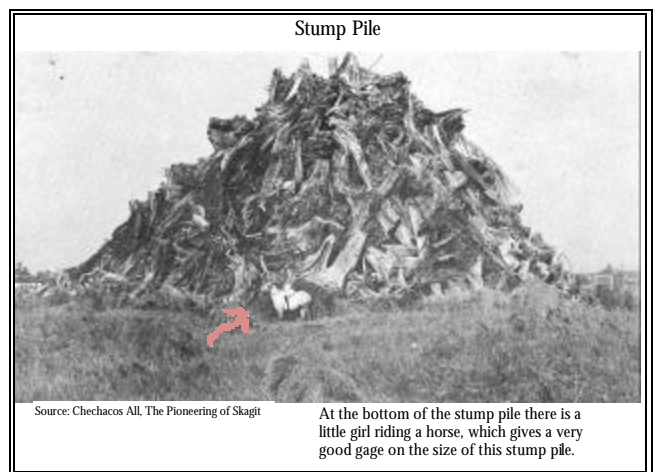
A tributary of Red Creek has been redirected to drain into a ditch that follows Helmick Road and then eventually cuts under the road via a culvert and into Red Creek. This ditch has been classified as a type 3 (fish bearing) stream despite the poor habitat it provides. The Hansen Creek Management Plan recommends one of three alternatives. They include a 'do nothing' alternative, an alternative to reroute the tributaries to Hansen Creek (which would further reduce the amount of buildable land on the site), or a proposal to reroute the tributary to follow its historical course into Red Creek.



**Cultural Resources**

Four Native American tribes of the Skagit River were known to inhabit the areas around Sedro-Woolley, however no known Indian sites of cultural or historical significance have been found at NSRA. More recently, NSRA was the working farm associated with the Northern State Hospital that closed in the early 1970's. The remaining structures of

the farm represent important cultural resources. The farm buildings were constructed as early as 1909 and display some unique, well-detailed, architectural characteristics. Some of the buildings are structurally sound while others are unfit for use and need to be either demolished or reconstructed. Many of these buildings represent opportunities for cultural/historic preservation, interpretation and adaptive re-use.



## **Recreation Needs Assessment and Survey Results**

Information from Skagit County's Comprehensive Plan and Washington's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) were used to determine the county's current unmet as well as projected unmet recreation needs. In addition to this data, a survey was developed and mailed to every household in Skagit County. The results from the survey allowed the planning team to compare the analysis in the plans with those of the survey respondents. Some highlighted results of the recreation needs assessment for Skagit County include:

- There is a need for adult softball fields.
- There is a need for youth baseball fields.
- Current and projected needs for soccer fields have been met in the County.
- There is a need for camping and picnic sites.
- There is a need for primitive, rural, and urban trails in the County.

Survey results indicated a desire for outdoor/passive recreation such as camping, hiking, environmental education, and wildlife viewing as well as a desire for an indoor recreation/multi-use events center.

## **Zoning & Infrastructure**

### ***Land Use & Zoning***

The Northern State Recreation Area property is located in a rural area of Skagit County. Currently, the site is zoned Public Use District (P) and the lower 2/3rds is in the urban growth area of Sedro-Woolley. Lands adjacent to the site are a mixture of houses on small and large parcels and farms. The Comprehensive Plan designations consist of Rural (RU), Agricultural Reserve (AR), and Residential (R) districts. While this part of the County remains rural in nature, there are a substantial number of homes in close proximity to the site and based on existing and projected growth patterns, the number of houses is likely to increase significantly.

### ***Roadways & Circulation Patterns***

Highway 20 on the South, Fruitdale Road on the West, and Helmick Road to the East border NSRA. Highway 20 is a two-lane highway with no center turn lane and can receive high traffic volumes (8,600 vehicles per day is the estimate by Washington State Department of Transportation). Fruitdale Road and Helmick Road are both two-lane county roads. Currently, the primary access to NSRA is from Helmick Road, which is on the counties transportation plan to be upgraded.

### ***Utilities***

Currently, there is no potable water available on the site. At one time there was a water line and multiple wells throughout the site. Today, the line is damaged but the wells still exist (one is artesian during the spring). Electrical, telephone, and natural gas service is available to the abandoned dairy barns. There is an existing electrical line that extends north through the site that historically provided power to the pumps in the interior of the property. An 18-inch sewer line along Fruitdale road could be accessed to meet future park demands.

## NSRA Master Plan

### *Vision and Goals*

Northern State Recreation Area is a premier year-round regional facility that offers a wide range of recreational experiences in a manner that respects the natural environment, celebrates the region's past, and meets the needs of current and future generations.

This vision is achieved by accomplishing the following goals:

- Provide facilities and activities that are compatible with the environment
- Showcase the natural, historical and cultural character of the region
- Design for accessibility and sustainability
- Promote a healthy, active community
- Offer a diverse range of opportunities and experiences (i.e., active, passive, team, individual, competitive, recreational, etc.).

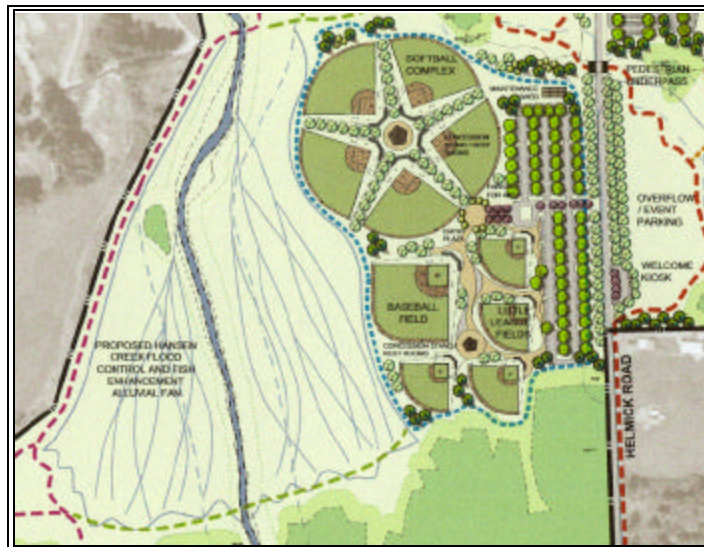
### *Design Elements:*

#### **Open Space**

Over 500 acres of the site will not be developed. This land will be left as it is or enhanced to provide for fish, wildlife, water quality, and other environmental purposes.

#### **Ball Fields**

The goal of the ball field component is to provide a destination youth and adult ball field complex that creates an exciting baseball environment by providing state-of-the-art play fields, integrated parking, concessions, restrooms, maintenance facilities, and picnic areas. An additional goal is to incorporate aesthetic values as well as conservation and restoration of sensitive natural resources into the planning of the ball field area.



Layout of Ball field elements at center of site

No Scale

### Elements

The ball field component includes the following elements:

- 5 youth/adult softball fields
- 4 youth baseball fields
- 1 youth/adult baseball field
- Adequate parking for the fields
- Sufficient space for maintenance and operations
- Adequate concessions
- Play areas

### Location

The ball fields and related infrastructure were designed to be constructed in the southern (lower) center region of the site. The charette participants felt that it was important to locate the fields close to one another so that they could share much of the infrastructure (maintenance area, concessions, play grounds, parking, etc.) that is needed to support the fields and related tournaments. The charette participants also felt that one of the alluvial fan alternatives, as recommended by the proposed Hansen Creek Management Plan, should be integrated into their designs if at all possible. The large contiguous block of buildable land in the lower center portion of the site quickly emerged as the only place large enough to accommodate the ball field facilities.

### Design Considerations

#### *Orientation & Architecture of Fields*

All ball fields and supporting facilities were aligned along a number of tree lined pedestrian walkways. These walkways radiate out from the central plaza and create organization around which the facilities are located. Ball



Artist's rendering of concessions stand

fields were oriented with consideration to the sun. The majority of the fields have been designed in the optimal position. Due to the circular design of the softball five-plex, not all of the fields could be arranged in the ideal position. Trees and vegetation will be used as buffers for stray balls as well as view screening and blocking the low afternoon sun. The maintenance and concession/restroom buildings will be constructed to reflect the historic architectural character of the original Northern State Hospital buildings.

### *Softball Fields*

The softball five-plex was configured in a circular layout to minimize space and to allow for proximity and ease when the site is host to tournaments. The ball field's largest concession building complete with restrooms will be located inside the five-plex to serve a more adult oriented crowd. The entire five-plex will be equipped with night lighting.

### *Baseball Fields*

The baseball fields were aligned along the main pedestrian walkway as well as to optimize the sun angle and the environmental constraints of the site. The adult field was put farthest from the parking lots to reduce the chance of foul balls hitting the parked vehicles. Rows of columnar trees were added to help create spaces for the fields and provide separation. A satellite concession building with restrooms was located at the end of the pedestrian walkway to serve the baseball fields.

Consideration should be given to not lighting the two youth baseball fields closest to the wetlands in the southern portion of the recreation area to reduce disturbance to adjacent neighbors, traffic on the highway, and wildlife.

### *Play & Picnic Areas*

Play areas were designed to be as centrally located as possible so that adults playing and watching the ballgames could keep an eye on their children. Two picnic areas were located on the fringes of the fields to allow for some open space and respite from the crowds and noise of the ball fields.

### *Maintenance Area*

A maintenance area was designed to be inconspicuous through the use of vegetative screening and location. The location of the maintenance area will also allow access to the softball fields without having heavy machinery using the foot traffic corridors to the fields. Some maintenance and operation equipment and gear will also be stored in the two-concession/rest room buildings to allow for easy access to the fields.

### *Parking*

The parking lots are situated to provide easy access to the ball fields while minimizing impact to the rest of the recreation area's traffic flow. Over 400 vehicles are accommodated in the four parking lots, which should be more than sufficient for normal uses. Larger tournaments may require additional parking, which has been designed in the overflow parking area across Helmick Road to the east. The overflow parking will not be paved; however, other hardening techniques will be used to

support overflow parking for automobiles. Trees and other vegetation will act as view screens for the parking lots as well as the overflow parking area. A vehicular drop-off and turn-around allows for better handicapped access as well as expedite the dropping off and picking-up of visitors. An entry plaza will greet and guide ballpark visitors and provides for an integrated aesthetic experience by serving as the central location from which all walkways radiate to the surrounding facilities.

### *Entranceway*

The visual experience of the visitor as he or she arrives into the park played an integral role in the design of the entranceway. The design of the entranceway and entire ball fields complex was planned so that the visual experience of the visitor seeking a more natural experience at Northern State Recreation Area was not impaired from the more developed feel of ball fields and their related infrastructure. As a result, the view towards the park from the main entrance on Helmick Road was designed to visually screen most of the ball fields as well as the parking. This will be achieved by planting four rows of large trees (two on either side of Helmick Road). In addition to the visual screening, at the access to the recreation area from Highway 20, an information kiosk and sign with vehicular pullout on the east side of Helmick Road has been planned to welcome and orient visitors.

### *Alluvial Fan*

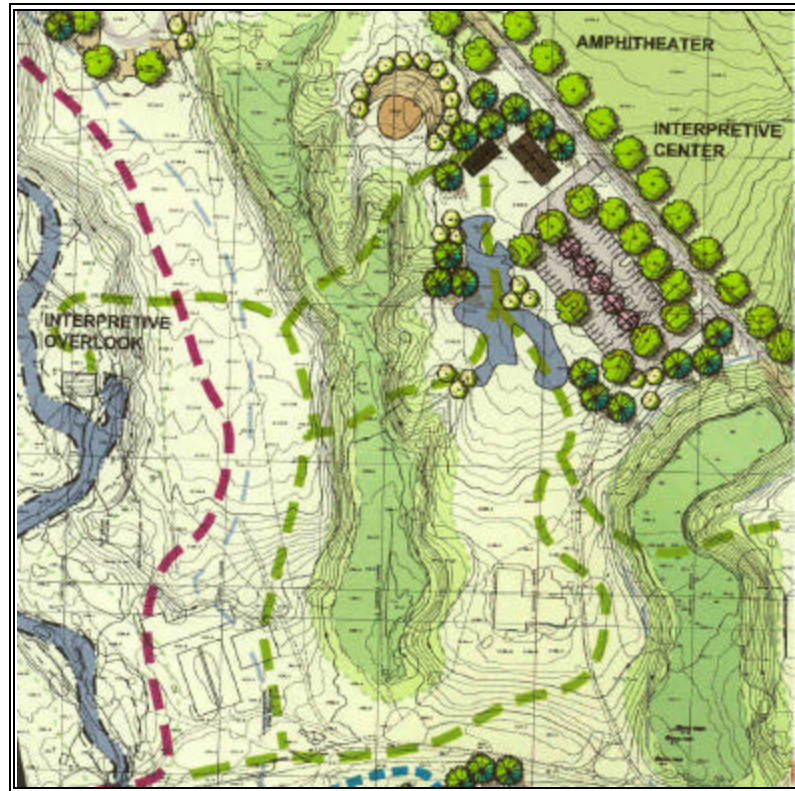
The ball field design team integrated their design with elements of the proposed Hansen Creek Management Plan. Every attempt possible was made by the design group to maximize the acreage available for the restoration of Hansen Creek's alluvial fan. A slightly reduced version of the medium-sized alluvial fan was the largest feasible alternative that could be integrated into the design of the ball fields and parking.

### *Ditch Realignment*

The ditch or Dairy Fork that currently runs alongside Helmick Road will be realigned to closer mimic its historical path feeding into Red Creek. This will allow for more usable space for parking as well as provide for hydrological restoration.

**Trails**

The goal of the trails component is to develop an integrated non-motorized trail network throughout the Northern State Recreation Area property that provides for a minimum of at least five miles of trail. It should be emphasized that trails were identified as the highest priority type of facility to include at NSRA in the countywide survey administered prior to the charette.



Layout of trails near interpretive center

No Scale

*Trail Types*

The design team members quickly agreed to several types of trails to include in planning a trail system. These are:



Artist rendering of a multiple use trail

*Multiple Use Trails*

The main type of trails the design team felt should be developed at NSRA are the multiple use trails suitable for walking, hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. This type of trail should be ten feet wide with a cleared area of twenty feet horizontal and ten feet vertical all around.

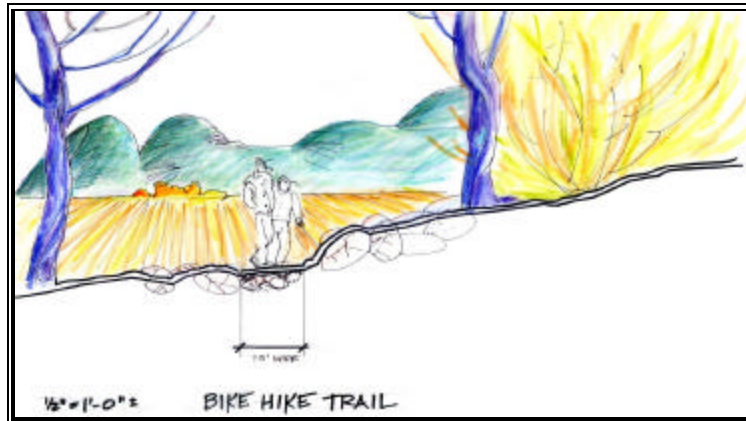
It should be a hardened, compact surface, possibly using some type of binder for increased compaction. These trails should be made ADA accessible where feasible and include frequent widened 'pull-out' type areas with benches and interpretive signs (where appropriate). The



team designed a primary north/south route through NSRA that would be a multiple use trail and would provide outside connections to the Cascade Trail on the south and to DNR lands to the north that could eventually be extended to create a link to the Pacific Northwest Trail.

*Mountain Biking/Hiking Trails*

This type of trail has a narrower tread width of three to five feet in width and is designed for hikers and mountain bikers (similar to hiking in a National Park or Forest). The surface would



primarily utilize native materials, with some sections consisting of crushed rock, turnpike or boardwalk as needed. This type of trail would be more rugged and may not be ADA accessible in all areas. In the northwest corner of NSRA, the team designed a loop mountain bike/hiking trail that would lead off of the multiple-use trail loop and would parallel Hansen Creek for a short section. This would provide trail users appropriate and managed access to views of wildlife along the creek and around wetland areas. Short spurs leading to wildlife viewing areas could also be developed.

Another trail of this type was planned in the south central part of NSRA where it will skirt the bottom edge of the restored alluvial fan. This area will likely experience frequent flooding and washouts which will make it difficult and costly to maintain a trail surface. The concept is to leave this section 'open' with two trail endpoints. Trail users should be able to make their way through this short section with little difficulty and the location could serve as a useful interpretive site about Hansen Creek restoration.



*Interpretive Trails*

An important component of the trail system includes several interpretive loop trails starting and ending at the Interpretive Center. Each loop would be developed around a theme (i.e., cultural, geology, wildlife, restoration, etc.). These trails would be for walkers only and would be ADA accessible.

### *Limited Use Trails*

A limited use area is provided for in the upper northeast corner of NSRA for hikers and horseback riders. This area would accommodate the desire from equestrian users for a space where they could occasionally set-up a cross-country course for timed events. The area would be closed to hikers during such events, but open to both hikers and horseback riders all other times. Horseback riders could access this area via the multiple use trails.

### *Exercise Trail*

A one-mile exercise trail is included around the athletic fields complex. This trail would include frequent 'pull-out' type areas with exercise stations for stretching, sit-ups, pull-ups, etc.

### *Bike Lanes*

Bike lanes are provided on roads in areas where separate pathways cannot be constructed.

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

The goal of the environmental education and interpretation component is to develop ways in which these concepts could be incorporated into all aspects of the Northern State Recreation Area.

#### Interpretation & Educational Themes

The overarching theme for the recreation area will be “the natural resources and people’s relationship to them over time.” Of the many possible stories that could be interpreted at Northern State Recreation Area, the team chose the following as the most significant to accomplishing the educational and interpretive goals of the site. Each is stated as a theme:

1. Salmon Habitat Restoration

Hansen Creek restoration is an example of the steps being taken to restore salmon habitat in Skagit County.

2. The Northern State Hospital Farm

The Northern State Farm produced enough food to make the hospital self-sufficient and also supported other state institutions. Many county residents were involved with the operation of the farm and the hospital.

3. Natural Habitats & Biodiversity

The Northern State Recreation Area includes a great variety of habitats that support a significant diversity of plants and animals.

4. Native American Continuity

Indian people, some of who live adjacent to the site today, have for a very long time been inhabitants of this region and continue to preserve their culture here today.

In relation to number 4, the story of Native American cultural and historical continuity should be integrated into the interpretive stories rather than being treated separately. For example, wayside exhibits about salmon should include the tribes' perspective and mention their involvement in restoration work, habitat preservation, etc. It will be especially important in referring to Indian people to emphasize their presence and activities today, avoiding the implication that their story is all one of the past. In order to better accomplish this, the local tribes should be consulted during the planning or development of this the particular theme.

### Guidelines for Interpretation

The following guidelines were recommended by the team:

- Include education as an element of the recreational experience
- Promote public understanding and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.
- Present topics of countywide significance.
- All designs, especially those of related to the educational facilities and devices, be sensitive to natural and cultural values of the site.

### Environmental Education Center

An environmental education center will serve as the focal point for educational and interpretive opportunities on the site. It will also act a gateway to the more natural or northern portion of the Northern State Recreation Area. It will be located in the center of the site just north of the ball fields and west of the multi use events center.

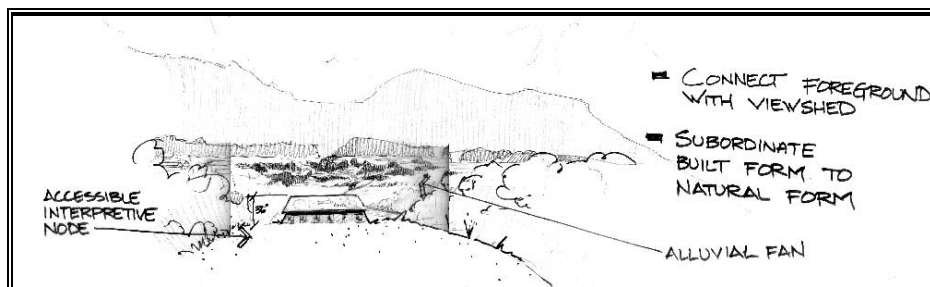
The following elements will be incorporated into the environmental education center:

- The structure will be designed to reflect the historic character of the site
- The structure will contain classrooms and/or theater(s)
- An outdoor amphitheater will be designed in close proximity to the environmental education center
- Exhibits will reflect the above mentioned themes

### Interpretive Trails

Interpretive trails should start from the environmental education center and return visitors via a loop route. Trails should be of varying lengths and allow for ADA accessibility where possible. Themes of potential interpretive trails include:

- Dairy barn and related farm structures
- Hanson Creek and restoration efforts
- Habitat diversity

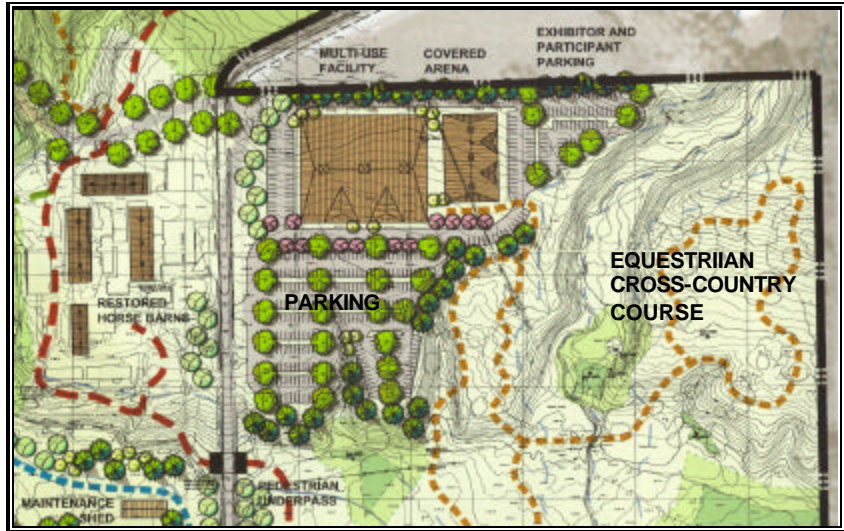


Rendition of alluvial fan interpretive site

***Equestrian and Multi-Use Events Center***

The goal of the equestrian and multi-use events center component is to develop a facility that can accommodate a variety of equestrian and community functions. These functions include (but are not limited to):

- rodeo and equestrian events
- school and educational programs
- trade shows
- craft fairs
- community and business meetings
- recreation classes
- family programs
- weddings and dances



Layout of Equestrian & Multiple Use Events Center Facilities

No Scale

Multi-Use Events Center

The Multi-Use Event Center building footprint is approximately 260 feet by 300 feet. The size of the structure is largely dictated by the need to fit an equestrian arena and spectator seating/grandstands inside. The open arena floor would be 240 feet by 140 feet. Grandstands/ bleachers would be installed on each side of the length of the arena, and will be capable of seating up to 2500 people. It is estimated that eight rows/banks of seating would be required on each side of the open floor to satisfy the seating capacity. The grandstands/bleachers may be designed as either permanent structures or as retractable seating, similar to that seen in high school gymnasiums. The arena floor will be designed so that the footing can be removed to expose a concrete floor for alternate uses.

In addition to the open floor and spectator seating area, the Multi-Use Event Center will house offices and meeting rooms, a concessions/kitchen area, an upstairs event announcer's and lighting booth, and restroom facilities. The building will be heated and lighted. Doors will be large enough to allow vehicle access for exhibitors, and for emergency and maintenance purposes. The building design will feature cupolas on the roof structure, as well as exterior design accents similar to the historic dairy barns across the street.

Covered Arena

An outdoor, covered arena will be located to the east of the Multi-Use Event Center. The overall footprint provides for a 200 foot by 100-foot equestrian arena and protection for onlookers or equestrians tacking up

their horses. The covered arena will be lighted, and is intended for use as a warm-up area during large equestrian events in the Multi-Use Event Center, as well as for general use by casual equestrians.

A driveway off Helmick Road provides vehicle access to the site, with a service road around the perimeter of the building. Handicap and general parking for approximately 300 cars will be located adjacent to the multi-use events center. Additional overflow parking is located in the lower field to the south of the center (see Ball Fields write-up). Pedestrian trails will offer a path for spectators to access the center or the ball fields from the lower parking area. Parking for horse trailers is located across the street inside the Equestrian Center, with a Pedestrian/Equestrian underpass designed to allow for the safe crossing of Helmick Road. An Exhibitor parking area for larger trucks and service vehicles is located to the east of the outdoors arena structure.

Users of the Multi-Use Event Center will be charged appropriate fees for specific uses. It is intended that use of this facility will produce sufficient revenues to offset the operating costs and maintenance of the facility and grounds.

#### Equestrian Center

A premier Equestrian Center will be located near the entrance of the park, in the historic Dairy Complex. It is a goal in the design of this center to preserve as many historical buildings as possible. Two or three of the old Dairy Barns will be saved and renovated to provide temporary stabling for 75 to 100 horses during equestrian events. The barns will be finished to include cupolas on the roofs and barn doors to match the original Dairy Barn designs. Barns will have interior lighting and a restroom facility. If feasible, a fourth barn building will be renovated as an open indoor area for a variety of meetings and group functions. Historic photographs and summaries describing site history and culture will be displayed throughout the Equestrian Center buildings. If possible, the old Dairy Barn mural on the old maintenance shed will be restored and moved to a new location within the Equestrian Center.

An equestrian Cross Country event course will be developed to the north of the Equestrian Center, extending up into the northeast corner of the park. The course will utilize the natural terrain of the park's open and a forested area to site jumps for the horses/riders. In addition to the cross-country course, equestrian trails will be developed throughout the park, with a concentration of trails to the east and south of the outdoor Covered Arena (adjacent to the Multi-Use Event Center) near Red Creek. A trail will extend south and will connect to the existing Cascade Trail. When not in use for events, the Cross Country course can be enjoyed by pedestrians and equestrians for casual use.

Access & Parking

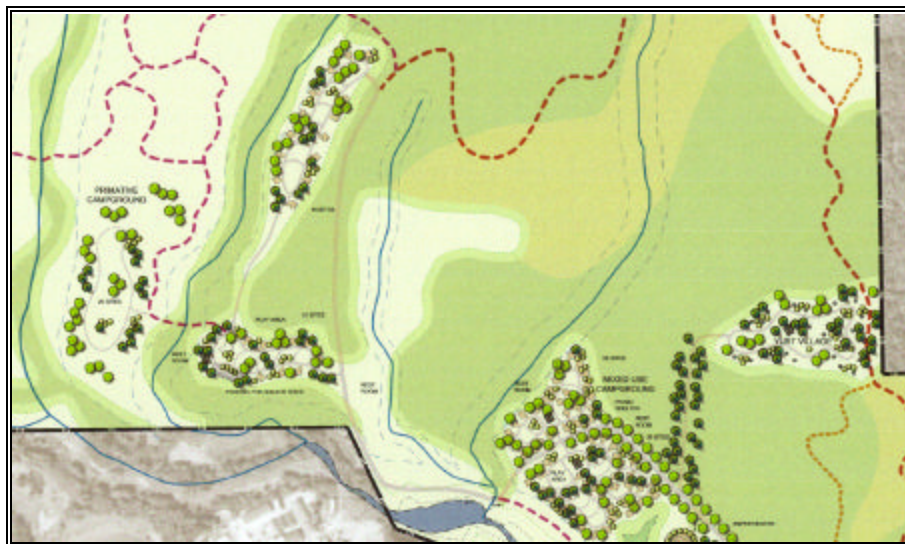
Vehicle access to the south end of the Equestrian Center will be from a driveway off Helmick Road, which leads directly into the center. Additionally, the center can be accessed from the north via the main entrance to the park. Parking for horse trailers and tow vehicles is available on the east side of the center, along the Helmick Road fence. Additional parking will be available directly to the west of the barns, with a road going around the perimeter of the center. Parking areas will be maintained as reinforced grassy fields to the extent possible. If necessary, the overflow parking area in the lower field south of the Multi-Use Event Center can be used for larger equestrian center events. The Pedestrian/Equestrian underpass will offer uninterrupted and safe crossing of Helmick Road by users.

Maintenance Building

If possible, a maintenance building will be located inside a restored building in the Equestrian Center. The building will be large enough to house a tractor and other equipment and tools needed for operations for the Equestrian Center and Multi-Use Event Center. Shavings bunkers will also be located on the site for the delivery and pick-up of shavings during equestrian events.

### ***Campgrounds***

The goal of the campgrounds component is to design a variety of camping experiences that address the regional deficiency in camping and picnic areas for a diverse set of potential users. The design team made every attempt to incorporate aesthetic values as well as



Layout of Campground Elements

No Scale

environmental education, conservation and restoration of the area's sensitive natural resources into the planning of the camping and picnic facilities.

### Elements

The campgrounds component includes the following elements:

- 100 camping sites
- Year round availability
- Diversity in design.
- Multiple locations throughout the site
- Play areas and picnic facilities dispersed throughout the site.

### Location

Camping facilities are located throughout the site near activity areas as well as in more remote locations. The sites of the various campgrounds, picnic areas and play areas were strategically located on small parcels of developable land left over after siting other facility needs and in relation to the sensitive areas to be retained as open space.

### Design Considerations

Campers at the Northern State Recreational Area represent a broad cross section of needs whether participating in sports tournaments, environmental education or escaping from the pressures of modern life. Driven by diverse demand, facility needs vary from larger heavily developed open public group campgrounds to more rustic isolated, individual or group areas as the user moves deeper into the park. Availability of



utilities also follows this pattern. Trees and vegetation as well as elevation changes and physical separation will be used as buffers for noise as well as to enhance the sense of separation.



### Quality of Experience

Each park visitor should come away from the experience remembering the uniqueness of the Northern State Recreational Area in terms of the events in which they participated. Campground facilities are to be designed and sited so as to be transparent. Tree and shrub buffered locations promote the sense of separation from the

other sites with views preserved at every opportunity and access to trails and other facilities.

### Maintenance

Maintenance ease and cost help drive the planning of the various campgrounds. Limited utilities reduce not only initial construction costs but also maintenance costs.

### Period of Usability

Remoteness of the hike-in areas limits their use in the winter, reducing the costs of maintenance. Yurts are designed as an all weather shelter for year-round use. Portable by design, the yurt village can be expanded as demand increases up to and beyond cost recovery.

### Infrastructure

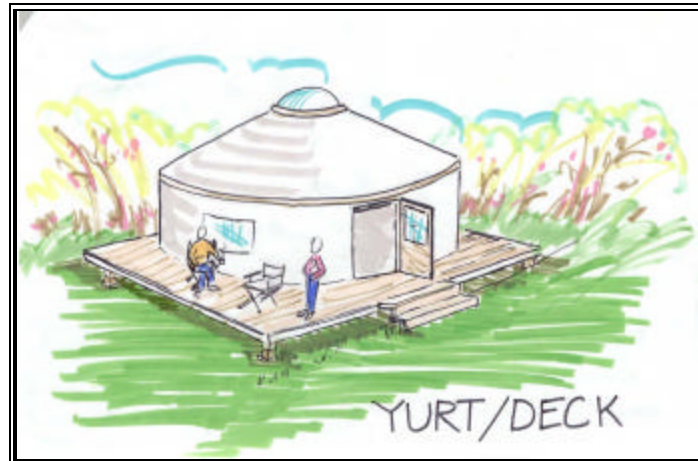
Access to areas by vehicle is in proportion to the type and number of likely users. A main campground loop is entered from the main entry drive with parking at the individual campsites. The yurt village accessed by an all-weather road, has a modest parking facility at the foot of the village. Parking for the more remote day use, camp and hike-in trailhead areas is reached by an all-weather but unpaved drive. Hike-in areas are approached by developed trails. Restroom and shower facilities are centrally located in more organized camping areas below the urban growth boundary. Each major campground and day use area is equipped with an appropriately sized open area for picnics, family sports and an equally proportional sized playground for younger visitors.

### Accessibility

Access to the various camping, picnic areas and play areas follows the same pattern as the facilities themselves. Easy immediate handicapped accessible facilities are universal in the larger more developed areas. Some trails to the more remote hike-in camping areas may present barriers to some visitors.

### Ecological Relationship

Balance is sought in siting the campgrounds between the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas and the camping needs of the general public. There is value in allowing park users to experience environmentally sensitive areas, but in a controlled manner so as to not jeopardize their integrity. For example, the yurt village and the upper camping areas provide for such access, while being separated by



fences, screening or elevation changes from the more sensitive nature to be experienced that surrounds it.

## **Appendix A - Planning Team & Advisory Committee Members**

### **Planning Team Members**

#### Skagit County Parks and Recreation

Bob Vaux, Director  
Earl Dierking, Assistant Director  
Patrik Dylan, Project Manager

#### Skagit County Parks and Recreation Board of Directors

John Semrau, Chairman  
Keith Magee, Vice Chairman

#### Northern State Task Force

Louie Requa  
Sharon Dillon

#### National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Program

*Project Planning Assistance*  
Bryan Bowden, Project Manager  
Dan Miller

*Charette Planning Assistance*  
Alex Stone  
Sue Abbott

### **Advisory Committee Members**

Mr. Arvid Alfred, Skagit RC Airplane Club  
Mr. Jon Aarstad, Burlington City Manager  
Ms. Sue Abbott, National Park Service  
Mr. Scott Babbitt  
Mr. John Bates  
Mr. Don Benson, URS  
Mr. Bryan Bowden, National Park Service  
Mr. Peter Browning, County Health Director  
Mr. Loren Cavanaugh, Burlington Parks Director  
Mr. Ken Cornett, Sedro Woolley Chamber  
Mr. Ken DeRussy, Hang Gliders  
Mr. Carroll Dillon, Parks Advisory Board  
Ms. Sharon Dillon, Sedro Woolley Mayor  
Mr. Patrik Dylan, Skagit County Parks  
Ms. Heather Elliott  
Mr./Mrs. Jim Falk, Anacortes Parks Foundation  
Mr. James Flannery  
Mr./Mrs. Richard Grosvenor, Equestrian Users  
Mr. Jeff Haddox, Skagit Bicycle Club  
Mr. Brian Hurst, Job Corps  
Mr. Ken Klepsett  
Mr. John Klochack, Skagit Systems Cooperative

Mr. Derek Koellmann, Skagit County PW  
Mr. Konrad Kurp  
Ms. Jeri Krampetz, Pacific NW Trail Association  
Mr. Ed Lipsey  
Ms. Judy Lipsey  
Mr. Keith Magee, Parks Advisory Board  
Ms. Liz McNett-Crowl, SCPAC  
Mr. Curt Miller, Miller Consulting  
Mr. Dan Miller, National Park Service  
Mr. Eric Monson, Mount Vernon School District  
Mr. Dick Morris  
Ms. Nikki Palesch, Camp Fire Boys & Girls  
Ms. Suzanne Perlmutter, MLA  
Mr. Louis Requa, Northern State Task Force  
Ms. Lauren Rich, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe  
Mr. Gary Robinson, Anacortes Parks Director  
Mr. John Semrau, Parks Advisory Board  
Mr. Bill Stendal, Sedro Woolley Rotary Club  
Ms. Alex Stone, National Park Service  
Mr. Bob Vaux, Skagit County Parks Director  
Mr. Brian Wetcher, Fidalgo Landscape  
Mr. John Yengich, WSU/Cooperative Extension  
Mr. Eldon Young, Kiwanis Club of Anacortes

**Appendix B – Charette Participants**

Mr. Jon Aarstad  
Mr. Nick Bates  
Mr. Don Benson  
Mr. Bryan Bowden  
Mr. Jim Brennan  
Mr. Tom Chisholm  
Mr. John Cooper  
Ms. Brenda Cunningham  
Ms. Desire Douglass  
Mr. Mike Elde  
Ms. Lynne Gearhart  
Mr. Dan Gilchrist  
Ms. Mary Jean Gilman  
Ms. Judy Grosvenor  
Ms. Jeroldine Halberg  
Mr. Jim Harris  
Ms. Andrea Henault  
Ms. Dianne Hennessey  
Ms. Lauren Woodmansee

Mr. Steve Hinton  
Mr. John Klochack  
Mr. Derek Koellmann  
Ms. Jeri Krampetz  
Mr. Keith Magee  
Mr. Tim Manns  
Ms. Marianne Manville-Ailles  
Mr. Pete Mayer  
Mr. Curt Miller  
Mr. Dan Miller  
Mr. Louis Requa  
Ms. Lauren Rich  
Ms. Gloria Rivera  
Mr. Jonathan Schlik  
Ms. Vicki Schimke  
Mr. John Semrau  
Mr. David Skrinde  
Mr. Brian Stark

MMM



Charette participants

October 21, 2001

## Appendix C – Design Elements

### 1) Open Space

500 Acres Minimum

- Protection of Streams, Wetlands, habitat and open space
- Compliance with Critical areas ordinances and regulations

### 2) Trails - *Highest Priority*

5-Mile Minimum

- Designed for multiple users
 

Biking	Jogging	Orienteering
Hiking	Walking	
Equestrian	Wildlife Viewing	
Interpretation of Natural/cultural resources		
- 61.3 % survey respondents interested in trails on this site. This was the most popular element

### 3) Campground – *Multi-use and Highest quality*

40 acres

- Multi camper needs served
 

Tent camping	Group camping
RV sites	Shelter sites
- 36.8 % interest from survey
- Needs assessment indicates 600 sites needed by 2015

### 4) Open Grass Picnic Area

5 Acres, may be multiple smaller sites

Managed Park Area	Picnic areas
Frisbee	Disk Golf

- 53.3% of Survey displayed interest, second most popular element
- Will function as support to other elements

### 5) Environmental Education Center

2 ½ Acres

- Compliments and highlights the diverse range of natural resources on site
- 24.7% interest from survey
- Provides unique regional draw to all county residents
- Environmental Ed center at Padilla Bay is Skagit County’s most utilized facility

### 6) Playgrounds

1 ½ Acres

- Enhances experience of the site for the entire family
- Multi-use areas to be developed by Charette participants. It is possible to include play structure as well as courts.
- Very popular park element that takes up very little space

7) Ball Fields

40 acres

1 adult baseball

4 youth baseball

- Youth baseball is highest field need in Skagit County according to needs assessment, 19 by 2015

5-youth/adult softball

- Skagit County Softball program is only limited by number of fields it can Schedule

8) Equestrian Center

25 acres

- Significant potential to incorporate established successful equestrian event, Logger
- Rodeo
- Unable to meet equestrian needs with current facilities in Skagit County and beyond
- Possible to incorporate and re-use existing barns on site

9) Infrastructure

10 + Acres

Interior Roads

Parking

Maintenance buildings

Utilities

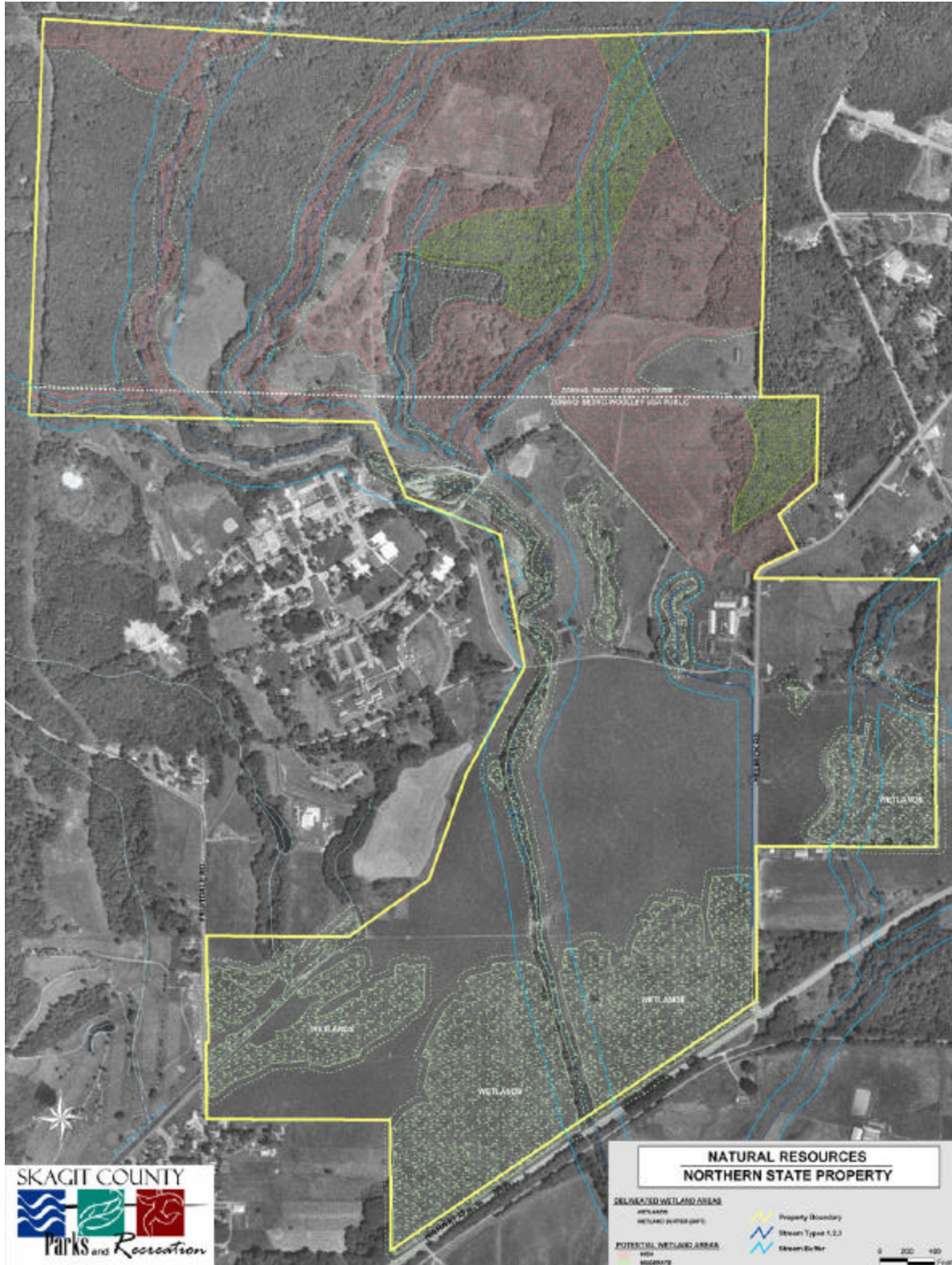
Restrooms

10) Additional consideration

Multi-Use Event Center

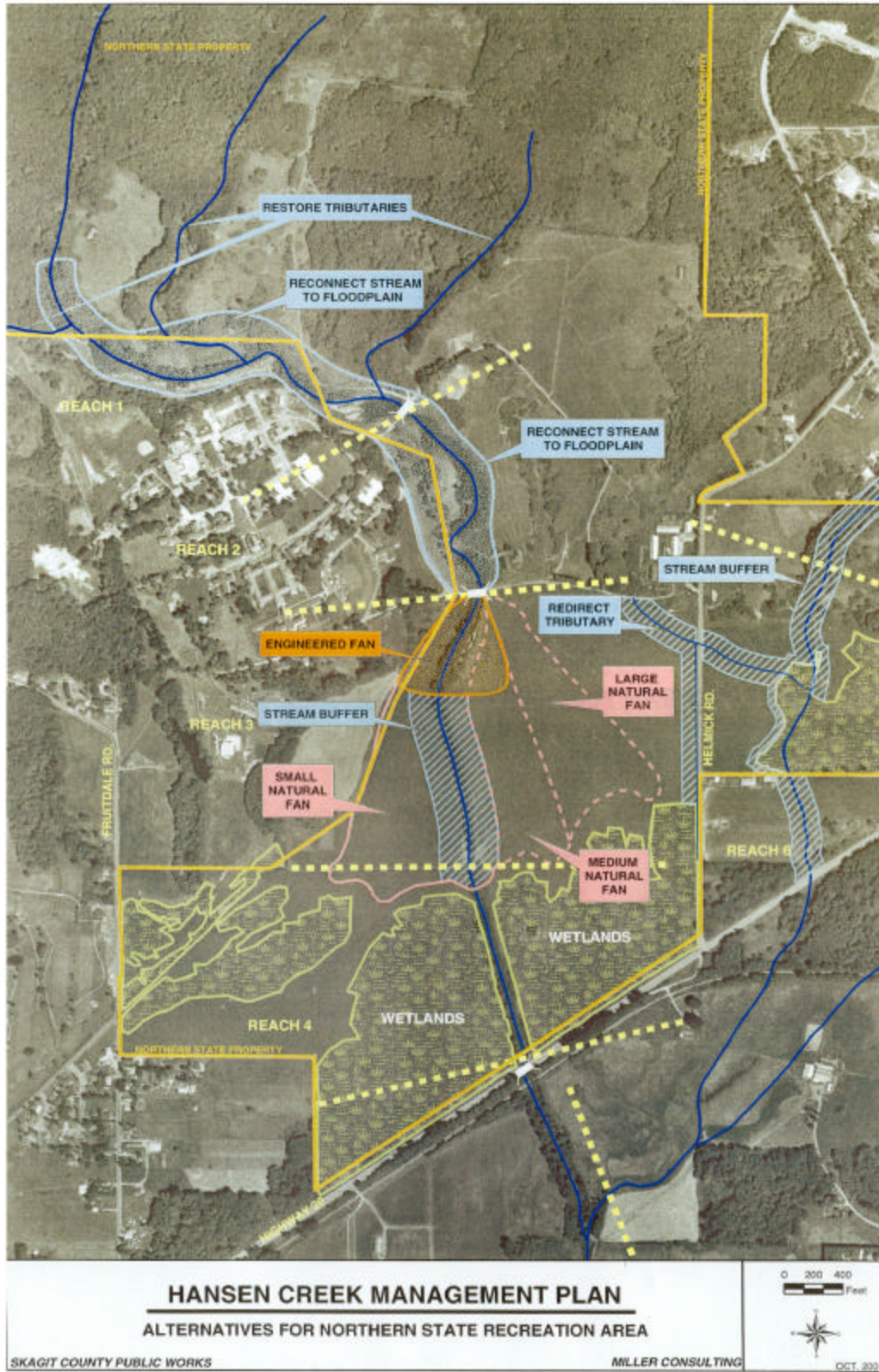
This element was determined to be most feasible if developed in conjunction with the equestrian center due to the similar square footage requirements





Map 2 – Wetlands Delineation Map





**Map 3 – Hansen Creek Restoration Alternatives**