RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment

Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition

Grant County, WA

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Region

March 2010

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian tribes and our commitments to island communities.

MISSION OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Region
Upper Columbia Area Office
Ephrata, Washington

PN-FONSI-10-02
March 2010

Introduction

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to comply with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (NEPA). This document briefly describes the Proposed Action, scoping process, alternatives considered, Reclamation's consultation and coordination activities, and Reclamation's finding. The Final EA for the Proposed Action fully documents the analysis that forms the basis of this FONSI.

Background

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) manages Steamboat Rock State Park (Park) located on lands owned by Reclamation. WSPRC proposes to construct the Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition (project), which would expand the Park's campground facilities and provide additional sewage treatment and water storage in support of the expanded facilities. The actions contemplated must be approved by Reclamation. That approval by Reclamation is the federal action that requires NEPA compliance.

The Park is in Grant County, Washington, and is located on Banks Lake, which is part of the Columbia Basin Project. The park is 3,522 acres in size and has 50,000 feet of freshwater shoreline. It contains two campground areas, with a total of 126 campsites, a swimming beach, 13.1 miles of hiking and biking trails, 10 miles of horse trails, a day-use area, and seven boat launches in three locations.

Purpose and Need

The Park receives over 500,000 visitors annually. It is a destination park, with approximately 70% of users coming from King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties, or from out of state, for

extended stays. It has the third highest campground usage rate in the state park system, and operates at or near full capacity during the entire reservation period (May 15–September 15).

Demand for campground spaces exceeds the available supply, excluding many potential campers from enjoying the Park and likely contributing to dispersed camping (i.e., camping outside of established campsites) in the areas surrounding the Park. The purpose of the project is to respond to this existing demand.

Moreover, the need for the project is identified in the following plans.

2001 Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

In 2001, Reclamation completed a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Banks Lake Management Area, the 44,500-acre area in which the Park is located. Reclamation also completed an EA for the RMP in accordance with NEPA requirements.

The RMP contains specific recreation site improvement goals and management actions. The goal for recreation sites is to "provide a diverse range of recreation opportunities and services consistent with public use trends." Management actions identified to accomplish this goal include focusing recreational use in areas that are environmentally suitable for public use and providing additional boat moorage slips in the vicinity of the existing north campground at the Park.

A FONSI was issued for the RMP EA. The FONSI identified expansion of the Park as a future solution to accommodate recreational growth. The selected alternative identified in the FONSI was designed to balance natural resource conservation with limited recreational development. The RMP specified that the Park was to maintain and operate existing facilities at 2001 levels until such time as increased demand warranted new sites or facilities. Under this policy, facility expansion within existing recreation areas was to have priority over new site development.

The FONSI indicated that additional NEPA compliance would be required once specific project plans were developed. The Final EA responds to the need identified in the RMP EA and FONSI and tiers off of that earlier analysis.

Centennial 2013 Plan

In 2003, the WSPRC began planning for its 2013 centennial celebration and developed the *Centennial 2013 Plan*. This plan designates the Park as an area to receive visible improvements, such as providing additional facilities.

Scoping Process

Reclamation involved the public in the preparation of the Draft EA for the project. The goal of the public involvement process is to ensure that all stakeholders have ample opportunity to express their interests, concerns, and viewpoints and to identify management issues and concerns to be addressed in the EA. Reclamation initiated an agency and public involvement program in June 2008. Information was gathered through a public meeting and a public meeting notification process that also encouraged written responses. Public review of the Draft EA is addressed later in this document.

A legal scoping notice ran in 21 local and regional newspapers on June 20, 2008. In addition, the scoping meeting announcement was mailed to 59 residents, property owners, and business owners in the Coulee City and Grand Coulee communities and in other parts of Washington and Oregon. In addition, 39 meeting announcements were distributed to EA agency reviewers and relevant local, state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions and 23 notices to nongovernment organizations, local libraries, and local newspapers.

The public scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, July 1, 2008, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The project team offered self-mailing comment forms and prepared a presentation and three display boards that consisted of the following elements:

- purpose and objectives of the scoping process
- project background
- project alternatives (No Action and Proposed Action)
- overview of NEPA/SEPA environmental process
- community involvement opportunities
- anticipated EA schedule
- question and answer session

One community member attended the scoping meeting, shared comments verbally with the project team, and mailed written comments after the meeting. In addition, WSPRC received two agency comment letters and two public comment emails. The 30-day scoping period closed on July 22, 2008.

Scoping did not identify any new issues that would require revising the proposed alternatives or the elements to be addressed in the EA. Elements analyzed in the EA included utilities and public services, recreation, socioeconomics, soils, surface water quality and aquatic resources, vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and historic resources.

Alternatives Considered

The Draft and Final EA were prepared in accordance with the CEQ and Department of the Interior regulations for implementing NEPA. The EA evaluated a No Action alternative and one action alternative, the Proposed Action. These alternatives are summarized below.

Alternative 1—No Action Alternative

Under Alternative 1 (No Action), no new campground facilities would be constructed and operations and maintenance would continue as under existing conditions or in accordance with future policies. The Park would continue to operate at capacity during the peak season and would continue to have to turn people away due to an insufficient number of camping spaces. The No Action alternative would not address the purpose and need of the project, because it

would not fulfill the existing demand for increased recreational opportunities by providing additional camping spaces.

The No Action alternative would not address the recreation site improvement goals identified in the RMP and RMP EA, the issues identified during scoping for the RMP EA, or the Centennial 2013 Plan priorities.

Alternative 2—Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, WSPRC would develop two new camping areas, upgrade the water and sewage systems, construct a trail and optional footbridge linking the campgrounds and day-use areas, and add boat moorage for both day users and campers. Boat moorage spaces and the trail/footbridge would improve the experience of campers by providing Park amenities and linking the developed portions of the Park together.

The Proposed Action is designed to meet the purpose and need for the project by providing additional camping spaces to meet demand. It would be consistent with and contribute to the attainment of the RMP goals because it would create additional spaces within an existing, developed park area. The Proposed Action also addresses issues identified during the RMP EA scoping process (i.e., a lack of desired recreational facilities, congestion in certain areas, and, to a lesser extent, environmental degradation resulting from dispersed camping). The Proposed Action would similarly address the priorities of the *Centennial 2013 Plan* by caring for an existing facility so that the public could continue to enjoy it; expanding an existing park to build capacity to meet increasing recreational demand; providing a new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trail, optional footbridge, and additional boat moorage slips to reduce the amount of boat moorage along the shoreline; and providing visible improvements to the Park.

The Proposed Action also reduces environmental degradation of the lakeshore by focusing use on developed areas (e.g., boat moorages and trail/footbridge). Upgrades to the sewage and water systems are necessary as part of the Proposed Action to support the additional camping spaces.

Subject to funding and regulatory approvals, the Proposed Action would be constructed in three phases, with Phase I planned for the 2009–2011 biennium; Phase II planned for the 2011–2013 biennium; and Phase III planned for the 2013–2015 biennium. The elements of each phase are described below.

Phase 1

- Construct the proposed North Campground area, with both recreational vehicle hookup sites and cabins, located between the existing north campground area and the existing day-use area.
- Add an underground potable water reservoir in the vicinity of the existing reservoir.
- Expand the existing sewage disposal system (i.e., sewage lagoons and related infrastructure) in the vicinity of existing sewage treatment facility.

Phase2

- Construct a new campground area (Middle Campground) between the existing south and north campground areas.

- Construct of a trail and optional footbridge linking the campgrounds and day-use areas.

Phase 3

- Construct of three sets of 12 boat moorage slips for the campgrounds (36 moorage slips total) installed adjacent to each of the two existing campground areas and the proposed Middle Campground.
- Construct of 16 moorage slips for the day-use area west of the existing boat ramp.

Recommended Alternative

The recommended alternative is the Proposed Action as described in the Final EA. This alternative meets the demand for additional recreational opportunity at the Park and minimizes environmental impacts by focusing development within the existing developed portion of the Park.

Environmental Commitments

Mitigation measures to minimize environmental impacts were identified in the EA. Reclamation is committed to their implementation and considers them to be part of the federal action.

Agency Consultation and Coordination

During the environmental assessment process, Reclamation coordinated and consulted with other groups and agencies. This section briefly describes these activities.

Endangered Species Act

Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires all federal agencies to ensure that their actions neither jeopardize the continued existence of listed species nor destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat.

In accordance with Section 7(c) of the ESA, Reclamation obtained lists of threatened, endangered, and candidate species, and species of concern potentially found in the Park (i.e., listed for Grant County) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Eastern Washington Field Office website (February 9, 2009). Rare plant information was obtained from the Rare Plant and Vegetation Survey Report prepared for the Proposed Action (as referenced in the final EA), which incorporated data from the Natural Heritage Program database and an onsite botanical survey. A list of anadromous fish species listed under the ESA was obtained from the NOAA Fisheries website (February 9, 2009). An analysis of the known range, habitat requirements, known occurrences, and results of field surveys was conducted for the EA for the following species:

- pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) Columbia Basin distinct population segment (endangered)

- Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) Upper Columbia River Spring-run Evolutionarily Significant Unit (endangered)
- steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Upper Columbia River Distinct Population Segment (endangered)
- bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) Columbia Basin distinct population segment (threatened)
- Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) (threatened)

The EA found that no listed species are known to occur in the study area and that the Proposed Action would have no impact on listed fish, wildlife, or plant species. These findings are also documented in a No Effect Letter, which found that the Proposed Action would have *no effect* on these listed species. Because no species listed under ESA are known to occur in the study area, Reclamation does not require concurrence from NOAA Fisheries Service and USFWS to proceed with the Proposed Action. A copy of the Final EA will be sent to both agencies.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) (as amended in 1992) requires that federal agencies consider the effects that their actions have on historic properties. To comply with Section 106 of the NHPA, federal agencies must consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), tribes with cultural or religious interests in the study area, and the interested public to identify and evaluate the significance of historic properties in the study area and the effects the project may have on them. The federal agency must mitigate any adverse effects that the project may have on significant resources.

In advance of the development of the RMP, Reclamation contracted with the Archaeological and Historical Services Department of Eastern Washington University (AHS) to prepare a cultural resources overview of the Upper Grand Coulee including the Banks Lake area. An intensive Class III survey was also completed between 1999 and 2002 by the Colville Confederated Tribes' History/Archaeology Program for the RMP project area, including the Park. Confidential information on Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) was compiled by Camas Consulting in consultation with representatives of the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Using the results of these surveys, Reclamation intends to prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) for the Banks Lake area, including the Park, in coordination with affected tribes and management agencies. The CRMP will outline specific management actions and measures needed to protect cultural resources and limit damage from area activities. Reclamation will also consult with tribes to further define and implement actions to avoid or minimize impacts on TCPs and other historic properties in the vicinity, to the extent consistent with agency authorities.

AHS conducted cultural resource surveys in 2007 and 2009 of the study area in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA for preparation of the Final EA. Two recorded archeological sites are located in the study area; both sites are isolated finds not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Proposed Action would not directly affect any known cultural resources in the study area. However, it has been determined, through consultation with

the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), that the Proposed Action will have an indirect adverse effect on cultural resources. Prior to beginning permitted work on the Proposed Action, Reclamation will enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the DAHP and other concerned parties to perform necessary mitigative actions to address the indirect effects.

As will be provided for in the MOA, should cultural resources be identified during construction activities, work will cease in the area of discovery and the find will be secured; park staff, Reclamation, DAHP, and affected Indian tribes would be notified. In the case of the inadvertent discovery of human remains, Section 3 of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 would be followed. NAGPRA states that protection will be given to Native American graves, burial sites, and cultural items. Cultural items include human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.

Tribal Coordination and Consultation

The relationship between federal agencies and sovereign tribes is defined by laws, regulations, and executive orders addressing the requirement of federal agencies to notify or consult with tribal groups or otherwise consider their interests when planning and implementing federal undertakings.

In accordance with 40 CFR Ch. V, Sec. 1501.7, an invitation to participate in scoping for the Proposed Action was mailed to the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Yakama Nation, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians on June 19, 2008.

Government-to-Government Consultation with Tribes

A copy of the Draft EA was sent to Colville Confederated Tribes, the Yakama Nation, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians on October 8, 2008. The representatives that received the Draft EA are listed in Section 6.3 of the Final EA.

Indian Sacred Sites (Executive Order 13007)

Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, requires federal land management agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites located on federal land by Indian religious practitioners and to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. It also requires agencies to develop procedures for reasonable notification of proposed actions or land management policies that may restrict access to or ceremonial use of, or adversely affect, sacred sites on federal lands.

Sacred sites are defined in the executive order as “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.”

The proposed undertaking is located on federal land subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 13007. No sacred sites have been identified in the study area. Potential impacts on sacred sites that may be extant in the Banks Lake Management Area are addressed in the FONSI and the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001c and 2001b). The Proposed Action will adhere to the Executive Order 13007 commitments of the FONSI and EA.

Indian Trust Assets

Indian trust assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals. Examples of trust assets are lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The United States has an Indian trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by or granted to Indian tribes or Indian individuals by treaties, statues, and executive orders, which are sometimes further interpreted through court decisions and regulations. This trust responsibility requires Reclamation to take all actions reasonable and necessary to protect ITAs. Potential impacts on ITAs in the Banks Lake area were addressed in the RMP EA and FONSI. The Proposed Action would have no impacts on ITAs.

Public Review and Reclamation Responses

The Draft EA was issued on October 8, 2008, and was mailed to agencies, tribes, and members of the public that had expressed an interest in the project. The public comment period closed on November 11, 2008, and a total of six comment letters were received.

The following is a summary of the major comments on the Draft EA and Reclamation's responses.

Potential Impacts on Cultural Resources

The Colville Confederated Tribes submitted comments concerning the potential impacts of this project on cultural resources. Because of the confidential nature of those concerns, they are not elicited herein, rather their concerns are addressed as part of the Section 106 of the NHPA consultation process.

Consultation with Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DAHP expressed interest in conducting consultation and receiving copies of correspondence from concerned tribes. The agency also provided guidance in the event that archeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities.

Reclamation Response

Consultation with DAHP is ongoing. Wording describing the actions that would be taken in the event that archeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities was revised in the EA to reflect suggested language.

Use and Control of Nonnative Plant Species

Commenters expressed concern over use of nonnative plant species for recovering disturbed sites, use of irrigation to help establish new plantings, and control of nonnative invasive species.

Reclamation Response

Additional mitigation measures were added to the EA. One measure specifies that if nonnative, noninvasive plants are used to recover disturbed sites, only certified, sterile types will be used. Another new mitigation measure states that prior to planting, sites will be evaluated and plant species with a high probability of successfully establishing on the site will be selected and irrigation may be provided to individual sites, as needed. A list of best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential introduction or spread of nonnative invasive plant species was also added.

Design of the Trail and Optional Footbridge

WDFW offered specific advice on design elements to reduce impacts on wetlands from construction of the footbridge and trail.

Reclamation Response

These elements are part of Phase 2 of the Proposed Action and have not yet been completely designed. The suggestions provided will be considered as designs are finalized.

Campground Operational Impacts

One commenter indicated that more discussion of operational impacts was needed.

Reclamation Response

Additional information on operational impacts has been added to the EA, including the increase in number of campers able to reserve sites and a discussion of the increase in boaters, boat ramp congestion, required maintenance, and personnel and equipment needs.

Dispersed Camping

The commenter asked for data to support the assumption that increasing the number of campsites available for reservation would decrease the amount of dispersed camping.

Reclamation Response

This was an assumption made in the Draft EA, based on the assumption that at least a portion of the people using dispersed sites are those that are turned away from the campground because it is full when they arrive. After further consideration of this assumption, the EA has been revised to state that some campers may continue to choose dispersed camping, because they prefer the experience over that of camping in a developed site or they do not want to pay campsite fees. Thus, although the additional recreational opportunities provided by the Proposed Action will likely result in a reduction in dispersed camping and a consequent reduction in related environmental degradation, it is unlikely to be a major reduction.

Boating Regulations

The commenter noted that “county boating regulations are not well noticed.”

Reclamation Response

Information was added to the EA describing the potential increase in the number of boaters under the Proposed Action and information related to the Grant County Sherriff's Office Marine Patrol Unit, Grant County Boating Ordinance, and Washington's Boater Safety Education Law. The Marine Patrol Unit specializes in patrolling Grant County waters and enforcing ordinances. The Grant County Boating Ordinance is currently being revised to address current conditions, and the Boating Safety Program is intended to increase safety on all Washington waters.

Soils

The commenter pointed out inconsistent statements regarding Quince Fine Sand in the Draft EA.

Reclamation Response

The inconsistency was corrected.

Boat Ramp Congestion

The commenter suggested an additional boat ramp be constructed in the Park for use by campers only.

Reclamation Response

An additional boat ramp is not planned at this time.

Horse Facilities

The commenter suggested additional horse trails and horse-use areas, including horse camps, instead of additional campgrounds.

Reclamation Response

No additional horse facilities are planned at this time.

Changes to Final Environmental Assessment

Reclamation incorporated editorial revisions to the Final EA to clarify aspects of the document and to ensure accuracy and consistency. In addition, minor changes were also made to the Final EA as a result of public and agency comments (as summarized above). Revisions are described below.

Alternatives

- Phase 2 description was updated to reflect revised trail configuration, which moved the trail back from the shoreline and wetlands and altered the footprint and area of disturbance associated with the trail.
- Phase 2 description was updated to include an optional footbridge as part of trail configuration.
- Footprint of trail and optional footbridge within 200-foot shoreline zone was changed to reflect revised trail configuration.

Utilities and Public Services

- Discussion was added regarding increases in demand for visitor services, use of recreational facilities, and potential need for increased staffing and new equipment as it relates to operating budget request; information was added to police protection, fire protection, and emergency services subsection.

Recreation

- Information was added describing the results of an outdoor recreation survey conducted by the WSPRC office.
- Total receipts for the 2008–2009 biennium, through January 2009, from watercraft launch sites at the Park were added.
- Hunting information on the Steamboat Rock peninsula was updated to reflect current agreements between Reclamation and WDFW.
- Information regarding demand for campsites at the Park was added.
- Discussion of recreational capacity and environmental degradation was expanded to clarify that dispersed camping may be reduced if dispersed campers are those that are turned away; however, it is likely that some campers may continue to choose dispersed camping, because they prefer the experience over that of camping in a developed site or they do not want to pay the camping fees. It was further clarified that although the additional recreational opportunities provided by the Proposed Action will likely result in a reduction in dispersed camping and a consequent reduction in related environmental degradation, it is unlikely to be a major reduction.
- Discussion was added regarding reduced congestion at the boat ramp as a result of campers using the new moorage slips.
- Information was added recognizing that the number of moorage slips provided would be less than the potential number of boats owned by campers in the existing campground, and that some campers will continue to beach their boats rather than trailer them when not in use.
- A discussion of boater safety was added.

Soils

- Dust control BMPs were added.

Surface Water Quality and Aquatic Resources

- Wetland and wetland buffer impacts were reduced to reflect minor changes in the configuration of the trail and optional footbridge.

Vegetation

- Additional mitigation measures were added for rehabilitating with native plant species areas disturbed by construction.
- BMPs to minimize the introduction or spread of nonnative invasive plant species during construction were added.
- Footprint of the trail and optional footbridge within the 200-foot shoreline zone was updated to reflect minor changes in the configuration of the trail and optional footbridge.
- Area of disturbed shrub-steppe habitat was reduced in response to the reduction of wetland impacts from revised trail and footbridge configuration.

Wildlife

- Area of shrub-steppe habitat disturbed was reduced to reflect reduction in wetland impacts from revised trail and footbridge configuration.

Threatened and Endangered Species

- Information on the habitat and distribution of the pygmy rabbit was expanded.
- Information on updated rare plant survey results was added.
- Environmental consequences of the No Action alternative were added.

Historic Resources

The entire Historic Resources section was updated. Revisions included the following.

- In the Draft EA, the term APE was inadvertently used to describe both the area surveyed for the cultural resources report prepared for the Proposed Action, which was the project footprint and a 0.25-mile buffer, and the area for which a records search was conducted for the Draft EA, which was the project footprint and a 1-mile buffer. In the Final EA, the term APE has been eliminated.
- The study area was more clearly defined as the portion of the Park located on the peninsula that contains the geographic location of the proposed development (undertaking) and a corresponding 150-foot buffer from direct impacts (i.e., the area for which a records search was performed for cultural resources for the EA). Information on TCPs was clarified.
- Clarification was made that impacts on cultural resources may occur outside of the study area under both the No Action alternative and the Proposed Action.
- A description of ongoing monitoring of natural and cultural resources in the Park and measures to respond to observed impacts on these resources were added.
- The paragraph describing inadvertent discoveries was revised to include the correct use of the term and to clarify procedures if such discoveries were made.

- It has since been determined that the Proposed Action constitutes an adverse effect to cultural resources. Prior to beginning permitted work on the Proposed Action, Reclamation will enter into an MOA with DAHP and other concerned parties to define measures to resolve the adverse effects.

Finding

Based on a thorough review of the comments received, the analysis of the environmental impacts, and implementation of all environmental commitments (i.e., mitigation measures) as presented in the Final EA and in this FONSI, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the Preferred Alternative will have no significant effect on the human and natural environment. Reclamation, therefore, concludes that preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and that this FONSI satisfies the requirements of NEPA.

Recommended:

3-11-2010

Date

Environmental Manager
Upper Columbia Area Office
Bureau of Reclamation

Approved:

3/11/2010

Date

William D. Gray
Area Manager
Upper Columbia Area Office
Bureau of Reclamation

Environmental Assessment

Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BA	biological assessment
BMPs	best management practices
CRMP	Cultural Resources Management Plan
DAHP	Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
EA	environmental assessment
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
GCC	Grant County Code
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NTUs	nephelometric turbidity units
OHWM	ordinary high water mark
Park	Steamboat Rock State Park
PHS	Priority Habitats and Species
project	Proposed Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition
Reclamation	Bureau of Reclamation
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RV	recreational vehicle
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
SR	State Route
TCPs	Traditional Cultural Properties
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WSPRC	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Chapter 1. Introduction

This environmental assessment (EA) was prepared for the Steamboat Rock State Park Campground Addition (project) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

1.1. Project Summary

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC) manages Steamboat Rock State Park (Park), which is located on lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) (Figure 1). WSPRC proposes to construct the project, which would expand the Park's campground facilities and provide additional sewage treatment and water storage in support of the expanded facilities. The project would be constructed in three phases. The actions contemplated in all three phases must be approved by Reclamation. That approval by Reclamation is the federal action that requires NEPA compliance.

The Park is located in Grant County, Washington, and is located on Banks Lake, which is part of the Columbia Basin Project. The Park encompasses 3,522 acres and 50,000 feet of freshwater shoreline. It contains two campground areas, with a total of 126 campsites, a swimming beach, 13.1 miles of hiking and biking trails, 10 miles of horse trails, a day-use area, and seven boat launches in three locations.

1.2. Purpose and Need for Project

The Park receives over 500,000 visitors annually. It is a destination park, with approximately 70% of users coming from King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties, or from out of state, for extended stays. It has the third highest campground usage rate in the state park system, and operates at or near full capacity during the entire reservation period (May 15–September 15). In the peak month of August 2007, there were an estimated 12,350 campers and 91,700 day-use visitors (WSPRC 2008).

Demand for campground spaces exceeds the available supply, excluding many potential campers from enjoying the Park and likely contributing to dispersed camping (i.e., camping outside of established campsites) in the areas surrounding the Park. The project responds to this existing demand. It also responds to goals, actions, and priorities identified in the plans and assessments described below.

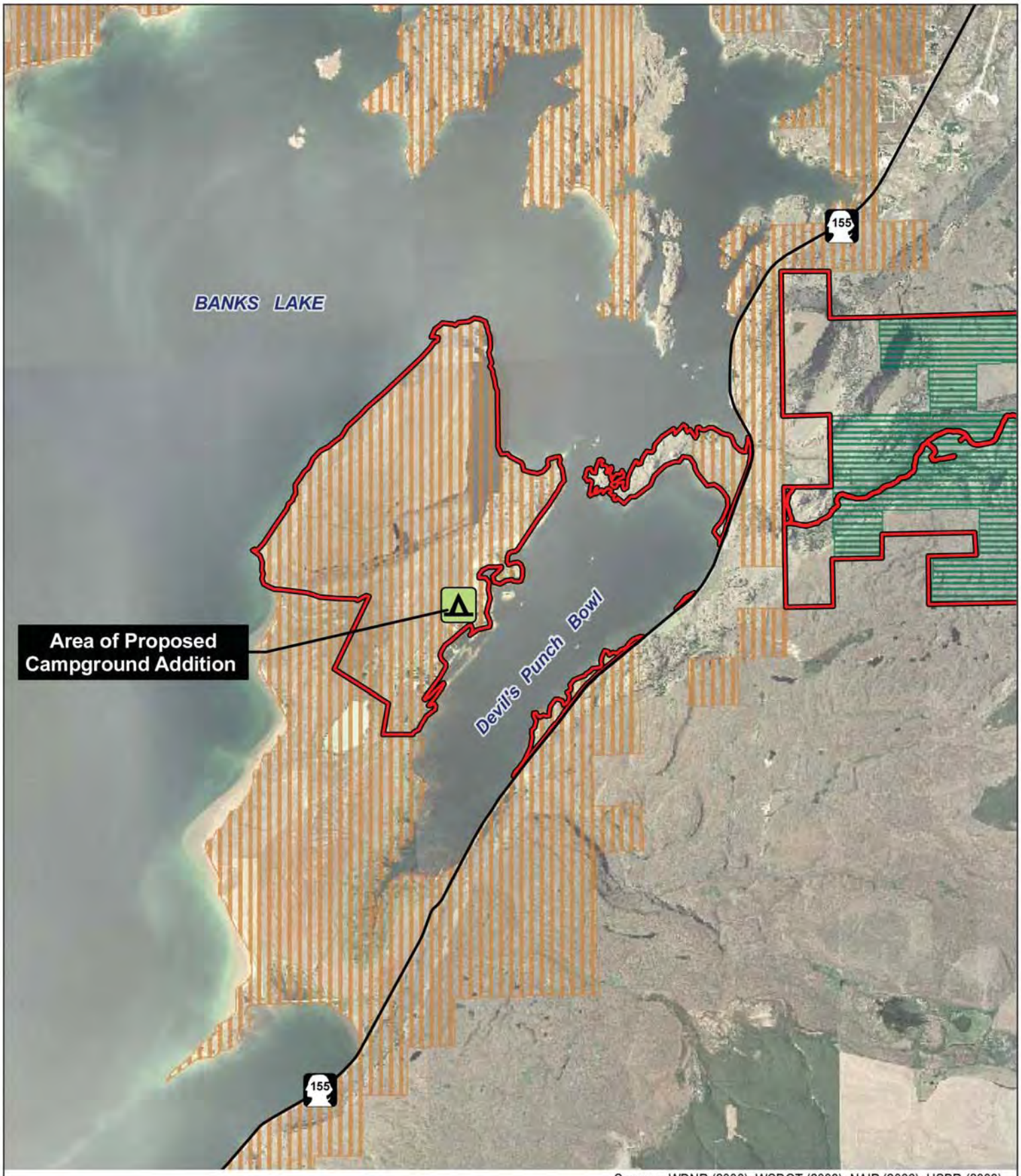

Figure 1. Project Vicinity

1.2.1 Plans that Support the Purpose and Need for Project

2001 Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

In 2001, Reclamation completed a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Banks Lake Management Area, the 44,500-acre area in which the Park is located. Reclamation also completed an EA for the RMP in accordance with NEPA requirements (Reclamation 2001a and 2001b).

The RMP contains specific recreation site improvement goals and management actions. The goal for recreation sites is to "provide a diverse range of recreation opportunities and services consistent with public use trends." Management actions identified to accomplish this goal include focusing recreational use in areas that are environmentally suitable for public use and providing additional boat moorage slips in the vicinity of the existing north campground at the Park.

The RMP EA identifies "control or eliminat[ion] of dispersed camping in environmentally sensitive areas by site improvements, access/seasonal restrictions, or site closure" as a management action to accomplish site improvement goals.

The following recreational issues were identified during the scoping process for the RMP EA:

- lack of desired recreational facilities
- user conflicts
- congestion in particular areas
- environmental degradation as a result of dispersed camping and indiscriminate motorized travel

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued for the RMP EA. The FONSI identified expansion of the Park as a future need to accommodate recreational growth. The FONSI indicated that additional NEPA compliance would be required once specific project plans were developed (Reclamation 2001c). This EA responds to the need identified in the RMP EA and FONSI and tiers off of that earlier analysis.

The selected alternative identified in the FONSI for management of Banks Lake was designed to balance natural resource conservation with limited recreational development (Reclamation 2001c). The RMP specified that the Park was to maintain and operate existing facilities at 2001 levels until such time as increased demand warranted new sites or facilities. Under this policy, facility expansion within existing recreation areas was to have priority over new site development (Reclamation 2001a).

Centennial 2013 Plan

In 2003, WSPRC began planning for its 2013 centennial celebration. The resulting Centennial 2013 Plan (WSPRC 2008) has three priorities:

- Priority 1: Care for the parks and recreation services enjoyed by the public today in the six core areas: stewardship; enjoyment, health, and learning; public service; facilities;

partnerships; and a financial strategy that leverages increased general tax support with earned revenue and donations for operations.

- Priority 2: Expand existing parks, trails, and services.
- Priority 3: Add new parks, trails, and services.
- The Centennial 2013 Plan designates the Park as an area to receive visible improvements, such as providing additional facilities.

1.2.2 How the Project Meets the Purpose and Need

2001 Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

The project (Proposed Action) would contribute to the attainment of the RMP goals for recreation sites and address the issues identified during the RMP EA scoping process (a lack of desired recreational facilities, congestion in certain areas, and, to a lesser extent, environmental degradation resulting from dispersed camping).

Although "user conflicts" (i.e., potential conflicts between people using personal watercraft and anglers) was identified during the RMP EA scoping process, it is considered an ongoing issue that is being addressed separately and is outside of the scope of this EA.

Provide Additional Recreational Facilities

The Proposed Action would increase recreational facilities by providing an additional 57 campsites, 20 cabins, and 52 boat moorage slips. These facilities would increase the capacity of the Park, helping to meet the existing demand for campground spaces, with the cabins providing a new opportunity not previously available at the Park. Addition of recreational facilities within the Park is consistent with the RMP objective of facility expansion in existing recreation areas rather than new site development.

Reduce Congestion

The proposed addition of 52 boat moorage slips (36 available for campground users and 16 available for day use) would expand boating opportunities in the Park. This could help to reduce congestion at area boat ramps because campers would not need to take their boats out of the water at the end of the day and day-users could moor their boats rather than trailering them should they come ashore to use the day-use area.

Reduce Environmental Degradation

When the Park is at capacity and no sites are available, some campers choose to camp outside of designated areas. When dispersed camping occurs in environmentally sensitive areas, environmental degradation results. Site improvement goals identified in the RMP include reduction in dispersed camping through the development of additional camping areas (as well as through closure of certain "primitive" motor-vehicle trails) to reduce environmental degradation.

Under the Proposed Action, the construction of 57 additional campsites and 20 cabins in the Park would likely reduce dispersed camping resulting from overflow; however, some campers may continue to choose dispersed camping. Therefore, the Proposed Action would likely result in

some level of reduction of environmental degradation from dispersed camping, but would not completely eliminate it.

During the early planning phase of the Proposed Action, construction of a developed area in a new portion of the peninsula was considered. It was ultimately decided, however, that interspersing development under the Proposed Action with the existing developed campgrounds was preferable because it would reduce impacts on wildlife habitat and would prevent fragmentation of existing large blocks of habitat. This approach to locating the Proposed Action is consistent with the RMP, which identifies the eastern shore of the peninsula as having a management emphasis of providing developed recreation, whereas other portions of the peninsula are to be managed for wildlife habitat or a mixture of wildlife habitat and non-developed recreation such as hiking and biking. The Proposed Action thus meets the need for additional camping capacity while minimizing environmental degradation by locating the new camping areas and related trail immediately adjacent to currently developed areas that, due to their proximity to developed areas, have a relatively low value as wildlife habitat. The boat moorage, trail, and optional footbridge also reduce environmental degradation by minimizing informal trail development and by directing Park visitors to designated use areas.

Centennial 2013 Plan

The Proposed Action would also address the priorities of the Centennial 2013 Plan by caring for an existing facility so that the public could continue to enjoy it; expanding an existing park to build capacity to meet increasing recreational demand; providing a new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible trail, optional footbridge, and new services (boat moorage); and providing visible improvements to the Park.

1.3. Location and General Description of Area

The Park is located on a peninsula in the northeastern portion of Banks Lake in Grant County, Washington. It is along State Route (SR) 155, approximately 20 miles north of Coulee City and 10 miles south of Grand Coulee and Electric City. Banks Lake is located in the Grand Coulee, a formerly dry canyon-like geological formation, and is part of the Columbia Basin Project, managed by Reclamation. Water is pumped into Banks Lake from Lake Roosevelt, the reservoir on the Columbia River behind Grand Coulee Dam, and is used for irrigation throughout a large portion of arid central Washington.

1.4. Related Actions

As described under Section 1.2, Purpose and Need for Project, Reclamation developed an RMP and associated EA for the Banks Lake Management Area in 2001 (Reclamation 2001a, 2001b) to provide management guidance for the land and water resources under Reclamation jurisdiction at Banks Lake. The FONSI issued for the EA selected Reclamation's preferred alternative, Alternative B, Natural Resource Conservation with Limited Recreation Development, with some changes based on public, tribal, and agency comments on the EA. Changes made by the FONSI included identifying the Park expansion concept as a future need for recreational growth, with in-depth evaluation of the location, design, and potential impacts required.

This EA assumes management under the selected alternative and does not repeat analysis of that decision. This EA focuses on the site-specific impacts that may occur in conjunction with the project.

1.5. Relevant Laws, Plans, and Programs

1.5.1. National Environmental Policy Act

Reclamation is responsible for determining if the Proposed Action might have significant effects on the environment under NEPA. If Reclamation determines that effects are not significant, a FONSI is prepared. A FONSI would allow Reclamation to proceed with the proposed action without the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

1.5.2. Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires federal agencies to insure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Section 7 of the ESA (16 United States Code Section 1536[a][2]) requires all federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for marine and anadromous species, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for freshwater and wildlife species, if an agency is proposing an action that may affect listed species or their designated critical habitat. If such species may be present, the federal agency must conduct a biological assessment (BA) for the purpose of analyzing the potential effects of the project on listed species and critical habitat in order to make an effect determination.

1.5.3. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, as amended, prohibits the unauthorized take of bald and golden eagles and their nests, eggs, or parts. The Act also prohibits the disturbance of bald or golden eagles, with disturbance defined as an activity that causes agitation to the extent that it causes injury to an eagle; decreases productivity by interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior; or causes nest abandonment.

1.5.4. Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 protects migratory birds by prohibiting the unauthorized take of birds protected under the Act, or their parts, including feathers, eggs, or nests. The law also prohibits unauthorized hunting or pursuing of included species.

1.5.5. National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to complete inventories to identify historic resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). NHPA also states that federal agencies will ensure those resources “are not inadvertently transferred, sold, demolished, substantially altered, or allowed to deteriorate significantly.” Regulations entitled “Protection of Historic Properties” (36 Code of Federal Regulations 800) defines the process for implementing requirements of the

NHPA, including consultation with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

1.5.6. Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act employs a variety of regulatory and nonregulatory tools to sharply reduce direct pollutant discharges into waterways, finance municipal wastewater treatment facilities, and manage polluted runoff. These tools are employed to achieve the broader goal of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters so that they can support the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water.

1.5.7. State Environmental Policy Act

The Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is intended to ensure that environmental values are considered during state and local agency decision making by providing information to agencies, applicants, and the public that encourages the development of environmentally sound proposals. The environmental review process involves the identification and evaluation of probable environmental impacts, and the development of mitigation measures that will reduce adverse environmental impacts. The environmental information, along with other considerations, is used by agency decision makers to decide whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a proposal.

WSPRC's proposed campground addition requires SEPA review; however, under the SEPA rules, a NEPA EA may be adopted to satisfy requirements for a determination of non-significance or EIS, if the requirements of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197–11–600 and 197–11–630 are met. WSPRC intends to adopt the NEPA EA under the SEPA rules for the project actions described herein.

1.5.8. Shoreline Management Act of 1971 and Grant County Shoreline Master Program

The Washington State Shoreline Management Act (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 90.58) requires local jurisdictions to develop shoreline master programs (SMPs) for shorelines of the state. Shorelines of the state are defined as streams with mean annual flows of 20 cubic feet per second or greater, lakes 20 acres or greater in size, and all marine shorelines. Shoreline jurisdiction (i.e., shoreline zone) extends inland 200 feet from the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) and any associated wetlands.

SMPs must contain goals and policies related to shoreline uses, conservation, economic development, public access, recreation, circulation, and housing. Under the Washington State Growth Management Act, a local jurisdiction's shoreline goals and policies are included as an element of the comprehensive plan, and the remaining portions are considered part of the jurisdiction's development regulations.

Banks Lake is classified as a shoreline of statewide significance, falling under the purview of chapter 90.58 RCW. The Grant County SMP of 1975 was developed to comply with RCW 90.58. Following development of the Grant County Comprehensive Plan, the Grant County SMP of 1975 was adopted into current Grant County Code (GCC) 24.12, which also incorporates the plans and shoreline goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

1.5.9. Other Plans and Programs

The RMP EA also identifies and describes the following plans and programs that may be applicable to the Proposed Action. These will be discussed in individual resource sections in Chapters 3 and 4, as needed.

- Grant County Comprehensive Plan
- Grant County SMP
- Steamboat Rock Bald Eagle Nesting Territory Management Plan
- Groundwater Management Area
- Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Management Plan
- Federal Columbia River System Operations Biological Opinion

1.6. Summary of Scoping Process

A legal scoping notice ran in 21 local and regional newspapers on June 20, 2008. In addition, the scoping meeting announcement was mailed to 59 residents, property owners, and business owners in the Coulee City and Grand Coulee communities, in other parts of Washington, and in Oregon. The lead agencies also distributed 39 meeting announcements to EA agency reviewers and relevant local, state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions and 23 notices to nongovernment organizations, local libraries, and local newspapers.

A public scoping meeting was held on Tuesday, July 1, 2008, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The project team offered self-mailer comment forms and prepared a presentation and three display boards that consisted of the following elements:

- purpose and objectives of the scoping process
- project background
- project alternatives (No Action Alternative and Proposed Action)
- overview of NEPA/SEPA environmental process
- community involvement opportunities
- anticipated EA schedule
- question and answer session

One community member attended the scoping meeting, shared comments verbally with the project team, and mailed written comments after the meeting. In total, WSPRC received two agency comment letters and two public comment emails. The 30-day scoping period closed on July 22, 2008.

Agency scoping comments included:

- recommendations to use integrated pest management tools to control problem insects, molds, and weeds;
- recommendations to recycle and to use recycled materials; and
- compliance with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Water Resources and Water Quality Programs.

An additional comment was received regarding traffic concerns; however, that comment was withdrawn as a result of conversations with WSPRC staff that provided additional information about the project.

- Comments from the public included one expressing concern that increased boat traffic in the vicinity of the campground would decrease boater safety. The second letter included recommendations for additional facilities that WSPRC could consider offering, and recommendations on campsite configuration and location of campsite utilities.

Chapter 2. Alternatives

This EA analyzes two alternatives, entitled Alternative 1, No Action, and Alternative 2, Proposed Action. The alternatives are described below.

2.1. Alternative 1: No Action

Under Alternative 1 (No Action), no new campground facilities would be constructed and operations and maintenance would continue as under existing conditions or in accordance with future policies. The No Action alternative would not address the purpose and need of the project, because it would not fulfill the demand for recreational opportunities by providing additional camping spaces. The Park would continue to operate at capacity during the peak season and would continue to have to turn people away due to an insufficient number of camping spaces. The No Action alternative would not address the recreation site improvement goals identified in the RMP and RMP EA, the issues identified during scoping for the RMP EA, or the Centennial 2013 Plan priorities.

2.2. Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Under Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), WSPRC would develop two new camping areas, upgrade the water and sewage systems, construct a trail and optional footbridge linking the campgrounds and day-use areas, and add boat moorage for both day users and campers. Boat moorage spaces and the trail/footbridge would improve the experience of campers by providing Park amenities and linking the developed portions of the Park together.

The Proposed Action is designed to meet the purpose and need for the project by providing additional camping spaces to meet the high demand. It would be consistent with the RMP goals because it would create additional spaces within an existing, developed park area. The Proposed Action reduces environmental degradation of the lakeshore by focusing use on developed areas (e.g., boat moorages and trail/footbridge). Upgrades to the sewage and water systems are necessary as part of the Proposed Action to support the additional camping spaces.

Subject to funding and regulatory approvals, project implementation is anticipated to occur in three phases, as described below and depicted in Figures 2, 3, and 4. Phase I is planned for the 2009–2011 biennium; Phase II for the 2011–2013 biennium; and Phase III for the 2013–2015 biennium.

2.2.1. Phase 1

Phase 1 elements (Figure 2) are summarized below followed by a more detailed description.

- construction of the proposed North Campground area, with both recreational vehicle (RV) hookup sites and cabins, located between the existing north campground area and the existing day-use area

- addition of an underground potable water reservoir in the vicinity of the existing reservoir
- expansion of the existing sewage disposal system (i.e., sewage lagoons and related infrastructure) in the vicinity of existing sewage treatment facility

North Campground

The proposed North Campground would provide a total of 26 campsites and 13 cabins. The campsites would have full water, sewer, and electrical hookups. The cabins would be available during the peak summer season (Memorial Day to Labor Day) and during the "shoulder seasons" (spring and fall) but would not be available during winter when the water system is shut off. There would be six pull-through sites and 20 back-in sites. One comfort station (restroom with shower facilities) would serve the North Campground area. Each cabin would have a restroom and be connected to the sewer system. The campground would be further improved with a fish cleaning station, landscaping, and an infrastructure of roads and utilities. Utilities would include water distribution lines, automated irrigation, underground power, gravity sewer lines, sewer force mains, and a sewage lift station.

The North Campground would be located in a currently undeveloped portion of the overall developed Park and would infill between the existing day-use area and the existing north campground loop. Approximately 8 acres of ground disturbance would occur during campground construction. Native earth materials (soils) would be leveled on site in a balanced cut-and-fill process; it is anticipated that no additional soils would be needed.

The new North Campground access road would be paved. Campsites would have hardened, graveled (or possibly paved) surfaces for parking. Each site would have a fire ring and picnic table. The hardened surface of the back-in sites would be approximately 70 feet long by 12 feet wide; the surface of pull-through sites would be approximately 110 feet long by 14 feet wide. In addition, three back-in sites would be built to current ADA specifications. Dumpster pads would be installed with hardened gravel (or possibly paved) surfaces. Areas between campsites would be planted with a combination of rock mulch, ornamental grasses, shrubs, trees, and lawn grasses. Stormwater runoff from buildings and hardened surfaces would be directed to grassy areas next to the facilities.

Cabins would be approximately 56 feet by 14 feet and would be constructed on a poured concrete foundation. The overall footprint of each cabin would vary slightly, however, depending on site conditions. They would have paved parking nearby and would be surrounded by an area of basalt rubble over geotextile fabric including an outdoor living space with gravel surfacing and landscaping of approximately 625 square feet.

The comfort station would measure approximately 38 feet by 24.5 feet and would also be constructed on a concrete foundation and be surrounded by a concrete sidewalk. The fish cleaning station, also constructed on a concrete pad, would be approximately 15 feet by 15 feet and surrounded by a concrete sidewalk. Utilities would be placed within or adjacent to the campground roads.

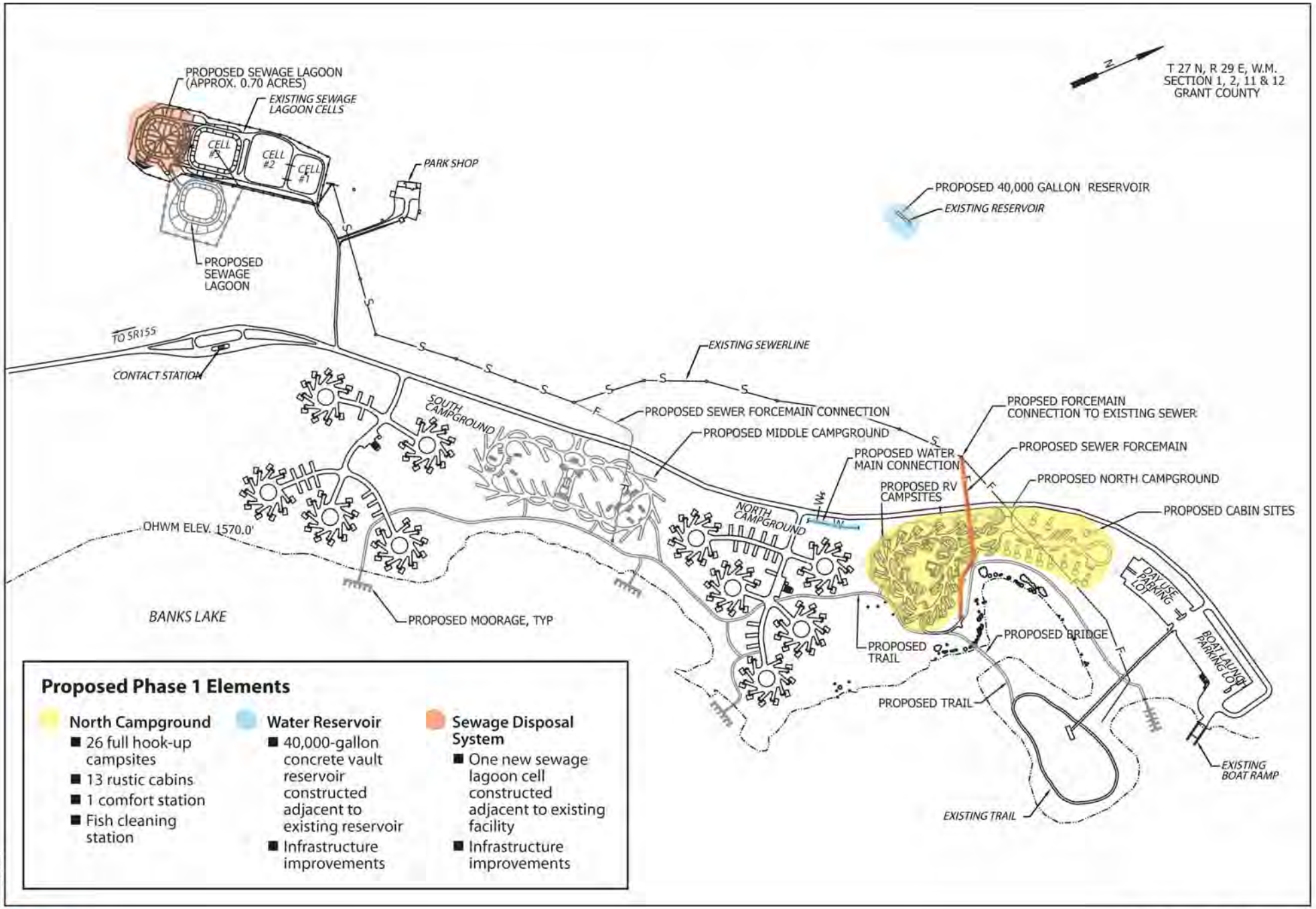

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Figure 2. Phase 1

The North Campground would be constructed outside of the 100-foot shoreline setback, designated to exclude parking areas and privies, as measured on a horizontal plane from the OHWM of Banks Lake (elevation 1,570.0 feet), as required under GCC 4.08.04 and 4.08.06 of 1975, as amended by GCC 24.12.020.

Water Reservoir

The new 40,000-gallon domestic water reservoir would be constructed adjacent to and southwest of the existing 40,000-gallon water reservoir and would be similar to the existing reservoir in design. Locating the new reservoir in this area would avoid removing approximately three ponderosa pine trees (*Pinus ponderosa*) to the northeast of the existing reservoir and ice age flood erratics (boulders) northwest of the reservoir that WSPRC has identified for preservation. The 6-inch inlet and 8-inch discharge lines associated with the existing reservoir would be branched and extended to serve the new reservoir.

The existing underground reservoir is a 10-foot-by-40-foot concrete vault, located adjacent to existing maintenance access roads. The existing pressurized main line to the existing reservoir from the wellheads and the existing gravity feed line to the existing campground areas from the reservoir would be used to provide water to the new campground areas. Existing water lines are located in the existing access road or the trail between the campground area and Steamboat Rock. Water lines to the new campground locations would be trenched parallel to the existing main Park road.

Existing water distribution lines would be improved to accommodate the additional use. Approximately 1,000 linear feet of 8-inch-diameter main would be constructed parallel to the main Park road.

The existing gravel access road to the existing reservoir is sufficient for heavy equipment access for construction of the new reservoir; no new road construction would be required. Reservoir construction would require the excavation of 300 cubic yards of soil. Any excess excavation materials would be disposed of in an approved site within the Park (e.g., old borrow pit).

Sewage Disposal System

The existing sewage disposal system would be expanded to accommodate additional recreational use. The evaporative capacity of the existing sewage disposal system would be increased with one new sewage lagoon cell. The cell (approximately 0.7 acre) would be constructed in the area adjacent to the existing cells and would be located to the southwest of the southern-most existing cell.

The cell would be excavated to a depth of approximately 5.5 feet and the total volume of excavated material would be approximately 1,500 cubic yards. Excavated material would be used to construct a raised berm around the cell and the access and maintenance road for the cell. The total area of new ground disturbance would be approximately 1 acre.

Construction of the new cell would require relocation of the existing overflow containment sump and extension of the gravity sewer inlet lines. This would occur within the area of either existing disturbed soils or the area of disturbance associated with the construction of the new cell.

The cell would be lined per current industry standards and in compliance with Department of Health (DOH) and/or Ecology regulations, to prevent leaching of sewage into the ground. To

date, WSPRC has not needed to remove solids from the existing lagoon cells, built in the mid-1970s. It is anticipated that the new cells would function similarly and that removal of biosolids would not be necessary. If it should become necessary in the future, biosolids would be removed and disposed of in a manner consistent with current regulations.

2.2.2. Phase 2

Phase 2 elements (Figure 3) are summarized below followed by a more detailed description.

- construction of a new campground area (Middle Campground) between the existing south and north campground areas
- construction of a trail and optional footbridge linking the campgrounds and day-use areas

Middle Campground

The Middle Campground would provide a total of 31 campsites and seven cabins. The campsites would have full water, sewer, and electrical hookups. There would be eight pull-through sites and 23 back-in sites. One comfort station would serve the Middle Campground area. The campground would be further improved with a fish cleaning station, landscaping, and an infrastructure of roads and utilities. Utilities would include water distribution lines, automated irrigation, underground power, gravity sewer lines, sewer force mains, and a sewage lift station.

The cabins would be available during the peak summer season (Memorial Day to Labor Day) and during the shoulder seasons (spring and fall) but would not be available during winter when the water system is shut off.

Approximately 10 acres of ground disturbance would occur during campground construction. Material would be leveled on site in a balanced cut-and-fill process; it is anticipated that no additional material would be needed.

Construction of the campground sites, comfort station, fish cleaning station, cabins, and utilities would occur as described above for the North Campground. The Middle Campground would be constructed outside of the 100-foot shoreline setback designated to exclude parking areas and privies, as measured from the OHWM of Banks Lake (elevation 1,570.0 feet), as required under GCC 4.08.04 and 4.08.06 of 1975, as amended by GCC 24.12.020.

Trail and Optional Footbridge

The non-motorized, multi-modal trail would be constructed to connect the campground areas and minimize informal trail development along the lakeshore, as well as to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle passage away from the road. The trail would extend from the existing southernmost campground area to the day-use area to the north. It would be routed through the existing north and south campgrounds, pass the outer edge of the proposed North and Middle Campgrounds on their lake side, and connect to the day-use area via a foot bridge across the mouth of a small embayment. Access trails connecting the proposed North and Middle Campgrounds with this trail would also be constructed, with the proposed Middle Campground having three connections and the proposed North Campground having two connections. This trail and all connecting access trails would be ADA-accessible and would be either paved or have a hardened gravel surface.

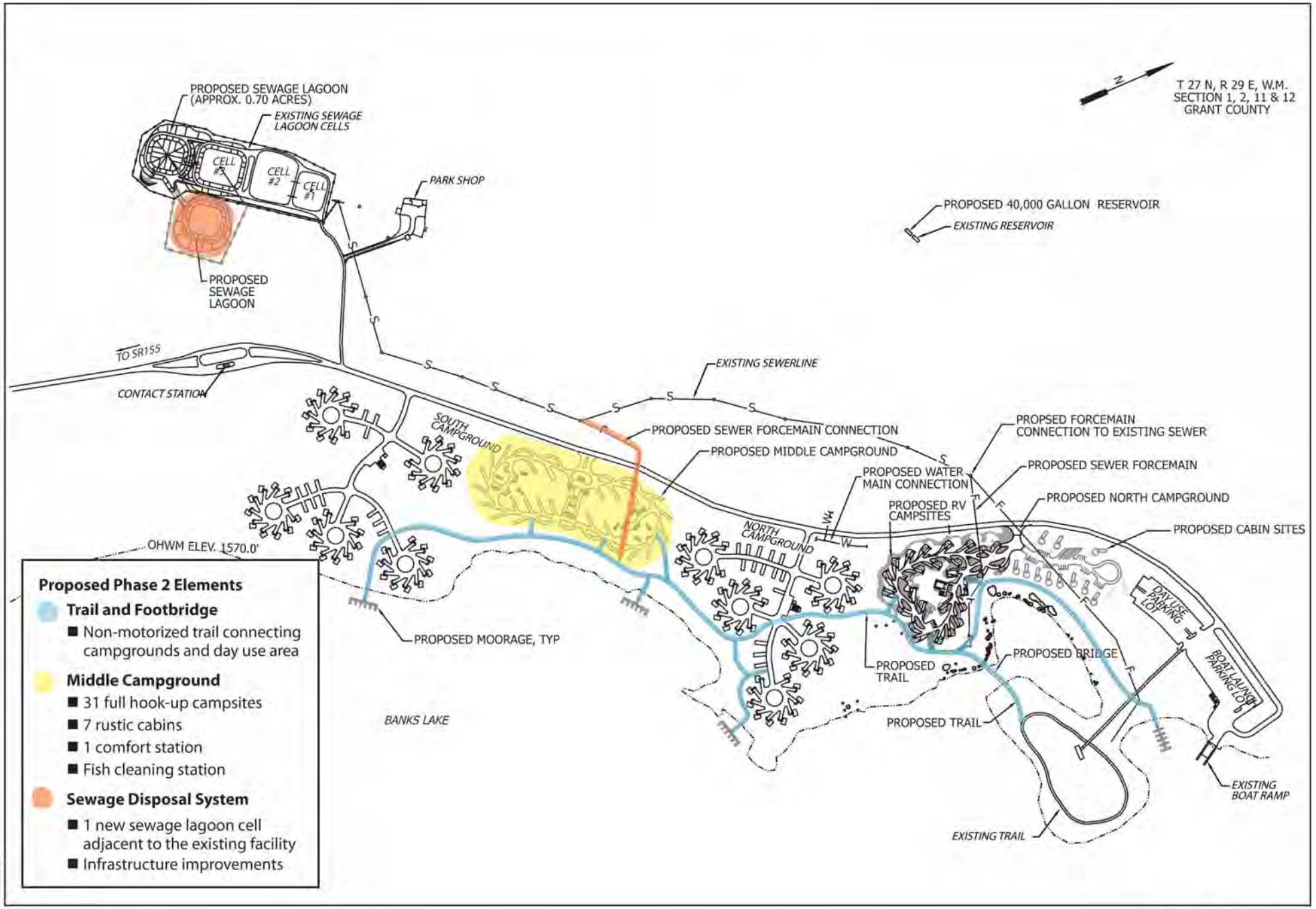

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Figure 3. Phase 2

The trail would be approximately 10 feet wide (8 feet wide paved with a 1-foot-wide gravel shoulder on either side) and approximately 4,590 feet long; connecting access trails would be 10 feet wide and vary in length. The service road from the proposed North Campground to the lift station would be 10 feet wide (all paved) and would function as part of the trail system. The trail to the optional footbridge would be approximately 10 feet wide and 500 feet long, including the 13-foot-wide bridge.

Based on a 10-foot-wide trail footprint, the total area of impact from the main trail and connecting access trails (including the service road to the lift station in the north campground) would be approximately 52,250 square feet (1.2 acres), with approximately 104,500 square feet (2.4 acres) of ground disturbance created during construction (based on 5 feet of disturbance on each side of the 10-foot-wide trail footprint).

The optional footbridge would cross the mouth of a small embayment located between the proposed North Campground and the existing day-use area. The trail up to and down from the optional bridge abutments would have a total footprint of approximately 3,690 square feet (0.1 acre). If the footbridge is ultimately included in Phase 2, footbridge design details would occur as part of the Phase 2 design process and would incorporate methods to avoid or minimize wetland impacts.

Approximately 25,600 square feet (0.6 acre) of the trail and optional footbridge footprint would be within the 200-foot shoreline zone. Trails are allowed within the shoreline zone, but may require a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit or revision.

Sewage Disposal System

To accommodate additional recreational use associated with the Middle Campground, the existing sewage disposal system would be increased with an additional sewage lagoon cell. The new cell (approximately 0.7 acre) would be constructed in the area adjacent to the existing cells and located to the southeast of the southern-most existing cell.

The cell would be excavated to a depth of approximately 5.5 feet and the total volume of excavated material would be approximately 1,500 cubic yards. Excavated material would be used to construct a raised berm around the cell and the access and maintenance road for the cell. The total area of new ground disturbance would be approximately 1 acre.

The cell would be lined per current industry standards and in compliance with DOH and/or Ecology regulations to prevent leaching of sewage into the ground. To date, WSPRC has not needed to remove solids from the existing ponds, built in the mid-1970s. It is anticipated that the new cells would function similarly and that removal of biosolids would not be necessary. If it should become necessary, however, biosolids would be removed and disposed of in a manner consistent with current regulations.

2.2.3. Phase 3

Phase 3 elements (Figure 4) are summarized below followed by a more detailed description.

- construction of three sets of 12 boat moorage slips for the campgrounds (36 moorage slips total)

- construction of 16 moorage slips for the day-use area

Phase 3 would include only boat moorage improvements. Three sets of 12 moorage slips would be installed adjacent to each of the two existing campground areas and the proposed Middle Campground.

Sixteen day-use moorage slips would be provided to the west of the existing boat ramp. These moorage slips would be constructed of aluminum frame material encapsulating a foam core and would be anchored with rings around steel pilings or equivalent design. They would be connected to the trail by a floating dock that would be attached to concrete footings (piers) on the lakeshore.

Moorage slip design details would occur as part of the Phase 3 design process and would incorporate methods to minimize aquatic impacts. The point at which the moorage slips connect to the trail would be constructed within the 200-foot shoreline zone. Therefore, a shoreline substantial development permit or revision could be required.

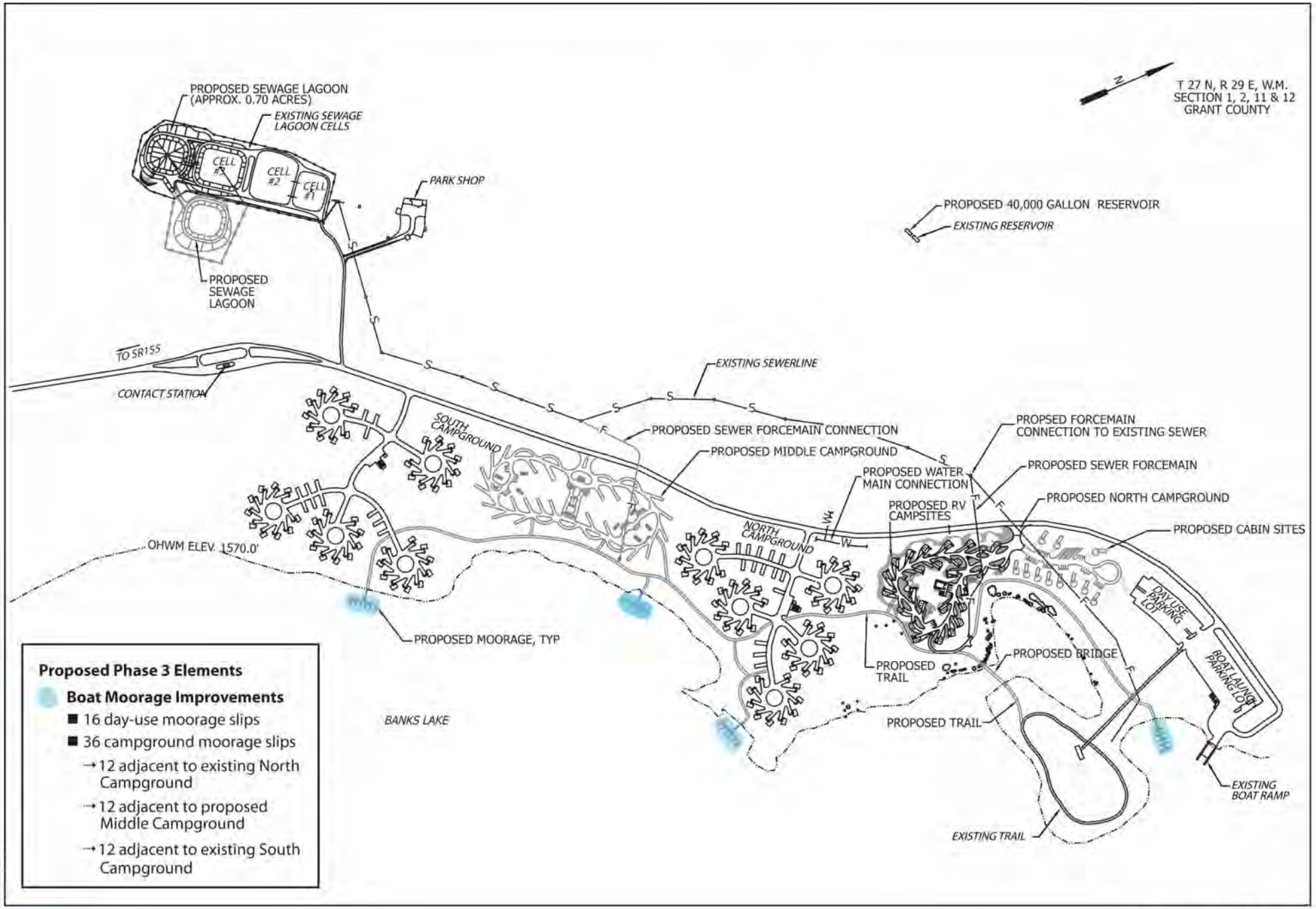

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Figure 4. Phase 3

Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This chapter describes the affected environment and environmental consequences for the resources that may be affected by the proposed alternatives. Resources that would not be affected by the proposed alternatives are: essential fish habitat, air quality, visual resources, land use, and groundwater quality, as described below.

Essential Fish Habitat

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, as revised by Public Law 104-267, the Sustainable Fisheries Act, requires fisheries management councils to describe essential fish habitat (EFH) for fisheries managed under this law. It requires federal agencies to consult with NMFS on actions that could adversely affect EFH. EFH is defined as those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.

No fish managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act—Pacific salmon, groundfish, or coastal pelagic species—are found in Banks Lake nor can they access Banks Lake. Therefore, in accordance with EFH requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, it has been determined that the Proposed Action would have no adverse impact to EFH utilized by Pacific salmon, groundfish, or coastal pelagic species. This determination is based on the nature of the project and the absence of EFH for these species occurring within Banks Lake or with access to Banks Lake.

Air Quality

The Proposed Action is not expected to affect air quality in the project area. Construction best management practices (BMPs) would be used to avoid and minimize wind erosion impacts. Emissions from motor boats are not expected to be significantly greater than current conditions, because it is likely that many of the boaters that would use the additional campground areas would have camped in another location and still launched and used their boat regardless of available moorage facilities.

Visual Resources

The Proposed Action is not expected to affect visual resources, because it would to be constructed as infill between existing developed campground areas and would be designed in a style consistent with the existing development. Structures would be constructed of low-glare materials and painted with earth-toned colors to help blend in with the surrounding environment. All lighting would be directed downwards and shielded.

Land Use

Local zoning regulations do not apply to federal lands. However, Reclamation lands in Grant County are zoned as an Open Space zoning district (Reclamation 2001a) and campground development is an allowable use in this zone; therefore, no impacts on land use are expected.

Groundwater Quality

A variety of factors can affect the quality of groundwater, including soil chemistry, land use, agricultural practices, and surface water management. In turn, these factors influence groundwater chemistry and the potential for organic and inorganic contamination.

The proposed alternatives would not affect groundwater quality, because neither would change the character or use of the landscape to a degree that would impact groundwater. The expansion of the existing sewage lagoon disposal facility will ensure that sewage is appropriately contained and does not pollute groundwater or surface water.

3.1. Utilities and Public Services

The study area for utilities is comprised of the developed campgrounds and day-use area in the Park as well as the areas adjacent to the existing sewage treatment ponds and water reservoir.

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The Park currently uses the utilities listed below.

- Potable water is provided by an onsite well. Water is stored in a below-ground potable 40,000-gallon water reservoir. The existing reservoir is a 10-foot-by-40-foot concrete vault located adjacent to existing maintenance access roads.
- Electricity is provided by the Grant County Public Utility District.
- Trash disposal is provided by Sunrise Disposal Company, which hauls trash to a permitted regional solid waste landfill.
- Wastewater from onsite offices and the campground comfort stations is pumped by an onsite lift station to existing wastewater treatment lagoons. The existing lagoons are lined to prevent infiltration. They retain biosolids and are of adequate surface area to evaporate all treated wastewater without discharging to Banks Lake. To date, WSPRC has not needed to remove solids from the existing lagoons, built in the mid-1970s.

The Park currently uses the public services listed below.

- Fire protection is provided by the Electric City Fire Department and by trained WSPRC staff.
- Police protection is provided by the Grant County Sherriff and by trained WSPRC staff. Grant County Sherriff's office, Marine Patrol Unit, patrols the waters adjacent to the Park.
- Emergency response is provided by Grand Coulee Fire District 14.

3.1.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, no new campground facilities would be constructed and operations and maintenance would continue as in the past or in accordance with future policies. There would be no substantial impacts on utilities or public services.

Proposed Action

Potable Water Storage Reservoir

As described in Chapter 2, Alternatives, a new 40,000-gallon water reservoir would be constructed adjacent to and southwest of the existing 40,000-gallon water reservoir and would be similar to the existing reservoir in design. There is a pressurized main (feed) line to the existing reservoir from the existing wellhead and a gravity service line from the reservoir to the existing campground areas. Existing water lines are located in the current access road and the existing gravel trail between the campground area and Steamboat Rock. Trenching for new water lines to the new campground locations would be placed parallel to the existing main park road to each new campground loop.

Existing water distribution lines would also need to be improved. Required water distribution line improvements include construction of approximately 1,000 linear feet of 8-inch diameter main parallel to the main park road.

The gravel access road to the existing reservoir is sufficient for heavy equipment access for construction of the new reservoir and no new road construction would be required.

Sewage Disposal System

To accommodate additional campsites in the Park, the existing sewage collection and disposal system would need to be expanded. As described in Chapter 2, Alternatives, the capacity of the sewage disposal system would be increased with two new sewage lagoon cells. The new cells would be constructed in the area adjacent to the existing cell.

Cells would be lined, per current industry standards and DOH and/or Ecology regulations, to prevent leaching of sewage into the ground. To date, WSPRC has not needed to remove solids from the existing lagoons, built in the mid-1970s. It is anticipated that the new cells would function similarly and that removal of biosolids would not be necessary. If it should become necessary in the future, biosolids would be removed and disposed of in a manner consistent with existing regulations at the time.

Electrical Service

New electrical lines would be extended to the new campsites and cabins. Electricity would continue to be provided by Grant County Public Utility District.

Police Protection, Fire Protection, and Emergency Services

There would be no change in required public services for police protection, fire protection, and emergency response services, because WSPRC would provide for these services. There would be no significant increase in employment required by those agencies.

An operating budget impact request has been made for an eight-month seasonal park aide position, additional utility dollars to support additional infrastructure and park features, fire protection contract coverage for the structures, and an electric utility vehicle. The operating budget impact request prepared by WSPRC has been submitted to the legislature and, if approved, funds would be allocated at the time of the opening of the capital project (Poplawski pers. comm.).

3.2. Recreation

The study area for recreation is the Park.

3.2.1. Affected Environment

Banks Lake is recognized locally and regionally for its diverse and outstanding recreational opportunities. The reservoir's clear waters support one of the finest fisheries in the state and it provides outstanding opportunities for camping, swimming, boating, picnicking, and other recreational pursuits.

Many recreationists are drawn to Banks Lake because of the unique and scenic natural features of the area (e.g., basalt outcrops and spectacular coulee walls) and areas unique to the region (e.g., Northrup Canyon). The coulee walls rising on the east and west sides of the reservoir enclose and separate Banks Lake from the surrounding agricultural and high desert landscape, giving recreationists, residents, and other users a strong sense of place and isolation. The small incorporated communities on the north and south ends of the reservoir do not detract from the feeling of remoteness that is possible at Banks Lake.

Public use varies seasonally with peak activity and visitation occurring from mid-May through September. Within the study area, more than 500,000 persons annually visit the Park. Grant County residents generally use the reservoir and surrounding lands during the day, but the lake is a popular overnight destination for visitors from other parts of the state and for out-of-state visitors. Grand Coulee Dam, a regional tourist attraction, draws many first-time visitors to the Banks Lake area.

Nineteen developed recreation areas are currently provided adjacent to or near Banks Lake by a variety of public agencies and private entities. These areas are served by a wide range of developed day and overnight recreation sites and facilities, and generally are concentrated at the south and northeast ends of the reservoir. A significant amount of dispersed camping occurs in undeveloped areas along the lake's shoreline.

The Park comprises two campground areas and a large day-use area located on sweeping green lawns, partially protected from winds by tall, dramatic poplar trees. The surrounding areas are carpeted with wildflowers, adding to the gray-green brush of the Scablands. The Park also includes a sandy swimming area and boat launches.

Water-Based Recreation

In 2006, an outdoor recreation survey was conducted for the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office that measured the outdoor recreational activity among Washington residents. The population-based research study on outdoor recreation in Washington ranked 15

major activity categories based on an average month in 2006. The study found that 19.1% of all Washingtonians motorboated on fresh water in 2006, for a total of 1.8 million excursions. Motorboating is the third most popular water-based activity in the state in an average month and the 17th most popular activity overall. Within the state, 26.3% of residents reported wanting to do more motorboating in the future and in the Columbia Plateau region of the survey (Douglas, Grant, Lincoln, and Adams counties), 38.0% of residents were interested in doing more motorboating (Clearwater Research 2007).

At full pool, the Banks Lake reservoir surface covers approximately 27,400 acres and provides approximately 82 miles of shoreline. The reservoir offers excellent opportunities for water-based activities such as boating, fishing, water-skiing, personal water craft riding, wind surfing, and swimming. The Devil's Punch Bowl is one of the areas with the highest concentrations of boating activities.

The reservoir surface is open to motorized boating with few restrictions. Wake/idle speed restrictions currently apply in any area marked with buoys or logs as a speed restricted area. The three boat launches (comprising seven boat ramps) and one swimming area managed by the Park on Banks Lake are signed with buoys indicating a speed limit of 5 miles per hour. Other boating restrictions under Grant County Ordinance 6.08 provide that it is unlawful to operate a vessel (1) within water areas marked by buoys; (2) on plane within 100 feet of other vessels, marked swimming areas, or fixed objects; and (3) on plane within 300 feet of a boat launch ramp.

User fees are required at the three boat launch sites managed by the Park. A charge of $7 is assessed at the Day-Use Area Boat Launch and Steamboat Rock Rest Area Boat Launch. Annual, unlimited use boat launch permits are available for $50. Camping fees at the Park, Coulee Playland, and Sunbanks Resort include use of boat launch facilities. A fee of $5 per launch is required at Coulee City Community Park. In the 2008–2009 fiscal biennium, which began on July 1, 2007, and continues through June 30, 2009, receipts through mid-January 2009 for daily watercraft launch sales at the Park were approximately $30,500.

During reservoir draw-downs, rocks and sandbars are sometimes exposed or lie just below the surface, making the Dry Falls, Million Dollar Mile North and South, Barker Flat, and Osborn Bay SE boat launches difficult to use. Launching is reported to increase at the Steamboat Rock Rest Area Boat Launch during low reservoir elevation periods (Reclamation 2001a).

Swimming is ranked as the second most common activity on Banks Lake. Developed swimming areas are provided and maintained at the Day-Use Area, Coulee City Community Park, Coulee Playland, and Sunbanks Resort. The swimming area in Coulee City Community Park sometimes experiences stagnant water conditions. Consequently, Coulee City is considering the installation of an aeration device or other measures to improve the park's swimming area. Periodically, low water levels in the swimming area are also a concern.

Fishing is ranked by users as the second most important and third most common activity in the study area. Banks Lake is regarded as one of the finest fishing lakes in the state for bass, perch, and walleye; the lake offers great fishing opportunities year-round. Popular fishing areas are Barker Cove and along the western shore of the Steamboat Rock peninsula for smallmouth bass; Osborn Bay, Kruk's Bay, Jones Bay, and Devil's Punch Bowl for largemouth bass; and deep water near Barker Flat for walleye and rainbow trout. During the winter season, ice fishing is popular and can last as long as 4 months.

The impact of bass tournaments on the reservoir fishery is one of the issues identified during public scoping for the RMP EA. Each summer, numerous bass and walleye fishing tournaments held on the reservoir draw local area fishing enthusiasts. In 1998, more bass fishing contests (21) were held on Banks Lake than any other water body in the state. Most contest activity (80%) occurred between April and October (Reclamation 2001a).

State regulations limit the number of contests and contestants allowed on lakes and reservoirs at any given time. No more than 35 bass and two walleye contests are permitted annually on Banks Lake. Contests where all participants expect to fish at the same time from boats are not allowed to last longer than 3 consecutive days. Because Banks Lake is over 10,000 acres, three separate contest permits may be issued per day with no more than 250 boats per contest day. No more than four weekend days per month and no more than two weekends per month may be scheduled on any water when contestants fish at the same time and are allowed to fish from boats.

Land-Based Recreation

Land-based recreation activities include both developed and dispersed camping, bank fishing, sunbathing, hunting, off-road vehicle riding, picnicking, hiking, bicycle and horseback riding, nature study (wildlife and wildflower observation), sightseeing, and photography. Of these, camping and hunting are the most popular activities.

Camping was ranked as the most important and common recreation activity at Banks Lake. Overnight opportunities include fully developed RV and tent sites, as well as dispersed informal campsites. Full-service RV utility sites and formal tent sites are provided at the Park, Coulee City Community Park, Coulee Playland, and Sunbanks Resort. The Park has 26 tent spaces, 100 utility sites (with full hookups), one dump station, five comfort stations (four with ADA-compliant designs) and six showers (four that are ADA-compliant). The Park also has 12 primitive boat-in campsites with vault toilets and water. The Jones Bay and Osborn Bay SW campgrounds offer a range of developed facilities (e.g., vault toilets, fire-rings, picnic tables, pedestal grills), but no RV utility hookups.

The Park has the third highest campground usage rate in the State Park system, operating at or near full capacity during the reservation period (May 15–September 15). The majority of the existing camping sites are reservable and the WSPRC online reservation system shows them as full early in the season. The few non-reservable sites generally fill each day, with Park personnel often having to turn away visitors (Poplawski pers. comm.). The Park also receives a high level of day use throughout the summer season. In the peak month of August 2007, there were an estimated 12,350 campers and 91,700 day-use visitors (Fraser pers. comm.). The campground is used by both local residents and out-of-area users seeking less crowded recreational opportunities, sunny days, and warmer water temperatures. The Park is a destination facility with 70% of users coming from King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties for extended stays. Limited camping capacity during the reservation season excludes many potential campers from enjoying the Park. Additionally, there are excellent shoulder season opportunities for cabin rental for the hunting and fishing seasons.

While much of the recreation use is concentrated at developed recreation sites, dispersed use also occurs in undeveloped areas along the lake's shoreline. These areas are accessed primarily by the primitive road system and/or by boat. Both campers and Park day users extensively use the shoreline in the developed portions of the Park. There are numerous social trails between the

developed camping areas and the shoreline, as well as between the two existing camping areas and the day-use area. Boaters routinely tie boats to shoreline vegetation adjacent to the campgrounds and travel between their boats and their campsites. This has resulted in damage to vegetation along the shoreline and in natural areas between the developed portions of the Park.

Unauthorized off-road vehicle activity and damage to wildlife habitat and vegetation were some of the primary issues identified during public involvement for the Banks Lake RMP and RMP EA. Four sites were surveyed on the south and west side of the peninsula. In general, adjacent vegetation was moderately disturbed with moderate to high amounts of adjacent off-road vehicle use. Some trash was present at each site, but not in large quantities. All four sites could be returned to a natural condition with some rehabilitation, but habitat recovery could take a considerable rehabilitation effort and time.

Unauthorized off-road vehicle activity is creating an ever-increasing mosaic of new roads on the west side of the peninsula. Motorized vehicles are being used to explore the peninsula either in the vicinity of a chosen campsite or in search of a new dispersed campsite. Consequently, a labyrinth of "cherry stem" roads is being created. Some of these new road networks pass through sensitive terrain and habitat. It should be noted that the west side of the peninsula is currently closed to camping with signs posted at several shoreline sites.

Hunting begins in September with the opening of dove season and extends through mid-March. The general hunting season for mule deer, white tail deer, upland birds, and waterfowl begins in October. Upland bird hunting includes quail in the brushy draws; chukar in hilly, rugged terrain; and Hungarian partridge and Canada geese in the stubble agricultural fields. Duck hunting is popular on Banks Lake and in the region's small potholes and lakes. Mule deer can be found in the sagebrush-covered flats and draws surrounding the Grand Coulee. Under existing management, hunting is permitted in the study area only on the portion of the peninsula managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); it is not allowed in the portion managed by WSPRC.

There are many other developed and dispersed day-use opportunities at Banks Lake. Developed picnic sites and playgrounds are offered at the Park, Coulee City Community Park, Coulee Playland, and Sunbanks Resort. Day-use activities include fishing, boating, swimming, sun bathing, hiking, off-road vehicle and horseback riding, bicycling, archery, model airplane flying, sightseeing, water skiing, scuba diving, wind surfing, personal water craft (e.g., jet skis), rock/ice climbing, wildlife observation, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. Golfing is available at the Banks Lake Public Golf and Country Club located near the Park.

Nature study, wildlife watching, and hiking are increasingly popular activities. The Banks Lake area supports a variety of wildlife observation opportunities, trails, scenic vistas, and unique plant communities (e.g., Northrup Canyon Natural Area) for study. Migratory and resident birds include great blue herons, white pelicans, sandhill cranes, hawks, long-horned owls, and bald eagles. Mammals such as deer, beaver, muskrat, and rabbit are abundant.

The Park offers a developed hiking trail network consisting of 13 miles of non-motorized, multi-use trail on and near Steamboat Rock. The Northrup Canyon Natural Area and Castle Rock Natural Area Preserve are the most recent additions to the Park. Accessed via SR 155, the gravel road leading into Northrup Canyon ends at a small, graveled parking area. Access beyond the

parking area is gated and limited to nonmotorized travel. Beyond the gate, the existing road network provides quality hiking and biking opportunities.

3.2.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, recreational opportunities would be the same as those described under existing conditions. It would have no impact on recreation. The Park would continue to operate at or near full capacity during the entire reservation period (May 15–September 15), resulting in turning away potential campers.

Under the No Action alternative, WSPRC would continue to manage campground activities according to current standards and rules. Dispersed camping and unstructured activities would continue to typify most public recreation use outside the Park and these areas would likely be used more when the Park is at capacity. Active management of dispersed camping and/or recreation sites would not occur unless periodic monitoring indicates a need for such management in the future. A policy of "pack-in/pack-out" would continue in all dispersed (undeveloped) and primitive (minimally developed) camping areas.

Future expansion in the Steamboat Rock area to meet growing recreational demands would be assessed on a site-specific basis. Site development is expected to occur when the demand on existing State Park facilities warrants proposed park expansion, and sufficient capital improvement funds are budgeted and available for construction.

Existing recreation sites and facilities would be operated and maintained at current levels. When increased recreation demand warrants new sites and/or facilities, facility expansion within existing recreation areas would receive priority over new site development on a case-by-case basis. Future development proposals would be based on public facility needs, recreation demand, and environmental protection requirements.

The need for additional facilities outlined in the RMP (Reclamation 2001a) and the WSPRC Centennial 2013 Plan would not be met under the No Action alternative. Overall, a general reduction in the quality of the recreational experience is likely as more people use the lake and its shoreline, and conflicts among user groups increase. No comprehensive effort would be made to focus or direct public use to specific areas better suited for long-term use.

Proposed Action

The RMP (Reclamation 2001a) provides for the future expansion of recreation facilities and services in the Park as public demand on existing facilities warrants and as sufficient capital improvement funds are budgeted and available for construction.

Based upon the existing high demand for campsites in the Park during the peak season, as evidenced by the high reservation rate and the number of people arriving without a reservation that are turned away (Poplawski pers. comm.), WSPRC has determined that the existing demand for camping spaces is greater than the supply currently available. This is further substantiated by the fact that, reservable campsites in the Park are completely reserved within 10 minutes of passing the 9-month reservation window, by about 7:10 each morning (Powell pers. comm.).

Effects on Recreational Capacity and Environmental Degradation

The Proposed Action would meet this need for recreational facilities by providing an additional 57 campsites, 20 cabins, and 52 boat moorage slips. This would increase the capacity of the Park, helping to meet existing demand for campground spaces, with the cabins providing a new opportunity not previously available at the Park. In addition, a new ADA-accessible trail and optional footbridge would be provided and visible improvements would be made to the Park.

The Proposed Action could also make the Park available to a greater number of recreationists during the 'shoulder seasons' (fall and spring) by providing additional cabins. Cabins would allow recreationists that do not own an RV to camp during months when it would be relatively uncomfortable to tent camp.

The Proposed Action would increase camping opportunity in the Park. This would help reduce the number of campers that arrive hoping to occupy the "first-come, first-served" camp sites and would also provide for a greater number of advance reservations. This increase in opportunity for camping within the Park will likely cause some reduction in the amount of dispersed camping that occurs in the Banks Lake Management Area. Such a reduction would reduce the types of environmental degradation typically caused by dispersed camping. The direct and indirect environmental effects often associated with dispersed camping include soil erosion and compaction, littering, improper human waste disposal, firewood collection, vegetative damage, wildlife disturbances, and indiscriminate off-road vehicle travel in adjacent areas.

However, even with the construction of additional developed campsites at the Park, it is likely that some campers may continue to prefer the dispersed camping experience over the experience of camping in a developed park site or because they do not want to pay campsite fees. Thus, although the additional recreational opportunities provided by the Proposed Action will likely result in a reduction in dispersed camping and a consequent reduction in related environmental degradation, it is unlikely to be a major reduction.

Construction of the trail, optional footbridge, and boat moorage facilities would likely reduce damage to vegetation along the shoreline and between developed areas. Reducing vegetation damage could be achieved by focusing recreational use in these facilities and by reducing the number of boats beached and/or tied up to the shoreline vegetation and the number of people using or creating social trails between the shoreline and campsites and between developed areas.

Effects on Boating

The proposed addition of 52 boat moorage slips (36 available for campground users and 16 available for day use) would expand boating opportunities in the Park. This could help to reduce congestion at area boat ramps because campers would not need to take their boats out of the water at the end of the day and day users could moor their boats rather than trailering them should they come ashore to use the day-use area.

Depending on the number of people who bring boats to the campground because of the newly available campsites, the increased number of people using the boat ramps may increase boat ramp congestion, particularly during peak use hours. Many boaters currently beach their boats during the day or overnight rather than taking them out of the water, while others do not due to concerns such as fluctuations in water levels. Providing moorage slips may increase the number of boats left in the water, reducing congestion at the boat ramp. This could also potentially

reduce impacts on lakeshore vegetation, as described in Section 3-6, if the number of boats being beached is reduced. The number of moorage slips would, however, be less than the potential number of boats present; therefore, some beaching is likely to continue.

The increase in available campsites could also result in an increase in boat traffic in waters adjacent to the Park, particularly in the area of the Devil's Punchbowl. This could result in a decrease in boater safety, especially if individuals do not comply with safety regulations posted at the Park. The Grant County Sherriff's Office, Marine Patrol Unit, patrols the waters of Grant County, promoting boating safety and enforcing Grant County Ordinance (6.08) and Washington State boating laws (RCW 79A.60). The Grant County ordinances are currently being revised (Grant County 2008). In addition, WSPRC recognizes a need for increased boating safety on a statewide level, and administers the Boating Safety Program, legislation that requires boat operators to take a boater safety education course in order to operate a boat in Washington State (RCW 79A.60.64).

The Boater Safety Education law makes it mandatory for all boaters born after January 1, 1955, and operating a boat with an engine generating 15 horsepower or greater to have a boater education card signifying that they have successfully completed a boater safety education course. Compliance with this law is phased, with younger boaters required to have the card sooner than older boaters. The intent of this program is to improve boater safety statewide (WSPRC 2008).

With local enforcement and statewide boater safety education requirements, it is expected that safety levels on Banks Lake and in the Devil's Punchbowl should increase over time.

The Proposed Action would thus contribute to the attainment of the RMP goals for recreation sites. It would help address issues of a lack of desired recreational facilities, congestion in certain areas, and environmental degradation resulting from dispersed camping and shoreline use. The Proposed Action would addresses the priorities of the WSPRC Centennial 2013 Plan, particularly Priorities 1 and 2, as well as specific goals for the Park, by providing additional recreational opportunities within an existing facility.

Therefore, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on recreational opportunities, but would likely have a beneficial effect resulting from the development of additional recreational facilities and the creation of more recreational opportunities.

Effects During Construction and Operation

During construction, protection of the property and existing facilities would be accomplished through the use of BMPs. Specific construction BMPs typically employed by WSPRC that would be applied to the campground expansion project include:

- Provide all protections necessary to prevent damage to existing park property and facilities.
- Permit only rubber-tired equipment to operate on paved park roads.
- Protect existing trees and other vegetation indicated to remain in place against unnecessary cutting, breaking or skinning of roots, skinning and bruising of bark, or smothering of trees by stockpiling materials within dripline. Provide necessary temporary guards to protect trees and vegetation to remain in place.

- Minimize damage to and cutting of major tree roots during excavation operations. Provide protection for larger tree roots exposed and/or cut during excavation operations.

3.3. Socioeconomics

The study area for socioeconomics is Grant County, Washington.

3.3.1. Affected Environment

Regulatory Context

Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse impacts of their actions on low income or minority populations. Although these population groups use the Park, the project would not produce conditions that might affect these specific populations, nor result in other disproportionately high and adverse impacts. Provisions of the Banks Lake RMP and the WSPRC Centennial 2013 Plan, described in Chapter 1, are also applicable.

Environmental Context

The Park is located at the north end of Banks Lake in northeastern Grant County, Washington. The Banks Lake area has a rich diversity of natural resources and is recognized locally and regionally for its outstanding recreation opportunities. The steep cliffs surrounding Banks Lake limit access, especially on the lake's west side. SR 155 extends along the east side and provides access to most developed recreation facilities in the area.

Regional and Local Economy

Grant County is located in the Columbia Basin, and is noted for both its hydroelectric dams and federal irrigation projects. Grant County's economy is based on the growing and processing of a large variety of irrigated crops. No major population centers exist in the area around the Park. Electric City, population 970 (Office of Financial Management 2007) is located about 8 miles north of Steamboat Rock. Coulee City, population 600 (Office of Financial Management 2007), is located at the southern end of Banks Lake about 16 miles south of the Park.

Grant County is mostly rural with small towns scattered throughout. The 2007 county population was 82,500 (Office of Financial Management 2007), and has increased by 2.4% since 2000. Moses Lake, located in south central Grant County, is the largest city with a population of 17,440 (Office of Financial Management 2007). Ephrata, the County seat, is about 30 miles south of Coulee City and has a population of 7,025 (Office of Financial Management 2007). The town of Grand Coulee, population 930, (Office of Financial Management 2007) is farther northeast near the Grand Coulee Dam.

Population data from 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006) indicates the following countywide and statewide comparisons:

- 94.8% White/Caucasian (84.8% statewide)
- 34.6% Hispanic and Latino (9.1% statewide) (Note: Hispanics may be any race and so are also counted in other races and percentages do not add up to 100 %.)

- 1.4% American Indian and Alaska Native (1.6% statewide)
- 1.1% Black/African American (3.6% statewide)
- 1.3% Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (7.1% statewide)

In 2004, the estimated Grant County median household income was $37,580 as compared to $48,438 statewide. That same year approximately 16.2% of the county population was living below the poverty line as compared to 11.6% statewide (U.S. Census Bureau 2006).

As of 2008, Grant County's largest employers are government agencies (22.57%), agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting (18.69%), manufacturing (13.27%), and retail trade (8.98%) (Grant County Economic Development Council 2008).

According to 2008 Washington State Employment Security Department data, "the June 2008 nonfarm employment summary for Grant County showed a healthy and growing economy. Compared to a year ago, employers added 850 jobs as the County's month-over-month pace of growth outperformed the State's for the fourth consecutive month. From June 2007 to June 2008, the goods-producing industries, which include manufacturing, natural resources, mining and construction, expanded by 290 paychecks, up 4.8%."

Washington State Employment Security Department (2008) data indicate that "the June 2008 unemployment rate of 5.9% was the same as May, but up 1.3% above the June 2007 rate of 4.6%. The number of residents who were actively seeking employment increased from 1,980 in June 2007 to 2,540 in June 2008, up 560 out of a total civilian labor force of 42,790. The state jobless rate reached 5.4%, up one percentage point over the June 2007 rate of 4.4%."

3.3.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action, WSPRC would continue to manage campground activities according to commission rules, policies, procedures, and standards. The No Action would continue existing conditions; it is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on the socioeconomic environment.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, additional campground facilities and ongoing management activities are not anticipated to adversely affect the socioeconomic environment. While low income populations are likely to exist in the project vicinity, none would be directly affected by the Proposed Action, as only federal property within the Park would be included. Therefore, no disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income or minority populations are expected to result from the Proposed Action.

Construction of the proposed facilities could temporarily benefit the local economy by providing jobs for construction workers and purchasing materials for construction. The Proposed Action could also have long-term economic benefits. Additional camping space in the Park could increase the number of people frequenting local businesses in the vicinity (e.g., to purchase gasoline, groceries, fishing and camping supplies) during the peak summer season. The enhanced amenities (e.g., cabins) could also increase the number of people visiting and frequenting local businesses during the non-peak season.

3.4. Soils

The study area for soils is the portion of the Park where construction is proposed.

3.4.1. Affected Environment

According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (2008), the surface soil at the Park consists of the following soil types:

- The portions of the Park along Banks Lake where new construction is proposed consist of Quincy Fine Sand. This soil type exhibits a low susceptibility to water erosion, but a high susceptibility to wind erosion. This soil type is unable to maintain steep cut slopes at shallow excavations.
- Upland areas west of the existing sewage lagoon consist of Strat Stony Loam. This soil type exhibits a moderate susceptibility to water erosion, but a low susceptibility to wind erosion.

3.4.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action Alterative

Under the No Action, no new facilities would be constructed and operations and maintenance would continue as under existing conditions or in accordance with future policies. The No Action alternative would have no impact on soils in the study area.

Proposed Action

Wind and Water Erosion

Land clearing, site grading, and underground utility installation would expose large areas of Quincy Fine Sand to potential wind and water erosion. According to the NRCS Web Soil Survey (2008), Quincy Fine Sand is highly susceptible to wind erosion and has low susceptibility to water erosion. This impact may be considered significant unless properly mitigated. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4.3 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Geotechnical Issues with Cabin Construction

Construction of cabins under the Proposed Action have an impact on Quincy Fine Sand, which is somewhat limited in its suitability as a substrate for dwellings without basements, mainly because of its inability to maintain steep slopes (NRCS 2008). This impact may be considered significant unless properly mitigated. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4.3 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

Geotechnical Issues with Wastewater Cell Construction

The Proposed Action would construct new wastewater lagoon cells, which would require shallow excavation and construction of earth berms using excavated sandy soil. According to the NRCS Web Soil Survey (2008), Quincy Fine Sand is very limited in its suitability for shallow excavations, because of its inability to maintain steep cut slopes. This impact may be

considered significant unless properly mitigated. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Section 3.4.3 would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

3.4.3. Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures are required to address potential adverse impacts on soil.

Wind Erosion and Water Erosion Control

The erosion-control measures listed below will be implemented at all construction sites within the Park.

- During construction, all disturbed areas will be frequently watered to prevent visible windblown dust emissions.
- Travel speeds will be reduced on unpaved roads to minimize windblown fugitive dust.
- Disturbed areas will be replanted as quickly as practical after completion of construction to minimize the potential for wind and water erosion.
- Temporary soil stockpiles will be covered, watered, or temporarily vegetated to reduce wind and water erosion.
- Temporary erosion and sedimentation control BMPs will be employed.
- BMPs contained in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater General Permit and the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be implemented.

Geotechnical Design for Construction of Structures and Wastewater Lagoon

As part of the design process for new cabins, wastewater lagoon cells, and other structures planned to be constructed over the Quincy Fine Sand soil unit, WSPRC will use a qualified professional engineer to evaluate the suitability of local soil conditions. The structural limitations of the Quincy Fine Sand soil will be considered as a design criterion for construction of subsurface features and above-ground soil berms.

Dust Control

Dust control will be required on roads used by the contractors and other areas as specified in construction plans and specifications. During construction, contractors will be required to maintain all excavations, embankments, stockpiles, roads, plant sites, waste areas, borrow areas and all other work areas within or without project boundaries free from dust that would cause a hazard or nuisance to others. Providing approved, temporary methods of stabilization consisting of sprinkling, chemical treatment, light bituminous treatment or equal methods to control dust will also be required. If sprinkling is used, the sprinkling is required to be repeated at such intervals as to keep all parts of disturbed areas at least damp at all times.

3.5. Surface Water Quality and Aquatic Resources

The study area for surface water quality and aquatic resources is the Park and Banks Lake.

3.5.1. Affected Environment

Regulatory Context

Updated in November 2006, the surface water quality standards for the State of Washington are detailed and described in Chapter 173-201A of the WAC. In conformance with present and potential uses of the state's surface waters and in consideration of natural water quality limitations and potential beneficial use designations, applicable water quality criteria have been established.

The water quality standards and beneficial use criteria applicable to Banks Lake are defined under WAC 173-201A-600, which defines the use designations for freshwaters and the level of protection they are afforded. Freshwaters are protected for the use of: salmonid spawning, rearing and migration; primary contact recreation; domestic, industrial, and agricultural water supply; stock watering; wildlife habitat; harvesting; commerce with navigation; boating; and aesthetic values. Banks Lake is protected for primary contact recreation, such as swimming or water skiing. Specific water quality criteria are described below.

Banks Lake is on the state's 2002/2004 Section 303(d) list approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The 303(d) list identifies impaired and threatened water bodies needing additional work beyond existing controls to achieve or maintain established surface water quality standards. The Clean Water Act identifies five categories of waters. Banks Lake is 303(d)-listed for three categories: 1, 2, and 5.

Category 1 waters are those waters that meet the water quality standards for the pollutants tested. Banks Lake is listed as a Category 1 water for the following pollutants (Ecology 2008).

4,4'-DDD	4,4'-DDE	4,4'-DDT
Alpha-BHC	Endosulfan sulfate	BETA-BHC
Gamma-BHC (lindane)	Endosulfan I	Endosulfan II
Beta-endosulfan	Endrin aldehyde	Alpha-Endosulfan
Heptachlor	Chlordane	Heptachlor
Aldrin	Heptachlor epoxide	Toxaphene
Mercury	Total PCBs	Hexachlorobenzene

Category 2 waters are waters of concern, where there is some evidence of a water quality problem, but not enough to require a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) at this time. There are several reasons why a water body would be placed in this category. A water body might have pollution levels that are not quite high enough to violate the water quality standards, or it may not have received enough violations to categorize it as impaired according to the Ecology listing policy. Data may show water quality violations, but the data were not collected using proper scientific methods. These are all water bodies that Ecology will continue to test. Banks

Lake is a Category 2 water body for one water quality parameter: total phosphorus (Ecology 2008).

Category 5 waters are polluted waters that require a TMDL. Placement in this category means that Ecology has data showing that the water quality standards have been violated for one or more pollutants, and a TMDL or pollution-control plan is not in place. Banks Lake is a Category 5 water body for two water quality parameters: 2,3,7,8-TCDD and total PCBs (Ecology 2008).

Banks Lake is part of the Columbia Basin Project. As a natural or artificial lake of a surface acreage of 1,000 acres or more, it is considered a Shoreline of Statewide Significance under the State's Shoreline Management Act [RCW 90.58.030(2)(e)(iv) and WAC 173-20-290], and thus is regulated by the Grant County SMP and related shoreline regulations in compliance with the Shoreline Management Act.

The WSPRC will apply for NPDES Permit coverage as part of the project. The NPDES permit program is authorized under the federal Clean Water Act. As part of the NPDES permit program, water pollution is controlled by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. All stormwater runoff generated as part of the project will adhere to the terms and conditions defined in the NPDES permit.

Aquatic Resources

Aquatic resources considered include wetlands, streams, ponds, lakes and other surface waters and the organisms that occupy these habitats.

Wetlands and Surface Waters

Six wetlands have been identified in the study area (all within the delineated wetland boundary shown in Figure 5): five associated with the shoreline of Banks Lake, and one associated with the northern shoreline of Thompson Lake. No streams occur in the study area. All of the wetlands are lakeshore wetlands, dominated by grass-like rushes and shrubs. Lakeshore wetlands provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Fish, particularly young fish, may use areas of emergent vegetation for hiding cover or to forage for insects in. Shrubs in lakeshore wetlands provide nesting habitat for a variety of birds and foraging habitat for birds and small mammals. Larger mammals, such as deer, may also use lakeshore wetlands for foraging or hiding cover. During hot weather, wetlands provide shade and access to the lake for drinking water.

Wetland functions refer to the benefits provided by a wetland, and the wetland's ability to provide these benefits. Functions can be categorized into three groups: water quality, hydrologic, and habitat functions. All wetlands perform some or all of these functions, to greatly varying extents. Water quality functions are performed when a wetland has the physical characteristics needed to slow and filter water, and when the need is present (i.e., untreated runoff or contaminated water is able to enter the wetland). Hydrologically, wetlands are important for flood and stormwater storage and aquifer recharge, and a wetland's value for these functions increases when homes or natural resources are downstream of or adjacent to the wetland.

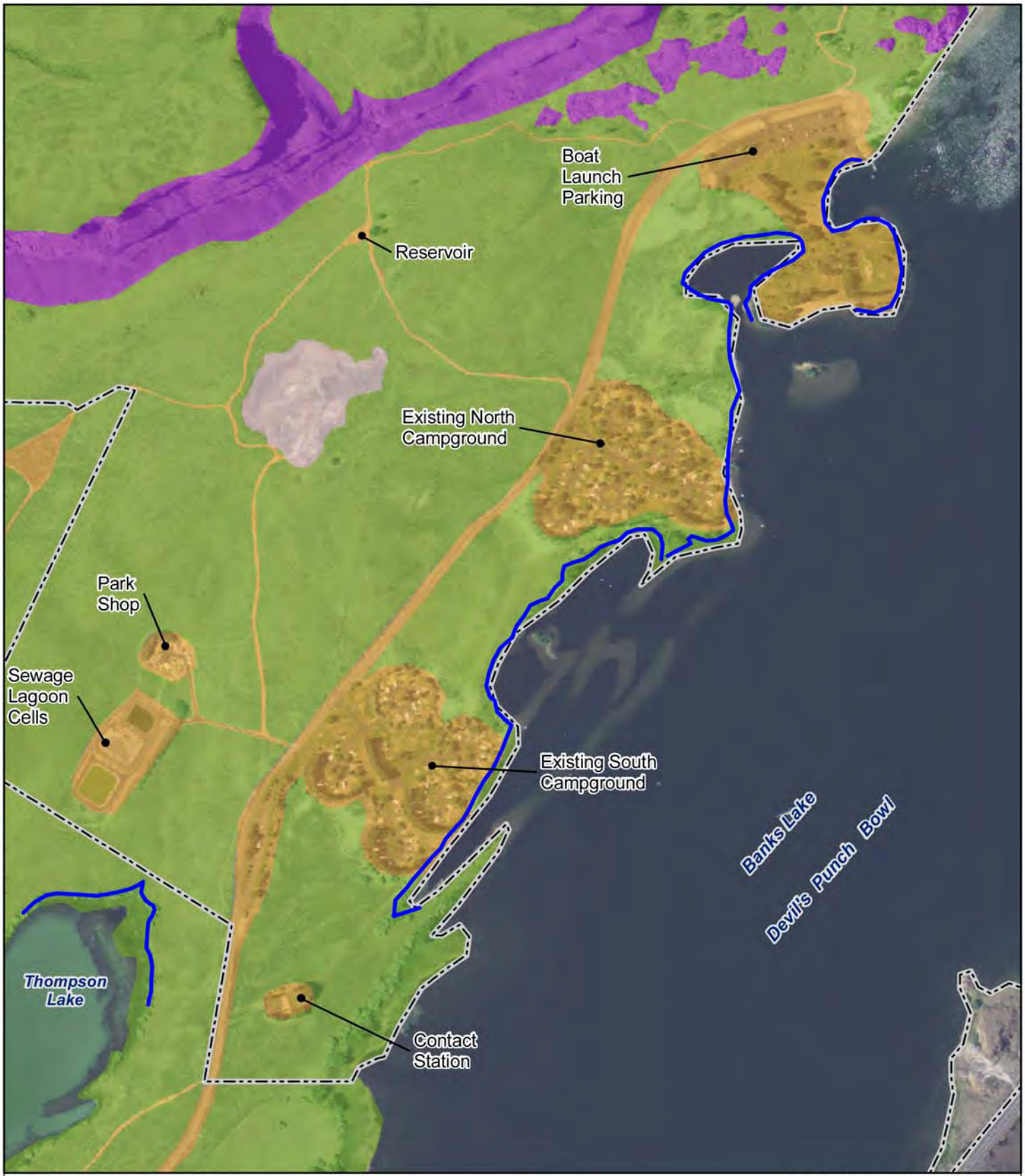

Figure 5. Land Cover

Wetlands can also supply a diversity of habitats for the foraging, breeding, and rearing activities of wildlife. Habitat functional values are measured by considering vegetative structure and composition, the presence of special feature (e.g., snags, downed wood), buffer quality, and proximity to other natural areas. The functions of the wetlands in the study area were quantified using the Ecology rating form (Hruby 2004) and are summarized in Table 1. Wetlands are rated on how well they provide different ecological functions, with a higher score indicating a higher function. The total score is then used to assign a wetland category (Hruby 2004). Under Washington State law wetlands are regulated based on their category.

Table 1. Wetland Functional Scores and Categorical Ratings

Wetland	Water Quality Score	Hydrologic Score	Habitat Score	Total Score	Category
A	10	4	20	34	III
B	18	8	23	49	III
C	18	4	16	38	III
D	18	4	25	47	III
E	18	4	23	45	III
F	16	10	30	56	II

Source: The Watershed Company 2007

Wetlands A, B, C, D, and E are all located along the eastern shore of the peninsula that juts into Banks Lake from the lake's eastern shore. These wetlands are composed of a matrix of palustrine scrub-shrub, emergent, and lacustrine aquatic bed communities. Some sections of Wetlands A, B, D, and E do not extend landward of the shore, but contain sparse aquatic bed patches. Milfoil (*Myriophyllum* sp.) is the dominant aquatic bed species along the lakeshore. Milfoil is nonnative and considered an invasive aquatic weed. Aquatic bed patches vary in width from 1 to 6 feet throughout the site. Milfoil present at the site was in senescence (decay); therefore, the coverage may be denser later in the season. According to Ecology, dense milfoil mats can reduce dissolved oxygen levels, provide habitat for mosquitoes, and increase sedimentation. Some waterfowl do eat milfoil, but it is not a good food source.

Wetland F is further inland along Thompson Lake. This wetland contains palustrine scrub-shrub and palustrine emergent plant communities.

These scores suggest that the wetlands in the study area have a medium to high value for water quality; a relatively low value for hydrologic function, with the exception of wetland F; and a moderate to high function as wildlife habitat.

Aquatic Organisms

WDFW has stocked Banks Lake with several species of fish, as data from 1953 to 1998 indicate (WDFW 2004). Historically, stocked species included several subspecies of rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, kokanee, coho salmon, Chinook salmon, burbot, walleye, channel catfish, and smallmouth bass. Many other species of fish have been documented in Banks Lake and were likely introduced with the water pumped from Lake Roosevelt into Banks Lake. Table 2 provides a list of fish species that have been documented currently or relatively recently in Banks

Lake. Species that historically occurred, but have not been observed recently are not included in Table 2.

Table 2. Fish Species in Banks Lake

Common Name	Scientific Name
Smallmouth bass	*Micropterus dolomieu*
Largemouth bass	*Micropterus salmoides*
Walleye	*Stizostedion vitreum*
Yellow perch	*Perca flavescens*
Black crappie	*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*
Pumpkinseed sunfish	*Lepomis gibbosus*
Bluegill	*Lepomis macrochirus*
Rainbow trout	*Oncorhynchus mykiss*
Kokanee	*Oncorhynchus nerka*
Lake whitefish	*Coregonus clupeaformis*
Mountain whitefish	*Prosopium williamsoni*
Northern pikeminnow	*Ptychochelius oregonensis*
Peamouth chub	*Mylochelius caurinus*
Brown bullhead	*Ameiurus nebulosus*
Yellow bullhead	*Ameiurus natalis*
White catfish	*Ictalurus catus*
Channel catfish	*Ictalurus punctatus*
Longnose sucker	*Catostomus catostomus*
Largescale sucker	*Catostomus macrocheilus*
Bridgelip sucker	*Catostomus columbianus*
Burbot	*Lota lota*
Sculpin	*Cottidae* spp.
Tench	*Tinca tinca*
Carp	*Cyprinus carpio*

Source: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 2004; Polacek et al. 2003.

Other aquatic organisms such as benthic invertebrates also occur in Banks Lake. Aquatic plants and attached organisms such as algae, protozoa, and bacteria (periphyton), as well as detritus, provide food and habitat for a wide variety of organisms. High invertebrate densities are typically associated with aquatic plants (Hoyer et al. 1997 in Reclamation 2004). Very few invertebrates or fish feed directly on the large aquatic plants; instead, they feed on the attached organisms and detritus (Heckey and Hesslein 1995 in Reclamation 2004).

Benthic invertebrates that live in sediments also collect beneath macrophytes. Some invertebrates use plant remains as food and shelter. Others eat algae that cover sediments. Invertebrates are a major food source for forage fish and young life stages of many game fish. Young waterfowl depend heavily on invertebrates as a high-protein food source needed for rapid early growth (Hoyer and Canfield 1997 in Reclamation 2004).

3.5.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

The No Action alternative would maintain existing conditions; it would have no impact on surface water quality or aquatic resources.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, improvements to the Park would increase the potential for impacts on surface water quality and aquatic resources. Impacts would include both short-term impacts associated with construction activities and long-term impacts associated with increased, concentrated human activity.

Project designs would be compliant with the Grant County SMP; this will be documented through a separate, local permitting process.

Surface Water Quality

The Proposed Action would require in-water construction associated with the construction of 52 moorage slips spread between four piers, ramps (gangways), and floats. The construction of these piers, ramps (gangways), and floats would require pile driving to secure the structures, which would cause a temporary and localized increase in turbidity. Such an increase would not be expected to exceed 5 nephelometric turbidity units (NTUs) in waters directly adjacent to the piling and the substrate interface. Localized increases would not be expected to be transferred to other parts of the lake and suspended sediments would settle out of the water column relatively quickly (i.e., within hours).

Piling used to secure floats and support piers would be constructed of steel. The use of steel pilings would not affect water quality.

The increase in moorage space would provide increased boat-in camping options at the Park; however, this increase in amenities would not necessarily facilitate an increase in boating activity on Banks Lake or increase the potential for contamination of surface waters. Providing increased amenities for boaters at the Park would likely lead to a decrease in boat-in camping at non-designated and unimproved campsites along the shores of Banks Lake. Increasing the capacity of existing facilities within the Park could decrease the potential for shoreline degradation, bank erosion, fecal coliform bacteria associated with human waste, and garbage associated with dispersed camping in non-designated and unimproved campsites.

The increase in available campsites and related facilities (i.e., sewage disposal, water reservoir) and boat moorage improvements would potentially increase impacts on surface water quality. The increased impervious surface area associated with access roads and camper pads would potentially result in runoff of oil and other petroleum-based pollutants. The expansion of Park facilities would result in an increase of approximately 233,500 square feet (5.36 acres) of

impervious surface area (100,000 square feet [2.3 acres] during Phase I; 153,000 square feet [3.5 acres] during Phase II; and 1,500 square feet [0.03 acre] during Phase III). With the exception of portions of the trail and optional footbridge, this impervious surface area would be located approximately 100 horizontal feet or further from the ordinary high-water mark of Banks Lake, the nearest surface water, with maintained landscaping (e.g., primarily lawn) between the edge of the impervious surface and the lake. In general, impervious surfaces would be cross-sloped at approximately 1% to 2% and runoff would be directed to adjacent grassy lawn areas for biofiltration and infiltration. Most of the pollutants would likely be removed prior to entering surface waters or wetlands associated with Banks Lake.

As part of the project, the WSPRC will obtain NPDES permit coverage and will comply with the terms and conditions defined within the permit. The terms and conditions established by the NPDES permit will ensure that stormwater runoff generated by the project will have a minimal impact to surface water quality.

During construction, protection of water resources would be accomplished through the use of BMPs. The following specific construction BMPs will be employed by WSPRC.

- Provide for prevention, control and abatement of soil erosion and water pollution within the limits of the project. This is intended to prevent and/or minimize damage to adjacent bodies of water.
- Coordinate these temporary soil erosion/water pollution control measures with the permanent drainage and erosion control work to ensure effective and continuous controls are maintained throughout the life of the project.
- Develop a written spill prevention and response plan for construction activities within 200 feet of the OHWM as measured on a horizontal plane from Banks Lake. The plan will include:
    - a narrative description of the proposed construction methods, materials, and equipment to be used for the work;
    - an assessment and listing of hazardous materials and/or potential contaminants that could be released during execution of the work;
    - MSDS sheets with cleanup instructions for all potential contaminants;
    - spill response/cleanup materials and instructions for their use;
    - procedures and precautions to prevent spills; and
    - spill response training for onsite personnel, including the location of the containment and cleanup materials at the site.
    - Conduct emergency notification in case of a spill or release. The Park Manager and Engineer must be included on the list of those who must be notified.

In addition to construction BMPs, the continued protection of water resources would be accomplished through the use of BMPs during Park operation. Specific BMPs typically employed by WSPRC that would be applied to the Proposed Action include:

- Perform all work in a manner not to create conditions injurious to fish or to their habitat, or which would make the water unsuitable for private, municipal, or industrial use.

- At all times of the year, take special measures to prevent chemicals, fuels, oils, grease, bituminous materials, waste washings, herbicides, insecticides, lime, wet concrete, cement, silt or organic or other deleterious material from entering waterways.
- Dispose of all wastes, effluents, trash, garbage, oil, grease, chemicals, cement, bitumen, etc., petroleum and chemical products or wastes containing such products off site in a lawful manner conforming to all applicable local, state, and federal laws.
- Conform to applicable local, state and federal laws for disposal of effluents. Dispose of waters used to wash down equipment in a manner to prevent their entry into a waterway. If any waste material is dumped in unauthorized areas, remove material and restore the area to the condition of adjacent, undisturbed area. If necessary, excavate contaminated ground and dispose of as directed by the Engineer and replaced with suitable compacted fill material with surface restored to original condition.

Aquatic Resources

The aquatic resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action include wetlands, fish, and benthic invertebrates.

Wetlands

Six wetlands have been identified and delineated within the study area. Five of the wetlands are located along the shoreline of Banks Lake (Wetland A through Wetland E) and one wetland (Wetland F) is located along the shoreline of Thompson Lake. The features of the Proposed Action most likely to result in direct wetland and wetland buffer impacts are the moorage piers, trail, and the optional footbridge. These features have not been completely designed to date, but would be located outside of delineated wetlands and their buffers to the extent possible. The configuration of the trail and optional footbridge included in the Proposed Action has been specifically chosen to minimize impacts on wetland and buffer vegetation. All staging areas and material storage areas would also be located outside of wetlands and buffers.

Based on the conceptual site plan (Figure 3), it is estimated that approximately 290 square feet (0.006 acre) of the trail and optional footbridge footprint would directly impact wetlands and approximately 1,970 square feet (0.05 acre) would directly impact wetland buffer.

Impervious surfaces, such as a trail, within wetlands or their buffers can reduce their water quality, hydrologic function, and wildlife habitat scores due to a reduction in vegetative cover. The project design and permitting process will require that unavoidable wetland impacts be compensated for through development, implementation, and monitoring of a compensatory mitigation plan consistent with federal, state, and local regulations.

Fish and Benthic Invertebrates

Several species of fish occur in Banks Lake (Table 2). Many of these fish are stocked by WDFW to provide recreational fishing opportunities for the public. No federally protected fish species occur in Banks Lake. The Proposed Action would potentially increase the recreational fishing pressure on the lake; however, the amount of increase would not constitute a significant impact on the fisheries resources of Banks Lake.

Benthic invertebrates in lakes tend to favor shoreline areas beneath aquatic macrophytes. The shoreline of the Banks Lake does have aquatic macrophytes. However, the lake is a reservoir managed for irrigation of agricultural lands and experiences fluctuations in water surface elevations. These fluctuations limit the benefits of aquatic macrophytes to benthic invertebrate communities. The Proposed Action would only have a minor impact on aquatic macrophytes, principally in the areas where the optional footbridge and access to the new moorage slips (piers) would be located. These structures would be specifically located to avoid or minimize potential impacts on shoreline vegetation and aquatic macrophytes to the extent possible, thus avoiding and minimizing potential impacts on benthic invertebrates. Overall, the Proposed Action would not have a measurable impact on benthic invertebrates, because the impacts on shoreline vegetation and aquatic macrophytes would be minimal and there would not be a measurable impact on water quality.

3.5.3. Mitigation Measures

Direct impacts on wetlands will be mitigated for at the appropriate ratio to replace the affected functions and to ensure no net loss of wetland habitats or functions as a result of the Proposed Action. Wetland mitigation will be monitored, as required, to ensure it is functioning as intended.

A variety of opportunities exist for wetland and wetland buffer enhancement in the study area that could result in an increase in wetland functions. These are described in detail in the wetland report prepared for the project (The Watershed Company 2007) and are summarized here:

Wetland A

- Vegetate the buffer with native shrubs.
- Do not mow within the buffer except as required for public safety.
- Plant shrubs to control access to the lakeshore and reduce boat and foot traffic through the wetland.
- Remove existing riprap to create a more gradual shoreline transition and plant exposed area with native shrubs and emergent vegetation to prevent erosion.

Wetland B

- Remove invasive plant species from the wetland buffer and plant native shrubs.
- Direct foot traffic from the proposed North Campground to the trail system to prevent damage to buffer vegetation.
- Add woody debris along the lakeshore.
- Provide snags along the lakeshore as perches for osprey.
- Site the optional footbridge to avoid direct wetland impacts.

Wetland C

- Plant native shrubs in the wetland buffer.
- Locate the boat moorage slip proposed in the vicinity so that is between wetlands B and C.
- Excavate at the wetland edge to increase its size.

Wetland D

- Locate the boat moorage slip proposed in the vicinity so that it is between wetlands D and E.
- Plant native shrubs in the buffer to reduce foot traffic.
- Replace invasive Russian olive with native shrubs.

Wetland E

- Locate the boat moorage slip proposed in this vicinity in the area where only a sparse aquatic bed of water milfoil is present.
- Remove invasive plant species and plant natives.

Wetland F

- Locate the proposed sewage lagoon outside of the wetland buffer, or use buffer averaging.
- Remove invasive plant species and plant natives.

3.6. Vegetation

The study area for vegetation is defined as the developed campground area, including the area of the proposed campground loops, and the area surrounding the proposed sewage lagoons and proposed reservoir.

3.6.1. Affected Environment

The Park contains both upland and wetland vegetation. Wetland functions, values, and classifications are described in Section 3.5, Surface Water and Aquatic Resources. This section describes vegetation communities and plant species in the study area. Land cover types in the Park include shrub-steppe, wetland, rock, disturbed, and developed areas (Figure 5). Trees and shrubs associated with lakes, streams, or rivers are commonly referred to as riparian vegetation. Riparian vegetation was not considered a land cover type; because it is generally associated with existing wetlands in the study area, it is included within the wetland cover type.

The Park is located in a large region of steppe and shrub-steppe vegetation that historically extended throughout most of central and southeastern Washington. Dominant plant communities in this region were sagebrush and bunchgrass associations, including big sagebrush (*Artemesia*

tridentata), threetip sagebrush (*A. tripartita*), stiff sagebrush (*A. rigida*), yellow rabbitbrush (*Chysothamnus viscidiflorus*), and bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) (Franklin and Dyrness 1973).

Upland areas in the Park include talus slopes, dunes, campsites surrounded by maintained lawn, developed day-use areas and parking lots. Dominant native plant species are sage brush (*Artemisia* sp.), yellow rabbitbrush, and sunflower (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*).

Several invasive plant species are common in the study area. Russian olive (*Elaegnus angustifolia*) is present in patches throughout the study area, often along wetland edges. Dalmation toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*) and knapweed (*Centaurea* sp.) are common in the vicinity of the sewage treatment ponds. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) are also common. The areas immediately surrounding campsites are maintained grass with some weeds.

Trees are most common along the lakeshore, and include Russian olive, black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*), and poplar (*Populus* sp.). Most of these trees are located in the riparian area along the lakeshore and many of these trees were planted to provide shade and a wind break. There is a small group of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) in the vicinity of the existing water reservoir.

As described in Section 3.5, the wetland report prepared for the project identified six wetlands in the study area (The Watershed Company 2007): five are lakeshore wetlands associated with Banks Lake (including a small embayment of Banks Lake near the current day-use area) and the other is associated with the shoreline of Thompson Lake.

The wetlands located along Banks Lake support a variety of plant species, including mountain rush (*Juncus articus var. balticus*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), Pacific willow (*Salix lucida*), cottonwood, red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*), giant horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*), reed canarygrass, scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*), Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*), wax currant (*Ribes cereum*), and cattail (*Typha latifolia*).

Russian olive and Pacific willow are the dominant shrubs in the wetland area associated with Thompson Lake. Cattails, hardstem bulrush, reed canarygrass, and mountain rush are the dominant emergents.

A rare plant and vegetation survey was conducted in the areas proposed for construction under the Proposed Action (Morrison 2008). Plant communities were mapped as individual polygons, and each polygon was visited at least once during field surveys. The survey found that plant communities in the study area are shrub-steppe communities dominated by rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), yellow rabbitbrush, snow buckwheat (*Eriogonum niveum*), and big sagebrush (*Artemesia tridentata*). The following primary plant communities and land cover types are located in the study area:

- Rubber rabbitbrush community: *Ericameria nauseosa – Chrysothamnus vicidiflorus – Eriogonum niveum – Artemesia tridentata/Hesperostipa comata var. comata – Achnatherum hymenoides – Bromus tectorum*

- Yellow rabbitbrush community: *Chrysothamnus vicidiflorus – Ericameria nauseosa – Eriogonum niveum/Pseudoroegneriaspicata – Balsamorhiza careyana – Bromus tectorum*
- Big sagebrush community: *Artemesia tridentata – Ericameria nauseosa – Eriogonum niveum/Poa secunda – Pseudoroegneria spicata – Aristida purpurea. var. longiseta – Bromus tectorum*
- Banks Lake shoreline artificial wetland community
- Sand deposits and dunes

No plant species listed as threatened, endangered, or sensitive were encountered in the study area. One species of cactus, *Opuntia fragilis*, recently removed from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Natural Heritage Program "watch" list because it is more common than previously thought, was encountered frequently in the area around the sewage lagoons and in the proposed Middle Campground expansion area (Morrison 2008).

During the spring 2007 wetland delineation, a beardtongue species (*Penstemon spp.*) was identified (The Watershed Company 2007); however, the exact species of *Penstemon* was not positively identified. The fuzzytongue penstemon (*Penstemon erantherus var. whitedii*) and Wilcox's penstemon (*Penstemon wilcoxii*) are listed as a DNR Natural Heritage Program sensitive species in Grant County. No *Penstemon* species were recorded during the May, June, and July 2008 rare plant surveys subsequently conducted by the Pacific Biodiversity Institute (Morrison 2008).

The proposed North Campground area would be located in an upland area dominated by yellow rabbitbrush. Soils are sandy and several social trails cross the area. The area of the proposed Middle Campground burned in a wildfire in 2007 and is now dominated by herbaceous vegetation, including sunflower. Cheatgrass is expected to establish in this area as a result of its presence in adjacent areas and the amount of exposed soil. The trail and optional footbridge would cross areas of upland and wetland habitat. Approximately 25,600 square feet (0.6 acre) of the trail and optional footbridge footprint would occur within the 200-foot shoreline zone along Banks Lake. Trails are allowed within the shoreline zone, but may require a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit or revision. Much of the shoreline upland and wetland vegetation is disturbed, particularly adjacent to the existing campgrounds, as a result of dispersed use as recreational users access the shore to tie up boats and walk between campground areas and the lake.

The area around the proposed sewage lagoons is dominated by big sagebrush and yellow rabbitbrush, with a high incidence of Dalmation toadflax. The area around the proposed water reservoir includes bare soil associated with the access road to the existing reservoir and vegetated areas are dominated by yellow rabbitbrush.

The presence of invasive plants in the shrub-steppe vegetation around the existing campground and associated facilities indicates the habitat is not in a high quality, or highly developed ecosystem condition, compared to shrub-steppe vegetation with native grasses and forbs. The lack of a cryptogam crust (i.e., a thin crust of lichens and mosses) on the soil surface also indicates the shrub-steppe vegetation is not representative of a higher quality condition.

3.6.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action, vegetation would continue to be managed as under existing conditions. The trail, optional footbridge, and boat moorage would not be constructed, and associated dispersed-use impacts would continue from recreational users creating and travelling social trails between campground and day-use areas and along the lakeshore. These activities would contribute to vegetation loss in the area, would prevent native plant species establishing in disturbed soils, and could allow nonnative invasive plant species to become established.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, approximately 24.4 acres of ground disturbance would occur, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Acres of Ground Disturbance by Project Element

Project Element	Approximate Acres of Ground Disturbance
Phase 1	
North campground	8
Sewage lagoon	1
Water reservoir	<1
Phase 2	
Middle campground	10
Trail and optional footbridge	2.4
Sewage lagoon	1
Phase 3	
Boat moorage	<1
Approximate total ground disturbance	24.4

Construction of the North Campground, Middle Campground, sewage lagoons, and water reservoir would result in the loss of approximately 24.39 acres of shrub-steppe vegetation. This would occur in an area where vegetation shows high levels of disturbance: several user trails have been created through the proposed campground areas, invasive weeds are common in the vicinity of the sewage lagoon, and roads and trails are located near the existing water reservoir. Additionally, much of the Middle Campground area was burned by a wildfire in the summer of 2007. The new campground facilities would be sited in these disturbed areas to avoid impacts on high quality shrub-steppe vegetation in other areas of the Park. The loss of these approximately 24.39 acres of relatively marginal shrub-steppe habitat within the 3,500-acre Park is not expected to constitute a significant impact on shrub-steppe plant species, particularly because no sensitive species were found in the study area. The presence of invasive plants in the shrub-steppe vegetation around the existing campground and associated facilities and the lack of a cryptogam crust (i.e., a thin crust of lichens and mosses) on the soil surface indicate the shrub-steppe vegetation in the study area is not in a high quality condition.

The configuration of the trail and optional footbridge under the Proposed Action has been specifically chosen to minimize impacts on wetland and buffer vegetation. The trail would be located parallel to the shore of Banks Lake and would likely affect approximately 0.006 acre of wetland and wetland buffer vegetation in places, particularly where it connects to the boat moorage slips and where the optional footbridge would be constructed. Wetland impacts and mitigation measures are described in detail in Section 3.5.2.

Construction of the trail and optional footbridge could reduce impacts on vegetation in undeveloped areas in the vicinity of the existing and proposed campground areas, as recreationists would likely use the developed trail rather than use or create social trails. This could reduce impacts on native vegetation in the study area and reduce the potential for nonnative, invasive plant species to become established. The addition of boat moorage facilities would also help to reduce dispersed-use impacts on lakeshore vegetation; additional moorage would reduce the number of beached boats and the related foot traffic between beached boats and camping areas.

3.6.3. Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures from the Banks Lake RMP EA (Reclamation 2001b) will be implemented to mitigate for impacts on vegetation.

- Use native species for revegetation; noninvasive nonnative plant species can be used for short-term use, with a goal of restoring native plant communities.
- Clearly mark construction limits and staging areas to help prevent unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the natural surroundings in the work vicinity.
- Avoid using environmentally important areas for storage of construction equipment or materials and stockpiling.
- Grade areas disturbed through construction to blend with the natural contours of the site and help ensure proper site drainage.
- Cover disturbed areas with topsoil taken from construction areas on the site and revegetate with plants native to the area and beneficial to wildlife, as appropriate.
- Where applicable and appropriate, WSPRC will consult with WDFW, the FWS, and NRCS, and Reclamation to develop the composition of plant species, seeding rates, and planting dates.
- Revegetate sites to restore native plant communities appropriate for the site's soil type, topographic position, and elevation.

The following mitigation measures will also be implemented.

- If nonnative, noninvasive plant species are used for short-term revegetation, only certified, sterile varieties will be used.
- Areas to be revegetated will be evaluated prior to planting, and plant species with a high probability of successfully establishing on the site will be selected. Supplemental

watering will be provided at individual sites during the first year following planting, to increase the probability of successful plant establishment. Use of native plant species common to the area is expected to limit the amount of water required.

To minimize the potential introduction or spread of nonnative invasive plant species, the following BMPs will be implemented during project construction:

- Use only certified weed-free seeds for seed mixes.
- Use only certified weed-free straw and other mulches.
- Minimize soil disturbance to the extent possible.
- Follow provisions of the Park's Integrated Pest Management Plan.

3.7. Wildlife

The study area for wildlife is defined as the peninsula on which the Park is located. This is larger than the study area defined for other resources in recognition of the ability of wildlife to travel over relatively large distances. While most of the species described in this section do not generally occur in the developed portions of the campground, they have the potential to occur, pass through, or use it as part of a larger home range territory.

3.7.1. Affected Environment

The Banks Lake RMP EA (Reclamation 2001b) identified 99 species of birds, 47 species of mammals, and 11 species of amphibians and reptiles that are known to occur or may occur in the RMP EA study area. A detailed description of these species is presented in the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001b), incorporated here by reference. Many of these species are likely to also occur in the wildlife study area for this analysis. Wildlife species that are expected to regularly occur in the study area include a variety of raptors, including bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*); waterfowl such as Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) and western grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*); mammals such as mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*); and reptiles such as racer (*Coluber constrictor*) and western rattlesnake (*Croatus viridis*).

The WDFW Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database contains records of several priority habitat types and a variety of wildlife species in the study area (WDFW 2008). Species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered with the potential to occur in the study area are described in Section 3.8.

Priority Habitats

Priority habitats in the study area are shrub-steppe, wetlands, and cliffs/bluffs. The majority of the study area is shrub-steppe habitat dominated by big sagebrush and yellow rabbitbrush. The PHS database identifies shrub-steppe habitat in the study area as year-round habitat for mule deer and sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). Shrub-steppe habitat also provides foraging habitat for a variety of raptors; nesting and foraging habitat for songbirds such as western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*); game birds such as ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus*

colchicus) and chukar (*Alectoris chukar*); and habitat for a variety of small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

Although not mapped as a separate habitat type because it largely coincides with the wetland locations, riparian habitat provides raptor, nongame, and game bird foraging and breeding areas and also provides foraging habitat and cover for deer, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. In the arid ecosystem of central Washington, trees are most commonly found in riparian habitats, providing perching and nesting habitat for raptors such as bald eagles and red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*). Riparian habitat also provides nesting habitat for migratory birds such as cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) and American robin (*Turdus migratorius*). In the study area, riparian habitat is located along the lakeshore associated with the delineated wetlands.

Wetlands in the study area are located discontinuously along the shoreline of Banks Lake, including the Devil's Punchbowl, and along the shoreline of Thompson Lake. Wetlands provide important waterfowl nesting, brooding, and resting areas and habitat for small mammals. Birds that may nest in wetlands include western grebe and red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), as well as many others.

Cliffs and bluffs provide nesting habitat for raptors such as golden eagle and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), nongame birds such as white-throated swifts (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) and cliff swallows (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*), and game birds such as chukar. Mule deer also may use this habitat for escape or cover, and several species of bats may use cliffs and bluffs for roosting. Reptiles may use this habitat and associated talus slopes. Cliffs in the study area are associated with Steamboat Rock; a large talus slope is located along its eastern base.

Priority Species

The WDFW PHS database identifies several priority wildlife species in the study area (Table 4).

Table 4. Priority Wildlife Documented in the Study Area

Species	Federal Status	State Status
Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)	Concern	Sensitive
Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos)*	None	Candidate
Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)*	Concern	Sensitive
Prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)	None	Monitor
Western grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)	None	Candidate
Common loon (*Gavia immer*)	None	Sensitive
Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)	Candidate	Threatened
Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)	None	Game species
Sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus)*	Concern	Candidate

Three bald eagle nesting territories are located in the study area, and large numbers of bald eagles roost in the study area during winter. All three of the nesting territories have management plans in place, with nest and shoreline buffers. One of these nests is located on the northeast side

of Steamboat Rock and another is located on the southwest end of the peninsula. No project work is proposed in the vicinity of these nests.

The shoreline buffer for the third nest extends along the shoreline of the Devil's Punchbowl to the northeast of the existing south campground area. It also encompasses the entire shoreline of Thompson Lake (WDFW 2008). The proposed Middle Campground, trail, and sewage treatment lagoons would be located wholly or partially in the shoreline buffer associated with this nest. In the study area, bald eagles are known to perch in trees along the shore of Banks Lake outside of the established bald eagle shoreline buffers (WDFW 2008).

One golden eagle nest has been documented in the study area, in cliff habitat on the east side of Steamboat Rock, more than 0.5 mile from the nearest Proposed Action elements. Golden eagles may forage over the areas of proposed development and may perch in trees in the area.

A peregrine falcon aerie is also located on the east side of Steamboat Rock, in cliff habitat (WDFW 2005), approximately 1 mile from the nearest Proposed Action elements. Peregrine falcons may forage over the area of proposed development.

A pair of prairie falcons has been observed in the study area, displaying behavior that may have indicated nesting activity; however, nesting was not confirmed. This activity was observed on the east side of Steamboat Rock, in cliff habitat (WDFW 2008) near the known peregrine falcon aerie, approximately 1 mile from the nearest Proposed Action elements. Prairie falcons may forage over the area of proposed development.

A nesting colony of western grebes has been documented associated with wetlands at the south end of the Devil's Punchbowl (WDFW 2008), more than 1 mile from the nearest Proposed Action elements. Common loons (10–12 pairs) have been observed in the same area during spring (WDFW 2008).

The PHS database identifies shrub-steppe habitat in the study area as habitat for sage grouse. This is based on a habitat survey conducted in 1993; however, no current records of sage grouse occurrence are included in the database (WDFW 2008). Although historically widely distributed throughout the Columbia Basin in Washington, sage grouse now primarily occupy two relatively isolated areas: one on the Yakima Training Center south of the study area and one in Douglas and Grant counties. The study area is located in the portion of the current range that is in northern Grant County and is in the Mansfield Plateau Management Unit, one of the three management units out of a total of 14 that are known to be occupied. However, no active lek sites are located in the study area (Stinson et al. 2004), and sage grouse are not expected to occur in the area proposed for development.

The PHS database also identifies shrub-steppe habitat in the study area as mule deer habitat, with year-round use occurring. Mule deer is also identified as species that uses riparian habitat in the study area (WDFW 2008). Mule deer are known to occur in the area of proposed development, where they likely browse and pass through to access the lake shore.

One occurrence of sagebrush lizard has been recorded in the study area, in the area between the existing and proposed north campgrounds (WDFW 2008). Based on this past occurrence, this species may occur in the area of proposed development.

3.7.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Park would continue to operate with existing facilities and would maintain those facilities. With no additional campground space provided, overnight use of the Park would not increase, although use of the day-use area could increase depending on recreational trends. Use of the Park would continue to be focused primarily in developed areas and on existing trails. Dispersed camping would likely continue at existing rates and could increase as demand for camping spaces increases, and so would continue to degrade wildlife habitat.

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the addition of campground and boat moorage facilities would increase the recreational capacity (e.g., camping, trail use, boating) of the Park, in response to recreational demand. Use of the Park would be focused in the areas developed under the Proposed Action. Potential impacts on priority habitats and species are described below.

Priority Habitats

As described in Section 3.6.2, the Proposed Action would result in the loss of approximately 24.39 acres of shrub-steppe habitat in the study area. This is a relatively small amount of shrub-steppe habitat compared to the amount available in the study area (estimated at over 1,000 acres) and would not significantly reduce habitat availability for species that use shrub-steppe habitat. Additionally, this habitat is intermixed in the project area, potentially reducing the frequency of wildlife use of these areas, compared to the larger expanses of shrub-steppe habitat in the remainder of the study area.

It is estimated that approximately 290 square feet (0.006 acre) of the trail and optional footbridge footprint would directly impact wetlands and approximately 1,970 square feet (0.05 acre) would directly impact wetland buffer. Impacts on wetland habitats would occur in conjunction with Phases 2 and 3 of the Proposed Action, namely the trail, optional footbridge, and boat moorage slips, which have not been fully designed. These facilities would be located outside of wetlands and wetland buffers to the extent possible, and a compensatory mitigation plan will be developed to mitigate for any unavoidable impacts. All staging areas and material storage areas would also be located outside of wetlands and buffers. Potential wetland buffer enhancements that could improve functions in the project area are described in Section 3.5.

Construction of the trail and optional footbridge could reduce potential impacts on wetland habitat, by reducing trampling of plants, concentrating foot traffic on the trail, and reducing the likelihood that recreationists would use or create social trails.

No direct impacts on cliff/bluff habitat are expected, because no project components are proposed in this habitat type. The new water reservoir would be located to avoid a large talus slope at the base of the southeastern edge of Steamboat Rock. Noise and activity from construction may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife using this habitat; however, none of the priority species documented in the area and associated with this habitat are near enough to be affected.

Priority Species

Bald Eagles

Under the Proposed Action, no construction activity would occur within either the 400-foot protected zone or the 800-foot buffer zone around any of the bald eagle nests in the study area. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Action would have no impact on nesting bald eagles. However, the proposed Middle Campground, trail, and sewage treatment lagoons would be located wholly or partially within the bald eagle shoreline buffer associated with the nest located along the shoreline of the Devil's Punchbowl. According to the bald eagle management guidelines, the purpose of this bald eagle shoreline buffer is to protect trees that may be used by eagles for perching in the nesting territory (Watson and Rodrick 2000). No trees suitable for perching would be removed for construction of the proposed Middle Campground or sewage treatment lagoons. The portion of the proposed trail within the bald eagle shoreline buffer would be designed to avoid the removal of trees suitable for bald eagle perches, consistent with the management guidelines (Watson and Rodrick 2000). For these reasons, the Proposed Action would not alter the suitability of the habitat in the shoreline buffer for bald eagles. Trees planted to provide shade for the proposed Middle Campground may also provide additional perches for bald eagles.

Construction of the proposed Middle Campground area could increase the number of people recreating in the shoreline buffer area during the nesting season, and construction of the new campground areas and boat moorage would allow for a higher number of boats in the vicinity. However, no new types of recreational uses would be introduced to the Park. Bald eagles are expected to be acclimated to the existing uses that are typical in the Park.

Bald eagles are generally most sensitive to near-nest human use (Watson and Rodrick 2000). Bald eagles nesting in the study area, particularly the eagle pair in the shoreline buffer that encompasses the existing south campground, are likely acclimated to the existing high levels of human use in the area. This eagle nest was established after the Park was established and camping was opened in the early 1970s. Human presence in the immediate vicinity of the nest (e.g., pedestrian traffic below the nest) would not increase under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is thus not expected to cause a significant increase in disturbance to nesting bald eagles.

By concentrating new development in the vicinity of existing development, the Proposed Action would avoid impacts on any bald eagles that are less acclimated to human activity. This would also avoid impacts on areas with high winter bald eagle use.

Other Priority Birds

The documented golden eagle nest, peregrine falcon aerie, and potential prairie falcon nest are all located farther than 0.5 mile from the area of proposed development. Therefore, no direct impacts from project construction are expected to occur. Loss of shrub-steppe habitat would incrementally reduce the amount of foraging habitat available for golden eagles; however, this habitat loss would occur in areas of existing development, which may be relatively low-use areas for golden eagles because of the existing human presence, particularly during summer. Increased recreational use of the study area could increase disturbance of nesting birds; however, because the cliff habitat locations of nests and aeries of these species are remote and difficult to

reach because of their topography, the probability of disturbance is low. All three species may forage in the area of proposed development, and the Proposed Action could reduce available foraging habitat. Approximately 24.39 acres of potential foraging habitat would be removed within an approximately 1,000-acre area, representing approximately 2.5% of the total area. This incremental loss of potential foraging habitat and the location of the habitat intermixed in the existing campground development are not expected to significantly reduce foraging success for these species.

Impacts on nesting grebes are not expected because no new development is proposed in the vicinity of the nesting area in the southern portion of the Devil's Punchbowl, and no increase in human use of the nesting area is expected. Although construction of additional campsites and boat moorage may increase the number of watercraft operating in the Devil's Punchbowl during the nesting season, watercraft use of the area is already high and the increase is not expected to result in a measureable difference in terms of noise disturbance. Shallow water and shoreline wetlands in the southern portion of the Devil's Punchbowl are expected to limit boat traffic in the immediate vicinity of the western grebe breeding colony. Western grebes may forage offshore of the proposed area of development, however grebes in this area are likely acclimated to human use and would be expected to continue to use the area.

Shallow water and shoreline wetlands in the southern portion of the Devil's Punchbowl are also expected to help minimize potential impacts of increased watercraft traffic on common loons. Because of shallow water conditions, motorized watercraft cannot approach too closely to nest sites, and so are not expected to create wakes that could swamp nests. Therefore, impacts on nesting loons are not expected.

Removal of approximately 24.39 acres of shrub-steppe habitat would reduce the amount of habitat available in the study area for sage grouse. The areas of proposed development are of relatively low quality, however, because of their proximity to existing areas of development and related high human use. The proposed North Campground and Middle Campground areas receive use from the existing neighboring campground areas from people creating social trails to the day-use area or explore the surrounding area. With human use in the campground occurring at its highest level during spring and summer, use of the area for leks or for nesting would be limited by disturbance. The Proposed Action was designed to focus new development in areas of existing human use, rather than in more remote areas of the study area. This concentration of development would protect habitat for sage grouse and other shrub-steppe species in the more remote areas. Although not currently known to use the study area for displaying or nesting, if sage grouse were to recolonize the area, they would benefit from the availability of undisturbed habitat.

Mule Deer

Removal of approximately 24.39 acres of shrub-steppe habitat would reduce the amount of foraging habitat available in the study area for mule deer. However, the amount of habitat lost would be small compared to the amount of habitat available, which is estimated at over 1,000 acres in the study area. As described in Section 3.6, shrub-steppe habitat that would be affected is of relatively low quality due to a high incidence of nonnative invasive plant species and soil disturbance caused by recreationists. The area of the proposed Middle Campground burned in a wildfire in the summer of 2007, removing virtually all vegetation. In summer 2008, the area was

observed to support a variety of herbaceous plant species. If left to continue to revegetate, it is likely that invasive species, particularly cheatgrass, would grow in this area.

Removal of wetland vegetation, although expected to be minimal, would also reduce the amount of cover available for mule deer. The areas proposed for development are located adjacent to existing developed sites. This location was chosen to concentrate the developed area, preserving more remote parts of the study area for wildlife habitat. Mule deer would likely still use the developed areas, particularly from fall through early spring when the campgrounds are not full. During the late spring and summer when campgrounds are full and when fawns are present, mule deer would be more likely to use the more remote portions of the study area. The proposed development is not expected to appreciably alter mule deer use of habitat in the study area.

Sagebrush Lizards

Sagebrush lizards are primarily associated with shrub-steppe habitat and also use rocky outcrops (Storm 1995). The one record of a sagebrush lizard in the study area indicated an occurrence between the existing northern campground and proposed North Campground. Development of the proposed North Campground would reduce habitat for this species and may have direct impacts on individuals in the immediate vicinity. Construction of the new lakeshore trail may also reduce habitat for this species and have direct impacts on individuals, but could also have a long-term beneficial impact by concentrating recreational use on the trail and reducing the risk of nests being trampled by recreational users creating or using social trails in the area.

3.7.3. Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures for impacts on wildlife, as described in the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001b), will be implemented.

- Develop a wildfire management plan to protect habitat such as shrub-steppe, which does not recover quickly.
- Develop and implement specific wildlife management plans for areas under WDFW and WSPRC jurisdiction.
- Coordinate review and evaluation of actions such as construction of new recreation facilities with the FWS.
- Schedule new construction to avoid impacts during critical wildlife periods (e.g., wintering, nesting and/or breeding, hibernation, or juvenile dispersal periods).
- Avoid using areas of native plant cover for construction staging areas.
- Reseed all areas disturbed by construction using a native seed mixture beneficial to wildlife.

3.8. Threatened and Endangered Species

The study area for threatened and endangered species is defined as the peninsula on which the Park is located and Banks Lake.

3.8.1. Affected Environment

Regulatory Context

Within the State of Washington several species of plants and animals are protected under the ESA as either threatened or endangered species. The discussion below provides information on the federally protected fish, wildlife, and vegetation that may occur within the study area.

Fish

Banks Lake is managed primarily for irrigation and secondarily for recreation. Water levels in the lake are maintained with draws from the Columbia River. Several species of federally protected fish are known to occur in the Columbia River, including Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Chinook salmon and steelhead are not able to migrate in the Columbia River upstream of the Grand Coulee dam, whereas bull trout do occur in the Columbia River upstream of the Grand Coulee dam.

Banks Lake is impounded at the north end by an earthen dam referred to as North Dam. North Dam is near Electric City and measures approximately 144 feet high and 1,450 feet long. A pumping station located at the left forebay of Grand Coulee Dam pumps Columbia River water up 279 feet into a feeder canal that runs 1.6 miles, delivering water to Banks Lake at North Dam. Therefore, no federally protected fish species occur in Banks Lake.

Historic data from creel surveys performed in the 1950s indicate the presence of kokanee salmon, burbot, bull trout, and possibly rainbow trout and eastern brook trout. In the early 1950s, occasional bull trout were recorded, but with no available spawning habitat, the species never became established in the reservoir (Reclamation 2001b). Bull trout were only ever recorded in the creel survey data from 1952 through 1954, and it is likely that they were entrained from Lake Roosevelt and never became established in Banks Lake, or that they were misidentified brook trout (Polacek et al. 2003).

Plants

One federally threatened plant species, Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), and one federal candidate plant species, northern wormwood (*Artemesia campestris* ssp. *borealis* var. *wormskioldii*), have the potential to occur in the study area (FWS 2008). Ute ladies'-tresses are usually found in full sun to partial shade in early- to mid-seral communities subject to flooding or periodic inundation (Reclamation 2001b), and so could occur in riparian or wetland habitats in the study area. Northern wormwood is associated with sand dunes and sandy areas along the Columbia River (Reclamation 2001b) and so could be found in sandy soils in the study area.

The Banks Lake RMP EA identifies an additional 15 special-status plant species that could occur in the study area. Surveys for special-status plants conducted for the project did not locate any special status plant species in the survey area (Morrison 2008). During the spring 2007 wetland delineation, a beardtongue species (*Penstemon spp.*) was identified (The Watershed Company 2007); however, the exact species of *Penstemon* could not be positively determined. The

fuzzytongue penstemon (*Penstemon erantherus var. whitedii*) and Wilcox's penstemon (*Penstemon wilcoxii*) are listed within the Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program as a sensitive species in Grant County. No *Penstemon* species were recorded during the May, June, and July 2008 rare plant surveys subsequently conducted by the Pacific Biodiversity Institute (Morrison 2008).

Wildlife

One federally listed endangered wildlife species, the pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*), and two federal candidate species, greater sage grouse and Washington ground squirrel (*Spermophilus washingtoni*), have the potential to occur in Grant County (FWS 2008). The sage grouse is discussed in Section 3.7.

Habitat for pygmy rabbits is generally characterized by tall, dense stands of sagebrush (*Artemesia* spp.) and areas that include relatively deep, loose soils that allow burrowing. Pygmy rabbits are highly dependent on sagebrush for food and shelter throughout the year. The pygmy rabbit is one of only two rabbit species in North America that digs its own burrows and, therefore, is most often found in areas with soils suitable for burrowing (FWS 2007).

The historical range of the pygmy rabbit in Washington included parts of Douglas, Grant, Lincoln, Adams, Franklin, and Benton counties. The study area is not within the area identified as historic range for this species, which at its nearest point is located approximately 10 miles southwest of the study area. No known pygmy rabbits remain in the wild in Washington State (Allen pers. comm.). Within its historic range, there are two recovery emphasis areas where captive bred pygmy rabbits are intended to reestablish populations in the state. The nearest recovery emphasis area is located approximately 35 miles southwest of the study area.

Because the study area is not within the historical range, existing suitable habitat, or recovery emphasis areas, and is located a significant distance from these areas, pygmy rabbits are not expected to occur in the study area.

Washington ground squirrels occur in shrub-steppe habitat growing on silty-loam soils (Finger et al. 2007). This species has not been documented in the study area (WDFW 2008), and the study area is not in an area of known historic or present occurrence (Finger et al. 2007). There is a low probability that this species occurs in the study area.

3.8.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, the Park would continue to operate with existing facilities and would maintain those facilities. With no additional campground space provided, overnight use of the Park would not increase, although use of the day-use area could increase depending on recreational trends. Use of the Park would continue to be focused primarily in developed areas and on existing trails. Without the construction of additional campsites in the Park, dispersed camping on Banks Lake would likely continue at existing rates and would likely increase as demand for camping spaces increases. The No Action alternative is not expected to degrade habitat for threatened or endangered species because no such species are expected to occur in the study area.

Proposed Action

Fish

Because no federally threatened or endangered fish species occur in Banks Lake, the Proposed Action would have no impacts on these species.

Plants

Because no federally listed or other special-status plant species were located in the study area during project field surveys conducted in spring and summer 2008 (Morrison 2008); the Proposed Action is not expected to have direct impacts on these species. Soil disturbance associated with project construction may create conditions that could allow nonnative, invasive plant species to become established, which could make habitat less suitable for native, special-status plants. The potential for this condition would be minimized, however, by implementing the mitigation measures described in Section 3.6. In particular, reseeding of disturbed soils with native, noninvasive plant species would help prevent the establishment of nonnative invasive species.

Wildlife

Because the study area is not located in the historic range of the pygmy rabbit, in the area currently identified as potentially suitable habitat for pygmy rabbit, or in the recovery emphasis areas for the pygmy rabbit, the pygmy rabbit is not expected to occur in the study area. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no impact on the pygmy rabbit.

Because the study area is not in an area of historic occurrence for the Washington ground squirrel (Finger et al. 2007) and the species has not been documented in the study area, the probability of its occurrence is low (WDFW 2008). Loss of approximately 24.39 acres of shrub-steppe habitat would reduce the amount of habitat available for Washington ground squirrels, if they were to occur in the study area. Ground disturbance in potentially suitable habitat could result in direct impacts on individuals of this species. However, because of the low probability of its occurrence in the study area, the Proposed Action would have no impact on the Washington ground squirrel.

3.8.3. Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Action would have no impacts on federally listed or state-listed endangered or threatened species or special-status plant species identified in the RMP; therefore, no mitigation measures specific to such species are proposed. However, construction BMPs typically employed by WSPRC will require that all work be performed in a manner that will not create conditions injurious to fish or to their habitat, or that would make the water unsuitable for private, municipal, or industrial use. These BMPs would further safeguard such species, if they were to occur in the study area.

3.9. Historic Resources

The study area for cultural resources is the portion of the Park located on the peninsula that contains the geographic location of the proposed development (undertaking) and a corresponding buffer.

3.9.1. Affected Environment

In considering the potential for impacts associated with a proposed campground development project at Grand Canyon National Park, the U.S. National Park Service used 150 feet as the "typical recommended buffer distance" between an activity and an archaeological site (U.S. National Parks Service 2002).

The Proposed Action is a similar recreational development with similar types of public recreational uses; therefore, the analysis of impacts for this action includes a corresponding 150-foot buffer from the direct project limits.

Regulatory Context

The NHPA requires federal agencies to complete inventories to identify historic resources that may be eligible for listing on the NRHP. The NHPA also directs project proponents with undertakings on federal lands to take into consideration the potential effects their undertaking may have on significant historic resources.

Section 106 of the NHPA defines the process for identifying and evaluating project developments and their potential effects on cultural resources. This process calls for the identification of significant (eligible) historic properties within the area potentially affected by the proposed action and consultation with the SHPO, potentially affected Indian Tribes, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other interested parties.

Historic Properties

The prehistoric and historic archaeological background is excerpted from Lineberger and Simonds (1998). Archeologists believe the first habitation of the Columbia Basin, specifically along the Columbia River, occurred around 11,000 years ago. Sites such as Lind Coulee, well south of the Park, typify these early occupations. Dating between 9,000 and 11,000 years ago, the site contained an unusually complete inventory of stone and bone tools used to hunt large bison. In recognizing the scientific significance of Lind Coulee, the site was added to the NRHP in 1974. After 5,200 B.C., the pattern towards a greater dependence on fish, smaller game and plant resources had been established. Beginning about 4,000 B.C., people were re-occupying locations for salmon harvesting and hunting (field camps). A limited archaeological investigation at one such field camp at the Park was undertaken by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in 2003 (Engseth et al. 2006). Those excavations suggest that the area was seasonally occupied as early as 3,500 years ago.

The study area is within the traditional territories of the Sanpoil, Nespelem, and Moses Columbia people, who now are among the Confederated Tribes residing on the Colville Indian Reservation. The area was homesteaded and ranched beginning in the late 1800s and then acquired by Reclamation in 1942.

Prior to development of the Banks Lake RMP (Reclamation 2001a), Reclamation contracted with the Archaeological and Historical Services Department of Eastern Washington University (AHS) to prepare a cultural resources overview of the Upper Grand Coulee including the Banks Lake area (Stevens 1997). The documents provide a summary of research conducted in the study area, including information on known cultural sites. In addition to the documents prepared by AHS, information on Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) was compiled by Camas Consulting

in consultation with representatives of the Colville Confederated Tribes (Moura 1997). This information is considered confidential. An intensive Class III survey was completed in between 1999 and 2002 for the RMP project area, including the Park (Hamilton and Hicks 2002).

Using the results of these previous surveys, Reclamation intends to prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) for Banks Lake area, including the Park, in coordination with affected tribes and management agencies. The CRMP will outline specific management actions and measures needed to protect cultural resources and limit damage from area activities. The CRMP will discuss identified sites in terms of historic contexts; identify additional investigations needed to assess individual site significance; identify specific threats to site integrity; and recommend measures to protect significant sites from damage.

For the current undertaking, AHS conducted cultural resource surveys of the study area (Crisson and Komen 2007) in compliance with the NHPA.

Cultural Resources Identified within the Study Area

There are two sites and one TCP within or adjacent to the study area. One site (45GR1915) was identified within the area to be directly impacted while the other two were within the buffer area (Crisson and Komen 2007). There are a number of other archaeological sites in the vicinity of the study area which are eligible to the NRHP and of significance to the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Traditional Cultural Properties

A TCP is a site eligible for inclusion in the NRHP when it is associated with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in the community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community. Investigations for this category of properties occurred during the preparation of the cultural resources overview (Stevens 1997).

The Park and the study area are located within the geologic feature of the Upper Grand Coulee, a physiographic region considered culturally important to the Colville Confederated Tribes. The Banks Lake Management Area contains a number of TCPs identified by the Colville Confederated Tribes (Moura 1997; Crisson and Komen 2007). One element of the Proposed Action is along the boundary of the Steamboat Rock TCP.

Reclamation is continuing to work with the Colville Confederated Tribes to address any concerns posed by management actions at Banks Lake including that presented by the proposed action.

Indian Sacred Sites

Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, requires federal land management agencies to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites located on Federal land by Indian religious practitioners and to avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. It also requires agencies to develop procedures for reasonable notification of proposed actions or land management policies that may restrict access to or ceremonial use of, or adversely affect, sacred sites on federal lands.

Sacred sites are defined in the Executive order as “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to

be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site."

The proposed undertaking is located on federal land subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 13007. No sacred sites have been identified in the study area. Potential impacts on sacred sites that may be extant in the Banks Lake Management Area are addressed in the FONSI and the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001c and 2001b). The Proposed Action will adhere to the Executive Order 13007 commitments of the FONSI and EA.

Indian Trust Assets

Indian trust assets are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individuals. Examples of trust assets are lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. The United States has an Indian trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by or granted to Indian tribes or Indian individuals by treaties, statues, and Executive orders, which are sometimes further interpreted through court decisions and regulations. This trust responsibility requires Reclamation to take all actions reasonable and necessary to protect trust assets. Potential impacts on Indian Trust Assets in the Banks Lake area are addressed in the FONSI and the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001c and 2001b).

3.9.2. Environmental Consequences

No Action

Under the No Action Alternative no new campground facilities would be constructed. Therefore, the No Action alternative would not directly affect any known cultural resources within the study area; however, indirect effects associated with continuing recreational use of the area are ongoing. Potential indirect impacts that may be associated with this alternative include vegetation trampling and soil erosion from user-defined trails, illegal acts of vandalism, surface collecting, and looting. Reclamation is addressing these impacts as part of management programs being implemented under the Banks Lake RMP (Reclamation 2001b).

Reclamation is consulting with the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Yakama Nation, and the SHPO to further define and implement actions that might avoid or minimize impacts on NRHP-eligible archaeological sites and TCPs, to the extent consistent with agency authorities. In regards to sacred sites, tribal access to sacred sites would remain unchanged. Additionally, no additional impacts would occur to Indian trust assets under this alternative.

Proposed Action

There are two recorded archeological sites within the study area, as well as, the Steamboat Rock TCP. Both archaeological sites are isolated finds not considered eligible to the NRHP.

Reclamation is consulting with tribes to further define and implement actions to avoid or minimize impacts on the Steamboat Rock TCP and other historic properties in the vicinity, to the extent consistent with agency authorities. In regards to sacred sites, tribal access to them would remain unchanged. Additionally, no impacts would occur to Indian trust assets under this alternative.

The project has been designed to avoid impacts; therefore, the Proposed Action would not directly affect any known cultural resources within the study area; however, indirect effects (e.g., vegetation trampling and soil erosion from user-defined spur trails, illegal acts of vandalism, surface collecting, and looting) associated with continuing recreational use of the area are possible. Reclamation has concluded, and the SHPO has concurred, that the Proposed Action would adversely affect cultural resources as a result of indirect impacts. Reclamation will enter into an MOA with the SHPO and other parties to address those adverse impacts prior to beginning permitting work on the Proposed Action.

Management actions to minimize or mitigate indirect impacts on these resources may include stabilization, data recovery, protective measures, educational displays, and park rangers and staff continuing to monitor the condition and health of the cultural resources as well as visitor use patterns that could affect these resources.

WSPRC staff routinely monitors impacts on park resources such as vandalism, erosion, overuse, social trails, fire, inadvertent discoveries, and provides appropriate responses in consultation with Reclamation, Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and interested tribes. Enforcement actions are implemented by the appropriate agencies with jurisdiction, including fully commissioned park rangers.

As will be provided for in the MOA, should cultural resources be identified during construction activities, work will cease in the area of discovery, the find secured and park staff, Reclamation, DAHP, and affected Indian tribes would be notified. In the case of the inadvertent discovery of human remains, Section 3 of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 would be followed. NAGPRA states that protection will be given to Native American graves, burial sites, and cultural items. Cultural items include human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.

Potential impacts on cultural resources outside the study area are addressed in the FONSI and the RMP EA (Reclamation 2001c and 2001b), incorporated herein by reference, and are not directly attributable to the proposed action.

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4.2. Personal Communications

Allen, Harriett. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. December 8, 2009—telephone conversation.

Fraser, William. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. July 22, 2008—telephone conversation.

Poplawski, Tom. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. July 1, 2008 and January 6, 2009—in-person and telephone meetings.

Chapter 5. List of Preparers

Author	Contact Information	Responsibility
Mark Matthies	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Project Director, Senior Technical Review
Heidi Tate	ICF International Olympia, WA 98501	Project Manger, Chapters 1 and 2; Vegetation, Wildlife, and Threatened and Endangered Species (plants and wildlife)
Torrey Luiting	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Final EA revisions Project Manager
Bryan Fiedor	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Recreation, GIS
Meg O'Leary	ICF International Olympia, WA 98501	Socioeconomics, Public Involvement
Jim Wilder	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Utilities, Soils
Chris Soncarty	ICF International Bellingham, WA 98225	Surface Water Quality and Aquatic Resources; Threatened and Endangered Species (fish)
Erica Hall	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Final EA revisions
Shane Sparks	ICF International Bellingham, WA 98225	Cultural Resources
Amy Jordan	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Cultural Resources
Laura Cooper	ICF International Portland, OR 97204	Editor
Kristen Lundstrom	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Editor
Deborah Bartley	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Editor
Manomi Fernando	ICF International Seattle, WA 98104	Publications Specialist

Chapter 6. Distribution List

6.1. Scoping Commenters

Terri Costello
SEPA Coordinator
Department of Ecology
Eastern Regional Office
4601 N. Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99205-1295

Cynthia McGlothern
Transportation Planner
Washington State Department of Transportation
North Central Region
P.O. Box 98
Wenatchee, WA 98807-0098

Mike Palko
mikeypal@scattercreek.com

Mark W. Igo
607 Birch Street,
Coulee Dam, WA 99116

6.2. Agencies

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services
Central Washington Field Office
215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Dennis Beich
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2
1550 Alder Street NW
Ephrata 98823

Grant Pfeifer
Ecology Eastern Regional Office
North 4601 Monroe Street
Spokane, WA 99205-1295

Dr Allyson Brooks
Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 48343
Olympia, WA 98504-8343

Washington Environmental Council
1402 Third Avenue Suite 1400
Seattle, WA 98101

Mr. Chuck James
Bureau of Indian Affairs
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4169

Dave Nelson
Grant County Community Development
P.O. Box 37
Ephrata, WA 98823-0037

SEPA Center
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 47015
Olympia, WA 98504-7015

SEPA Center
Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 43200
Olympia, WA 98504-3155

Ecology Environmental Review
P.O. Box 47703
Olympia, WA 98504-7703

6.3. Tribes

The Honorable Jeanne Jerred
Colville Confederated Tribes
P.O. Box 150
Nespelem, WA 99155

Camille Pleasants, THPO
Colville Confederated Tribes
P.O. Box 150
Nespelem, WA 99155

The Honorable Ralph Sampson
Yakama Nation
P.O. Box 151
Toppenish, WA 98948

Johnson Meninick
Yakama Nation
P.O. Box 151
Toppenish, WA 98948

The Honorable Greg Abrahamson
Spokane Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 100
Wellpinit, WA 99040

Randy Abrahamson, THPO
Spokane Tribe of Indians
P.O. Box 100
Wellpinit, WA 99040