



Don Hoch  
Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

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July 24, 2014

## **Item E-4: Kopachuck Facility Concept Plan - Requested Action**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** This item asks the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to adopt a Facility Concept Plan for Kopachuck State Park. This item aligns with agency core values and advances the Commission Transformation Strategy: “Develop amenities and acquire lands that advance transformation”.

### **SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In 2009, staff led a four-stage public planning process to develop a classification and management plan (CAMP) for several parks in the south Puget Sound area, including Kopachuck State Park. This process identified the public’s hopes and concerns for the parks, and explored alternative approaches to addressing those issues. The Commission approved land classifications and a long-term park boundary for Kopachuck in January 2011.

Since that time, staff discovered laminated root rot infecting many of the park’s mature Douglas fir trees. This pathogen has the potential to cause healthy-looking trees to fall without warning, which can be dangerous in developed park areas. After finding the pathogen in Kopachuck’s trees, those posing a heightened risk to people or property were removed. The park’s campground was closed indefinitely and as a result, Kopachuck is now operated as a day-use park.

In January 2014, staff contracted with Bruce Dees & Associates, a landscape architecture firm, to develop a master plan for the park that better aligns with its day-use operation. The park’s CAMP was used to inform the new planning effort.

### **Planning Teams**

Staff formed two teams to work through the master planning process. The first consisted of agency staff and the design consultant, and the second was an ad hoc committee made up of members of the public representing a diverse set of interests. The members of the two planning teams are listed on the last page of the Master Plan under ‘Acknowledgments.’

### **Park Planning Process**

The master planning process included many opportunities for public input. In addition to seven meetings of the internal planning team, the process included:

1. Two well-attended public meetings;
2. Seven meetings with the Ad-Hoc Committee, including one on-site meeting;
3. One Pierce County planning meeting;

4. Letters to the Nisqually, Puyallup, and Squaxin Island Tribes;
5. A park planning web page; and
6. Mailings on the planning progress to approximately 540 people on the project's contact list.

Throughout the planning process, the team took public comments and concerns into consideration and responded to issues that arose. At the last public meeting, the planning team presented its preliminary master plan to the public. The master plan was well-received.

### **Master Plan**

The plan focuses development around four primary areas; the Upper Day Use Area, the Beach Area, Trail Improvements, and Road and Parking Lot Improvements.

Proposed developments in the plan include day-use facilities, an interpretive trail plan, a kitchen shelter/restroom facility for school groups and events, trails, utilities, ADA improvements, and improvements to the parking lot and restrooms.

### **Key Issues**

Laminated Root Rot: While support for improvements to Kopachuck was broad, many in attendance at the first public meeting expressed concern over the removal of trees. State Parks cleared six acres in 2011 to create a safe zone around the park shop and ranger residence, and many people were worried that the agency may move forward with more clearing. After learning that State Parks intends to manage Kopachuck for day-use facilities only, and has no intention of moving forward with more large-scale tree removal in the park, most of the attendees were less worried.

The ad hoc committee has recommended that the master plan include a Forest Management Plan to address the root rot issue and any potential long-range camping redevelopment. For more information, see page 2 of the Master Plan.

Geology: A site reconnaissance-level geologic hazard evaluation was conducted in October 2012 by Associated Earth Sciences, Inc. The report concluded that a minimum 40-foot building setback from the top-of-slope would provide a suitable buffer to protect future improvements. The report also said that surface water drainage should be directed away from the slopes or tightlined (piped) to the bottom of the slopes. The geotechnical engineer believes that the risk of landslides, debris flows, or slope erosion affecting future improvements is low if the recommendations are followed. The master plan incorporated all of the recommendations from the geologic hazard evaluation.

Public Comments: The public's comments on the plan are detailed on page 28 of the Master Plan. The most reoccurring public comments, along with the plan's recommendations on them, included:

1. Minimize tree removal. The planning team made significant efforts to minimize tree removal. Based on staff's current understanding of the forest areas subject to laminated root rot, it is believed that the projects proposed in the Master Plan can be developed without removing any trees over 10" diameter; however, future tree health investigations

may identify hazard trees or additional areas affected by root rot. Such future investigations may necessitate removal of some larger trees.

2. Provide for ADA access. The master plan recommends that the upper day-use area will be ADA compliant, including access to the kitchen/restroom building, picnic area, amphitheater, and viewpoints. Pedestrian ADA access to the beach is not possible due to very steep topography; however, visitors with disabilities will be allowed to drive down the beach access road and park at the bottom of the hill, where ADA compliant parking, restrooms, trails, and viewpoints will be waiting for them. Access to the Beach Road will be by a new, remotely-controlled gate that park staff can operate from the welcome center.
3. Maintain a natural and rustic feel. The plan's intent is to provide a uniform and rustic character throughout the park. All fencing is proposed to be round, three-rail post construction. Steps on the new sections of trail will be precast concrete, made to resemble stone. Information kiosks will be wood structures in character with the buildings and other site furnishings. And the park's buildings will be simple, with dominant roofs.

Transformation: Aligning the plan with the Commission's transformation strategy was an important consideration. Key strategies incorporated in the master plan include:

1. Demonstrating that all Washingtonians benefit from their state Parks
  - a. Creating a fully ADA-accessible experience
  - b. Connecting people in urban areas to the outdoors
  - c. Responsibly managing natural resources, including development of a Forest Health Plan
2. Adopting a business approach to park administration
  - a. Developing a reservable kitchen shelter facility for weddings, meetings, reunions, etc.
  - b. Attracting more visitors with improved trails and beach access
3. Providing recreation, cultural, and interpretive opportunities people will want
  - a. Adding picnic facilities
  - b. Developing an amphitheater
  - c. Improving beach access
  - d. Creating places to gather
  - e. Developing new trails
4. Promoting meaningful opportunities for volunteers, friends, and donors
  - a. Developing facilities that can be used by volunteers to provide environmental education programming
  - b. Engaging park users in plan implementation

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Kopachuck Facility Concept Plan proposes significant improvements to the park’s day-use facilities. Key elements include:

1. Trail System Improvements (Appendix 2).
  - Six connected and improved loops trails with interpretive story points.
  - Trail connection to Kopachuck Middle School
  
2. Road and Parking Lot Improvements (Appendix 3).
  - Revised park entry/exit
  - Upper day use parking lot improvements
  - Welcome Center
  - Paved access to the beach use area
  - Six car parking lot at the interpretive trailhead
  
3. Upper Day-Use Area (See Appendix 4).
  - Kitchen Shelter/Restroom facility
  - Picnic area
  - Children’s play area
  - Amphitheatre
  - View Point
  
4. Beach Area (Appendix 5).
  - Restroom
  - ADA-accessible viewing decks
  - Two additional mooring buoys
  - Cascadia marine trail campsite
  - Improved beach access

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the Kopachuck State Facility Concept Plan as shown in Appendices 2 through 5.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

Appendix 1: Location and Vicinity Map

Appendix 2: Site Map

Appendix 3: Road and Parking Lot

Appendix 4: Upper Day Use Area

Appendix 5: Beach Area

Appendix 6: Master Plan Document

**AUTHORITY:** RCW 79A.050.030(1), WAC 352-16-010(4), WAC 352-16-020, WAC 352-32-075(3)(a), WAC 352-32-070(2), WAC 352-04-020, WAC 352-16-010; Commission Policies: 50-62-1, 72-99-1, 65-04-2, and 72-78-1.

**REQUESTED ACTION OF COMMISSION:**

That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission:

1. Accept staff's "Determination of Non-Significance" that the proposed action is minor and the environmental effects are not significant.
2. Adopt the staff-recommended Facility Concept Plan for Kopachuck State Park (Appendices 2 through 5) and as recommended by staff.
3. Delegate to the Director the authority to approve minor changes to the Facility Concept Plan.

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**Reviewer(s):**

**Randy Kline, SEPA Review:** Pursuant to WAC 197-11-310 and WAC 197-11-340, staff issued a "Determination of Non-Significance" for the staff recommendation finding that the action proposed by Commission staff was minor and the environmental effects not significant.

**Terri Heikkila, Fiscal Impact Review:** No immediate impact by approval of this item. Should the plan be implemented, capital improvements would be proposed with possible operating impacts noted through the budget development process.

**Jim Schwartz, Assistant Attorney General Review:** 6/11/14

**Peter Herzog, Assistant Director**

**Approved for Transmittal to Commission:**

  
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**Don Hoch, Director**

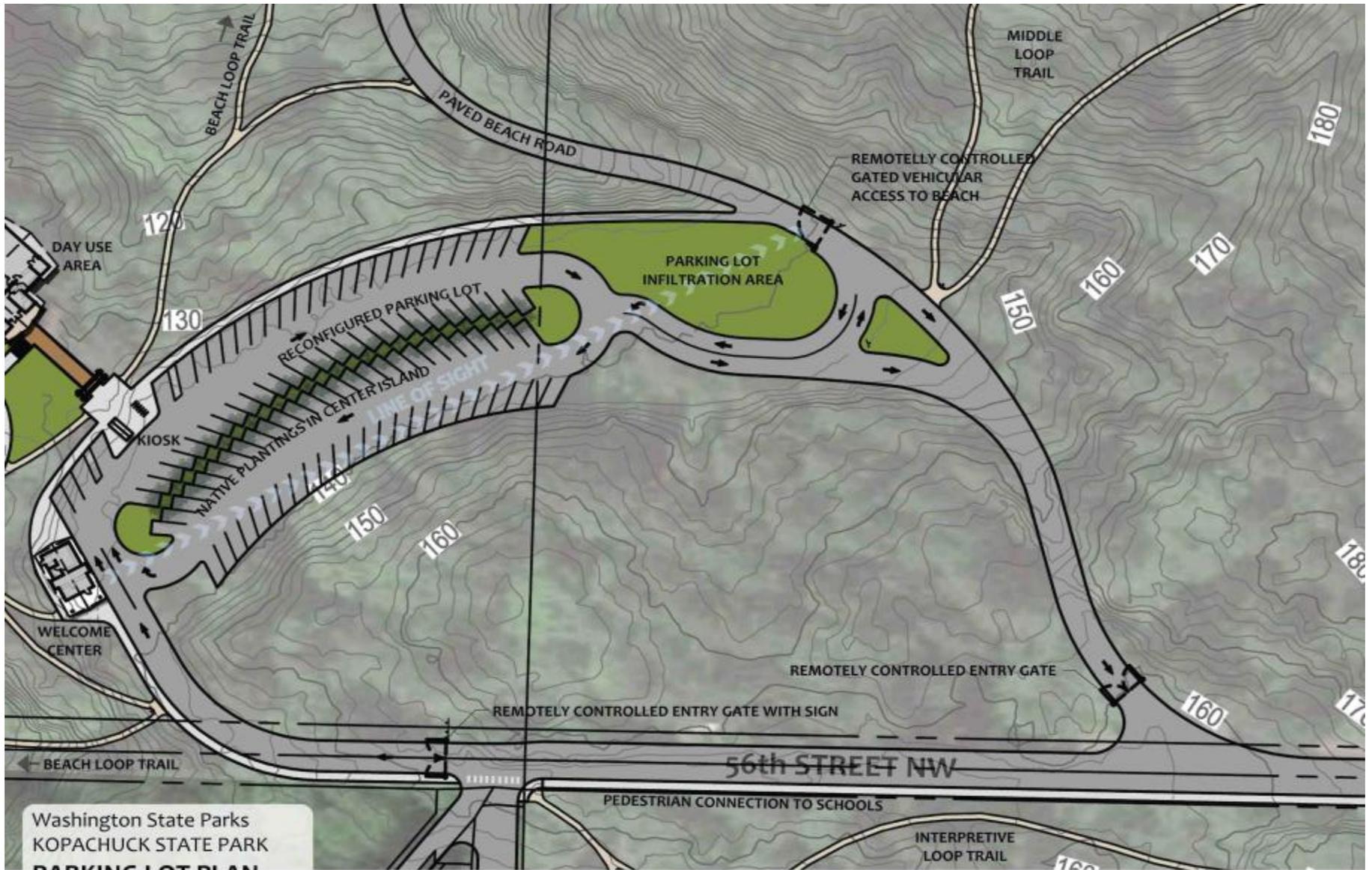
## APPENDIX 1 - LOCATION AND VICINITY MAP



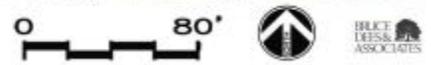
## APPENDIX 2 – SITE MAP



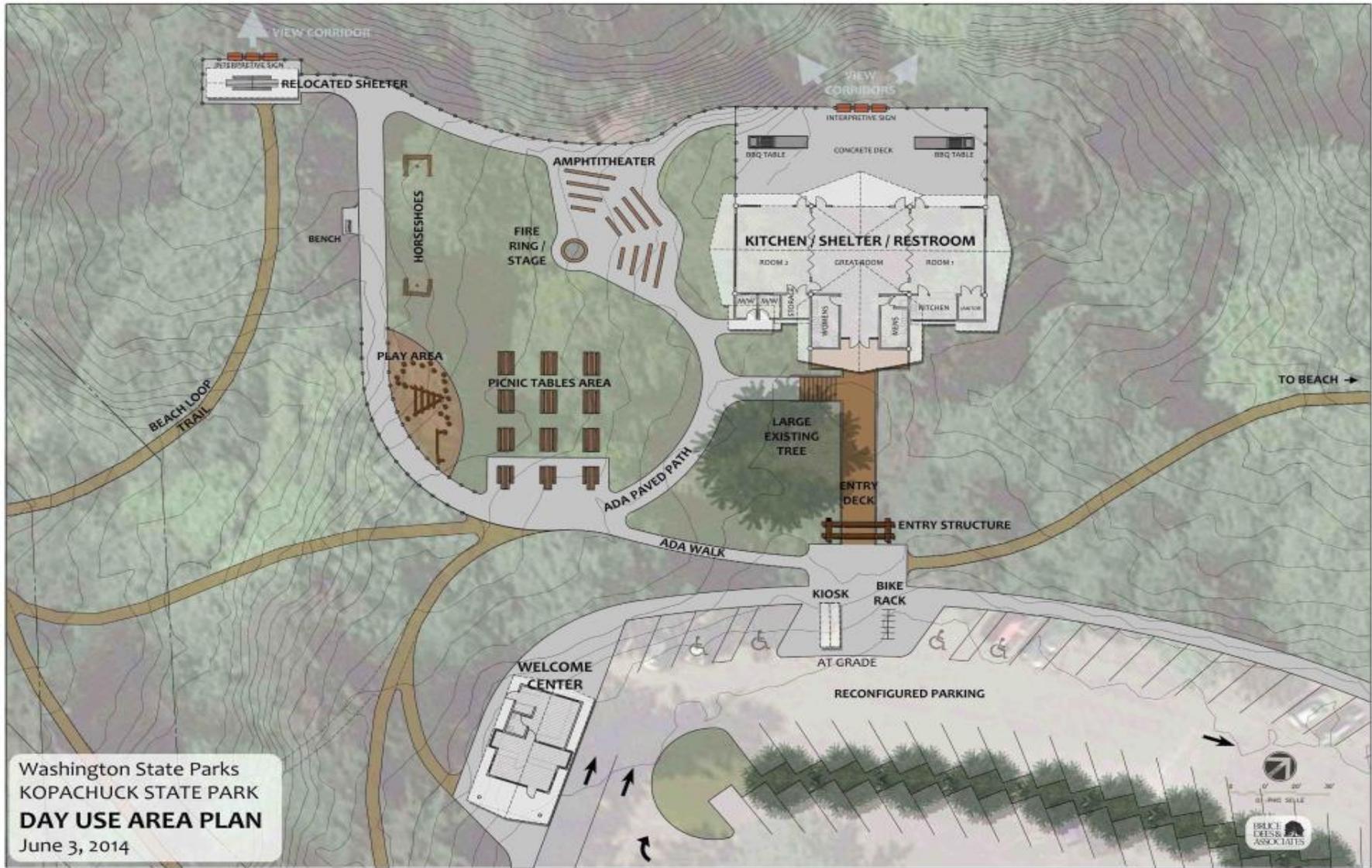
# APPENDIX 3 – ROAD AND PARKING LOT



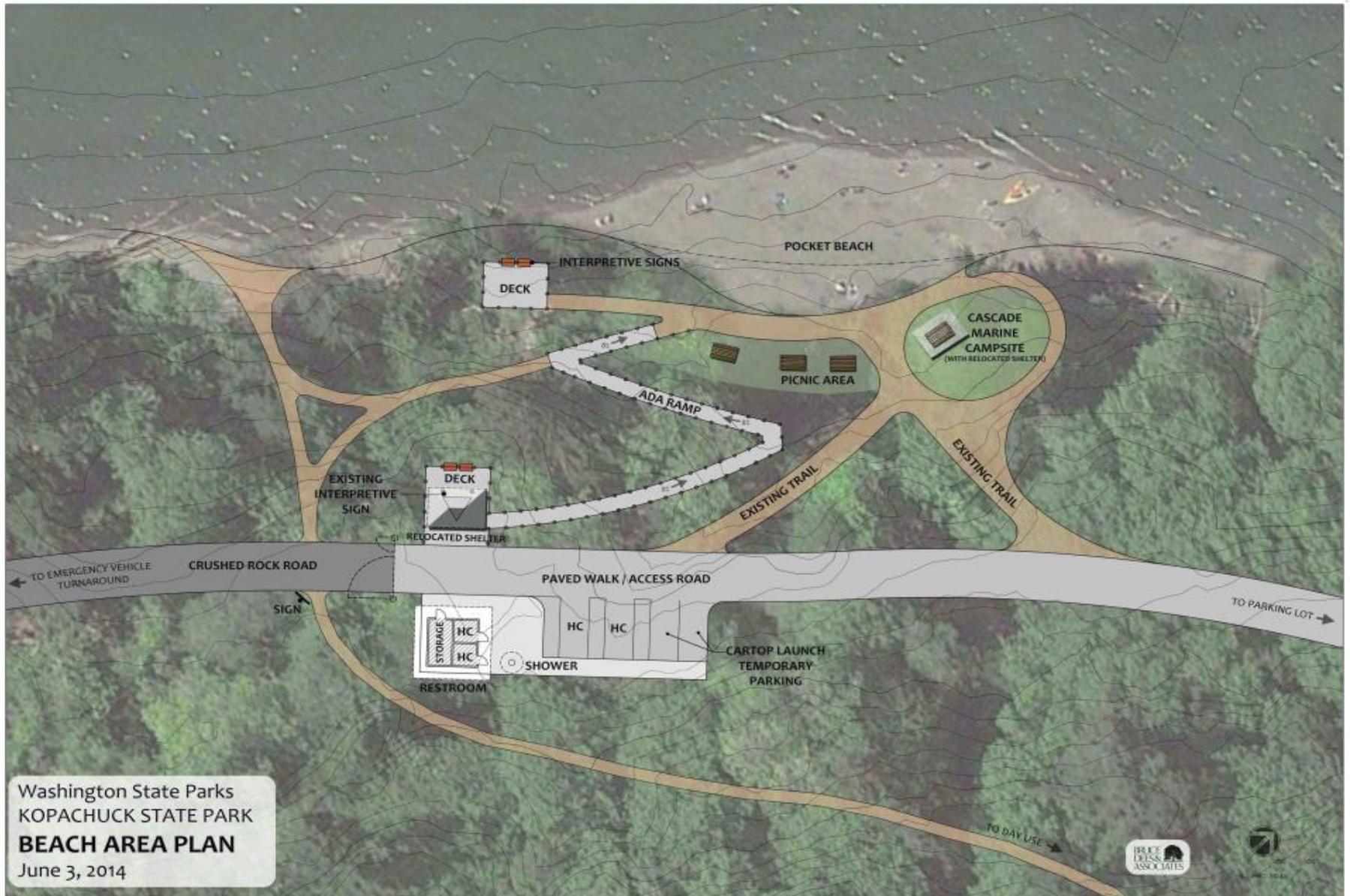
Washington State Parks  
KOPACHUCK STATE PARK  
**PARKING LOT PLAN**  
June 3, 2014



## APPENDIX 4 – UPPER DAY-USE AREA



## APPENDIX 5 – BEACH AREA



## **APPENDIX 6**

### **KOPACHUCK STATE PARK MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan is available at <http://www.parks.wa.gov/858/Kopachuck-Master-Plan>

For a hard copy contact Srey Ryser at 360-902-8626 or [Srey.Ryser@parks.wa.gov](mailto:Srey.Ryser@parks.wa.gov)