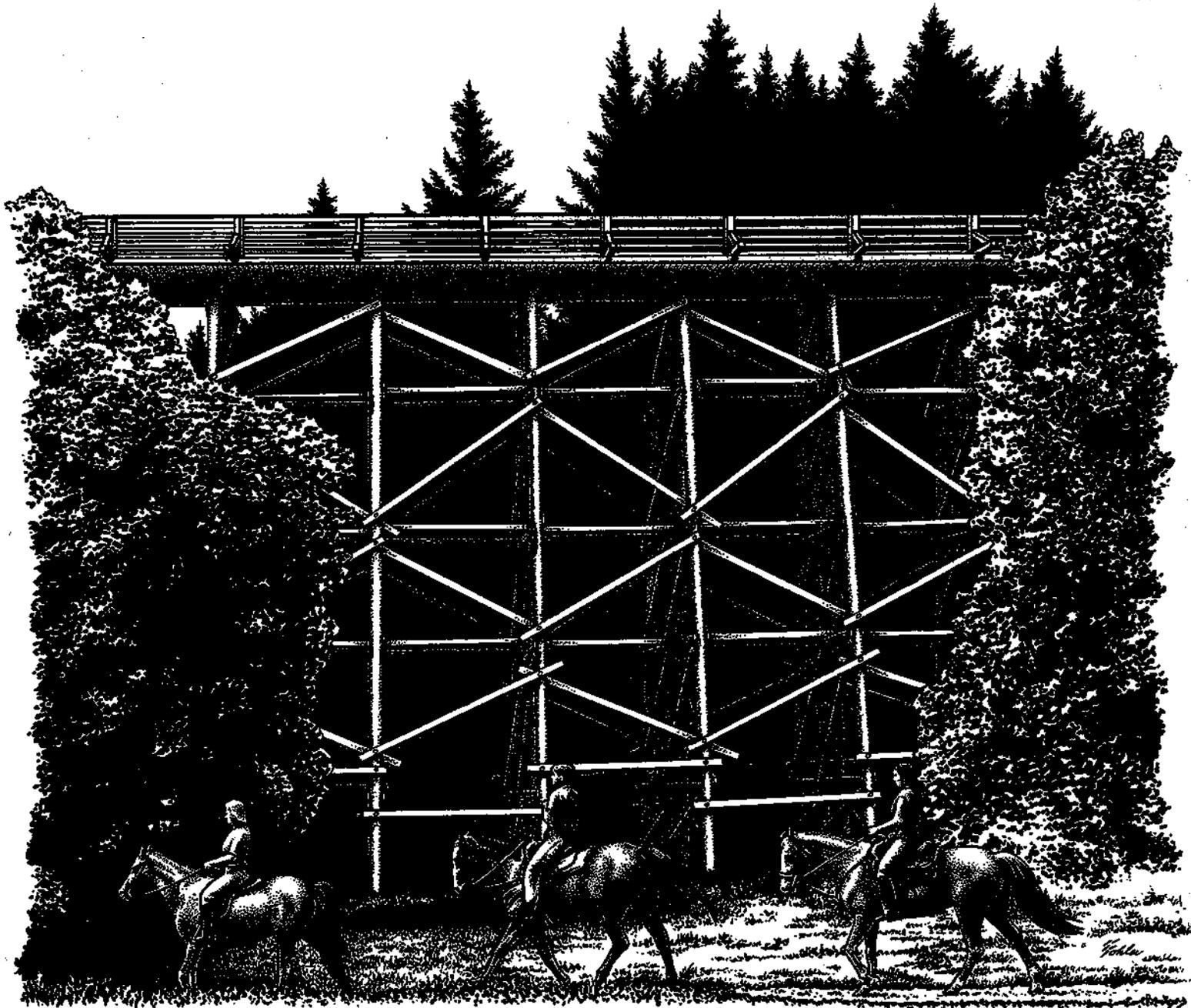


Kate's Copy



Banks-Vernonia State Park

Master Plan
1992

OREGON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**BANKS-VERNONIA
STATE PARK**

MASTER PLAN

■ 1992 ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SPECIAL THANKS

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Gene Fabryka, Banks-Vernonia State Park Manger
Michelle Harris and Sandy Martell, Administrative Support
Ron Hemmer, Survey Crew Chief
Kevin Kohler, Graphic Artist**

Marty Fruin and The Friends of the Banks-Vernonia Trail

and

Joe Paiva for keeping the idea of the Banks-Vernonia trail alive in the difficult, early stages of the park's development.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Banks-Vernonia State Park is a 21 mile long trail developed from an abandoned railroad right-of-way between Banks in Washington County, and Vernonia in Columbia County. The 12 foot wide trail straddles the top of a 60 to 1,100 foot wide right-of-way and is graded at less than two percent. The trail spans thirteen renovated trestles and bypasses two large trestles which have not yet been repaired. The State ownership of the trail is interrupted by a mile long gap between Pongratz Road and Manning. The trail ends 2000 feet north of Banks.

The trail traverses through rolling agricultural lands and steeply sloped and heavily forested lands. The park has moderate to high quality natural areas and a scenic, wildlife corridor. Unique geologic features offer opportunities for interpretation.

Several Washington and Columbia County recreation feasibility studies, and public involvement served as the basis of this master plan. An analysis of resource values and land use suitability was conducted. This trail was identified as an important opportunity for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding in an area of the state where demand far exceeds the supply of trails. This trail also forms essential links with other non- motorized trails developing in the region.

The master plan identifies locations for six trailheads and describes the improvements needed for each. The Beaver Creek Trailhead is complete. Trailhead sites at Vernonia, Tophill, Buxton, Pongratz Road and Manning have been identified and development sketches and cost estimates have been prepared. Funding and permitting for the Tophill and Manning sites have been secured. A location for the Banks trailhead has yet to be finalized.

Acquisition of land to connect the mile gap is essential for a continuous trail. The success of a connection will depend upon the future cooperation of adjacent land owners. OPRD is also awaiting the abandonment of the southern 2000' of the Burlington Northern right-of-way which will link the trail Banks. This section will be railbanked for trail use.

The trail needs to be covered with an asphalt surface to make it accessible to all bicycles and wheelchairs. The financing of development will require creative public and private partnerships and funding.

This master plan provides management recommendations and maintenance priorities. A fire plan adopted by several agencies addresses concerns of fire prevention and protection. Park rules prohibiting fires, smoking and user supervision have been adopted and posted. Maintenance operations which include cleaning of the 149 culverts must be funded to ensure public health, safety and welfare. Studies detailing the structural integrity of both trestles must be funded. The restoration of the Buxton Trestle and the restoration or removal of the horseshoe trestle must also be funded.

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department master plans are prepared to guide the long range development and use of each state park in accordance with Oregon Revised Statute 390.180. Each plan includes an assessment of resources, recreation needs and a determination of park capacity for public use and enjoyment of the park. Completed master plans provide for the development of the most appropriate recreational facilities while protecting important natural and cultural resources.

Master plans provide information and guidance to park managers and staff involved in day-to-day management and maintenance. They are also intended as an information source for the public about the resources, recreational opportunities and existing and planned facilities for the park.

The Banks-Vernonia master plan is based on research and public involvement which occurred during the completion of the 1988 Feasibility Study, consultants reports and subsequent input from neighbors, local jurisdictions and other agencies.

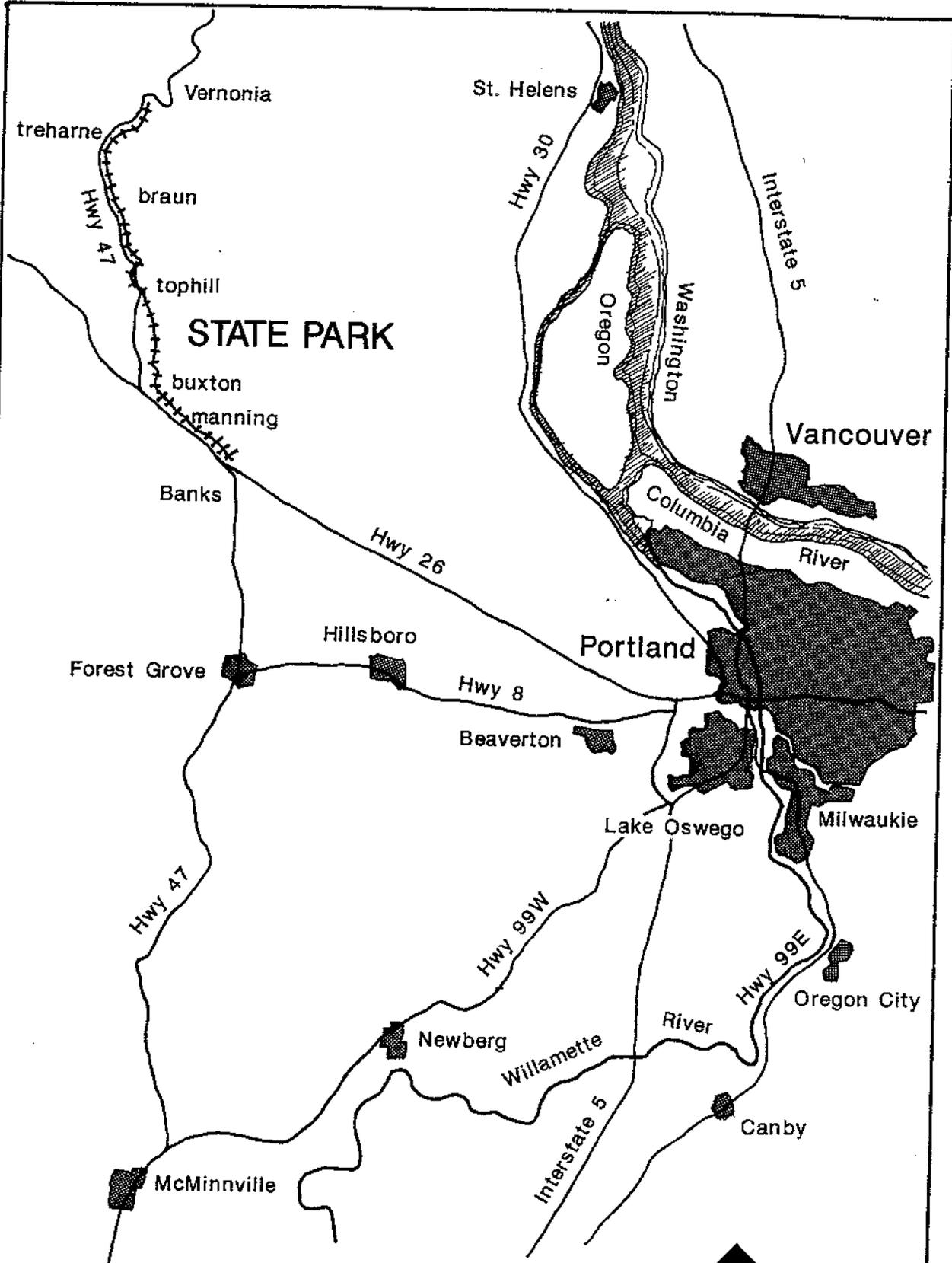
The master plan is formally adopted as an administrative rule through the rule making process with the Secretary of State. This plan includes a discussion of existing conditions, land use suitability, recreational use issues, recreation needs and opportunities, development proposals and management guidelines.

Detailed information used to prepare the plan is stored in the State Parks headquarters in Salem.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Summary:

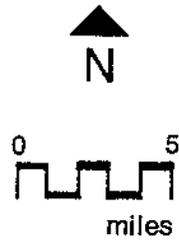
- Location:** Northern Washington County and southern Columbia County between Vernonia and Banks. Access to existing Beaver Creek trailhead is 25 miles west of Interstate Highway 5 via the Sunset Highway, (Highway 26), and north 13 miles on the Nehalem Highway, (Highway 47). Access to the north end of the trail is possible in Vernonia at Anderson Park. Anderson Park is located at the south end of Adams Street.
- Acreage:** 353 acres (\pm)
- Description:** 21 mile long trail traversing the rolling agricultural lands of the western Willamette Valley and the thickly forested and rugged Coastal range.
- Day-Use Facilities:** Trail open during daylight hours in Columbia County. Parking, picnic area and camping in Anderson Park which is operated by the City of Vernonia. Toilet facilities available at Anderson Park and at the Beaver Creek trailhead.
- Day-Use Attendance:** None available
- Overnight Facilities:** None
- Recreation Opportunities:** Hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and nature study.
- Accessibility for Disabled:** Trail graded at less than 2%. Grade accessible except at two places which bypass large trestles at Buxton and at Tophill. Trail surface is currently not accessible for wheelchairs. All planned trail restrooms are accessible.



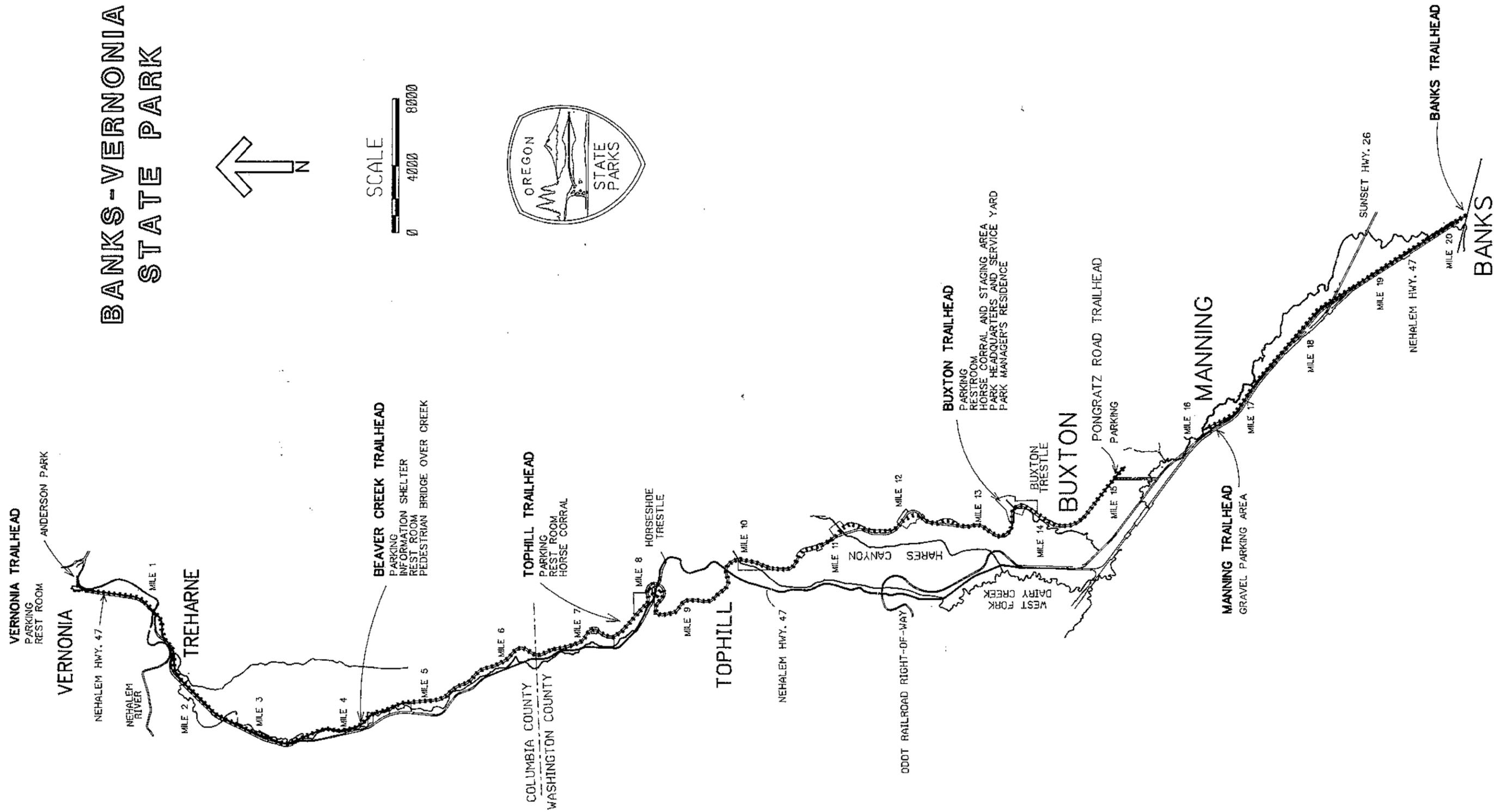
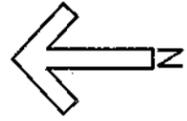
STATE PARK

BANKS/VERNONIA

Vicinity Map



BANKS-VERNONIA STATE PARK



What is a "Linear" Park?:

Banks-Vernonia State Park is a linear park developed from an abandoned railroad right-of-way. A linear park is a long parcel of land, primarily used as a trail route and may serve as a wildlife or greenbelt corridor. In this case, the Banks-Vernonia State Park is 21 miles long and approximately 60 to 1,100 feet wide.

Banks-Vernonia State Park is the first linear park developed by Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department. It was acquired in fee simple after the railroad was abandoned in 1972.

In 1983, Congress passed the National Trails System Act. This act allows railroad right-of-ways be "railbanked" rather than abandoned outright. Railbanking is a voluntary agreement reached between a railroad and a trail managing agency to dedicate a rail corridor no longer in service to interim trail use. When a right-of-way is railbanked, the ties and rails are taken up and the corridor is opened to the public as a trail until the railroad may need to reestablish a rail line.

Since, 1983, thousands of miles of railroad right-of-way have been converted into recreational trails in the United States. In Oregon, the Forty Mile Loop in the Portland Metropolitan Area and the Willow Canyon Trail in Jefferson County have been railbanked. It is anticipated that many more miles of abandoned railroad right-of-ways will be railbanked creating a trail network throughout Oregon. Opportunities to connect future railbanked right of ways to this trail will be pursued.

Historic Background of Rail Right-of-Way:

The railroad right-of-way was first purchased in 1913 by United Railways, to establish a line between Keasey, nine miles west of Vernonia in Columbia County and Wilkesboro in Washington County. Construction began in the 1920's at Keasey and Wilkesboro simultaneously, the two lines met north of Tophill. The line was used to haul logs and lumber from the Oregon-American lumber mill in Vernonia and freight and passengers from Keasey to Portland from 1924 to 1957. During this time the right-of-way ownership had successively been held by the Portland, Astoria and Pacific Railroad Company, the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroad and finally Burlington Northern Railroad.

In 1957 the lumber mill closed and the railroad discontinued use of the line. In 1960 Burlington Northern leased the line to the Vernonia South Park and Sunset Railroad, a non-profit organization formed by steam engine enthusiasts. It operated an excursion line which transported passengers in 1910 vintage coaches pulled by a steam engine. 50,000 passengers rode on the excursion train from Banks to Vernonia during the five years it operated. The railroad right-of-way was used by Hollywood film-makers for the filming of "Ring of Fire", and Emperor of the North".

In 1973, the line was abandoned, and ties, rails and hardware salvaged by Orth Industries. The right-of-way was purchased by the State Highway Division in 1974. At that time, Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department was a division of the State Transportation Department. When State Parks became a separate department of state government in 1990, the property was officially transferred to State Parks ownership.

In 1987, the state legislature requested a study to determine whether the state-owned property should be developed for recreation use. An extensive feasibility study was conducted by a private consulting firm, Klein Consulting Engineers, with the advice of a local committee. The consultant concluded that the development of a linear park between Banks and Vernonia would be feasible and appropriate. Based on this feasibility study, the legislature appropriated money for the park's development. Several land parcels were acquired for trailhead development and a park manager's residence. With this funding many of the trestles were decked, and had safety railing installed, culverts were cleaned, and the Beaver Creek trailhead developed. OPRD and GTE formed a creative partnership in which GTE was allowed to lay a fiber optic phone line under the length of

the right-of-way. In exchange GTE graded and gravelled the surface of the trail. Vegetation was cleared and mile markers and signs installed by OPRD.

The Setting:

Banks-Vernonia State Park is located approximately 30 minutes west of Portland. The southern portion of the trail is accessible from the Sunset Highway, (Highway 26), the northern portion accessible from the Nehalem Highway, (Highway 47). The linear park is located on the abandoned Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way and extends 21 miles from Banks in Washington County to Vernonia in Columbia County. The right-of-way is located in a rural area in the north-western corner of the Willamette Valley and climbs north into the thickly forested foothills of the Coast Range. The south and north ends of the trail are located in small rural communities. The town of Banks, to the south, is surrounded by agricultural operations. The city of Vernonia, to the north, is surrounded by private timberland and small farms.

Geology and Soils: The Banks-Vernonia Linear Park rests on two geologic formations. The bedrock south of Pongratz Road is the western edge of the basalt lava flows of the Columbia Plateau, which flowed westward across the state 5 to 24 million years ago. The area north of Pongratz Road is formed from basalt lava flows and 55 million year old sediments uplifted from the ancient ocean floor when the continental plate collided over the sinking ocean floor to form the Coastal Range. The thick layers of sediments are soft and weak and prone to landslides. Some of the sediments contain fossils of marine animals and leaves.

Much of the railroad right-of-way from Banks to Pongratz Road lies within the 100 year flood plain of the West Fork of Dairy Creek. The soils underlying the right-of-way contain younger alluvium of clay, silt, sand, peaty materials and gravelly beds. Many of the soils are hydric. Portions of the trail are elevated by gravel and sand ballast immediately adjacent to the West Fork of Dairy Creek to assure passage along the trail. The underlying and adjacent soils contain severe restrictions for septic development and do not generally afford large yields to wells.

The trail geology north of Pongratz Road is composed of sedimentary rocks, primarily tuffaceous shale, sandstone and intermixtures. Fossils from sea animals are found at several outcroppings of exposed limestone. North of Tophill, a large limestone deposit was quarried and was the site of a large cement manufacturing plant. Although the mining has stopped and the plant dismantled, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and schools periodically bring visitors to this area to look for fossils and to conduct outdoor laboratories.

Active landslides have occurred along the steep slopes of the trail. A lengthy tunnel south of Tophill was constructed in the 1920's. Unfortunately the soft soils contributed to many cave-ins and land-slides causing train accidents and fires. The tunnel was eventually removed. In 1991, a portion of the fill supporting the trail slumped 60' into Mendenhall Creek south of Buxton and a landslide north of Tophill eroded the trail. The trail was unaffected by the first slide and was rerouted over and around the second slide. Slope instability exists between Pongratz Road and the Columbia County line along the steep slopes. These sedimentary deposits are largely devoid of potable water or at the most, yield small amounts of water from the first 100 feet.

Topography: The Banks-Vernonia trail traverses through rugged areas with considerable topographic relief. From Banks, the grade climbs 700 feet to an elevation of 944 feet at Tophill. From there, the trail descends 300 feet to Vernonia.

The slope on the abandoned railroad grade does not exceed 2% . Slopes adjacent to the trail are relatively flat from Banks to Pongratz Road. The trail between Pongratz Road and

the Columbia County line passes through rough terrain typical of the Coastal Mountains. The original engineering of the grade required extensive cut and areas of massive fill. At places, 60% side slopes plunge downward 60 to 80 feet. The trail north of the Columbia County line goes through more gradual terrain with moderate side slopes.

Climate: Regional climate in the Portland-Vancouver area is influenced by its proximity to the Pacific Ocean and the Coast and Cascade mountain ranges. The Coast Range shields the area from the Pacific Ocean air masses. The Cascade Range provides a steep slope that lifts moisture-laden westerly winds and causes moderate rainfall. Regional airflow is usually northwesterly in the spring and summer, and southwesterly in the fall and winter.

Winter temperatures seldom drop below freezing for long periods of time. In January, the average temperature in Vernonia is 36.9 degrees. In summer, hot, dry continental air brings the highest temperatures. July and August are the warmest months, averaging 62.2 degrees and 61.6 degrees respectively in Vernonia. Average annual rainfall in Vernonia is 47.6 inches; the wettest month being December. As the trail spans 21 miles and increases 700 feet in elevation, temperatures and weather conditions vary upon the trail. Generally, it is cooler and wetter at Tophill, allowing snow to accumulate in that area.

Local Air Quality: The site is located in a rural undeveloped area outside the Portland-Vancouver Interstate Air Quality Maintenance Area. No data concerning the ambient air quality is available. Other sources of air pollution are the dust and exhaust emissions from traffic and logging operations and of wood smoke from homes. The air can become heavy when areas are being slashed burned. Currently, there are no grass seed growers adjacent to the trail who may engage in field burning.

Wildlife Habitat: The area south of Pongratz Road and along some of the creeks which the right-of-way crosses, is designated by the 1986 Washington County Comprehensive Plan as wetlands. It provides habitat for water fowl and small mammals, numerous amphibians, reptiles and small birds. The area adjacent to the agricultural fields along the southern portion of the trail also provides cover for ring-necked pheasant, valley quail and mourning dove which frequent the fields. The West Fork of Dairy Creek is adjacent to the right-of-way and provides riparian vegetation and water for wildlife. In many places the 60' wide right-of-way provides the only cover available in the agricultural area. The vegetation along either side of the continuous 12' trail will be maintained to provide a continuous wildlife corridor.

The area north of Pongratz Road is zoned as a sensitive wildlife habitat for black bear, black-tail deer and Roosevelt elk. The habitat is especially important for the survival of deer and elk during the critical winter season. This northern forested area is also inhabited by blue and ruffed grouse, mountain quail, and band-tailed pigeons. The birds prefer a habitat with a mixture of timbered areas, clearcuts, meadows and brush patches.

The trail right-of-way in this northern area varies from 100' to 1,100' in width and provides a wildlife corridor through northern Washington County and southern Columbia County. The trail right-of-way will provide vegetation and cover through areas which are clearcut or put into agricultural production. Any proposed trailhead development would occur adjacent to existing major roads and would have minimal impact on wildlife. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has reviewed the trail proposal and is supportive of the plan. Oregon's Natural Heritage Data Base has no record of sensitive or endangered animal species in this area.

Vegetation: The area adjacent to the right-of-way south of Pongratz Road is committed to pasture and agricultural use. The vegetation found within the right-of-way is primarily volunteer species including wild rose, big-leaf maple, blackberry scotch broom and an occasional Oregon white oak or Oregon ash. The vegetation found in the wetter areas

along the West Fork of Dairy Creek is willow and cattail. This vegetation has a low profile, and where allowed, is thick, impermeable, and serves as wildlife habitat.

Douglas-fir, red alder, western red cedar and grand fir are the principal overstory trees along the right-of-way. Some specimens are up to 70 years old and over 100 feet tall. The area north of Pongratz Road is adjacent to land with regenerating Douglas-fir forests. Recently clear cut areas have species of big-leaf maple, vine maple, blackberry and Douglas-fir. Brush species typical to the Coast Range make up the understory including sword fern, western bracken fern, Oregon grape, vine maple, blackberry, salal, snowberry, ocean spray and elderberry. The Oregon Natural Heritage Data Base has no record of sensitive plant species in this area.

Water Features and Hazards: The linear park is situated in two watershed basins. The area from Tophill and north is in the Nehalem River basin. The trail generally follows Beaver Creek to where it flows into the Nehalem River at Treharne and then follows the Nehalem River to Vernonia. The southern portion of the park is in the Tualatin River basin and generally follows the West Fork of Dairy Creek to its headwaters. It crosses numerous creeks and streams which flow into the West Fork of Dairy Creek. The trail right-of-way lies in the 100 year flood plain of the West Fork of Dairy Creek from Pongratz Road to Banks.

Historic and Archeological Sites: The area along the Banks-Vernonia trail has never been surveyed for archeological sites. Likewise, no historic sites known to OPRD have been identified with the exception of the historic significance of the rail right-of-way and the trestles.

Visual Resources: The trail traverses a diversity of landscape settings imparting a tranquil rural quality that is visually pleasing, and has more scenic appeal than the urbanized north Willamette Valley. The level areas south of Pongratz Road include expansive views of the distant forested hills to the north.

The area between Buxton and Treharne offers the greatest scenic experience. The raised railroad grade is perched on the forested side-slopes above narrow valleys and lush vegetation. The picturesque pastoral views into Buxton give way to a wilder appearing landscape north of Bacona Road. Here, the trail traverses through uninterrupted, steep, thickly forested areas creating a "tunnel" effect. Clear cuts occasionally open up the tightly hemmed in trail to allow expansive views of the mountain range and surrounding valleys. Through this rugged country, a number of fast moving streams flow under the trail filling the steep canyon walls with the echoing ring of falling water. As the trail approaches Treharne, the topography gently flattens and the adjacent land use eases back into agricultural use providing pastoral scenes. The forest seclusion is interrupted when the trail connects up with and follows the Nehalem Highway.

Trestles, Bridges and Culverts:

Fifteen trestles or bridges were built within the twenty-one mile stretch between Banks and Vernonia. Eleven of these are small, crossing small creeks. These have been re-decked and have had railing added to them. One is a 267 foot long trestle-girder structure crosses the Nehalem River near Vernonia which has also been decked and railed. One overpass over HWY 47 was constructed using a surplus pedestrian bridge from the Banfield highway in Portland. This was accomplished as a partnership project with ODOT.

Two expansive timber trestles provide great architectural and engineering interest. The Buxton Trestle is located just south of Bacona Road. It is 733 feet long and spans the Mendenhall Creek valley. A piling core test needs to be performed to determine its suitability for decking and foot

traffic. Trail users now take a trail bypass route and cross Mendenhall Creek on a small timber bridge.

The Horseshoe Trestle, stands 81 feet high and is the highest structure on the line. Its 620 foot length spans the Nehalem Highway and Beaver Creek two miles south of the Washington-Columbia County line. The lattice work design was originally built in the 1920's. The lattice was replaced in 1952. The trestle is unusable. The north end of the trestle was destroyed in the Pebble Creek Fire in 1987 and the entire trestle is structurally weak due to dry rot. A study needs to be performed to evaluate its integrity which includes a pile core test. It may be determined that it needs to be removed. Portions of the lattice have fallen on HWY 47, other pieces have been removed.

Currently a trail bypass is planned to cross Beaver Creek at Tophill. The crossing will provide an at grade bypass around the Tophill trestle. This bypass will utilize a large arch pipe to cross Beaver Creek.

The trail also crosses over 149 culverts. 44 of these are concrete, 100 are corrugated metal pipe and 5 are timber culverts. These culverts have been randomly examined for their structural integrity and are cleaned out periodically to free them of debris. Some of the culverts are at the bottom of 80 foot deep fills. If these deep culverts become blocked they can quickly cause a substantial amount of water to pond behind the grade causing disastrous washouts.

Public Services and Utilities:

Water Supply: The City of Vernonia has the only public water supply on or near the right-of-way. It recently completed a water treatment facility and is capable of providing high quality water meeting U.S. Environmental Protection standards. The City of Banks has a quality water source and will service customers outside the city limits. However, service as far as Manning would not be possible. Water needed for trailhead development outside of Banks or Vernonia would require the construction of a well.

The Manning Trailhead is located on an abandoned house site. It has a well which needs to be tested. The park manager's residence in Buxton has a well which supplies water at two to three gallons a minute. This is less than the five gallon a minute standard used for residential use. The geology of the remainder of the trail does not lend itself to high yield wells.

Sewage Disposal: The City of Vernonia has a sanitary sewer collection system and a sewage disposal facility which could be extended to accommodate needs prompted by trailhead development at Anderson Park. Most of the soils between Vernonia and Banks have characteristics which severely restrict septic tank absorption fields. Further, the soils south of Pongratz Road are within the 100 year Flood Plain of the West Fork of Dairy Creek.

Telephone: In 1990-91 General Telephone and Electric (GTE) laid a fiber optic cable in the trail right-of-way from Banks to Vernonia. This fiber optic line cannot be used for local service. There is telephone availability at Anderson Park in Vernonia and at the Park Headquarters in Buxton. Future phone service may be available in areas where there is existing phone service. Maintenance of emergency phones may be difficult along the trail. The fiber line cannot be used for local service.

Electricity: Portland General Electric services the area between Banks to Buxton. West Oregon Electric Cooperative Inc. services the area north of Buxton to Vernonia. There is no electricity at any of the trailheads. There is service at Anderson Park in Vernonia.

Fire Protection: The linear park falls within three overlapping fire districts. The forested land north of Pihl Road to Vernonia is covered by the Oregon State Forest Department. It's

headquarters are located in Forest Grove, approximately 30 minutes travel time to the park. The area from Banks to the Washington-Columbia County line is serviced by the Tri-City Fire Department, headquartered in Banks. The area from Vernonia to the Washington-Columbia County line is also serviced by the Vernonia Fire Department headquartered in Vernonia.

The three fire fighting entities are well equipped and staffed. The Department of Forestry has a 24 hour on call stand-by crew available during the fire season. Banks and Vernonia Fire Departments are staffed by volunteers.

OPRD has adopted a coordinated written fire plan with all three fire fighting groups. It has distributed gate keys to each of the entities and has developed a phone tree and action plan. It has also made the trail accessible to fire fighting equipment, developed and marked water holes, turn-around areas and has marked the trail with quarter mile posts. State Parks has also established rules prohibiting smoking, campfires and fire arms which will be posted at the trailheads and trail access points.

Additionally, on September 9, 1992, OPRD and State Department of Forestry entered into a written agreement whereby each agency agreed to cooperate to develop and execute wildfire procedures, wildfire training forest fire shut-downs, forest practices activities and public information programs.

Law Enforcement and Emergencies:

Four law enforcement agencies have jurisdiction over the State Park. These are: Oregon State Police based in Columbia City, the Columbia County Sheriff based in St. Helens, The Washington County Sheriff based in Hillsboro and the City of Vernonia Police. Response time for any of the law enforcement agencies depends upon the availability of an officer in the immediate area. These agencies work cooperatively. The park is patrolled by the park ranger. Rangers are equipped with a radio and have authority to issue citations.

A rescue unit is based in Banks, a volunteer ambulance unit is available in Vernonia and emergency helicopter service is available from Portland.

Jurisdictions:

Banks-Vernonia State Park is in Washington and Columbia Counties. Land use compliance and development permits fall under county jurisdiction. The northern portion of the trail falls within the urban growth boundary of the City of Vernonia. The southern end of the trail is just outside the northern edge of the urban growth boundary in Banks. A Banks trailhead could possibly be located within the Banks urban growth boundary.

The majority of the Banks-Vernonia State Park is zoned Exclusive Forest Use. Additionally, in Columbia County the park is zoned rural residential near the Treharne area. In Washington County, the area south of Pihl Road, meanders among various agricultural zones, including Agricultural Forestry 5, (A-F 5), Agricultural-Forestry 10, (A-F 10), and Agricultural-Forestry 20, (A-F 20), and Exclusive Farm Use (EFU). A small section of the park near Nowakowski Road is also zoned A-F 20.

The portion of the Banks-Vernonia Park located in the Vernonia urban growth boundary is zoned "General Residential". This zone requires approval of a Conditional Use Permit for a public park.

The Banks-Vernonia State Park has been mentioned in both county comprehensive plans. Columbia County Comprehensive Plan as amended in 1986 provides a discussion of the park proposal on page 291. As Columbia County has no special park zone to fit State Parks facilities, it granted the State a temporary and conditional land use for the park in 1990. State Parks will work with

Columbia County's periodic review to create zones which relate to State Parks and are consistent to the master plan and the Columbia County comprehensive plan. Washington County also endorsed the Banks-Vernonia State Park in its comprehensive plan which stated:

"The detailed plan developed by the State could be brought off the shelf and pursued. A close-to-home multiple use path is the kind of recreational facility the county needs the most." (Paragraph E.2.4.3.5, page VII.E12, Volume I, Washington County Comprehensive, Revised 9-9-86.)

Further, the Rural/Natural Resources Plan Element provides a clear policy to "ensure that open space and recreational facilities are provided which reflect the needs of the county residents", (Policy Statement 24). This plan element also mandates implementing strategies which specify certain actions which the County will perform. Included in this list of required strategies is the following statement:

"Encourage the Oregon Parks and Recreation Division to reactivate planning for the Banks-Nehalem Linear Park." (Paragraph e., page 8.2, Volume III, Washington County Comprehensive Plan, Revised 9-9-86.)

Washington County does not have a park zone which would accommodate State Park facilities. Instead, it has a special use zone which permits some park facilities. State Parks received a conditional special use permit from Washington County in 1992. State Parks will work with Washington County in their periodic review process to have this master plan adopted into the county comprehensive plan.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Vernonia contains a policy statement endorsing the Banks-Vernonia State Park. It says:

"The City shall work with the Oregon State Parks Branch to implement the Linear Park between Vernonia and Banks, Oregon." (Policy Statement #4, page 19, Vernonia Comprehensive Plan, adopted 5-18-81).

Banks-Vernonia State Park is a critical link between the rural residential areas of Treharne, located one and one half miles to Anderson Park, Vernonia Schools and Vernonia Lake Park in Vernonia. OPRD will work with the city and with the schools to secure funding to develop a safe and convenient bicycle route to connect these facilities.

The master plan proposals have been researched to identify critical resources which require special permitting for development and use. Generally, State Parks relies on the local notification process to respond to proposed zoning changes or development proposals on adjacent lands. These proposals are evaluated on a case by case basis to determine whether the change will affect park use or its resources. The criteria for evaluating compatibility with the park are outlined in the county zoning ordinance.

OPRD staff evaluate adjacent lands for existing and potential impacts or opportunities as part of the master planning process. Adjacent lands have visual, historic or natural resources that provide a setting for the park. Critical adjacent lands are identified as areas of concern or future acquisition in the land use suitability chapter. Identified lands which can no be protected through the zoning process may be targeted for acquisition.

Both counties and the State Highway Division have jurisdiction over access permits from county roads and state highways. The master plan proposals must comply with sight distance and other requirements for vehicular park access points and trail crossings of roads.

LAND USE SUITABILITY

Oregon State Parks and Recreation is mandated by state law to determine the carrying capacity of its lands so that appropriate levels of use and development can be planned to protect important resources. This determination of carrying capacity is outlined below.

The term "land use suitability" as used in the OPRD master plan refers to the various degrees of human use and development which the land is capable of withstanding. Land use suitability, in this context, should not be confused with the local jurisdictional planning use of the term which refers to the zoning of the many different land uses. The six OPRD land use suitability designations are protection, conservation, intensive development, area of concern, surplus and acquisition.

The evaluation of suitability is based on the concept that different resources can withstand different degrees of recreational use and development. Comparing the sensitivity of a particular resource to the potential degree and type of impacts on that resource is known as determining the carrying capacity of the resource. Those areas which can tolerate heavy use and development without adverse impacts to important resources are identified, as well as those areas which require extraordinary protection from human use.

Resources which require extra protection include wetlands, riparian areas, important plant communities and wildlife habitat, sensitive or rare species, archeological sites and important historic resources. Natural hazards and engineering constraints related to topography, geology and soil conditions have also been factored into suitability designations.

The suitability determination or carrying capacity process is performed by State Parks staff in the field and in consultation with other resource experts. Areas with very sensitive, high quality unique or irreplaceable resources have the least suitability for direct recreational use and facility development. Areas with very severe engineering constraints are also ranked as having a low suitability. These areas are designated as a "protection" level of suitability.

Areas with moderate resource sensitivity, uniqueness or quality, or with moderate engineering constraints are designated at a "conservation" level of suitability. Those areas with resources which are very tolerant of access, are of low quality, are extremely common or which have only slight engineering constraints are designated at the "intensive development" level of suitability.

Because this park is 21 miles long, detailed mapping of the land use suitability areas is difficult. Mapping of these designations has only been done for areas proposed for park development. For the rest of the park, a representative cross-section illustrates where the protection, conservation and intensive development areas are generally found.

The twelve foot wide top of the old railroad bed is designated as intensive development. The bed is a constructed rock ballast, gravel and sand feature in the landscape which has been kept clear of vegetation as a transportation corridor. This bed has low resource values and slight engineering constraints. The bed has been constructed to rise above or span over wetlands, water features and flood areas.

The areas on the shoulders of the old railroad grade and on adjacent cut slopes have formerly been cleared of vegetation. These have been allowed to re-vegetate with a variety of species, both native and introduced. For the most part, these areas have moderate resource values and few engineering constraints. They provide a visual buffer between the trail and the adjacent land owner's land and a green space for recreationists to pass through. They also serve as wildlife habitat in the form of a corridor through agricultural fields, harvested forests and rural development. These areas have been designated as conservation.

Some important resource areas adjacent to the old railroad bed have been designated for "protection". These areas include streams and related riparian areas. No significant high quality

wetlands, sensitive species or critical summer habitat have been identified within the park. Fossil beds at Tophill have been identified for protection. No archeological sites have been surveyed or identified for survey within the park. No historic resources have been identified to date.

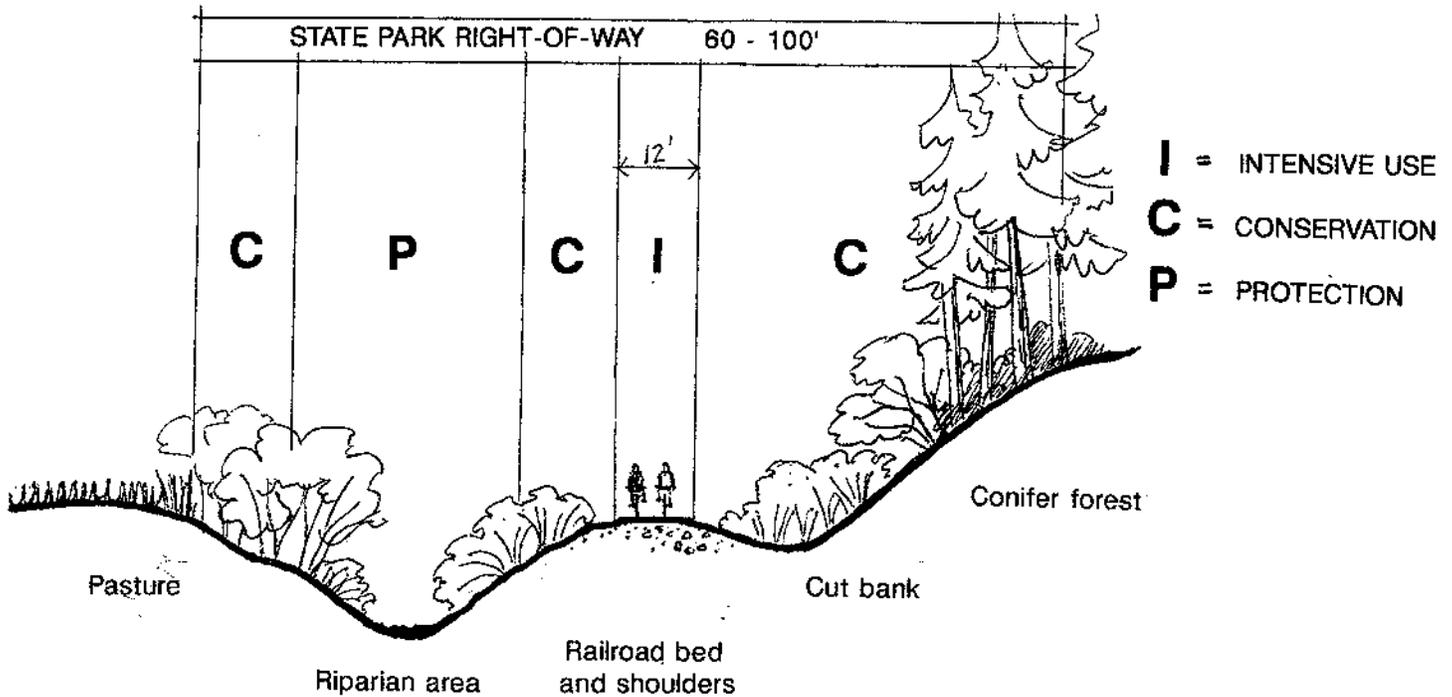
In addition to the land use suitability designations which address carrying capacity, there are three other designations. These are areas of concern, surplus and acquisition.

A surplus designation is given to those areas currently in OPRD ownership which do not provide or protect important recreational or resource values associated with the park. These areas may be sold or traded by OPRD.

The area of concern designation is given to important resources lands adjacent to the park which have compatible uses and zoning with park use. Should the use change and become a hazard or conflict with the park resources or use, these lands may be prioritized for acquisition.

An acquisition designation is also given to areas with resources needed to support recreation.

A chart describing each designation and corresponding typical activities, development and management follows:



Detailed mapping of the trailheads at Vernonia, Tophill, Buxton, Pongratz Road, Manning and the park management site at Buxton have been included at the end of this chapter. No site has been selected to date for the Banks trailhead and so no land use suitability study has been performed for it.

Vernonia Trailhead: Umatilla Street has been identified for acquisition to allow a direct connection between the future parking area and the trail. Likely this would involve asking the city to vacate that portion of the street.

A northern portion of the area designated for intensive development has been deeded to the City of Vernonia to build a city hall building. Portions of this site may be identified for parking use during events and heavy trail use weekends. Should the construction of a city hall not be feasible, an independent interpretive/informational center should be located near the trailhead parking. This facility could accommodate the Friends group's need for a gift shop and interpretive center and serve as a community orientation point.

Areas adjacent to the trail have moderate resource values and have been designated for "conservation". Important Nehalem River riparian areas are located off park property to the east. Should this area become threatened with development, State Parks should consider acquiring it.

Beaver Creek Trailhead: This site includes a parking area off the shoulder of the Nehalem Highway and a restroom facility adjacent to the trail. These areas have been designated intensive development because of the site has been continually disturbed. A 100' long temporary pedestrian bridge connects the trailhead parking area from the trail. This trail area is classified as conservation because of the moderate quality of the riparian vegetation. The banks of the Nehalem River are classified as protection to protect the riparian area.

Tophill Trailhead: The majority of this site has been designated as "intensive development" because of recent site disturbances and slight engineering constraints. The surrounding areas on the west side of the highway are of moderate quality and have been designated as "conservation". The area on the north side of the highway contain moderate to high quality wetlands and riparian areas. Fossil beds are located at the top of the hill, north of the destroyed portions of the historic Tophill trestle.

Buxton Trailhead and Management Facility: This site includes a small area of abandoned farm fields and an old homestead which includes a pre-fabricated home and two barns. These areas have been designated as intensive development due to their low resource values and slight engineering restraints.

A corridor of varying width corresponding to the riparian area of Mendenhall Creek is designated for protection. All other areas within the park have been designated as "conservation" because of moderate vegetation and habitat values and moderate engineering constraints. The area adjacent to the trail, designated as "conservation", varies in width as the park ownership varies in width.

The field west of the park property has been identified for eventual acquisition to support day use and parking. The farm west of the field has been designated as an area of concern. This designation is based upon the historic and related visual values on that property. The historic farmhouse is part of the view from the trestle. Construction of new buildings or the destruction of existing buildings on that site would negatively impact the site setting. If changes are proposed by the landowner, OPRD should offer to acquire the property to protect these resources.

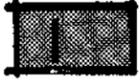
Pongratz Road Trailhead: The proposed Pongratz Road trailhead site is located on the abandoned railroad grade. The entire area has been designated for intensive development due to poor resource values.

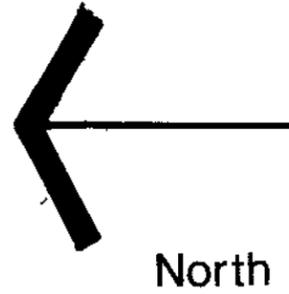
Manning Trailhead: Most of the Manning trailhead site has been disturbed and has low resource values and slight engineering restraints. The surrounding areas, except for the roads are of moderate resource quality and have been designated as "conservation". An abandoned mill is located adjacent to the trailhead. This site is visually incongruent with the more natural setting. OPRD should consider acquisition and naturalize this area. This site could also serve as wetland mitigation.

BANKS-VERNONIA STATE PARK

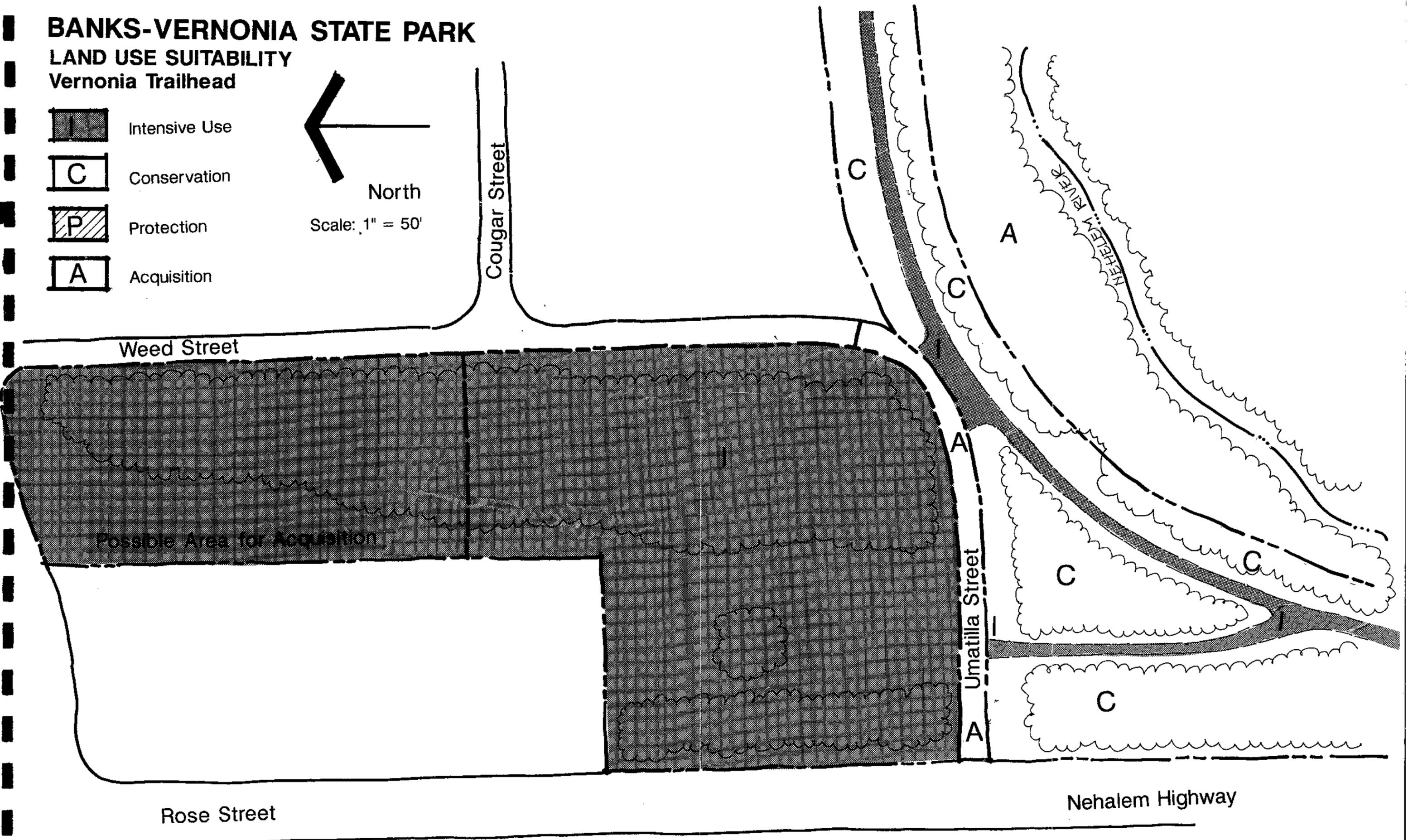
LAND USE SUITABILITY

Vernonia Trailhead

-  Intensive Use
-  Conservation
-  Protection
-  Acquisition



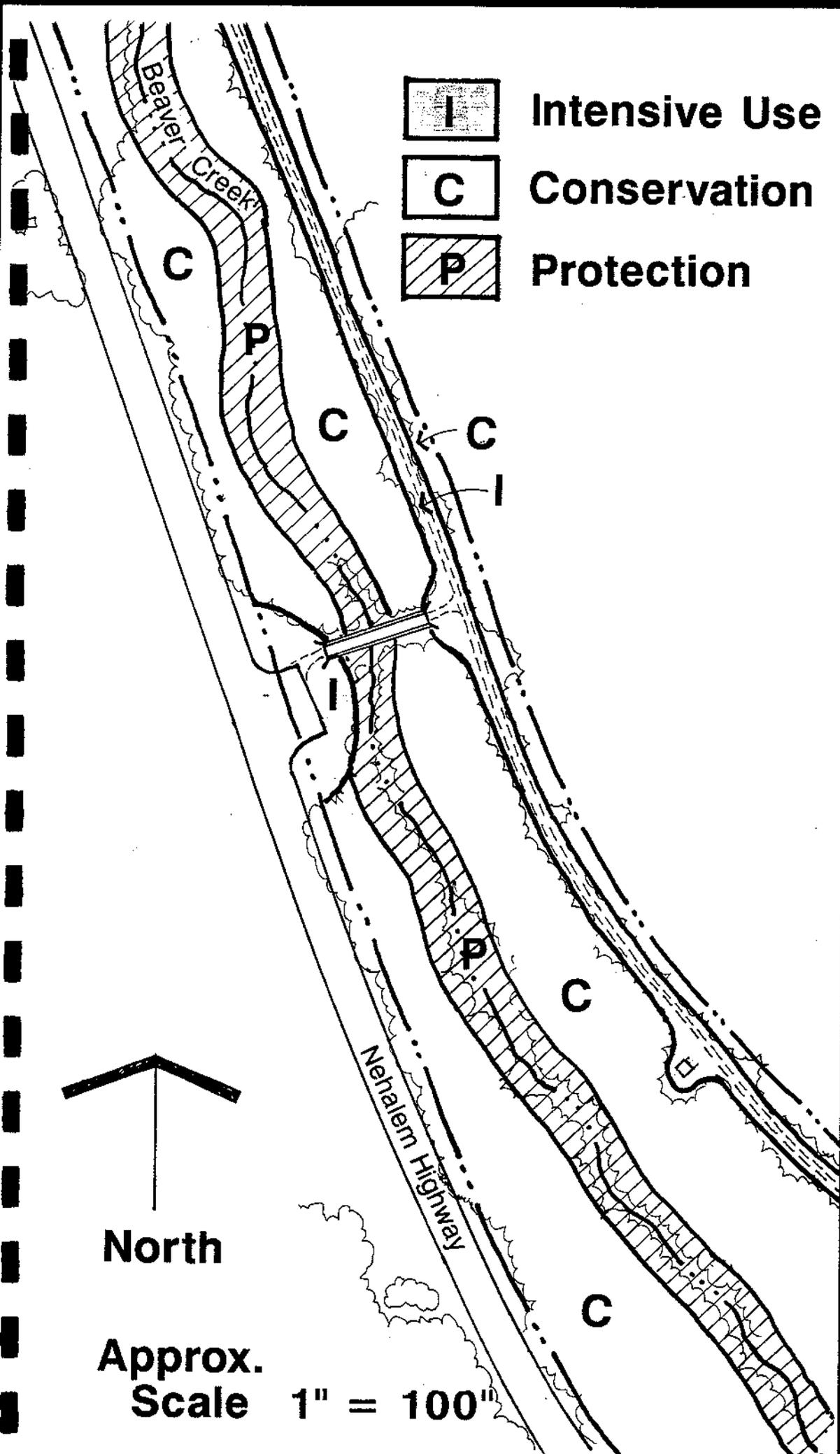
Scale: 1" = 50'



OREGON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

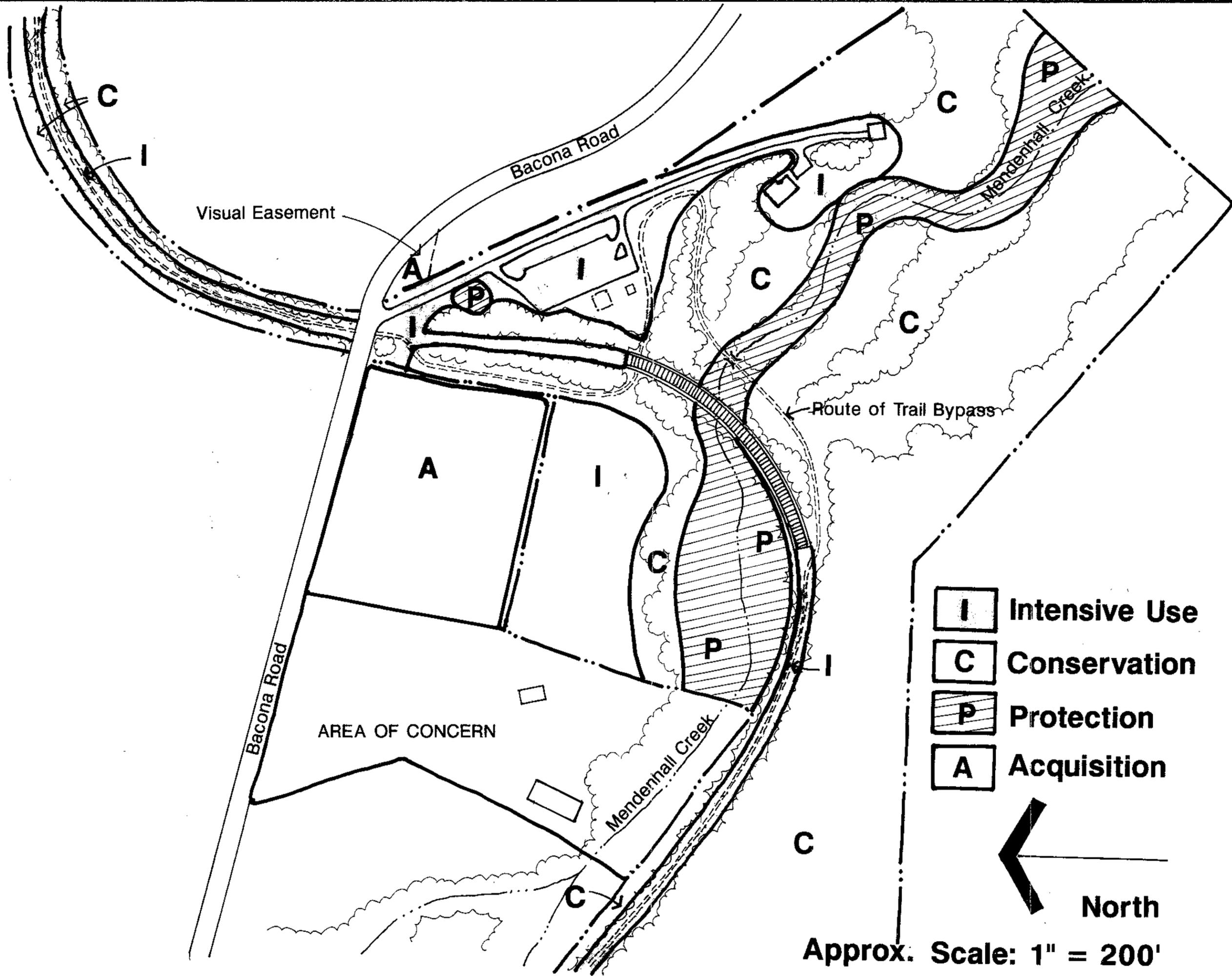
<u>Class and Description</u>	<u>Typical Activities</u>	<u>Typical Development</u>	<u>Typical Management</u>
<p>PROTECTION: Land with important or unique park resources such as scenic or geologic features, fish or wildlife habitats, wetlands, special plant communities, rare threatened or endangered species or historic or archeological sites or hazardous conditions for development.</p> <p>CONSERVATION: Land with park resources such as scenic or geologic features, habitats, plant communities, water features or historic or archeological sites of a lesser quality or importance than those of the protection. Or those resources which are more common or tolerant of use and development qualify for this designation. Or lands with moderate site constraints for development. This designation is used for buffer zones for protection areas, for open space and scenic protection or for soil stabilization or water shed protection, etc.</p> <p>INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT: Land suitable for intensive recreation development.</p> <p>SURPLUS: Land not suitable for PROTECTION, CONSERVATION OR DEVELOPMENT classification which may be retained, sold or exchanged.</p> <p>ACQUISITIONS: Lands needed to be acquired to improve park use or management or to protect resources and provide recreational or education opportunities. Acquisition lands may be classified for PROTECTION, CONSERVATION OR INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT.</p> <p>AREAS OF CONCERN: Lands whose current use or zoning provides protection of adjacent state park resources or which support important public recreation opportunities. These lands are candidates for acquisition if their benefit as a buffer to park resources is jeopardized, or their recreation value is threatened.</p>	<p>Activities having a low impact on the resource, such as pedestrian use, fishing, swimming, non-motorized boating, wildlife watching and other nature activities.</p> <p>Activities having moderate impact on the resource, such as bicycling, equestrian use, primitive camping, dispersed picnicking, and any activities allowed in limited protection class.</p> <p>Activities having potentially high impact on the resource. All appropriate recreation activities are allowed.</p> <p>No recreation activities will be proposed for these areas.</p>	<p>Limited development such as trails, signs, rustic bridges, simple interpretive devices, self-contained toilets and limited parking.</p> <p>A moderate level of development is allowed including all of the above plus primitive campgrounds, simple equestrian facilities, dispersed picnicking facilities, utilities, small structures, boat ramps and docks, secondary roads and parking lots.</p> <p>All recreation related development and support facilities, which are in keeping with the character of a state park are allowed.</p> <p>All non-recreation development required to manage these lands that is not disruptive to park resources in areas in other land use classifications.</p>	<p>Specific management techniques and practices are used to protect and enhance protection resources. Appropriate management for protection of public health and safety is allowed as well as for prevention of loss of developments or personal property on or adjacent to the park. The use of natural processes and techniques is encouraged to achieve these ends.</p> <p>Allows the minimum resource manipulation required to accomplish specific objectives such as insect and disease control, fire prevention and suppression, wildlife habitat improvement and visual resource enhancement.</p> <p>Allows appropriate management activities required for the safe and enjoyable use of the area and to preserve the state park character of the area.</p> <p>Allows management of these lands for profit, exchange or sale.</p> <p>Lands are designated which are likely to have a use or zone change based on ownership, other adjacent uses and development and current zoning.</p>

CLASSIFI.TBL #1 (Rev. 1/93)



BEAVER CREEK TRAILHEAD

Land Use Suitability

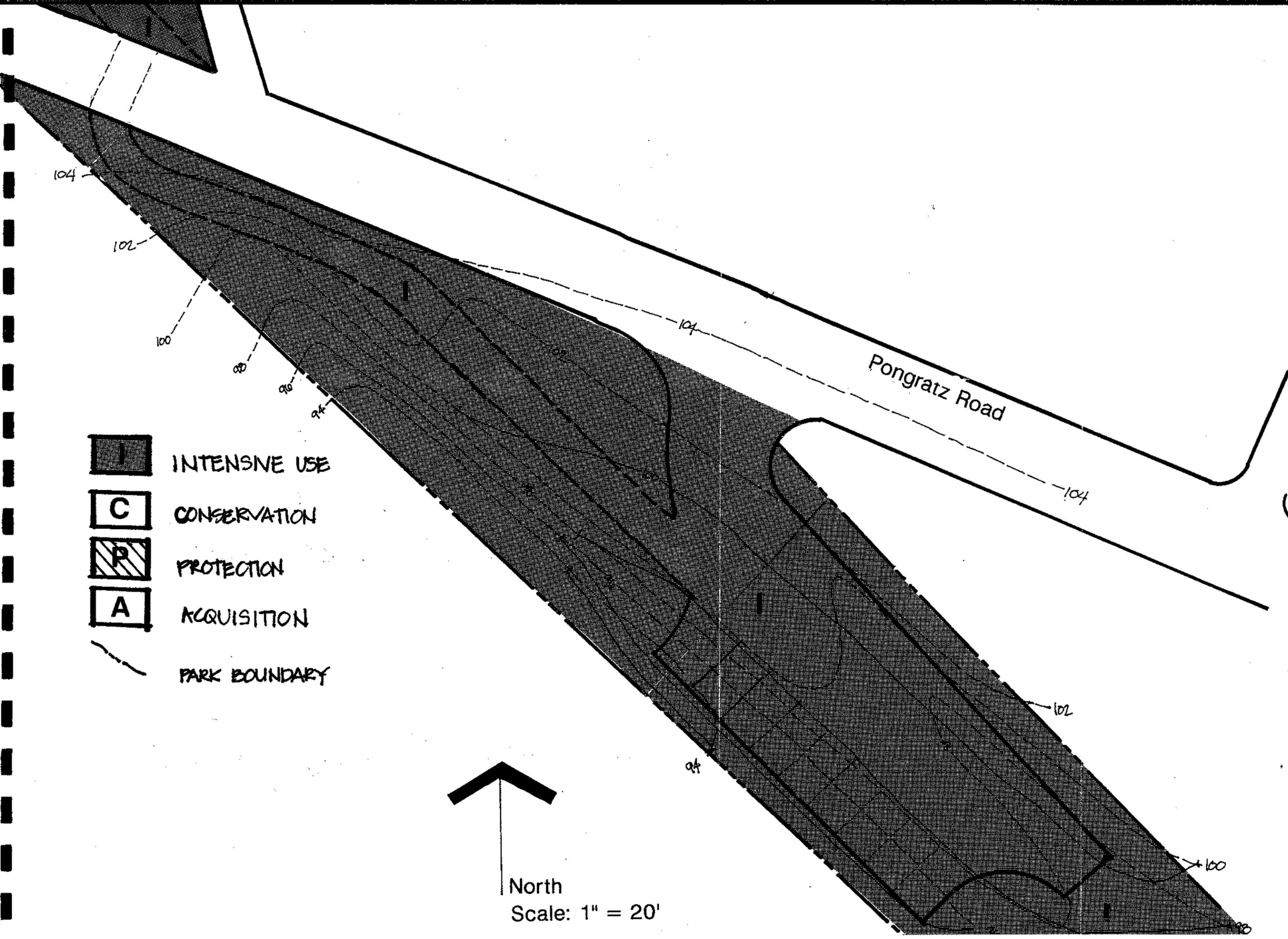


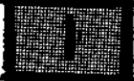
- I** Intensive Use
- C** Conservation
- P** Protection
- A** Acquisition



Approx. Scale: 1" = 200'

BUXTON TRAILHEAD LAND USE SUITABILITY



-  INTENSIVE USE
-  CONSERVATION
-  PROTECTION
-  ACQUISITION
-  PARK BOUNDARY


 North
 Scale: 1" = 20'

Land Use Suitability

BANKS - VERNONIA STATE PARK
Pongratz Road Trailhead

RECREATION NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Role:

Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department is a recreation advocate and statewide provider of outdoor recreation lands and facilities. The OPRD system of parks exists within a larger community of recreation providers which include federal, state, county, city and agency. In order to avoid jurisdictional and managerial inefficiencies, OPRD must determine its most appropriate role as a provider of trail opportunities in the Washington/Columbia County and western metropolitan area.

The Banks-Vernonia linear property is located in close proximity to the western Portland metropolitan area. This area has many outdoor recreation providers or advocates including Columbia County, Washington County, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon bicycle route program, Portland METRO, Oregon Trails program and private advocacy groups.

Columbia County has supported the Banks-Vernonia trail proposal as a critical north-south link between the western Portland metropolitan area and the interior of Columbia County. The linear park could potentially connect north and west to Astoria along a state designated Portland-Pacific trail. Banks-Vernonia State Park provides a public equestrian trail and accommodates popular horse events at Anderson Park in Vernonia.

The only county provided recreational opportunity in Washington County is at Hagg Lake. Additional trail construction and connections between the Banks-Vernonia trail and the developed areas of Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Beaverton and Portland will need to be pursued by other providers unless the county changes its recreation policy.

The State of Oregon Bicycle Master Plan approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission April March 23, 1992 establishes a proposed statewide bicycle system. A route between Portland and the coast along Highway 26 has been designated. The 3.5 mile portion of the Banks-Vernonia trail between Banks and Pihl Road serves as a portion of this route.

The Banks-Vernonia trail is outside the METRO Service District. However, the West Fork of Dairy Creek has been identified as a significant river and unprotected natural area even though it is outside the service district. Portions of the Banks-Vernonia trail cross or are adjacent to the West Fork of Dairy Creek. These lands will remain undeveloped and will serve as a wildlife and natural corridor and help preserve this significant river.

Future abandonments of railroad right-of-ways can provide opportunities for OPRD and or METRO to connect segments of the outer METRO system to the 40 mile loop and other Portland based trails. Other abandonments will also expand west, to link the Portland area with the coast via the Tillamook Forest trail system. See the map at page 39 for a graphic explanation of the possible routes which could become available for trail connections.

Recreational opportunities:

In 1987, the Oregon State Legislature requested a study to determine whether the Banks-Vernonia right-of-way should be developed for recreational use. The study was conducted by a private consulting firm, Klein Consulting Engineers, with the advice of a local advisory committee. The consultant analyzed whether the location of the property, parcel shape and size would be suitable and desirable for use as a trail. The consultant concluded that the site was ideal for trail use due to the gentle gradients and curves and wide flat surfacing. The consultant also found that the recreational demands in the area west of the Portland metropolitan area was rapidly growing and that the supply of recreational facilities was grossly inadequate. The consultant concluded that the location of the trail would not only serve the local recreational needs for hiking, biking and

equestrian amenities of the communities of Banks and Vernonia but also serve the greater western metropolitan area.

This facility is in close proximity of the Portland metropolitan area. Based on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, (SCORP), the Portland metropolitan region receives the most recreation participation in the state. This is due to the availability of prime recreational opportunities and the highest density of the population in the state. The following chart gives the percent increase predicted for the years between 1987 and 2000 for the primary activities which will happen on the trail:

SCORP REGION 7	
ACTIVITY	USE ESTIMATE: PERCENT INCREASE 1987 TO 2000
JOGGING, RUNNING	72%
HORSE BACK RIDING	20%
BICYCLE OFF-ROAD	38%
DAY HIKING ON TRIALS	67%
NATURE WILDLIFE OBSERVATION	52%
OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY	49%

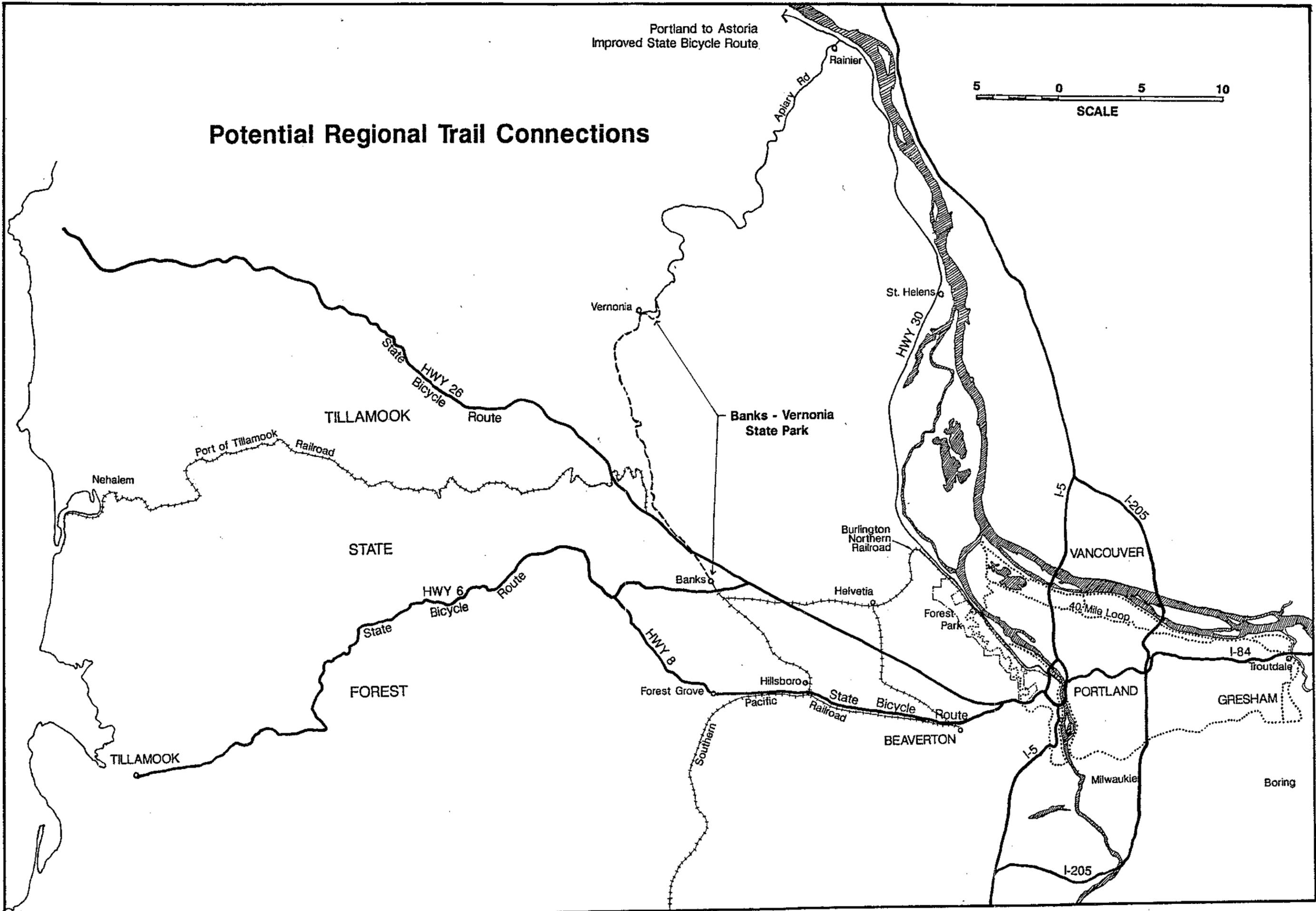
Because the majority of persons who participate in these types of activities prefer primitive, semi-primitive and roaded natural settings, new facilities for these recreation uses in more natural settings are needed.

This trail will meet many of the recreational needs of this growing metropolitan area. Trailheads should be developed every three to five miles. In total this trail will provide:

- * Opportunities to provide 17 continuous miles and 3 additional miles of multi-modal trail for hikers, bicyclists, equestrians and disabled users.
- * Opportunities to eventually provide trails usable by those who have physical disabilities.
- * Opportunities to interpret the surrounding geology, wildlife, the architectural significance of the trestles and the history of the railroad along the trail.
- * Opportunities to connect to the developing trail system of the Portland metropolitan area and to trails extending down the Willamette Valley and to the Oregon Coast.
- * Opportunities to address the local needs of providing safe alternative transportation routes. Recently a young horseback rider was killed by a log truck near Treharne on the Nehalem Highway.
- * Opportunities to connect the Banks-Vernonia State Park to Vernonia Lake, a city park with a variety of recreational opportunities including paved bicycle paths.

Potential Regional Trail Connections

Portland to Astoria
Improved State Bicycle Route



PARK ISSUES:

1. Trail is not continuous:

The Banks-Vernonia trail is not continuous but is composed of two segments. The northern 17.5 mile segment extends from Vernonia to Pongratz Road. The southern 3.5 mile segment extends from Pihl Road 2000' north of Banks. A 1500' gap separating the two segments occurred when that property legally reverted back to the adjacent property owner when the railroad was abandoned. This gap causes an approximate one mile interruption to the trail. Adjacent landowners have not been willing sellers in OPRD's efforts to procure a feasible bypass.

2. Further abandonment issues:

Currently, the railroad abandonment ends 2000' north of Banks. Burlington Northern Railroad has filed public notification of its future intent to abandon this portion of the right-of-way. If OPRD acquires this portion of the trail, the one small trestle spanning the West Fork of Dairy Creek must be repaired, redecked and have railings installed.

Burlington Northern has provided notice that it may abandon its line from Forest Park in Portland to Banks. Likewise, the Oregon Electric Railroad has provided notice that it may abandon its spur line from Helevtia to Beaverton. Should these lines be abandoned, there is great possibility to link the Banks-Vernonia trail to the metropolitan areas of Portland and Beaverton.

There is also a possibility of linking Portland to the coast. The Port-of-Tillamook line travels west from Forest Park in Portland to the Cornelius Pass area through North Plains to Banks. In Banks it parallels the Banks-Vernonia trail to Buxton and then moves west through the coast mountains to the Nehalem Bay and south to Tillamook. This line has been subsidized by the State of Oregon for several years. While currently operating, there may be a point where it may be considered for abandonment.

There are also several lines which run north and south in the Willamette Valley. While none of these lines have hinted that they will be abandoned in the immediate future, there is a possibility that abandonments will occur linking Vernonia south to McMinnville, Salem, Albany, Eugene and Corvallis. All total, these railroad right-of-ways could create a interconnected network of trails west of the Portland area.

3. Need for Trailhead Development:

Currently, there is a trail access at Anderson Park, owned by the City of Vernonia and a State Park Trailhead at Beaver Creek. Trailheads are being developed at Tophill and at Manning. The access at Anderson Park has no parking for trail use. The Beaver Creek Trailhead provides parking for five vehicles. The Tophill parking lot can accommodate 12 vehicles, half of which can be vehicles towing trailers. The Manning trailhead can provide parking for nine vehicles. These trailheads are designed only for trail access. Additional trailhead development is needed in Vernonia, Buxton, Pongratz Road and in Banks to provide access to the trail every 4 miles and to serve as informational orientation centers.

Vernonia Area: It is anticipated that Vernonia will serve as the starting point for numerous trail events. These events may draw hundreds of participants several times a year. Currently Anderson Park is developed as a city picnicking area and small campground with RV hook-ups. The campground restroom building has been badly damaged by winter freeze

and needs to be replaced. Restroom facilities which meet the standards of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) would accommodate the year-around campground needs and trail use are needed.

Additional overflow parking for 100 or more vehicles is needed for special events related to the trail. This space is not available at Anderson Park. Several city blocks adjacent to the trail on Weed Street are undeveloped and in OPRD ownership. This area could be used for event parking, restroom facilities and for loading and unloading of horses. A structure to orient visitors and provide information is needed. This facility could be part of the Vernonia City Hall development or a small interpretive center at the trailhead parking area. Efforts should be made to make a strong connection between the Banks-Vernonia trail and the City of Vernonia, Vernonia Lake Park and to the Vernonia Schools by working with the city and Columbia County in partnership relationships.

Buxton Trailhead: The feasibility study and preliminary working documents which preceded this master plan stressed the need for a major trailhead in the Buxton area. This trailhead is particularly important as the northern portion of the trail terminates one mile south at Pongratz. A staging area is needed to access the trail northward. This trailhead would provide parking for 40 or more vehicles and at least 15 vehicles pulling horse trailers. A horse corral, restrooms and a picnicking area are also needed. The current well is inadequate for the manager's residence and an additional well would be needed for public use.

OPRD purchased land and planned for the development of a trailhead to be developed adjacent to the park headquarters in Buxton. However, Washington County found that the proposed access road to the site did not have adequate sight distance. A solution to the site distance must be resolved before the trailhead can be developed. An alternative possibility would be to acquire the adjacent five acres on Bacona Road for parking and trailhead facilities. The existing park ownership could be upgraded for a park headquarters and shop.

Pongratz Trailhead: Currently the northern segment of the trail ends at Pongratz Road. Individuals can drive one mile south on Pongratz Road to the southern segment positioned at the Manning Trailhead. Pongratz Road is narrow, curving gravel road with no shoulders. At the request of Washington County, OPRD will post warning signs to trail users to discourage use of Pongratz Road.

Trailheads should be established at both ends of the gap to encourage trail users to park their vehicles and use the portions of the trail adjacent to the trailhead instead of Pongratz Road. A trailhead at Pongratz Road was proposed in 1991. However, the access point did not meet Washington County sight distance standards. Since then, several speed studies have been conducted and Washington County has concluded that access for a trailhead at Pongratz Road is possible. Once funds become available, OPRD will proceed with the permitting and implementation.

An additional concern of adjacent landowners is trespass of trail users onto their property. Several vehicles have been illegally parked on the adjacent property owner's land near Pongratz Road. Apparently the vehicles belonged to trail users who hiked north from that point. Signage and designated parking for three to five vehicles is needed at least until the trail is connected around the "gap".

Manning Trailhead: A trailhead at the north end of the southern portion of the trail is needed at Manning. A trailhead to provide gravel parking for nine vehicles is planned for

June 1993. There is sufficient acreage to expand parking in the future should the need arise.

Banks Trailhead: The trail currently ends 2000' north of Cedar Canyon Road in Banks. OPRD is awaiting the formal abandonment of the Burlington Northern line at which time it will officially request interim trail use. A trailhead is needed at the end of the trail. An application has been made by the Port-of-Tillamook Bay Railroad, who owns and operates the rail right-of-way adjacent to the park from Banks to Manning, to develop an excursion train from Banks into the Tillamook Forest. The train depot and parking has been proposed to be located two blocks south of the proposed trail terminus in Banks. The proposal includes trail access from this facility and a 106 vehicle parking lot.

To strengthen the local partnership, OPRD should be part of the design team and negotiate an agreement with the developers to use a portion of the parking as a trailhead and perhaps install a gift shop and interpretive center for the Friends of the Banks-Vernonia Trail in the terminal. It must also look for a means to safely link the proposed terminus of the trail to the proposed depot location, two blocks south.

4. Trestle Rehabilitation:

Two expansive timber trestles remain in disrepair. The Buxton Trestle, located south of Bacona Road adjacent to the park manager's residence, is 733' long and spans the Mendenhall Creek valley. A pile core test is needed to determine the soundness of the structure. It would also need to be decked and have railings attached. Access to the trestle has been barricaded and signed to discourage public use of the structure. The estimated cost to deck and rail the structure is \$250,000. Additional costs for structural repair can not be determined until after pile testing. Possible partnerships with the US Marines could reduce the labor costs. In the interim, a trail bypass has been created to route trail users around the trestle. The bypass is not accessible to the disabled.

The second large trestle is the horseshoe trestle located at Tophill. It is 81' tall and spans 620' across the Nehalem Highway and Beaver Creek. The north end of the trestle burned and was destroyed in the 1987 Pebble Creek Fire. Portions of the trestle are deteriorating. During the summer of 1992, the State Highway Department removed portions posing safety hazards over the Nehalem Highway. An early cost estimate to rebuild the missing end and deck and rail the entire structure is \$600,000. No cost is available for structural repair of the rest of the structure.

OPRD is planning a temporary trail bypass around the tophill trestle. The trail bypass descends and climbs steep grades and will not be accessible to the disabled or by service vehicles. However, vehicles can access the trail from the abandoned service road 2,000' north on the Nehalem Highway.

5. Horseback staging areas:

Many horseback riding clubs and individual riders have expressed much enthusiasm for the trail. They need areas where they can park their trucks and trailers and then prepare for a ride along the trail. Trailheads could be provided at Vernonia, Tophill, and Buxton. Once the trail links the northern portion of the trail with the southern portion, staging area could be located north of Banks as well.

6. Trail Surfacing:

The trail is currently covered with a compacted gravel surface. This surface is difficult for all types of bicyclists and those confined to wheelchairs to maneuver. A harder, more stable surface is needed. The northern half mile of the trail has been resurfaced with smaller fines bounded together by a oil medium. This experimental procedural looks promising for bicycle use. The City of Portland and Gresham are installing a variety of experimental surfaces on the Forty-Mile Loop trail. Results from their study can provide guidance for Banks-Vernonia State Park. All efforts to secure funding for paving should be made.

7. Camping:

Proponents of the trail have suggested that camping would be an appropriate trail activity. The concept of camping alarmed many of the adjacent landowners concerned that camping would cause noise, litter, and devalue their property. The most serious concern was that of possible fire danger. Because of these public concerns, camping was removed from the development and land use applications. Special park activity which would include "permit only" group camping at the Buxton trailhead would require approval from Washington County.

8. Conflict with adjacent forest activities:

Most of the area along the trail north of Manning is in the Forest Conservation District and much of that adjacent land is actively managed as forest land. Adjacent land owners expressed concern that forest management practices may conflict with trail use. Several systems have been developed to reduce the possibility of conflict. The Department of Forestry will notify OPRD when an adjacent land owner has filed for a permit for aerial spray activities. OPRD can then close the trail during the duration of those activities to avoid conflict. OPRD has also issued a letter to all adjacent land owners which requested that they voluntarily notify the park manager before engaging in activities such as aerial spraying, slash burning and harvesting near the trail so that the park ranger can close areas affected to reduce conflicts. OPRD is also coordinating with the fire fighting agencies and the State Forestry Department in developing a Fire Management Plan for the area. These agreements are being adopted by the various agencies.

The portion of the trail south of Manning traverses through agricultural land. Adjacent land owners expressed concern that the trail will interfere with adjacent agricultural activities. A survey of the adjacent crops was taken. The land is primarily devoted to pasture land and grain crops. Current agricultural practices will be confined to the agricultural land. The natural vegetative and water barriers and existing fencing will separate the trail users from the noise or dust that may be generated from these agricultural activities.

Along the trail there are numerous private trail crossings. These private access points will be respected by OPRD. Additional access points will be reviewed through easement agreements as specific issues arise.

9. Manager's Residence Rehabilitation and Upgrade:

The manager currently lives in a double wide trailer on state owned property. The roof needs replacement and the building is infested with termites and carpenter ants. Continued pest management may not abate the problem in the long term and the facility may need to be replaced.

The well serving the manager's residence provides only two-three gallons per minute. Five gallons per minute is the standard for a residence. A reservoir system may be needed.

10. Park Management Facilities:

There are no crew facilities. Currently, the crew operates out of a pole barn. A rented sani-can is used for sanitary facilities. A standard two-bay shop with crew facilities is needed.

No diesel tank is located on site. An above-ground diesel tank is needed to provide fuel for park management use.

11. Park Headquarters:

There is a need for a place to provide public information and to report emergencies. This could be part of an interpretive facility at the Banks or Vernonia trailhead. Additional informational signs should be available at other trailheads; Beaver Creek, Tophill and Manning.

12. Fencing:

Natural vegetation, water and steep topography serve as effective barriers to keep trail users on the trail. Columbia County has required that additional fencing may be needed in areas where the trail is within 100' of residential structures. Washington County has required that additional fencing may be needed where there are not sufficient barriers along the trail.

13. Nehalem Highway Realignment:

A portion of the Nehalem Highway just north of the Treharne area is scheduled for realignment in 1993-4 by the Department of Transportation. This project will include realignment and paving of the adjacent Banks-Vernonia Trail.

14. Logging Roads:

A number of private logging roads cross the Banks-Vernonia Trail. OPRD will issue access permits to cross over the trail when the roads are opened to resume logging operations. Other safety precautions including closing portions of the trail will be taken as needed to avoid conflicts.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Objectives:

1. To develop seven trailheads so the visiting public and local citizens can access the trail.

Three large trailheads are needed which would provide parking for at least forty vehicles each. 25% of the spaces available should be for vehicles pulling horse trailers. Four additional smaller trailheads should be sited in between to provide parking for 5-10 vehicles every 4 to 5 miles. Two of these must be sited at Pihl Road and at Pongratz Road to provide safe starting and ending points where the trail is discontinuous. Major trailheads should provide sanitary facilities. All trailheads should post park rules and directional information. Development must comply with local ordinances and meet the permitting requirements.

Based on the above criteria, opportunities for new trailheads have been identified at Vernonia, Tophill, Buxton, Pongratz Road, Manning and Banks.

Vernonia-Weed Street Trailhead: Develop a major trailhead capable of providing parking for up to 100 vehicles to accommodate large groups and events on state owned property off of Weed Street between Cougar and Umatilla Street. In 1986, OPRD transferred the parcel north of the proposed parking area to the City of Vernonia for the purpose of building a new city hall. The deed specifies that the restroom facilities of the city hall would be open to the public and could serve as trailhead facilities. Plans should include joint parking and an informational center at city hall. The City of Vernonia has no funds to construct a city hall at this time and it is uncertain when the building will be constructed.

OPRD will continue to work with the City of Vernonia to develop a civic site. Until funding is available for this trailhead development, interim parking should continue to be provided off Weed Street. This area needs to be identified and posted with signs. The vegetation between the concrete bollards and Umatilla Street should be removed to allow for trail staging. Hitching posts can be installed. Access to the trail should be clearly defined and posted with signs. A vault toilet building along the trail should be installed.

The City of Vernonia and OPRD need to prepare a contingency plan if these interim facilities are inadequate. Expanded trailhead parking can occur on the block defined by Cougar, Umatilla, and Rose Streets. Access can be provided at the intersection of Weed and Cougar Streets. Umatilla Street is currently maintained in poor condition, does not provide access to other entities, and interferes with possible staging efforts for the trail. OPRD should work with the City to vacate Weed Street after the last residential driveway. The parking area would be regraded, covered with gravel and the edges defined with landscaping. A facility to provide visitor orientation and information is needed at the trailhead. This could serve jointly as a gift shop, and interpretive center sponsored by the Friends of the Banks-Vernonia Trail.

A vegetative screen should be maintained between Rose Street and the proposed parking area. Street trees and grass or low groundcover should be planted along Weed Street for shade, screening, visual relief and to separate the parking from the street. Should additional parking be needed in the future, OPRD should negotiate to use the land owned by

the City of Vernonia until a city hall is constructed. Should this use be over a period of years, street trees and landscaping should be planted and maintained along Weed Street.

OPRD will continue to assist the City of Vernonia in funding trail connections between Anderson Park and Vernonia Lake Park. OPRD wishes to pursue an alternative pedestrian bridge over the Nehalem River. The most favorable connection is to rebuild the railroad trestle which crossed the river at Anderson Park. OPRD will work with the City and the County to secure funding.

Other proposals will also be considered. OPRD will also work cooperatively with the City of Vernonia and Columbia County to identify grant money to develop a restroom facility to accommodate the campground use of Anderson Park and the anticipated day-use associated with the trail.

Beaver Creek Trailhead: A Bailey bridge was placed over Beaver Creek in 1990. This bridge is owned by the State Highway Division and eventually needs to be replaced.

Tophill Trailhead: Develop a trailhead parking area for 12 vehicles which includes six spaces for horse trailers. Install a vault toilet, informational and directional signage, gates and bollards. OPRD will work with Friends groups and or equestrian clubs to develop a horse hitching area and accessible mounting platform. Develop a trail bypass over Beaver Creek.

Buxton Trailhead: Develop a major trailhead site off of Bacona Road in the vicinity of the park manager's residence. The trailhead access road must be sited to have sufficient sight distance along Bacona Road. The siting of parking and screening should be sensitive to neighbor's concerns about visual intrusions. The final trailhead development will depend on the availability of buildable land and sufficient acreage to construct parking for up to forty vehicles in a location which permits access from Bacona Road. As the park shop facilities and storage areas are located at this trailhead, this trailhead can serve as a staging area for volunteer groups such as the Boy Scouts.

The preferred design is to acquire five acres of the adjacent property to the west, develop an access road near the western edge and develop parking and a horse corral on the flat terraces away from the road. The trail users would be routed under the trestle to the existing trail bypass. A toilet building will be located adjacent to the trail. Day-use, staging and events could occur in the area east of the right-of way and the driveway for the park manager's residence.

A second option would be to acquire a visual easement east of the driveway so as to obtain adequate site distance and develop an access road from the existing driveway and parking between the right-of-way and the driveway.

A third option is to acquire access 100 feet west of the trail right-of-way. The access road would cross the trail and connect up with the existing driveway to the park manager's residence. Parking would be developed in the area between the right-of-way and the driveway.

Under the second and third options, overflow vehicular parking would occur in the field west of the trestle. No trailers would be allowed under the trestle due to clearance limitations.

Picnicking and day use activities can occur in the open fields south of Mendenhall Creek. A short interpretive trail could also be developed.

Pongratz Road Trailhead: Develop a nine car parking area to encourage trail users to park and hike northward only. The designated parking area should reduce the problems of citizen trespass upon adjacent landowners. A small site has been located which has adequate site distance and sufficient buildable acreage. It would involve filling a small area to level it sufficiently for a gravel parking lot for five vehicles. No sanitary facilities are planned.

Manning Trailhead: Develop a nine vehicle gravel parking area. This will provide safe access to the southern portion of the trail and will serve to steer users away from Pongratz Road. No sanitary facilities are planned. A well exists and water may be available for future development.

Banks Trailhead: Develop a trailhead in Banks to provide access to the southern end of the trail. Trailhead parking for forty vehicles and access to sanitary facilities should be provided. No site has been finalized. The Port-of-Tillamook is proposing a concession train depot in Banks which has possibilities of being developed also as a trailhead for the Banks-Vernonia State Park. The depot could provide restrooms and a gift shop for the Friends group. Should the depot be located elsewhere, State Parks could work cooperatively with the owner of the feed store at T2N R4W Section 25 Lot 2200 for use of the feed store parking lot. Should that parcel become available OPRD should consider acquisition for a trailhead. No equestrian access can be accommodated in the town of Banks. Long range plans may include an equestrian access facility in a rural area near Banks.

2. To provide connections so that the trail is continuous from Banks to Vernonia.

- * Develop a long-term solution to connect the northern portion of the trail ending at Pongratz Road to the southern portion ending at Manning. The solution may involve purchasing an easement across the tax lot from which the right-of-way reverted or purchase an easement across an adjacent parcel. Pursue acquisition of the Port-of-Tillamook line should it ever be abandoned, and develop a connection to Pongratz Road.
- * Provide a connection to Banks. Enter into a rail-banking agreement with Burlington Northern when that segment is abandoned. Look for appropriate safe connections to proposed depot or other appropriate trailhead site. A non-motorized rail crossing may be necessary.
- * Develop a permanent trail bypass at the damaged horseshoe trestle. This will route park users around the trestle until the trestle can be repaired or replaced for trail use. If the trestle cannot be repaired a bypass route at an accessible grade will have to be developed.

3. Monitor and pursue connections and other opportunities with other rail abandonments to extend the trail from Banks into Portland and down into the Willamette Valley.

Work with OPRD trails coordinator and the rail specialist from ODOT and local jurisdictions to successfully coordinate a trail system. Connections may involve rail-banking and partnerships with local park districts. (See conceptual map).

4. Provide a trail surface which can accommodate bicycle and wheel chair traffic.

The gravel surfacing of the trail is difficult to maneuver on a bicycle. An experimental surface using a fine gravel bound together by oil is being tested. This surface may be stable for bicycling but could be torn up by horse traffic. Asphalt paving would ease some of the difficulties by delineating the bicycling surface from the unpaved horse trail. Many children residing in the rural areas adjacent to the trail can use the trail as an alternative to the busy Nehalem Highway when traveling to Vernonia. Paving between the Treharne area and Vernonia is critically needed due to the growing number of rural residences in that area. Paving should eventually extend southward as funding permits.

5. Repair the trestles.

The Buxton trestle and the damaged Horseshoe trestle are great examples of a lattice type structure. Views from the trestles are expansive. The Horseshoe trestle has significant structural concerns which may preclude restoration and require removal. Funding and cost saving partnerships to redeck the Buxton trestle and restore and redeck the Horseshoe trestle should be pursued. Absent sufficient funds to repair the Horseshoe trestle for pedestrian use, the structure can be maintained in a state of arrested decay to preserve the historic character and interpretive value of the site.

6. Park structures.

The park manager's residence will need replacement in 10 to 20 years. A standard two and a half bay shop facility which includes a small crew facility and restroom and an above-ground 1,000 - 1,500 gallon diesel tank is needed. Septic facilities can be provided for in the field behind the barn. The existing metal pole barn will remain to house the water system, and for storage.

The Banks-Vernonia Friends group could meet the informational needs of the public with a small building designated as a gift shop, interpretive center and meeting hall. The structure could be located at the Banks, or Vernonia Trailheads. The following alternatives could be used for such a structure:

- * Renovate several railroad cars and place these at the end of the trail in either Vernonia or in Banks.
- * Include as part of the Port-of-Tillamook depot proposal. The depot would include room for the Friends to operate a gift shop.
- * Develop space in the proposed City Hall Building when that structure is built.

Impacts of Proposed Park Development:

The anticipated trail use will not adversely impact the adjacent areas. Steep topography, thickly vegetated slopes, water bodies and fences will keep the trail users confined to the trail itself. Access to the trail is barricaded to keep motorized vehicles off the trail. The trail will be patrolled and litter picked up on a regular basis. The danger of fire damage is a threat when the public enters a forested area. Smoking, firearms and campfires will be banned on the trail. OPRD is working cooperatively with the fire fighting agencies to develop a fire plan and a system for closure due to fire risk. All service providers agreed that with this type of management, the trail will not have an adverse impact on the adjacent land.

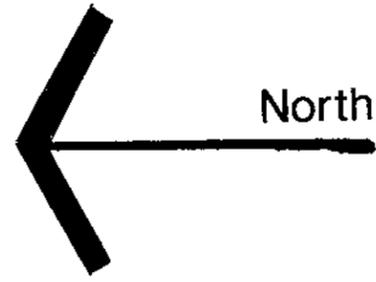
The development of trailheads will have a small impact on the area. All trailheads are located off main roads. The Vernonia trailhead will be developed on existing disturbed area. The Tophill trailhead is less than .3 acres and is located on a disturbed area previously used as a log staging area for a clear cut operation. The Buxton trailhead may occupy up to 10 acres. Parking must be carefully sited to avoid disturbing the wetlands, the scene, and Mendenhall Creek. The Manning trailhead is estimated to be .2 acres and is located on a gravel site which was previously used as an homesite.

The adjacent lands are used for forest production and agriculture. An inventory of the adjacent land uses was made and it was concluded that adjacent land activities will not adversely impact the trail use.

BANKS - VERNONIA STATE PARK

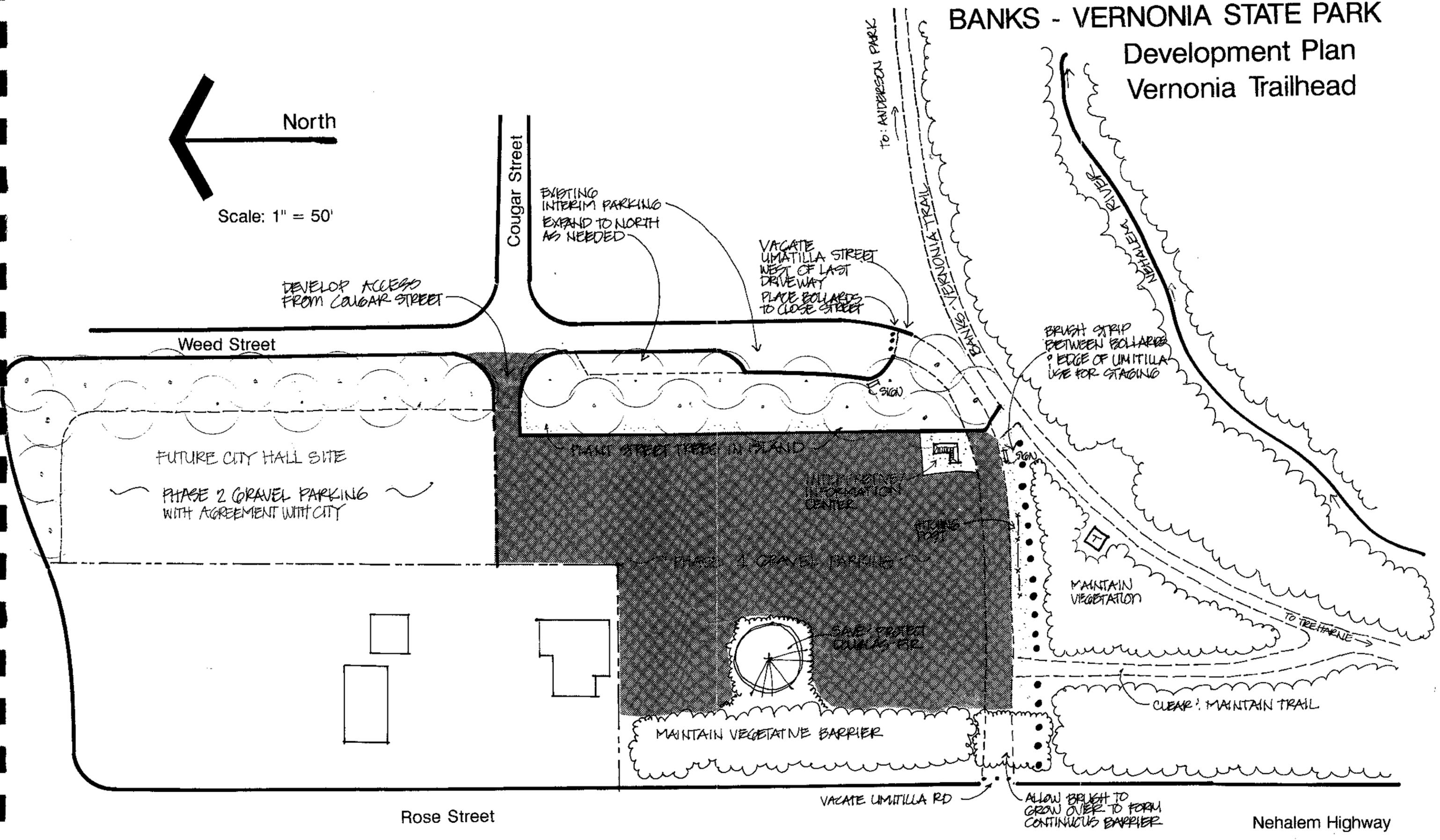
Development Plan

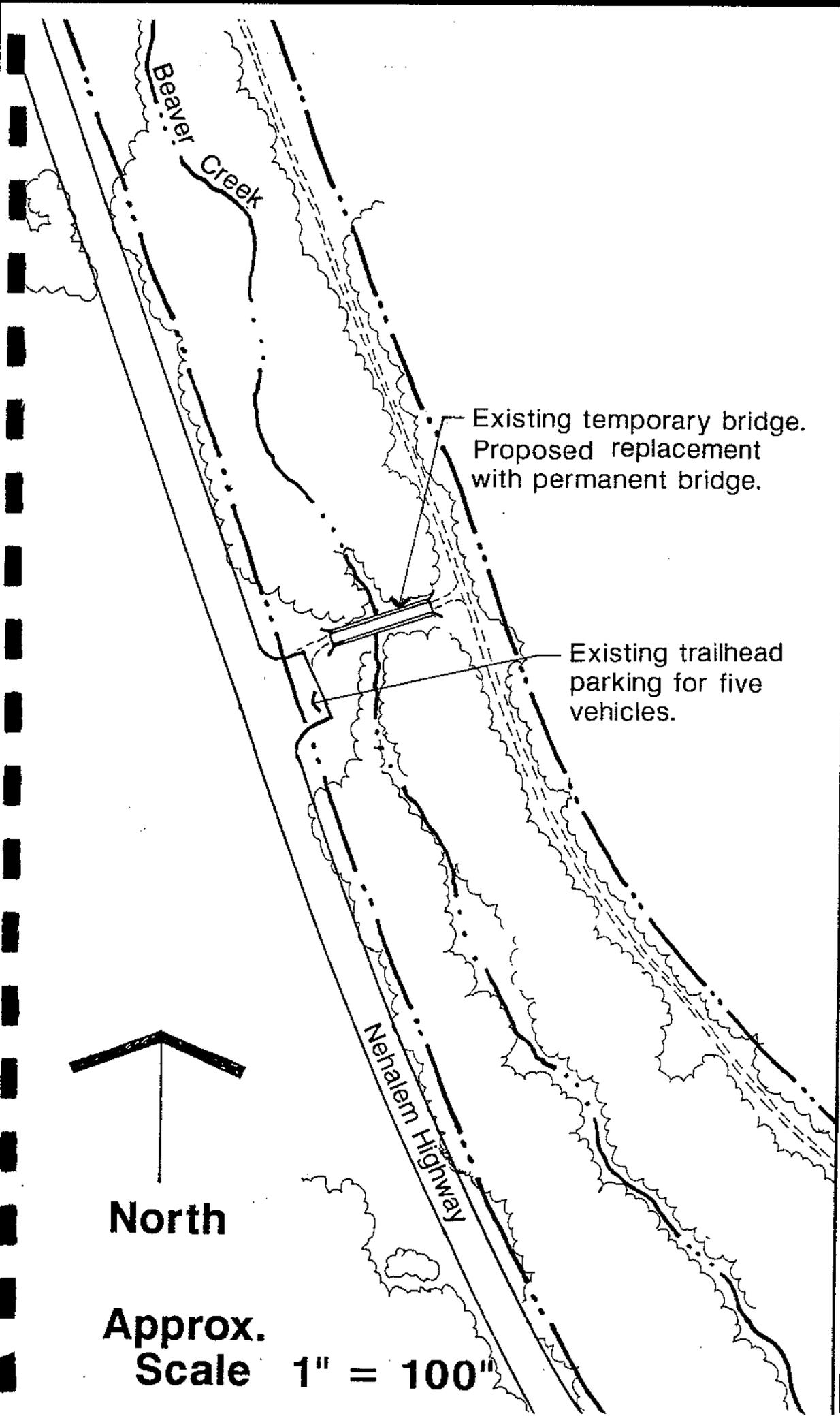
Vernonia Trailhead



North

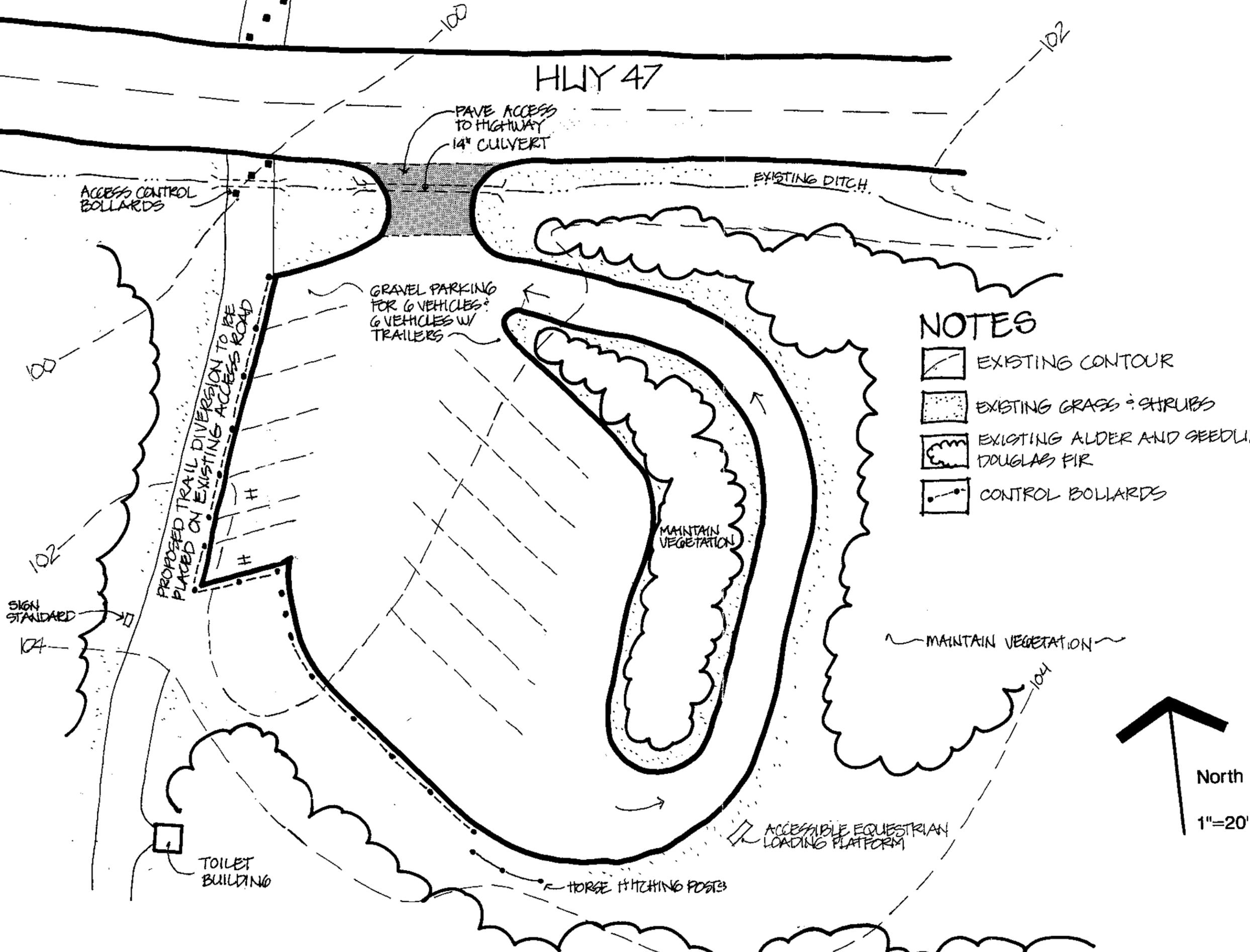
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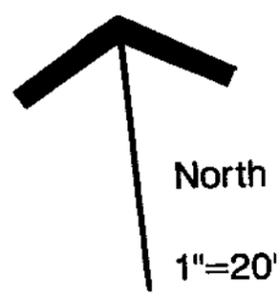


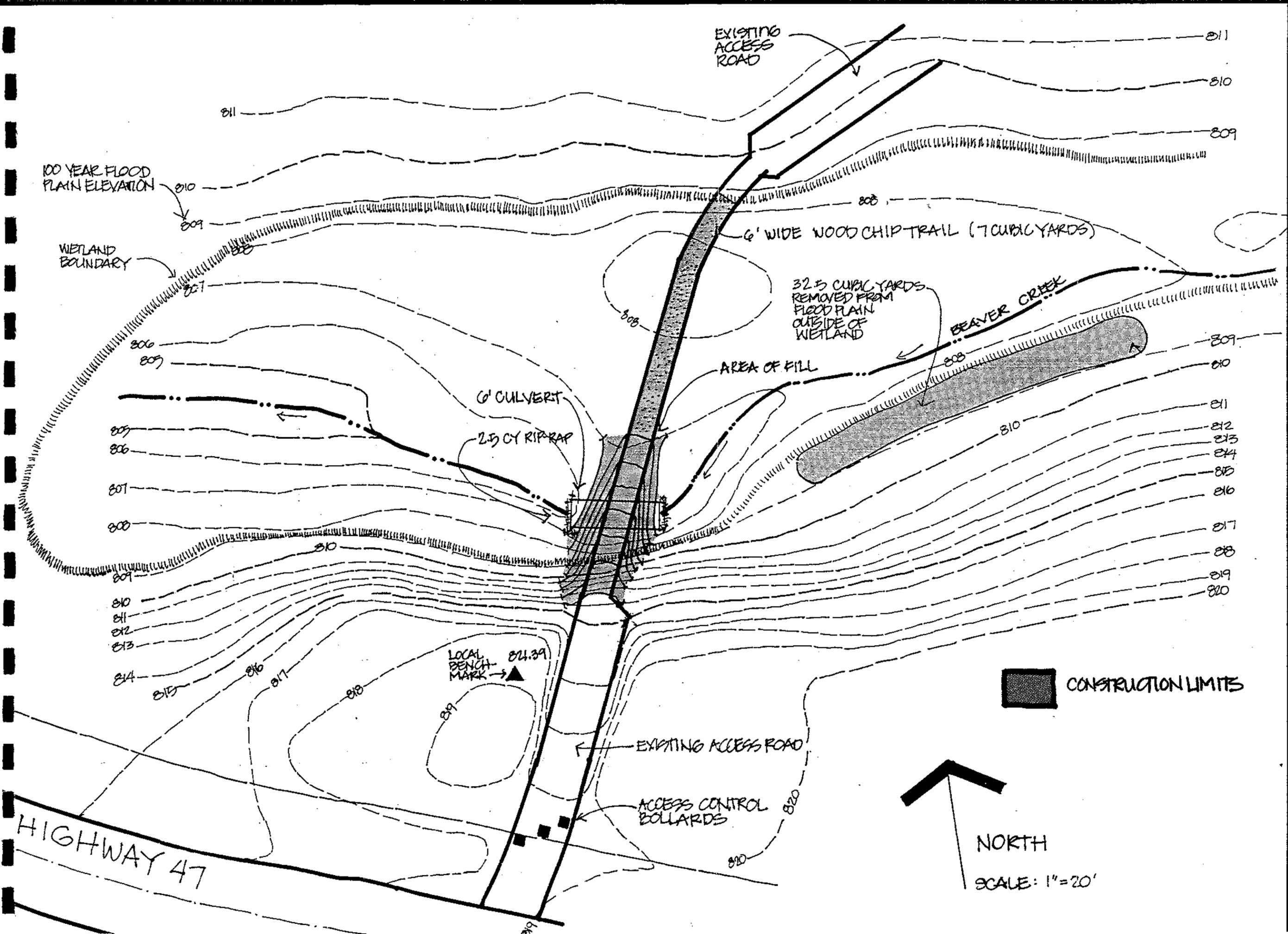
Existing Conditions & Development Plan

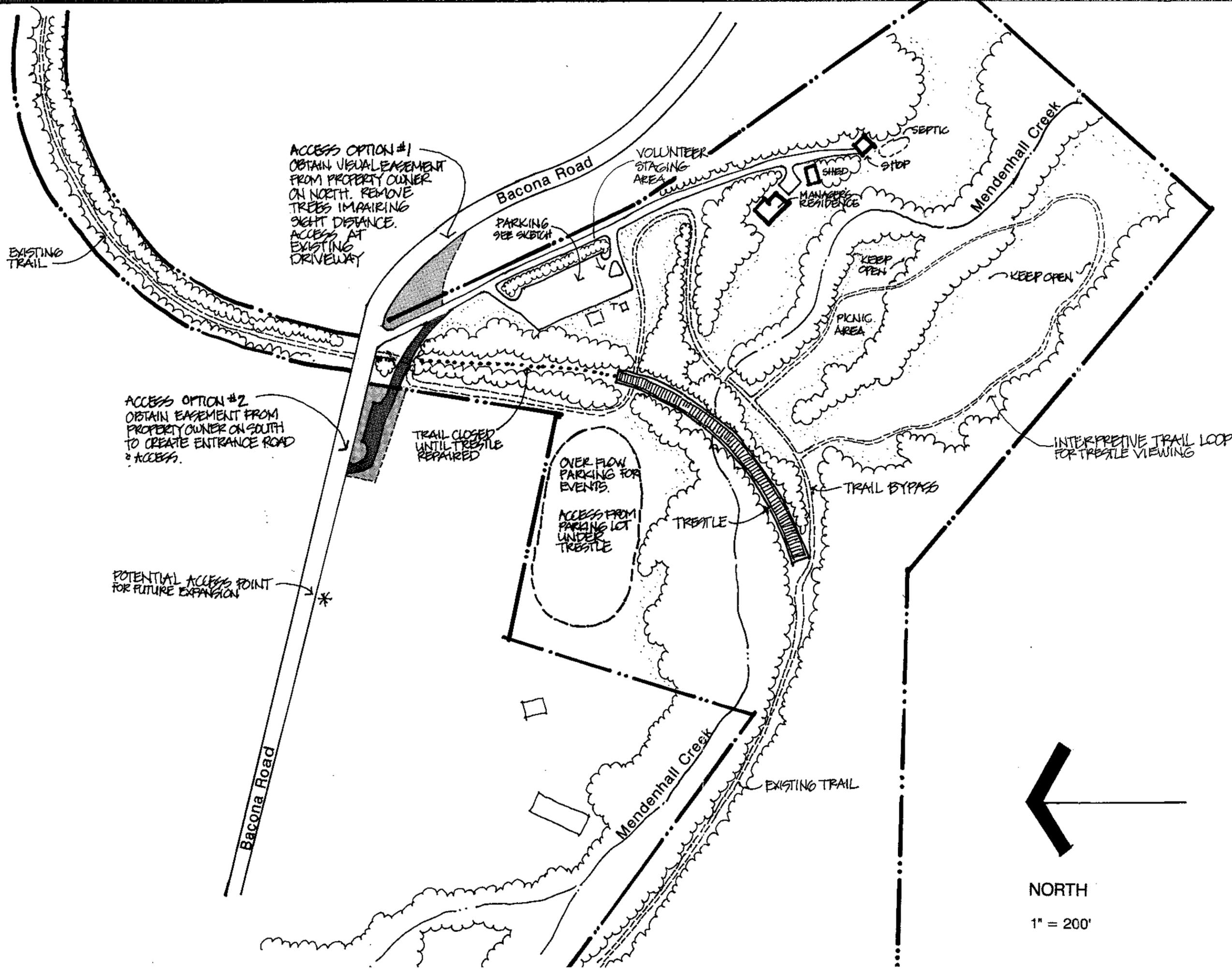
BEAVER CREEK TRAILHEAD



- ### NOTES
-  EXISTING CONTOUR
 -  EXISTING GRASS & SHRUBS
 -  EXISTING ALDER AND SEEDLING DOUGLAS FIR
 -  CONTROL BOLLARDS



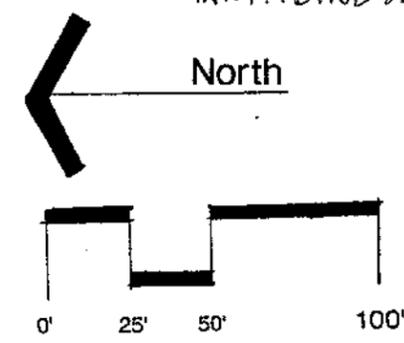
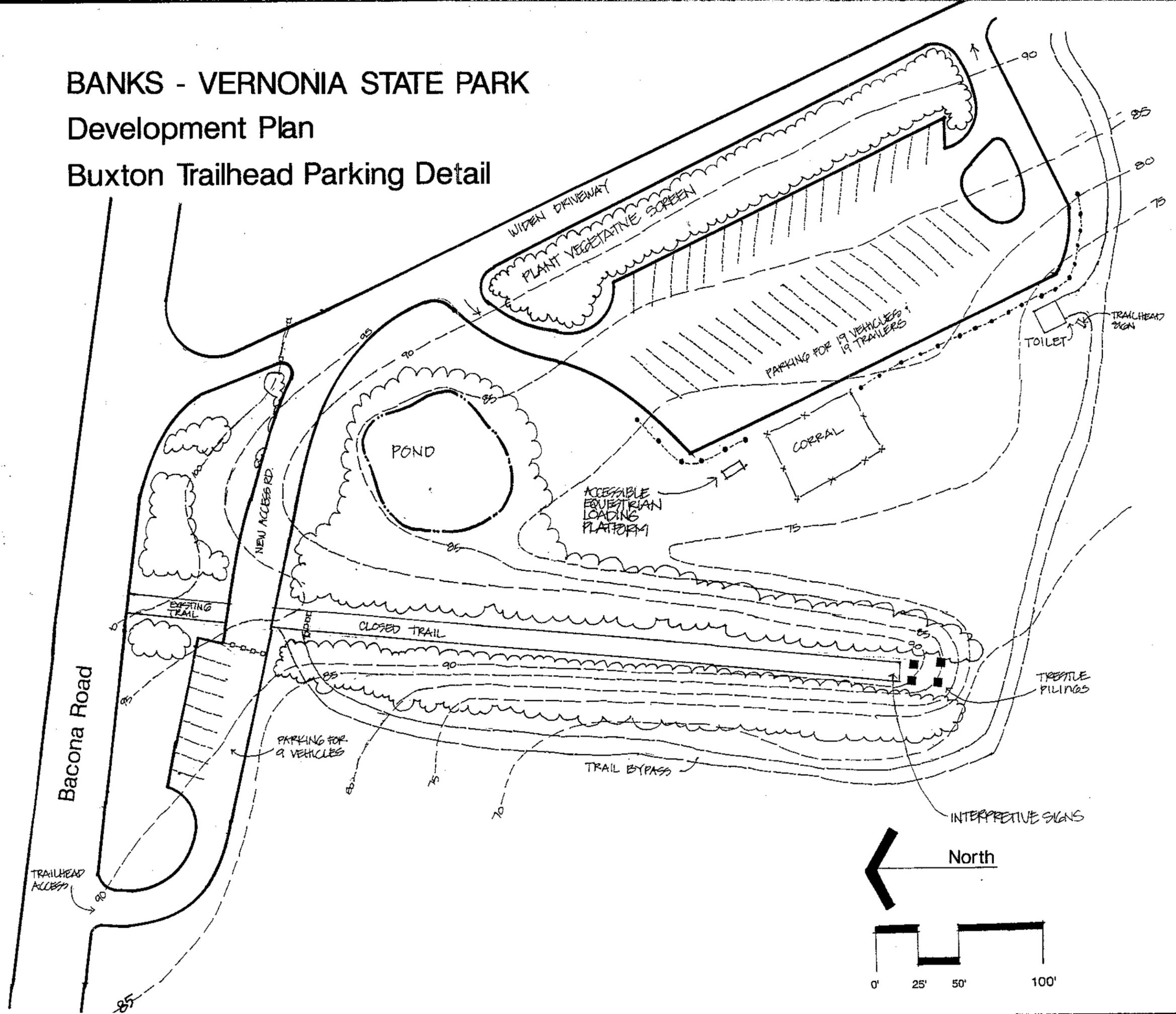


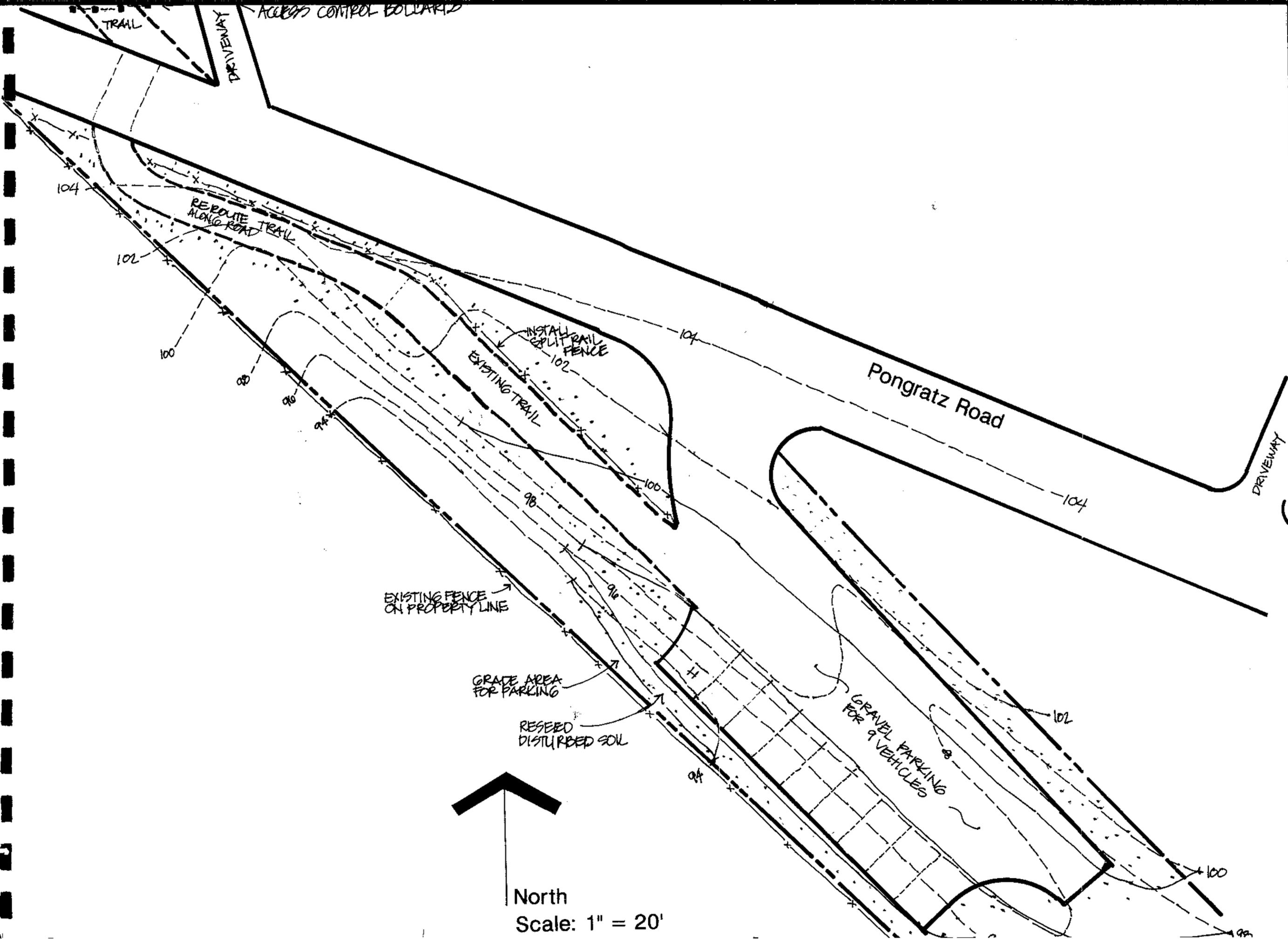


DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BUXTON TRAILHEAD

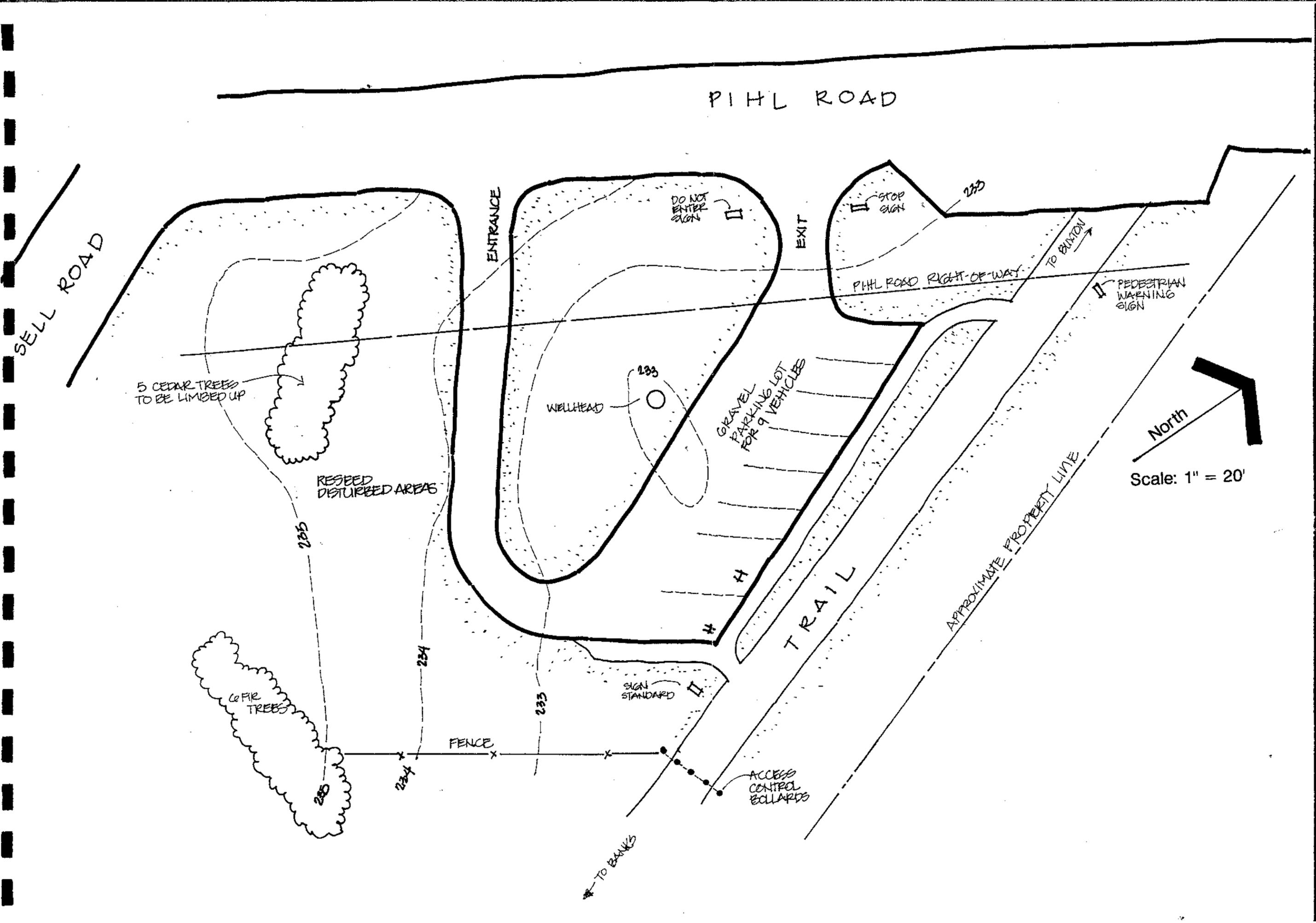
BANKS - VERNONIA STATE PARK
Development Plan
Buxton Trailhead Parking Detail





Development Plan

**BANKS - VERNONIA STATE PARK
Pongratz Road Trailhead**



DEVELOPMENT PLAN COST AND PRIORITY SUMMARY

Project Description	Cost	Priority
Location: Vernonia		
1. Develop Interim parking with signage	\$750	High
2. Vault Toilet Building	\$6,500	High
3. Develop Parking lot and landscaping and interpretive facility	\$90,000	Medium
4. Pedestrian bridge over Nehalem River at Anderson Park	\$50,000	Medium
5. Pave trail to Treharne	\$50,000	High
6. Develop permanent toilet building at Anderson Park	\$120,000	Medium
Location: Beavercreek		
1. Replace Bailey Bridge	\$100,000	Medium
Location: Tophill		
1. Develop trail bypass	\$4,000	High
2. Develop gravel parking area including paved shoulder and signing	\$6,900	High
3. Vault toilet building	\$6,500	High
4. Rebuild trestle	\$600,000	Low
Location: Buxton		
1. Acquire land for trail head development	up to \$15,000	High
2. Develop access and parking area	\$30,000	High
3. Vault toilet building	\$6,500	High
4. Develop trail bypass	\$2,000	High
5. Repair Buxton trestle	\$250,000	Low
6. New park residence	\$115,000	Low

Project Description	Cost	Priority
7. New park shop building	\$75,000	Medium
Location: Pongratz Road		
1. Develop trail head	\$8,500	High
2. Acquire trail link between Pongratz Road	Costs Unknown	High
Location: Manning		
1. Develop trail head	\$6,000	High
Location: Banks		
1. Acquire and develop 2000' trail into Banks	Costs Unknown	High
2. Repair and redeck trestle over Dairy Creek	\$3,000	High
3. Acquire land and develop a trailhead in Banks	Costs Unknown	High
Location: Entire Trail		
1. Pave trail from Tophill to Vernonia (50,000/mile)	\$350,000	High
2. Pave trail from Banks to Buxton	\$250,000	High
3. Pave trail from Buxton to Tophill	\$15,000	High
4. Delineate horse trail	\$25,000	High
5. Provide mile post signage	\$1,500	High
6. Acquire land between Pihl Rd. on Pongratz Rd. for trail	costs unknown	High
7. Conduct culvert structure review	\$15,000	Medium

Project Description	Cost	Priority
Land Acquisition Priority		
1. Acquire right-of-way into Banks	Costs Unknown	High
2. Acquire easements/land necessary for trailhead development at Buxton	Costs Unknown	High
3. Acquire land between Pihl Rd. and Pongratz Rd. for trail development	Costs Unknown	High
4. Purchase parcel between Nehalem River and Anderson Park	Costs Unknown	Medium
5. Purchase mill site at Manning	Costs Unknown	Low

PARK MANAGEMENT

Maintenance and Operation:

Banks-Vernonia State Park is managed and maintained by the Champoeg District, whose headquarters are located at Champoeg State Park in northern Marion County. The Champoeg District is part of Region 2 headquartered in Tillamook.

Maintenance facilities at Banks-Vernonia State Park include two metal 36' x 24' barns of pole construction. The green barn houses water pumping equipment and serves as a temporary shop facility. A rental toilet facility is adjacent. The silver metal barn is used for storage of the tractor, fencing and other park equipment.

Maintenance Staff:

The permanent maintenance staff at Banks-Vernonia include a permanent park manager ranger, two additional seasonal park aid positions are needed.

Interagency Coordination:

Fire District: Tri-City Fire Department in Banks, Vernonia Fire Department in Vernonia, Oregon State Forest Department in Forest Grove.

Rescue Service: The City of Vernonia and Banks each have rescue services.

Police: Oregon State Police in Columbia City and in Banks, Columbia County Sheriff Department in St. Helens, Washington County Sheriff in Hillsboro and the City of Vernonia Police.

Emergency Procedures Program:

Park staff has established emergency procedures for handling medical emergencies. A comprehensive coordinated fire plan has been adopted by the fire fighting agencies in the area. The trail has been made accessible for fire fighting vehicles, the trail has been marked with quarter mile markers for location identification and water pumping holes and turnaround areas have been identified and enhanced.

Management Goals:

To improve the recreation quality and interpretive programs of the park. To maintain conditions favorable to the public health and safety. To establish good public relations and achieve the most effective management system. To work cooperatively with the Friends of the Banks-Vernonia State Trail to meet the goals of the park.

Management Issues

1. **Culvert Maintenance:** This trail crosses over 149 culverts. It is essential to keep these culverts clear to avoid dangerous washouts. These maintenance operations require a significant commitment of resources because of the sheer number of culverts to be monitored. The length and substantial overburden of many culverts make maintenance difficult as many of the culverts are not easily accessible. It is critical that these maintenance operations be funded to avoid the extremely expensive consequences of a washout. A detailed structure review of the culverts needs to be completed to assess the need for replacements.

2. **Trestle Maintenance:** The trail goes over thirteen trestles and bridges which need to be maintained on an annual basis. The loss of any one bridge or trestle will make the trail inaccessible in that area. It is critical to fund the maintenance operations to protect the long term investment and to assure safety.

3. **Vegetation Management:** The vegetation adjacent to the trail on the right-of-way continues to creep onto the trail. Annual brushing and herbicide control can keep the trail clear. The vegetation adjacent to the trail on the right-of-way should not be maintained unless there are serious noxious weed or safety concerns. The vegetation provides a substantial barrier between the trail and the adjacent land owner, separating the land uses and reducing the potential for conflict. The vegetation also serves as important habitat for wildlife along the twenty-one mile long corridor.

The unused spur of the trail north of Pihl Road is subject to encroaching vegetation. Adjacent land owners have concerns that this vegetation is shading their agricultural fields and causing weed problems. As time and funding permit, OPRD should work with the adjacent land owners to develop a program for vegetation management.

Much of the land adjacent to the trail right-of-way is managed for timber. The trees on the trail right-of-way should be managed to protect against windthrow as needed. Some of the forested areas adjacent to the trail are densely planted. Consideration should be given to thinning to allow for healthy mature trees. Areas which have been cut should be replanted with a native conifer mix which reflects the original species composition.

The vegetation south of Pihl Road is primarily riparian in nature and enhances adjacent riparian areas. Should the blackberry vegetation become a management concern, consideration might be given to restore the area to native upland vegetation.

The open fields south of the park manager residence should be kept open for day use and visual variation.

4. **Dumping:** Illegal dumping is an ongoing problem and requires additional staff hours to police. Enforce with citation authority when feasible.

5. **Horse Use:** Horses continue to use the trail surface designated for bicyclists and hikers. The horses tear up the compacted gravel surface and the graveled oiled surfaces making it difficult to walk or ride on. The adjacent horse trail needs to be clearly delineated either through wear or woodchips. Signage explaining the different uses needs to be posted along

the entire length of the trail. Education of the user groups of the different trail uses could occur through the Friends group. A brochure of trail etiquette could be developed and posted at trailhead sites.

6. **Hunting:** Fire arms, other weapons and motorized vehicles will not be allowed in the park or on the trail. Park rules respecting wildlife will be posted along the trail.

7. **Interpretation:** Identify areas for interpretation. Sites might include key wildlife viewing areas, and areas showing unique geological features such as the fossil beds. Cultural features such as the Buxton and Horseshoe trestles would also be appropriate.

8. **Barricades:** The Horseshoe trestle and the Buxton trestle are not safe for the public to use. The trail should be sufficiently barricaded to keep the public off these structures. Signs should be posted and trail bypass routes clearly delineated. The spur north of Pihl Road is currently unused as it terminates into an agricultural field held in private ownership. Until a solution to route the public around this field, the spur should be blocked at Pihl Road and signs posted to keep public out.

9. **Signage:** Each of the trailheads will be posted with signs which provide directional information and the park rules. No trespassing signs will be posted along the trail in Washington County pursuant to a written request by the adjacent land owner.

APPENDIX

PAST STUDIES

A Feasibility Study For The Proposed Banks/Vernonia Linear Park

Prepared by Klein Consulting Engineers, Inc, K.J. Won, AICP,
& George Wm. Otten & Associates,
May 1988

Washington County State Park Site Investigations

Prepared by Oregon Department of Transportation, Division of Parks and
Recreation
May 1988

Columbia County State Park Site Investigations

Prepared by Oregon Department of Transportation, Division of Parks and
Recreation
May 1988

Recreational Use of the Proposed Banks-Vernonia State Park Report

Prepared by Oregon Department of Transportation, Division of Parks and
Recreation
1976