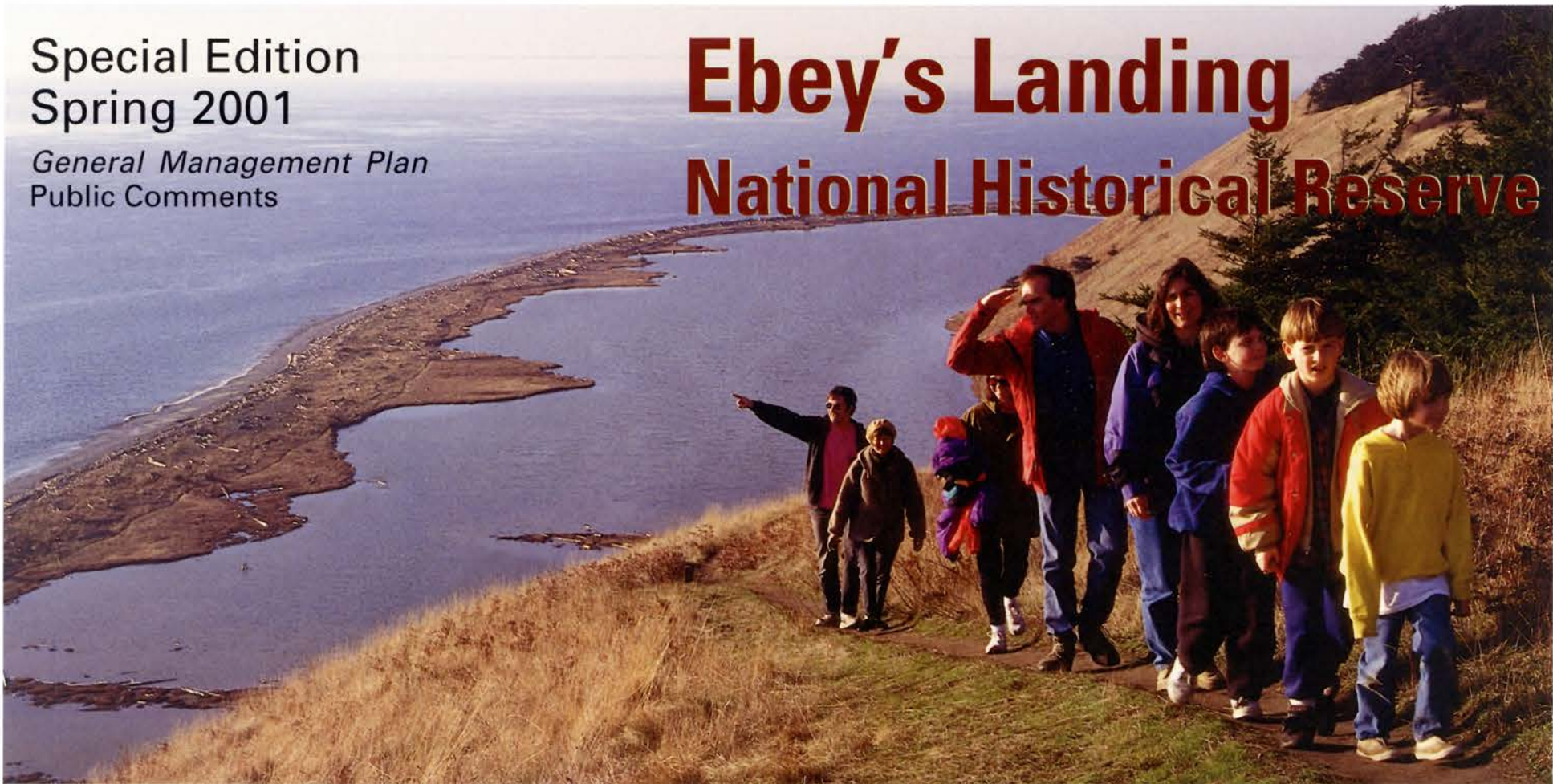


Special Edition
Spring 2001

General Management Plan
Public Comments



Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

A message from the Chairman

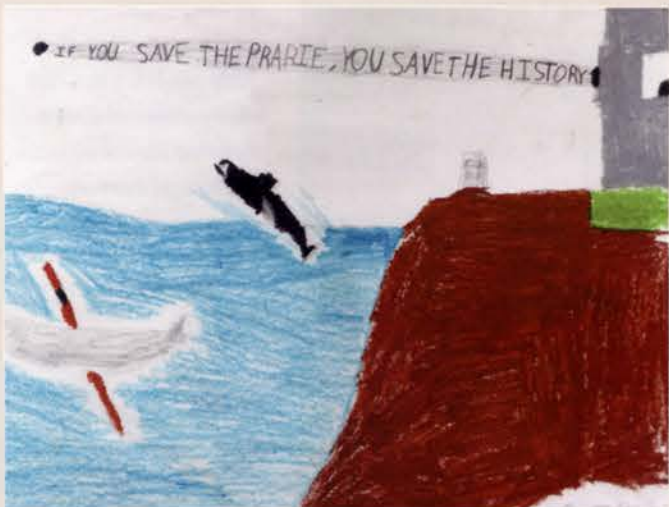


Dear Friends,
Greetings from Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Our magnificent cultural landscape contains 17,400 acres of prairies, homes, fields, seashores, forests, and historic farms on central Whidbey Island. The Trust Board of the Reserve and the National Park Service have been working cooperatively over the past several months on a multi-year planning process to determine how best to interpret the rich history of the area, serve the public, and preserve and protect this heritage landscape and its resources.

We have held several public scoping meetings and have received hundreds of comments from you, both verbal and written. We are grateful for your thoughts. In this newsletter, we have summarized the many comments you have provided and hope that we have accurately reflected your ideas and concerns. Your valued input will help guide us in preparing a draft general management plan that will be available for your review this coming winter.

This plan will establish management direction of the Reserve for the next 15-20 years. It is an exciting and challenging process. Your continued involvement can help ensure the best possible future for this jewel in America's crown, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Thank you very much for your ongoing interest and support. Please stay in touch!

Bob Lappin
Chairman, Reserve Trust Board



Reserve Partners Receive Public Comment

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve partners—the National Park Service, Washington State Parks, Island County and the town of Coupeville—have begun work on a new General Management Plan (GMP) for the Reserve. Last spring, the Partners published a public “scoping” newsletter announcing the beginning of the GMP planning process. The purpose of the newsletter was to encourage the public's participation and comments on important Reserve issues. It provided relevant information about Reserve resources, an explanation about the importance of a GMP, and a schedule of the planning steps. Dates, times, and locations for public scoping meetings were also published.

Approximately 650 copies of the newsletter were sent to people on the Reserve's mailing list, and over 2800 copies were distributed to public places in the area such as libraries, civic buildings, businesses, and parks.

Public Participates in Meetings

In June, the Reserve Partners held a series of public scoping meetings. Included in the agenda was an orientation to the Reserve, an overview of the planning process, and discussion of issues or concerns. The first meeting occurred in Seattle, Washington on June 20, 2000. Twenty-four people attended and signed-in.

On June 21, 2000 the Partners held two meetings in Coupeville, Washington. Twenty people attended the afternoon session. Thirty-three people, primarily property and business owners, neighbors, and farmers signed-in for the evening meeting. Organizations represented in the three meetings included Au Sable Institute, the Friends of Ebey's, Whidbey Environmental Action Network, Coast Defense Study Group, Whidbey News-Times, Washington Native Plant Society, Central Whidbey Trails Council, the Town of Coupeville, and the Ebey's Landing Trust Board. In total, 141 comments were recorded from the three meetings.

(continued on page 2)

New Dates for GMP Planning Steps and Schedule

General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
1 Gather Data and Establish Goals for Future Reaffirm the legislative purposes of the park Identify and study park's significant features Develop goals and objectives for park's future Determine planning issues and concerns Conduct public scoping meetings Late Spring 2000	Read first newsletter Attend scheduled public meetings Submit comment sheet from newsletter
2 Develop Alternatives Suggest a range of alternatives to achieve goals, address issues, and solve problems Develop alternatives working with agencies, community members, and tribes Fall 2001	*We Are Here Read this newsletter
3 Prepare and Publish a Draft GMP/EIS Refine alternatives Analyze environmental impacts associated with each alternative and identify a preferred alternative Distribute draft GMP/EIS for public review and comment Winter 2002	Attend public meetings Read third newsletter Review draft GMP/EIS Agency review
4 Revise Draft and Publish Final GMP/EIS Develop final GMP/EIS based on public response to the draft GMP/EIS and other relevant information Revise preferred alternative as appropriate Final GMP/EIS distributed to public Summer 2002	
5 Begin Implementation Work with agencies, community, and tribes on partnership activities Request funding for major capital improvements and program initiatives Develop any required legislative proposals Fall 2002	Work with agencies, community members, and tribes on partnership activities

Other individual meetings were held between August 2000 and March 2001 to meet with organizations located within the Reserve to discuss issues of mutual interest. The National Park Service planning team and the Reserve Manager met with the following groups: The Nature Conservancy, Au Sable Institute, Island County Planning Department, U.S. Navy (Outlying Landing Field), Seattle Pacific University (Bocker Environmental Reserve), Coupeville Planning Department, Washington State Parks (Fort Ebey and Fort Casey state parks), Central Whidbey Trails, Island County Public Works, Whidbey Environmental Action Network, Whidbey Audubon, Island District Economic Development Council, Island Transit, and Central Whidbey Chamber of Commerce.

Partners Receive Written Comments

The Reserve Partners received a total of 36 letters during the official public scoping comment period. Some of these were comments written on the form provided in the scoping newsletter and mailed back to the National Park Service. Others were individual letters, some several pages long. Fifteen were from the town of Coupeville, 9 from Whidbey Island, 9 from Western Washington, 1 from Eastern Washington, and 2 from other states (Pennsylvania and Arizona).

In the previous scoping newsletter the Partners listed issues that need to be addressed in the GMP. From these comments, the Partners may be selecting additional issues that the GMP will address.

Public Comment Analysis

The comments from both the public meetings and letters are grouped under the following headings and are summarized.

Resource Protection

Cultural Resources

- Several commentors mentioned the importance of preserving historic buildings.

- Some suggested setting up an endowment fund for historic preservation or donating time and money and using volunteers.
- Others suggested using facade easements to help preserve historic buildings along with land easements.
- Someone asked how one finds the funding to maintain historic buildings, such as barns, that are no longer needed but contribute to the cultural landscape.
- As an added preservation strategy for historic properties, the Reserve should consider a tax abatement program at the town or county level which would provide incentives to property owners through tax credits or other incentives. The Reserve should also explore the possibility of federal tax credits.
- The Reserve should provide technical support for owners who would like to upgrade their historic houses for energy efficiency, but in keeping with historic regulations.

Natural Resources

- The Reserve needs to develop a workable technical assistance program for both natural and cultural resources.
- Several commentors mentioned the importance of hedgerows and the need to maintain them in cooperation with the county. Landowners who protect them could be offered financial incentives.
- The Reserve should protect botanical resources through easements and eliminate noxious weeds such as poison hemlock.
- A commentor mentioned the need to preserve or restore the existing prairie fragments. The Reserve should first identify them and then develop a plan to encourage landowners to preserve them.

- The Reserve needs a formal arrangement with Seattle Pacific University to continue to operate and maintain the tide gate. It needs to be repaired so that it operates properly.
- Someone asked about the role and management of fire.

Recreation

- Most of the recreational comments were concerned about trail use. Trails need to be carefully planned, implemented, and managed; people need to be educated about appropriate trail uses.
- Many would like to see the trail system enhanced with better signage.
- Trails could be developed across The Nature Conservancy's property, and the north side of Crockett Lake (for bird watching).
- A continuous multi-use, non-motorized trail could link with existing Reserve, state, and county trails including Fort Ebey and Fort Casey state parks, the Kettles Geological Park, Ebey's Landing bluff, Crockett Blockhouse, Rhododendron Park and Coupeville.
- Some trails need to be relocated and some uses prohibited at certain locations (such as bicycling on the bluffs).
- The Reserve should establish a trail for people with disabilities.
- A few commentors were concerned about noisy activities on Penn Cove, specifically the use of personal watercrafts (jet skis) and floatplanes.
- Someone mentioned the need for better boat access to Penn Cove.
- The Reserve could have groups such as Whidbey Audubon lead nature field trips within the Reserve.
- Many people recognized the importance of bicycles in the Reserve, both to reduce traffic and as the best way to see the Reserve. This would involve having access to conveniently located and well-designed bicycle racks.
- Someone suggested that the Reserve subsidize a short-

term bicycle rental program in Coupeville until the idea becomes profitable for the private sector.

- The Reserve needs to better understand the sport requirements of certain recreational activities, such as paragliding and horseback riding and their impacts. Someone asked what types of uses are appropriate within the Reserve and how they affect private landowners.

Parking and Transportation Issues

- Several commentors mentioned the need for more parking at Ebey's Landing; others were concerned about the impacts of additional parking there. Many suggested not to expand the lot but to consider off-site parking for overflow at the Coupeville Park-n-Ride lot. The Reserve should encourage visitors to use a busing, shuttle system, or trail from town to the landing.
- Many respondents were concerned about vehicular traffic and its impacts; one commentor did not want to encourage large tour buses through the area.
- Someone mentioned that some roads are poorly maintained. The county should consider road enhancement projects.

Indian Activities

- Several commentors would like to establish a tie to the Indian presence. Indian tribes should participate because they are important to the history of the area.

Staffing and Administration

- Most of the issues discussed involved the current inadequacy of staffing, but many commentors would not like to see the Reserve get "too bureaucratic." The Reserve should find a way to share staff with other partnering agencies.
- Many commentors mentioned the need for additional staffing, volunteers, and funding.
- The Reserve needs a separate administrative

office with educational displays.

Boundary and Land Protection

- Several respondents suggested that the existing Reserve boundary be expanded to include Smith Prairie, the Navy Outlying landing field, and the pheasant farm (former Washington State Department of Natural Resources Department property), and the proposed gravel mine. Another commentor suggested no boundary expansion.
- Many respondents see land protection directly connected with keeping agriculture viable.
- The Reserve should prioritize key areas for land acquisition.
- Someone suggested purchasing the Jenny farmstead for offices and a museum.
- One commentor suggested that the National Park Service should be directly involved in land negotiation, not the Reserve Trust Board or staff.
- Several comments were made regarding conservation easements-reducing the tax burden, acquiring specific lands more quickly and better managing the terms of the agreement.
- The Reserve needs a new land protection plan to help determine what lands to buy in fee and what lands to buy in easements.
- The Reserve should buy private property at Keystone Spit as it becomes available since it may be the last natural occurring spit on the island.
- Someone suggested that the Reserve could approach wealthy individuals or groups to set up a land protection fund. Another suggested that land be put in a private land trust.
- The Reserve could provide an emergency funding source for parcels in peril.
- The NPS budget needs to be increased to provide for a greater administrative role to maintain the historic



Artwork and poetry produced by students of Coupeville Elementary School in 1998 honoring the 20th anniversary of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.

setting. Money could be allocated to specific programs supporting agriculture, such as land lease subsidies and more development easement purchases.

Planning

- The town and county need to have compatible historic preservation regulations.
- One commentor stated that mobile homes should not be in the Reserve.
- The plan should ensure coordination of management of land within the Reserve between different owners.
- The Reserve should not overly restrict or regulate land.
- Someone asked what types of easements are available for land and buildings.
- One respondent suggested extending the historic overlay district within town of Coupeville.
- One commentor perceived a contradiction between Reserve goals and the Washington State Growth Management Act. The town of Coupeville must absorb more growth within its town limits, but historic lots are larger and more appropriate than zoned smaller lots. If growth occurs outside urban growth boundary, then there is loss of farmland
- The plan should integrate the preservation efforts of the newly acquired Nature Conservancy property into the Reserve plan.
- There were many questions asking about the following: tax incentives, conservation easements, zoning restrictions, open space, tax debt, different agency regulations.
- Other questions centered on the GMP and whether it would change types of uses, and what baseline surveys had been done.
- The plan should make recommendations for land protection that are outside the scope of NPS planning that could be implemented by others.
- Someone asked if preservation is reliant on local government administration or regulation then shouldn't the Reserve have representation on local government boards and commissions.
- One commentor recommended strengthening land use laws within the Reserve.

Visitor Orientation and Experience

- Many of the commentors expressed the thought that the beauty of the Reserve should be protected and the land kept less developed and regulated. However, others stated that central Whidbey is reliant upon tourism-change will happen, visitor use will grow, and that growth will need to be accommodated in an

- acceptable and sensitive fashion.
- The Reserve could develop an information station or kiosk for visitors arriving by car or boat at the Reserve and display maps and brochures containing basic information on trails, lodging, and food.
- The Keystone Ferry dock restaurant could serve as an interpretive center to interpret the importance of Crockett Lake to migratory birds. Visitors could be encouraged to delay their ferry connection and tour the Reserve.
- A few respondents were concerned about people management issues, such as volume of visitors and the potential for trespass on private property. Someone suggested that better signage would help.
- Many mentioned the need for the agencies (partners) to work cooperatively together.
- Coupeville is part of the Reserve and a "living landscape". The town could be used as the Reserve's information center and a place to leave cars and rent bikes to explore the area. Commercial use should be focused in Coupeville.
- One commentor stated that people need solitude on the

bluff trail.

- The Reserve needs to develop a constituency for public support.
- To disperse visitors and avoid crowding, the plan should locate any new facilities in outlying areas.
- Someone mentioned the need for a visitor survey and asked how many visitors visit the Reserve.
- The plan needs to look at carrying capacity for visitors and facilities; find a balance between preservation and recreation.
- Someone asked what the plans are for using concession businesses, promoting marketing, developing visitor centers, and rehabilitating the Ferry House in the Reserve.
- The Reserve could provide free bus tours beginning on weekends only and staffed with interpreters. The route could follow the route in the "Driving and Bicycling Tour" brochure.
- The Reserve needs to balance visitor needs to local populace needs.
- The visual impact of traffic is a concern to some commentors.
- One commentor suggested limiting "invasive" presence of docents, signs, fences, and paving, and to continue the dogs-on-leash policy.

Interpretation and Education

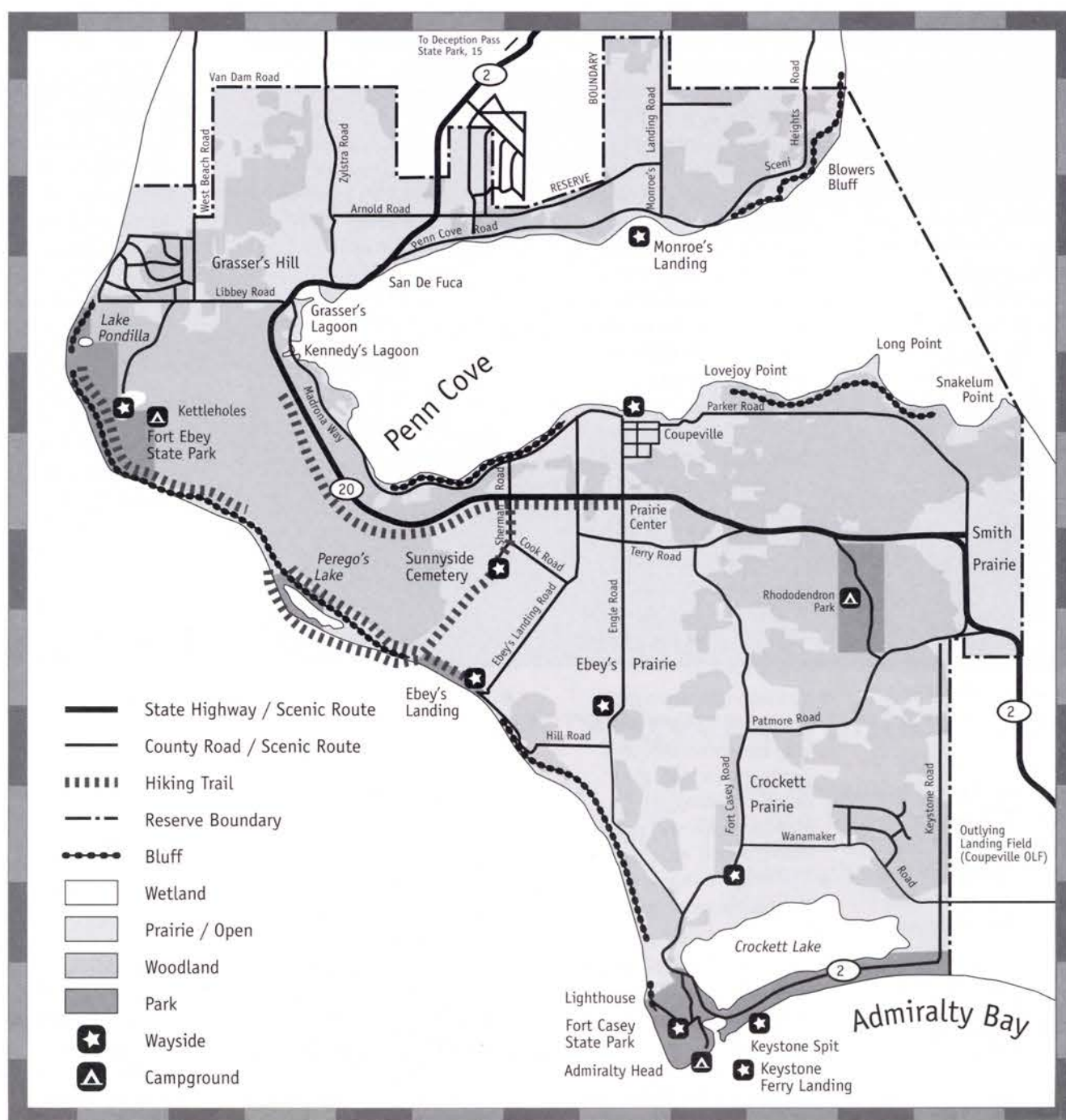
- Many commentors wrote or spoke about the new concept of a national "reserve", how it differs from a traditional national park ("it's a living landscape"), its complexity, and how it is interpreted and perceived by the public. Some mentioned the need to educate not only the local community but also national constituents as well about this new concept.
- There were many ideas about what to interpret in the Reserve—the history, heritage of homesteaders, Native American use of the area, and native plants and animals—and many ideas of how to interpret the Reserve—more waysides, a museum, an amphitheater, discussion seminars, workshops, guided tour buses, interpretive beach walks, a farmer with horses tilling fields, informational plaques at significant sites for self-guided tourists, and interpretive signs for agricultural fields, trails, and historic structures.
- Several people mentioned the role of the local community in helping to establish the Reserve, the "pride of roots" and local heritage.
- Someone mentioned that current history has a role in

future interpretation.

- There is a need to network with other Pacific Northwest historical institutions and communities and to collect oral histories.
- A few commentors suggested de-emphasizing signs and exhibits and voiced concern about providing interpretive facilities, interpretive rangers, visitor orientation space, and educational staff.
- The Reserve should have the Washington Native Plant Society prepare a plant list for the Reserve or at least the bluff area.
- One respondent suggested that the theme for the Reserve be "A Quiet Presence".
- The Reserve could promote one-day workshops, which incorporate the goals and purpose of the Reserve with groups such as Whidbey Tith Society or Island County Agriculture Extension Service, and work with organizations such as Au Sable Institute for educational and scientific purposes.
- The Reserve should promote its website.

Agricultural

- Most of the comments on agriculture stated the desire and need to keep Whidbey's



Map of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

(continued from page 3)

- agriculture viable, the need to preserve farmland, and that doing so will preserve the history, beauty, and rural character of the area. Many spoke and wrote of the difficulty of living off the land because of the realities of economics, environmental, and regulatory issues.
- The Reserve should assist and support farmers and farming such as considering funding land leases to augment farming operations.
 - Someone asked if the economic model of the Reserve needs to be evaluated. Can the Reserve survive in the face of changing economic conditions? Can it do this without NPS having a significant ownership role? The pressures on local farmers to sell out and local businesses to expand are only going to increase.
 - Another commentator asked what would happen if there is an action affecting property that has two conservation easements from two different organizations on the same piece of property.
 - The Reserve should consider the importance of farms located on other areas of the Reserve (north cove)

in addition to Ebey's Landing area.

- The Reserve should allow flexibility in converting historical agricultural buildings to other uses and in agricultural practices.
- Changing agricultural uses have occurred over time, creating an evolving landscape.
- Someone asked what types of agriculture or other land uses will be viable in the future to retain the agricultural scene.
- It is critical that the Reserve Trust Board and staff communicate well with landowners.
- The Reserve is unique. Landowners are the real Reserve managers and farmers have an important role to play. More coordination is needed.
- Through education programs, the Reserve could help farmers establish a product mix including organic farming, fruit stands, ponds, and specialty items for restaurants.
- The Reserve should be involved in preserving historic farmland.
- What can the Reserve learn from other countries such as England?
- The Reserve plan should

explore the applicability of the Midwest Soil Banking Program.

- If over time, there is a transition to all public lands within the Reserve how will that affect the agricultural community? The look of agricultural land is an important part of Ebey's Landing.
- Someone asked how land would be managed in Reserve if agriculture is no longer viable.
- It is important that the plan should strive to preserve the seamless quality between public and private lands.
- Someone in agricultural production should be on the Reserve Trust Board, or at least serve in an advisory capacity. Is there a role for the Board in local agriculture?
- The Reserve plan should explore ways for the tax base to support agriculture. Taxes should support "paying for the view".
- There is always potential for conflict between farming and other uses such as residential. The Reserve could have a role in educating people about farm practices.
- The Reserve should add more emphasis on agriculture. It's part of the history,

character, economic viability, and draw of the landscape. The Reserve partners should include a statement on agriculture in the Reserve's purpose and significance statements, interpretive themes, and desired future conditions.

- Someone asked if Island County has a "Right-to-Farm" ordinance to protect farmers?

Reserve Trust Board

- The Reserve Trust Board should continue to pursue acquisition of development rights and viewshed protection where there is a threat to the integrity of the Reserve.
- Communication is important between all agencies and landowners involved within the Reserve.
- The Trust Board should have a role in agricultural issues, involvement in agricultural education, promotion of new uses, and exploring grant opportunities.
- The plan should reconsider and reevaluate the role and function of the Trust Board. It may be possible and advantageous that some board members serve as representatives to other boards, including local government.

- One commentator stated that the NPS and Trust Board should advocate for the Reserve in other forums and take a stand on controversial issues. The Board should promote openness through the use of e-mail, advisory groups, and agendas. The Board should be involved in the political process and lobby the county to strengthen design review.
- When board vacancies open, someone asked how this information is made public.
- The public needs to understand the function and role of the Trust Board and have better communication about Trust Board activities and board position openings.
- The Trust Board needs knowledgeable staff and an administrative site; the Board needs to get involved in issues early and to seek advice from others.
- The Trust Board should create an agricultural baseline inventory of what's important within the Reserve.



**Reserve Manager
Ebey's Landing
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OH BEAUTIFUL PRAIRIE
Oh beautiful prairie
How did you come to be?
Tell me your story,
Of how you came to be.

I will tell you my story
Of how I came to be.
I started under a glacier
that sat on top of me.

It pushed me out of the way,
It made my hills you see today.
It made a hollow deep and wide
and sat there a long, long time.

And finally the sun came and melted it away.
It left behind a beautiful lake
That many years ago dried up to make,
The prairie you see today.

Emma Ruggiero

Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

General Management Plan
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