TOTEM BIGHT STATE HISTORICAL PARK MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DRAFT PLAN - SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has been working to develop the Totem Bight State Historical Park Master Development Plan since 2007. As part of this effort, a draft plan was issued for review on November 12, 2010 and a public meeting was held on December 09, 2010. The public comment period extended until January 24, 2011. A summary of these comments and responses are listed below. Since they are not "issues," comments regarding editing, document organization, and non-management issues are not included in this summary, though they are still addressed in the document as appropriate.

Issue	Comment	Response
Park Headquarters	A scaled conceptual plan of the recommended park headquarters renovations should be provided in the plan.	A scaled conceptual plan of the headquarters renovations is not appropriate for this plan. The division does not have a clear idea of what these renovations would look like or how it would work. These recommendations are included in the plan because the need to replace many of these structures is so great. How this would be accomplished is something that would be determined during a site planning process.

Volunteer Housing	It is doubtful that there will be room in the park property to build the volunteer housing. There should probably be an effort to locate both the volunteer housing and the RV parking spot in another location where running water and a sewer system can be accommodated.	Noted. An on-site presence is needed to provide adequate security to the visitors, the park, and park resources when paid park employees are not present at the park.
	Housing for park employees at Totem Bight should not be funded. Park employees should buy or rent housing to help them build credit and to boost the local economy.	Noted. The recommended housing would accommodate a volunteer park host, not a paid employee. Currently, only people that own an RV are able to volunteer at Totem Bight as park hosts. The increasingly high cost of transporting motor homes to Ketchikan, further limits the pool of potential volunteers.
	Running water for the park host dwelling is needed.	Noted. Currently water for the volunteer park hosts is available via a “potable water hose” from a 2000 gallon water tank that has submersible pump in it.
	Do not fence the RV host site; the only type of screening that would be appropriate is native vegetation. An open view allows for better security by the host.	Noted.
	Most visitors traveling by RV do not spend the night at either Potlatch Park or Totem Bight, so why would money be used for an RV screening structure? This should not be funded.	There currently is one RV spot reserved for use by a volunteer park host. The screening is meant to provide this volunteer with some level of privacy while still allowing him or her to see what’s going on around the site. The RV spot is not for the use of park visitors.
	An RV sewage pump facility should not be funded.	Noted. Sewage disposal can be as simple as a holding tank. Currently, they have to put sewage in a dump container, and haul it to the dump station in town. It is impractical to frequently maneuver the RV once it is in place.

Ranger Station/Office	The ranger station is physically barely functional and needs renovation.	Noted.
	Running water and flush toilets may be appropriate for the ranger office.	Noted.
	Ranger station is insufficient to meet park and district needs and should be replaced. It also needs running water.	Noted.
	Make the completion of a new ranger station a high priority. It is inadequate to accommodate the number of visitors the park receives and borders on being structurally unsound. A consolidated space, uniting the bookstore and ranger station, which would allow for visitor interaction with park staff, a gathering space for visitors, interpretive displays, and a more open bookstore space, would greatly enhance the visitors' experience.	Noted.
Visitor Contact Station	Do not expand bookstore to sell additional material that would compete with Potlatch Park. Do not fund a gift shop.	There is no intention to expand the scope of sales of the bookstore or compete with private businesses. The intention is to replace the currently decaying structure with one that is structurally sound and functional that would also provide a bit of space for visitors to learn about the park and Ketchikan.
	Do not implement or build a gift shop; it would compete with Potlatch Park.	Noted. See response above.
	Do dispense tourist information regarding the park. The visitor contact station should provide interpretive information pertaining to the park and its cultural and historical importance. However, this space should not be used as a full-blown retail space.	Noted. See response above.

	Visitor Contact Station/Bookstore is in need of immediate renovation because the floor is in imminent danger of collapsing, the roof leaks, and the useable space inside is too small leaving many park visitors waiting to get inside.	Noted. See response above.
	Keep the educational tone.	Noted. See response above.
	The bookstore has immediate needs that urgently need to be addressed.	Noted. See response above.
	Make the completion of the bookstore/visitor contact station a very high priority. It is inadequate to accommodate the number of visitors the park receives and borders on being structurally unsound. A consolidated space, uniting the bookstore and ranger station, which would allow for visitor interaction with park staff, a gathering space for visitors, interpretive displays, and a more open bookstore space, would greatly enhance the visitors' experience.	Noted. See response above.
	Any reference to "gift shop" should be removed from the plan.	Noted. All references to "gift shop" will be removed.

Restoration Shed	There is concern that the restoration shed would become a carving center that would function as a tourist attraction. Do not build a carving center; there is a carving center and a full-time carver at Potlatch Park.	The restoration shed will be used specifically to restore and maintain Totem Bight's poles. It is not intended to function as a tourist attraction or a carving center, but it is designed so visitors can see the restoration work; this would allow for better transparency regarding the work done on the poles.
	Why is the restoration shed advancing prior to completion of the plan? It is one of the plan's recommendations.	The plan has taken longer than anticipated to complete and some of the park's poles are in urgent need of repair. The division couldn't wait any longer to provide a space in which the poles could be restored. The final plan will reflect this change by including the restoration shed in the "Existing Conditions and Issues" section of the plan rather than recommending that it be built.
Tribal Consultation	Better tribal consultation should take place in the development of this plan.	The plan will provide recommendations aimed at improving communication between the park and the local Native groups and ensuring that the park work closely with the local Native groups especially where the totem poles, clan house, and interpretation and education are concerned. Also, a meeting will be scheduled with the local tribal leaders to discuss the best way to deal with the totem poles that are too rotten to stand and cannot be restored or repaired. Any decisions made at that meeting will be reflected in the plan.
Restoration and Preservation of Poles	Poles should not be restored by anyone other than Native people without their support and approval.	Ideally, the restoration professionals would be Native carvers. However, the poles belong to the park and it is the park's responsibility to maintain and restore them, Native carvers would be hired to do any carving needed to repair any of Totem Bight's totem poles.
	The recommendation for funding the restoration of two totem poles per year by Tlingit and Haida carvers is an excellent one and should be followed. Not only	The intention in preserving the poles is just that, the process is not intended to be a tourist attraction. However, it is very important that both the Native

	would this honor the legacy of the CCC's restoration program, but it would also provide an additional tourist attraction for the park--another goal of the CCC. Given the park's plan to honor the CCC era, a few original examples of their work should remain preserved for studying the longer lineage of Northwest Coast Native totem pole carving. The local tribal leaders should be consulted regarding plans restore the totem poles so as to maintain their traditional integrity. DO maintain and restore the badly deteriorated poles. BUT, if you spend money on restoring the poles, do not allow the levels of decay and neglect to progress as in the past.	heritage and the CCC's legacy be respected and kept as an integral part of the park throughout the restoration and maintenance process. The division will continue to maintain and preserve as many of the CCC era poles as possible. However, the division does not have space for storing or exhibiting poles that have deteriorated to such a degree that they can no longer stand and their wood no longer has the integrity needed to support restoration. Local Haida and Tlingit will be involved in any carving needed for totem pole restoration and in the decommissioning of totem poles. The manner of disposing of decommissioned poles is still being determined. The preservation assessment for the poles and the clan house that is attached as Appendix A in the master development plan outlines the process to be followed to restore the poles and what needs to be done afterwards to maintain them. Restoration professionals should follow this process as closely as possible.
Disposal of Very Decayed Poles	The recommendation on p. 48 for a site in the forest where a few poles could be left to deteriorate is a difficult matter since the CCC was technically employed to restore totem poles and to arrest the deterioration process that was part of the totem pole's traditional life style. The process described for choosing poles to put out for deterioration is inadequate as the Memoranda of Agreement signed by Tlingit and Haida pole owners in the late 1930s gave up ownership of the poles and made them public property. Giving the Tribes the	Noted. The two poles that are currently beyond repair have already been "replicated" just as the CCC did with poles that were too far gone to be restored. The division hasn't made a final decision regarding what to do with these two poles yet. Noted. This section will be revised; a final decision has not been made at this time.

	option to come and get them when they can no long stand is not going to work. The park owns the poles, and as such has a responsibility to deal with them.	
	No process for disposal is mentioned, other than giving them away or placing them in a nonexistent totem graveyard. This directly conflicts with the mission of the Totem Bight State Park. A better plan of action that outlines the process of preservation of older totems is necessary. One option is to take totem poles no longer able to be restored and put them into the restoration shed for viewing with interpretation for as long as feasible. These are historic artifacts; they can and should be used for as long as possible for art history studies of both Natives and non- Natives.	Noted. This section has not been finalized and the division has not made a final decision regarding these poles. However, placing the rotten poles in the restoration shed for viewing is not an option. The restoration shed is intended specifically to provide space for restoring totem poles and doing maintenance on them, it is not meant to be storage space, a display, or tourist attraction. The process for disposal will be discussed with Native Tribal Leaders before a decision is made.
	The disposal of deteriorating poles should be further discussed with the Ketchikan and Ketchikan area tribal leaders.	Noted.
Pole Ownership	Technically, the Memoranda of Agreement that the Tlingit and Haida owners of totem poles signed in the late 1930s rescinded their individual and clan title to totem poles and agreed they would become public property (which was the only way the Forest Service could spend public money on the poles).	Noted.
	Ownership of the current totem poles was resolved several years ago and the State of Alaska is the owner of the poles. Tribes retain ownership of the stories.	Noted. The necessary corrections will be made to the plan.
Clan House	Don't move the clan house door. The clan house does not have a traffic flow problem, the current configuration works fine. Don't make any improvements to the clan house, it should remain as	Noted. The clan house should, indeed, remain as authentic as possible. The recommendation in the final plan will be to keep and enhance the clan house's authenticity and traditional architectural integrity while

	authentic as possible. The only improvements that should be made are those that directly affect the health, safety and welfare of those who visit, and changes should only be made if mitigating the problem through other means cannot be accomplished.	providing for public health, safety, and welfare.
	The local tribal leaders should be consulted regarding plans to restore the clan house so as to maintain its traditional integrity.	Noted. The plan will reflect this within the recommendations.
	Do restore and maintain the clan house.	The plan will recommend that every effort should be made, according to the Preservation Assessment of Totem Poles in Appendix A, to restore and maintain the clan house.
Trail Re-routing	The current trail system is adequate for the current park conditions and receives overwhelmingly positive reviews by visitors.	Noted. Only the alterations necessary to accommodate the changes in the park infrastructure or to make trails ADA accessible will be made to the existing trail system.
Land Ownership	Totem Bight SHP is located outside of city limits, but within the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. The picnic shelter is not on city land.	Noted. Changes will be made to the plan's language to reflect this.

Training for Commercial Tour Guides	There is a great and immediate need for commercial tour guide training to help address some of the misinformation being disseminated intentionally or unintentionally.	Noted. There currently are tour guide trainings where accurate information is given, but there is no way for park staff to control what is said during tours led by commercial tour guides. The recommendation for preparing a standardized training outline is intended to help address some of these problems, but will not fully solve them.
	It would be beneficial and appropriate for the Alaska Native tribal leaders in Ketchikan and the Ketchikan area to work with the area's park ranger in the development of a tour guide training program that provides an accurate message. The tribal leaders support the recommendation that all tour guides complete a program before leading tours. It is very important that the information is accurate and consistent.	Noted. The idea of a partnership with the local Tlingit and Haida in the tour guide trainings will be reflected in the recommendations.
General Corrections	The park is within the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, but it is not within the city limits.	Noted. Appropriate corrections will be made to the plan.
	p. 5 The phrase "abandoned villages" is widely disputed and best avoided. Replace the phrase with "uninhabited village", or "seasonally unoccupied village".	The phrase "abandoned villages" used in the Background section will be replaced with "seasonally uninhabited villages".
	The Native villages were not abandoned. Native groups moved seasonally and left their villages and many belongings for their return. It is misleading to say that the poles were retrieved from abandoned villages.	Noted. See response above.
	p. 8 The word "stewardship" seems too vague for a vision statement and seems to carry paternalistic connotations of state or federal government needing	The use of the word "stewardship" in the plan is geared towards the public taking an active role in public lands. The state manages Totem Bight, but it belongs to

	to “care” for Native objects.	Alaskans and the objective is to have Alaskans take an active role in their park—to have a sense of ownership and act on it.
	p. 12 Note that the moieties discussed are both Tlingit and Haida, but only Tlingit words are used (Ch'aak' and Yeil). Include Haida words for Eagle/Raven or reword.	This sentence will be reworded.
Restrooms	New restrooms with flush toilets are unnecessary. The existing restrooms are clean and functional and meet the park’s needs; people can go next door if they prefer flush toilets.	Noted. New flush toilets are not a high priority need. They are in the plan as a recommendation simply to reflect that, should funding become available and it be deemed a need in the future, this is something that could occur in the park—it would not be inappropriate. If the state ever did spend money on this, it would likely be if sewer lines were extended this far out of town.
	Potlatch Park already has flush toilets and is right next door. To spend state money on flush toilets in Totem Bight would be wasteful.	Noted. See response above.
	Running water is needed in restrooms.	Noted. See response above.
	Replacing the existing restrooms, which smell bad and people do not like, with restrooms with running water is a good idea that would benefit visitors to both Totem Bight and Potlatch Park.	Noted. See response above. Hand sanitizers are available in each of the restrooms.

General Comments on the Plan	There is general support for preserving and restoring the park.	Noted. The restoration shed is essential to accomplish these objectives.
	The plan has potential but the most important thing in the plan is its ability to be followed and implemented into the future but it lacks the detail of how to implement some of its goals.	Not all of the goals can be detailed at this point in the process. Many of the recommendations will need to go through a site planning process when funds are allotted for their completion. Most of the details will be worked out during the site planning process.
	Be careful in preparing this plan so that the recommended course of action does not pose any competition to nearby private businesses. If this plan is well done, the execution of the recommendations should be beneficial to both parks.	Noted. Some of the plan's language will be modified and various recommendations modified or eliminated from the plan to avoid any potential competition with private enterprises in the vicinity.
	Make sure that the recommendations of this plan do not duplicate the efforts of neighboring businesses.	Noted. See response above.
	Make sure the plan recommendations will not compete with private local businesses.	Noted. See response above.
	Make the necessary adjustments in the plan that would allow Totem Bight and Potlatch park to benefit from their proximity and not compete with each other.	Noted . See response above.
	Keep it simple. It is a spiritual experience to walk the path to the long house.	Noted. Every effort will be made to keep the integrity of the park's character.

Smoke House	Smoke House is a good idea, but in reality, it is a fire hazard, a maintenance problem. It doesn't offer anything within the park's mission and would just be another expense that would also take up staff time.	This was included as a low priority recommendation. However, this item will be removed from the plan to avoid potential conflict with nearby local businesses.
	There is a commercial smokehouse located on adjacent property.	Noted. See response above.
	The addition of a smokehouse in the park, as the Forest Service originally planned, is also a great idea and would provide an interpretive site important to Tlingit and Haida fishing cultures.	Noted. See response above.
	There is a smoke house in Potlatch Park; do not spend money on putting in another one so close—it would be wasteful.	Noted. See response above.
	Do not build a smokehouse.	Noted. See response above.
Bus Shelter	The Bus Shelter is not yet built. But more emphasis should be made to cooperate with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough to make improvements in certain aspects of the park, such as: parking, landscaping the parking areas, lighting and signage and picnic tables in those areas.	Noted. The tense of the text referring to the bus shelter will be changed from past to future. A possible partnership with the borough will be emphasized in the Partnerships section of the plan.

Staff	More staff is required, at least seasonally to accommodate the demands of the park as outlined in the draft plan. See Chapter 4 for more details on this, especially as to operations and staffing.	Noted. This will be reflected in plan.
	All the services outlined in the plan provided by current staffing levels are not attainable.	Noted. The division recognizes that the services that can be provided are limited by funding and staffing levels. However, the plan will provide recommendations for additional staffing and hopefully will serve as a tool to secure funding for the implementation of these recommendations.
Plan Title	It is more of a Strategic Plan, or Comprehensive Master Plan, should not be considered a Development Plan. There are aspects that consider facilities, infrastructure, maintenance, and interpretation and education.	Noted.
Plan Review Periods	Strategic Plans or most any Master or Comprehensive plan are usually reviewed and renewed every 3 to 7 years.	Noted.
Wildflower Garden	The wildflower garden is a high-focal or interest point for many visitors. It gives people the opportunity to enjoy and learn about other aspects of the park while waiting for a tour to start. Plants also appeal to independent travelers. Maybe include additional interpretive signs along the trail identifying plants.	Noted.
	Leave the green spaces (gardens and landscaping) at the park entrance. It is an attractive and nice welcome for visitors. However, if non-native plants (no invasives) are used they should be labeled as such as to avoid confusion about what plants really belong here and what plants are just garden visitors.	Noted. The recommendation to label non-native plants as such will be reflected in the plan.

Boat Rentals	Boat rentals are not a good idea. There currently is no dock. Beaches are sandy and would be extremely difficult to access the canoe. The NW wind is strong and blows into the bight. If people are unfamiliar with paddling, it may be difficult. If winds are SE, a person would paddle into the wind, and it would be difficult to see the totem poles from the boat.	Noted. This recommendation will be removed from the plan.
Implementation Time Windows	The timetable for implementation (appendix D) uses inappropriate time windows. Immediate is just that: now or past due, not 2 years from now. If an item is listed as immediate, it should be listed as deferred maintenance. Short term is 1-3 years and long term is everything else. Other strategic plans rank long and short term projects and priorities so that when the opportunity arises the most important/highest ranked item can be crossed off the list. The current system in the plan gives highest priority to the most immediate items and lower priority to long term items with no overall guide or preference to which items are the most important and vital to the park. Most importantly, the plan should have a specific date for accomplishing the listed item.	Noted. For clarification, not all immediate needs are necessarily deferred maintenance, though many are. The implementation table system will be re-evaluated.
Park Maintenance	Any funding Totem Bight receives should be used to improve the park and it should go to cleaning and maintaining the park trails, benches, clan house, boardwalks, and totem poles that are already in place.	Noted.

Partnerships	Continue to encourage the partnership with Alaska Geographic and work together to make the park a wonderful educational, historical and anthropological attraction.	Noted. This will be reflected in the plan's recommendations under "Partnerships".
	Encourage and promote a working partnership with the local Native groups, especially concerning training, interpretation, the restoration and maintenance of totem poles and the clan house, and the disposal of deteriorated poles that can no longer be repaired.	Noted. This will be reflected in the plan's recommendations under "Partnerships"; we will continue to work with Native groups.