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I. SILVER FALLS

MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) prepares master plans for its properties as mandated by ORS 390.180. The purpose of a state park master plan is to plan for both the protection and public enjoyment of state park resources. Master plans identify and provide guidance on the most appropriate recreation-related uses for parks based on resource opportunities and constraints, development opportunities and constraints, public recreation needs and the Department’s role as public recreation provider. The master plan may also identify desired lands for Department acquisition as a result of the park being master planned. It also provides a basis for preparing partnership agreements, budget and management priorities, detailed development and management guidelines, and requests for land use approval of planned park projects.

This document describes the purpose of a Silver Falls State Park master plan and the process used to take it from conception to adoption. This plan also contains descriptions of the existing facilities, future recreation demand, suitability of the land for public recreational uses, issues related to public use and management, and recommended goals and objectives for the future use and development of the property. This plan provides a good reference for information about the park and long term plans for Silver Falls State Park. State law and rule ORS 390.180 and OAR 736-018 mandate the master planning process for this document.

Each master plan is intended to address 20 years of a park’s future. Development concepts show how the plan’s goals will be realized through the development of new facilities at the park. These concepts provide the ‘blueprint’ for the park over the next 20 years. The development concepts reflect resource constraints and identified needs. They reflect the appropriate type, size, location, and access for the proposed facilities as shown in the concept drawings and described in the Development Concept chapter.

Mapping is completed to show natural, cultural and scenic resources within the boundary of the park, as well as the type and location of existing facilities. The maps are an invaluable planning tool used frequently by the park rangers in the field, policy makers, members of the public and friends groups. It is through the resource mapping of the park that sound decisions can be made regarding the management of resources and facility development.

New sign at south entrance to the park (OPRD, 2007).
At any time during the master planning process the public is able to comment on any concerns or ideas for the park. In addition, there are nine public meetings to discuss the future of the park. The master planning process provides an excellent platform for the public to discuss and contribute to the future of the park. The planning process also included mailings, news releases and a website, as well as requests to the public to provide written comment on both issues associated with the plan and proposals/guidelines proposed by the draft master plan.

The intention of master planning is to foster positive partnerships that will encourage wise stewardship, thoughtful development and best management practices.

Oregon’s Premier State Park

Silver Falls State Park

Silver Falls is situated in the foothills of Oregon’s Cascade Mountains, 26 miles east of Salem in Marion County. Oregonians know Silver Falls State Park better than any other. In fact, Silver Falls defines “state park” for most people. Its large forested landscape, studded with world class waterfalls and nationally important historic buildings set amid a variety of recreational opportunities, make the park a classic.

Two Parks Into One

Silver Falls is one of the most outstanding examples of parks designed and built during the “golden-era” in park master planning in the country and is an excellent example of the naturalistic and rustic park style. Along with Crater Lake National Park, it is the most complete and extant example of this style of planning for state parks in Oregon.

Initially, Silver Falls was two separate parks that were each built for very different purposes, despite having the same design principles applied to each. Silver Creek Falls State Park on the west side of Highway 214 followed the traditional style of resource protection and access for all. The Silver Creek Recreation Demonstration Area on the east side of Highway 214 was a bold experiment for the period, calling for habitat restoration of marginal farm land and logged forest on a scale previously unheard of within the United States.

The layout and infrastructure for each park was created independently of one another and was not originally intended to function as a single unit. Access and orientation to today’s Silver Falls has never been fully resolved. Highway 214 cuts between the two former parks and does not give the visitor a clear sense of entry and exit. The smaller of the two former parks, Silver Creek Falls State Park, was developed to access the waterfalls and was designed
as a day use park only. The larger park, Silver Creek Recreation Demonstration Area, was designed primarily for youth groups. Overnight use by the general public was not part of the initial plan for either park, and the extensive trail system was built for day use.

The state began acquiring property in 1931 for Silver Creek Falls State Park. State Parks superintendent, Samuel H. Boardman, engineered the purchase of 100 acres for $10,000 from D.E. Geiser, including the South Falls area. Another 40 acres at North Falls was purchased from the Silverton Lumber Co. for $2,000. These and other acquisitions – totaling 700 acres – were the nucleus of the state park that focused on the canyon and the waterfalls contained therein. The National Park Service (NPS), working with Oregon State Parks, designed roads, trails, parking areas, walls, fire breaks, bridges and the South Falls Lodge. The NPS then oversaw the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) construction of the features in the park during the 1930s. Silver Creek Falls State Park was dedicated on July 23, 1933.

Recreation Demonstration Areas (RDAs) were the product of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal era, and were built using Works Project Administration (WPA) and CCC workers. The RDAs were one of many programs designed to help disadvantaged farmers who were in a hopeless situation on marginal land where they could not make a living. Their lands were of such low value that buyers were not interested. The RDA concept was to remove the farmer, “resettle” the farming family on more productive lands, and attempt to reclaim the marginal land for recreation and forest culture.

The newly created RDAs were to play a double role; not only would they reclaim spoiled land, but also offer rehabilitative services to disadvantaged children living in nearby cities. There were RDAs in 24 states, involving the government purchase of nearly 400,000 acres nationwide of marginal land. CCC camps and labor, funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), built the completed plan under the supervision of the NPS.

Silver Creek Falls State Park was on the north side of Hwy. 214 and Silver Creek Recreational Demonstration Area was on the south side of the road (OPRD Archives, 1935).
The Silver Falls Challenge

It should not be forgotten that Silver Falls serves its local community and has many constituents who use the park on a regular basis. The park will need to retain its local identity, so that it can continue to be appreciated by those who know it best.

On the other end of the spectrum, the challenge for OPRD is to recognize that the park’s inspiring natural and cultural resources are in a category that gives them national recognition. In appreciating national recognition for the resources, it follows that visitors should find “first class” recreational and interpretive experiences there. Currently, Silver Falls falls short when it comes to providing this type of experience. Ensuring memorable experiences that are thoughtfully integrated with resource stewardship goals is the key to making Silver Falls meet its full potential.
The key park development concepts in this master plan include the following:

Recreation activities will be expanded along with the facilities required to meet these needs. New and improved facilities will result in reduced parking problems, less traffic congestion during peak periods and prevention of localized resource damage, all of which will improve the recreation experience for the visitor. With the new land purchase, and by making better use of existing facilities, Silver Falls can accommodate growth, correct problems and improve facilities to meet visitors’ expectations. For example, new campgrounds can increase the current overnight capacity at the park from under one hundred to over two hundred through a carefully phased program. In addition, improvements to day use parking and trail connections throughout the park will alleviate parking problems and overcrowding in pressure point areas, especially during peak visitation periods.

More trails will be built in the park

Circulation between different portions of the park will be improved and access areas will be more clearly defined. Access off Highway 214 will include improvements to the north, south and central entrances to the park, as well as the pullouts along the highway. Better trail connections between the day use and overnight areas will increase the visitor’s enjoyment of the facilities. Also, loop-trails will be developed that connect with the developed areas to provide for a variety of hiking experiences. As part of an integrated parkwide trail system, the enhancement of the existing biking, hiking and equestrian trails on the east side of the park will provide for more recreational experiences and potentially alleviate

Provide for a variety of outdoor activities

The park offers a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities within a relatively large geographic area. Popular recreation activities, many of which are related to the waterfalls and abundant forest, range from passive and low-impact activities to more intensive pursuits. Activities such as hiking, picnicking and related outdoor games, fishing, wildlife observation, and camping are all popular. In addition, the park includes the only conference center in the State Parks System and a youth camp that has been continually used by the YMCA since the day it opened in 1937. The proposals and guidelines contained in this master plan are presented with the assumption that all of these activities should be allowed to continue at the park, provided that important resources are protected and that the various uses are compatible with each other and with neighboring land-uses.

The key park development concepts in this master plan, including the new land addition, will enable an expansion of the recreation opportunities at Silver Falls. However, it is important that the natural and cultural resources within the park are not impacted by any new development. Recognizing the reason people come to Silver Falls is for the abundant lush forest and outstanding array of waterfalls will aid resource protection, as well as enhance the park’s vitality. This intent is expressed in the master plan’s goals, development concepts and resource management guidelines.
overcrowding along the Canyon Trail. Other improvements throughout the trail system will include improved signage, interpretation, small resting areas and up to four back-country camping sites.

The Smith Creek conference center will be improved to provide a state-of-the-art facility, yet retain the rustic character of the setting that makes it so popular. Improvements to Smith Creek will include better meeting facilities, more overnight accommodations, increased parking, an increase in leisure opportunities and improved access to technology.

A new north entrance to the park will be built befitting the size and prominence of Silver Falls. The new north entrance will serve a variety of purposes including providing a state park presence through new staff housing, and a central location for park administration and maintenance. In addition, the west side of Highway 214 will be a new day use area, and the meeting hall there will be rehabilitated to provide a welcome area for visitors with a new trailhead to connect to the Canyon Trail. On the east side of Highway 214 new group camps will be built for equestrian, RV and tent camping. In this area, a new free-style bike area will also be built through cooperation with the local biking community in Silverton.

The Canyon Trail will be repaired and improved to meet increased use and provide safe passage through unstable and steep terrain. Improvements will need to be balanced with maintaining the spectacular natural features along the route and preserving the cultural significance of the trail itself. In addition, a section of the trail up to the upper north falls will be made universally accessible.

The local community and visitors will get facilities and activity areas that can accommodate a variety of uses without causing crowding or impacting the significant cultural and natural resources in the park. These new facilities will be in the form of improvements to day use buildings or new events spaces that can accommodate their needs more efficiently and with a greater capacity. New structures in the historic areas of the park will be constructed using materials and craftsmanship in keeping with the rustic style.

The historic area within the park will be preserved to retain this excellent example of state park master planning and, in doing so, continue to display the outstanding craftsmanship of the CCC. The historic significance of the park for rustic master planning has now been recognized. By preserving the individual features and the holistic approach to integrating park design with nature, the integrity of Silver Falls will be supported and may lead to national recognition as a National Historic Landmark District.

Historic view of South Falls in c1920 (OPRD Archives, 2007).
The natural resources in the park will be protected through the numerous programs that are in place to manage the diverse ecosystems including old-growth forest, meadows and riparian areas. The park will maintain these programs and add new ones where appropriate. For example, at The Ranches a new meadow restoration program will be initiated, as well as a restoration of the riparian area. In addition, the threat of invasive species will be met through the development of a program to manage their presence within the park.

Improvements will include a new welcome center, improved parking and more trailheads

There is a need for a medium-sized interpretation and event center. South Falls was selected as the optimal location for a center that will not only interpret the natural and cultural history of the park, but also host some of the major annual events held at the park. The interpretation of the CCC work at Silver Falls as well as the outstanding beauty of the falls and the forest will be a focus of the center.

To accommodate these improvements, the administrative and maintenance facilities will be enlarged and modernized. A new administrative center will be located at the north end of the park where it will be able to better serve the public. In addition, the maintenance facility will be relocated adjacent to the new headquarters building. The construction of the new maintenance facility will be phased to match the expanded growth of the overnight facilities. New staff housing for permanent and seasonal staff will also be provided near the staff headquarters.

The key resource management guidelines in this master plan address the following objectives:

Natural Resources
Surrounded by agricultural land and timber forests, the park represents a sample of low-elevation coniferous forest that was once prevalent throughout the area. The park encompasses the upper reaches of Silver Creek, Smith Creek, Howard Creek and Hult Creek watershed. Portions of the upstream lands are owned mostly by private timber holdings with some federal and state forests.

Silver Falls’ large size of over 9,000 acres, its low-elevation and early conservation efforts in the 1930s make it an important and unique area for the protection and enhancement of mature, low-elevation, coniferous forest. Following the early tradition of ecosystem restoration in the 1930s, the challenge for Silver Falls today is to uphold the conservation work and ensure this increasingly rare setting for lowland coniferous forest continues to function as a healthy ecosystem. The following key concepts will outline an approach for achieving this:

- Manage forested areas for forest health, resistance, resilience and habitat.
- Manage and restore where feasible, habitats of conservation concern including various types of coniferous forest stands, shrubland, herbaceous and wetland.
- Protect and manage at-risk species habitats.
- Control the spread of invasive species and restore affected areas where feasible.
Cultural Resources

The historic district will be treated and managed to preserve the surviving features and actively interpret them based on the period of significance: 1933 to 1951. Based on the primary treatment, preservation, and the secondary treatment, rehabilitation, the following principles will be applied throughout the historic district to cover all areas of the park that were master planned in the 1930s and that retain integrity today:

- The primary focus for historic preservation is the early master planned infrastructure of the park, built between 1933 and 1947.
- Extant characteristics and features of the historic master plan will be retained and preserved, including work needed to stabilize and repair deteriorated conditions.
- Overall management of the expanded historic district will focus on retaining its historic character, in order to convey the spatial organization, function, and design of the original master plan.
- Treatment will also focus on discrete elements of the historic district that will improve the historic character through the gradual recovery of historic features, particularly in the South Falls day use area, Smith Creek Conference Center, Silver Creek Youth Camp, Canyon Trail, and the pullouts along Highway 214.

View of falls from Canyon Trail (OPRD 2007).
The new facilities will alleviate crowding and reduce impact on the significant resources in the park.
II. MASTER PLANNING OVERVIEW

Authority
OPRD prepares master plans for its properties under the authorities embodied in state statutes and rules, which include ORS 390.180, OAR 736 Division 18, ORS 195.120 and OAR 660 Division 34. The statutes and rules guide the planning process, ensuring best practice is followed throughout the life of the master plan.

Useful Products from a State Park Master Planning Process
A written and illustrated reference is produced containing extensive information pertaining to the park and long-term plans for stewardship of the site. The master plan is the binding guide for the 20-year future of Silver Falls State Park. In describing the need for envisioning the park's future, the master plan:

- Covers the planning process
- Inventories existing facilities in the park
- Analyzes future recreation demand
- Evaluates the suitability of the land for public recreational uses
- Explains issues related to public use and management of the site
- Sets out the consensus-driven goals derived from public consultation
- Provides objectives and development concepts for the future use and development of the park property
- Provides guidelines for stewardship of park resources.

The preferred development concepts describe a concise vision of required facilities that best fit cultural, natural, scenic and recreation needs. Development concepts in the master plan are determined after a thorough review of the available alternatives based upon opportunities and constraints. Development concepts are a deliberate vision for the park that is a direct result of input from all interested parties. The development concepts address the goals established in the planning process while ensuring resource constraints are balanced with recreational opportunities. They describe the appropriate types, sizes, locations and access for the proposed facilities.

Resource maps, which accompany the master plan document, show various natural, cultural and scenic resources in the park. These maps are invaluable planning tools used frequently by the park rangers, other resource agencies, policy makers, members of the public and friends groups. A thorough analysis and evaluation of the information contained in these maps is the basis for making sound resource management and development decisions.

Community Involvement
The master planning process is an excellent opportunity for the public to discuss and provide input on the future of the park. A discourse occurs regarding the future of the park, facilitated by OPRD, with the goal of ensuring the public a central role in guiding the stewardship of their land. The planning process includes several public meetings, mailings and surveys. In addition, the public is invited to provide written comments on the pertinent issues and the proposals and guidelines established by the master plan.

Partnerships play a major role in ensuring the success of a master plan. The planning process provides an excellent opportunity for natural partners (including OPRD, other agencies, interest groups and neighbors) to interact. Through open dialogue, the various partners reached consensus on park related issues during the planning process. This will aid implementation of concepts laid out in the master plan, which in turn will benefit the future stewardship of the property.

Process for Completing a Master Plan
The steps for completing the Silver Falls State Park Master Plan follow a linear process that includes input from many groups and individuals, as well as information from a wide variety of sources. The first steps in the process require that information is
gathered regarding natural, cultural and scenic resources; existing facilities are inventoried; recreation and interpretive needs are documented; and information about the local community relative to the park is sought.

Issues involving the use, development and management of the park are identified through meetings with the general public, the local government decision-making body, an advisory committee and OPRD staff.

Goals are set for the management of resources as well as the future use and development of the park. From these goals, resource management guidelines and development concepts are formulated. These are checked for consistency with the state land-use goals and local government comprehensive plans.

All of the above information is compiled into a draft master plan to be reviewed by the public, OPRD staff, an advisory committee, OPRD’s Director and program managers, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission. Comments are sought and collated with master plan revisions based on guidance from the Director and Commission. After the revisions are completed, the draft is presented for adoption as a state rule and approval by affected local governments. Additional comments are sought from the public and local government in formal public hearings, which often lead to additional revisions prior to final adoption. (Those interested in a detailed description of the process can contact the Master Planning Section at the OPRD headquarters office in Salem. OAR 736 Division 18 mandates this process).
Master Planning Process Flow Chart

Process for completing a master plan (OPRD, 2007).
Conceptual Designs for Park Development Projects

State park master plans include text and illustrations that describe appropriate locations, layouts, sizes, and types of proposed recreation facilities. The locations and layouts of development projects are illustrated conceptually. It is expected that components of a development project (i.e. location or layout of a building) may be changed when completing final designs. A reasonable amount of flexibility is contained within the parameters of the master plan to accommodate this type of situation. Anything considered to be unreasonable will require that it is revisited by the master plan. For instance, relocation of projects to totally different areas of the park, or changes proposed in a way that impact important natural or cultural resources, recreation uses or neighboring lands, may be considered unreasonable.

OPRD is dedicated to proposing facilities that support outdoor recreation needs appropriate in relation to their setting to fulfill OPRD’s role as a recreation provider. Proposed park facilities are selected, located and designed to ensure there is no impairment of significant resources, (as identified in the resource suitability assessments prepared for the master plan). An important goal is to avoid causing significant conflicts between park constituents by creating incompatible recreation uses or detrimentally impacting surrounding land-uses. The planning process aims to ensure that proposed facilities are compatible with recreation uses and surrounding land-uses.

General Parameters for Design

General parameters considered in formulating development concepts in state park master plans include the following:

- Balancing recreation needs with resource constraints and avoiding or minimizing conflicts between recreation uses.
- Providing good access and circulation for vehicles and non-motorized travel within the parks.
- Locating and designing facilities, roads and trails that will aid public orientation, especially to the parks major resources.
- Avoiding significant impacts on important natural, cultural and scenic resources within or adjacent to the parks.
- Taking advantage of scenic views and resource interpretation opportunities.
- Presenting an appearance that is harmonious with the setting and the region.
- Providing a wide range of recreation amenities and settings for a diverse constituent group.
- Clustering development in appropriate locations to ensure minimal impact on natural resources.
- Ensuring preservation of cultural resources through continued use, and if that use is no longer attainable, finding an adaptive use that is compatible with the cultural significance of the site.
- Providing equal opportunities for access to the park by visitors from different economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Providing opportunities for universal access to all visitors.
Master Plan Implementation and Amendments

Once the state park master plan is adopted as a state rule and determined to be compatible with local government comprehensive plans, any development in the parks must be consistent with the master plan. Minor variations from the adopted master plan may be allowed if such variations are determined by the OPRD Director and the affected local government to be consistent with the master plan in accordance with OAR 736-018-0040. Any use that is not consistent with the master plan requires a master plan amendment. Master plan amendments must follow the same process used to adopt the master plan, as described in OAR 660 Division 34 and OAR 736 Division 18, which includes re-adoption as a state rule and a determination of compatibility with local government comprehensive plans.

Master plans are amended when changes in circumstances are significant enough to warrant major alterations to the adopted development concepts for the park. The OPRD Director considers the recommendations of OPRD staff and outside interests in prioritizing the park master plans to be adopted or amended each biennium. The director’s decisions are based on consideration of the following significant changes that may occur at a park:

- Condition of, or threats to, the natural, scenic or cultural resources within or surrounding the parks.
- Knowledge of and need for best stewardship practices for natural, cultural or scenic resources within the parks.
- Recreation demand or needs, or crowding within the parks or the vicinity of the parks.
- Partnership opportunities for implementing park projects or managing park resources.
- Impacts or potential for impacts from surrounding land-uses.
- Alternatives to amending the master plan that would adequately address changes, such as interagency management agreements, non-OPRD management partnerships, etc.

Improve visitor access and orientation in the park

A decaying nurse log on the Rim Trail provides a home for a young hemlock and a variety of insects and plants (OPRD, 2007).
Why Master Plan This State Park Now?

Several factors are considered for determining which parks will be master planned each year within the State Park system. OPRD’s Director sets master plan completion priorities after a review of staff recommendations. The Silver Falls State Park Master Plan was chosen for completion at this time because of a variety of issues. Designed initially as two separate parks, the layout and infrastructure on each side of the park was created independently of one another and was not originally intended to function as a single unit. For instance, access and orientation at Silver Falls has never been fully resolved. Highway 214 cuts between the two former parks and does not give the visitor a clear sense of entry and exit. The smaller of the two former parks, Silver Creek Falls State Park, was developed to access the waterfalls and was only designed as a day use park. The larger park, Silver Creek Recreation Demonstration Area, was designed specifically for youth groups.

Surveys show a predicted growth in the use of day use facilities

As overnight use by the general public was not part of the initial plan for either park, Silver Falls campground today has the capacity of a much smaller site. In addition, visitors perceive the maturing forest as having always been there; not realizing they are looking at a formerly desolate landscape that is one of the earliest and most successful restoration projects ever undertaken by the State of Oregon. The maturing forest brings with it a new set of problems; sightlines to major natural features have been lost, trails do not meet the needs of current users, and elements of the historic designed park landscape are changing beyond recognition.

Additionally, the importance of the park as a historic designed landscape, a classic example of early park planning and structures built by the CCC, is just now being recognized. Interpreting the creation of this park and its design intended to “bring visitors to wilderness” is compelling now that its true value has been recognized.

The historic factors listed above have led to the current conditions found at the park. The master plan must also factor in future trends including opportunities for accommodating the needs of a growing and changing population. These needs include diversified and expanded overnight accommodations, more group use and group meeting options, more and better trails and trailheads, and more interpretation. The park is heavily used during the summer season by visitors from all over Oregon and beyond. Meeting the needs of these visitors led to the purchase of new property at the north boundary of the park. In purchasing this property, Silver Falls will finally get a north entrance that will better serve visitors and alleviate overcrowding at South Falls.

In addition, improvements to existing facilities can increase the seasonal use of the park, allowing more visitors to enjoy the park in the shoulder seasons (spring and autumn), as well as winter. The park is also very important to local residents and to the economy of its gateway town Silverton. New plans for the park have been worked out in close consultation with neighbors and representatives from nearby communities. The hope is that the park will continue to function as an economic driver and local playground for the gateway communities it serves.

Below is a summary of the reasons why a master plan has been undertaken for Silver Falls. This list is not exhaustive, but highlights the main needs of the park:
Master Planning Overview

- Escalations in recreation activities that occur in the park have exceeded recreation facility capacities. The growing demand has resulted in parking problems, traffic congestion during peak periods and localized resource damage, all of which have impacted the recreation experience for the visitor. There is a need to evaluate the ability of Silver Falls to accommodate growth, correct problems, and plan for improved day use and overnight facilities where appropriate.

- Movement between different portions of the park needs to be improved and arrival areas need to be more clearly delineated. Problems relating to access off Highway 214 will involve rethinking the current organization of park circulation. This includes evaluating the north and south entrances to the park, as well as the pullouts along the highway to create a sense of arrival at Silver Falls and alleviate traffic problems.

- The Smith Creek conference center struggles to cope with the ever increasing needs of groups wanting a state-of-the-art conference facility, yet still wanting the tranquil setting that makes Smith Creek a special place. Improvements to Smith Creek will meet the growing demands of retreat users, but must be carefully balanced with the cultural and natural setting of the site.

- The purchase of new land at the north entrance to the park has created an opportunity to build a gateway to Silver Falls that befits the size and prominence of the park, the “crown jewel” in the state park system. The new north entrance will need to serve a variety of purposes; provide a state park presence to improve security, create new access points to the Canyon Trail and east side trails, provide better day use facilities, and expand group use opportunities for equestrian, RV and tent camping.

Need for more camping sites

- The waterfalls along the Canyon Trail are the main attraction at Silver Falls. These spectacular falls are made accessible by a trail that not only takes visitors along the canyon floor, but also takes them behind four of the falls. This trail has been designated a National Recreation Trail and recently nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Maintaining the trail is difficult based upon the high volume of use and the difficult terrain it must traverse to ensure access to the falls. There needs to be a comprehensive review of the Canyon Trail to ensure it can meet the demands placed upon it by increasing use from visitors. This needs to be balanced with the trail qualities that create an intimate setting and proximity to nature which visitors have come to expect when they walk the trail.
• The historic area within the park remains an excellent model of state park master planning, and continues to display the outstanding craftsmanship of the CCC in building rustic park day use, providing overnight areas and restoring large tracts of marginal land to a pristine state. Only recently has this significance been fully understood and master planning for the future of the historic areas in the park is essential to ensure the integrity and sense of continuity is not lost.

• The natural resources in the park are well understood and numerous programs are in place to manage the diverse ecosystems including old-growth forest, meadows and riparian areas. The park needs to ensure that these programs are retained and where possible enhanced. In addition, the threat of invasive species needs to be more fully recognized and a program developed to manage the spread of invasive species that threaten the native fauna, flora and wildlife found within the park.

• The OPRD Interpretive Framework Plan lists Silver Falls as a “level five” park, which indicates the need for a medium-sized interpretive center. Silver Falls was selected as the best location for a regional interpretive center in the Willamette Valley dedicated to the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Oregon and also to interpreting the outstanding beauty of the falls and the old-growth forest.

• To accommodate these improvements, the administrative and maintenance facilities need to be enlarged and modernized. There is a need for centralizing information and registration facilities to one or two locations. There is a need to examine the need for a new administrative building that may also be able to better serve the public. The old caretaker’s cottage is currently used as an administration building. In addition, Silver Falls needs to improve its maintenance facility to meet the anticipated growth of recreation in the park.

There is a need for more camping sites at Silver Falls (OPRD, 2007).
Master Planning Overview

There is a need for more picnicking facilities at Silver Falls (OPRD, 2007).
II. PLANNING CONTEXT

Location

The Vicinity Map at the end of this chapter illustrates the general location of the planning area relative to the surrounding communities, transportation system and major water bodies. Silver Falls State Park is situated in the foothills of the west Cascade Mountain Range. The park is accessed and divided by Highway 214, a winding secondary road that connects with Silverton to the north and Highway 22 to the west. The secondary access route, with indirect connections to Interstate 5 via Silverton and Salem, makes Silver Falls seem remote to Oregonians, even to residents in the Willamette Valley. The park encompasses over 9,000 acres and is dissected by four creeks carving gentle valleys to steep sided canyons that create prominent ridge lines that are mostly covered with lowland coniferous forest. Road access follows the rim of the canyon (Highway 214), or runs adjacent to the creeks until the upper reaches of the watershed (Silver and Smith Creek Roads). Silverton and Sublimity are the nearest urban areas to the park and the city of Salem is the nearest city, approximately a 30 minute drive. Both Eugene and Portland are approximately a one-and-a-half hour drive from Silver Falls.

Landscape Character

The park is situated in the upper reaches of the Silver Creek, Smith Creek, Howard Creek and Hult Creek watersheds. These watersheds form part of the lowland foothills on the west side of the Cascade Range. Some upstream lands are owned by private timber holdings, as well as federal and state forests. Rural residences are adjacent to the park on the north, west and southwest boundaries. Agricultural lands dominate the western side of the park and mix with the rural developments on the north side. With logging on the east side and agriculture on the north and west boundary, Silver Falls is an island of maturing coniferous forest. This island of trees survives on terrain that makes access difficult and provides for spectacular scenery. The creeks in the upper reaches of the park soon enter canyons that give way to magnificent waterfalls that dominate the setting at the park. These waterfalls can only be accessed from three major locations due to the steep nature of the canyon walls. Remnants of old farms and homesteads remain in the park, these areas today provide open meadow type landscapes and valuable habitat for wildlife as well as rare plant species.

Regional Economic Trends

Historically, the regional economy was dominated by the timber products industry, with agriculture and homesteading playing significant roles. This area of the Cascade foothills is somewhat removed from major population centers and, as a result, the growth of tourism has been less pronounced here than in some communities in the Willamette Valley until recent years. Agriculture and the logging industry still provide the majority of jobs in the area and tourism is still secondary as an industry. Christmas trees farms now dominate the agricultural landscape around the park and provide a cash crop that has mostly replaced food crops. The recent growth in the local tourism industry is attributed in large part to the efforts of the local communities in promoting tourism development, especially along the Silver Falls Tour Route. Today, the significance of tourism in the area is slowly growing, together with the development of Silverton as a destination town for tourists, Silver Falls is expected to continue to grow in popularity.
Zoning

Land-uses in the parks are governed by Marion County. The following zoning districts apply to the parks:

- Timber Conservation Zone (TC): Applies to the majority of the park.
- Exclusive Farm Use Zone (EFU): Applies to a portion of the park along its west boundary.
- Farm Timber Zone (FT): Applies to a portion of the park along its northeast boundary.

OPRD’s Role as a Statewide Recreation Provider

OPRD master plans help to accomplish the OPRD mission by establishing the goals, development concepts and resource management guidelines that strike a balance between recreational use and development and resource protection. Our Mission is to:

“Protect and provide outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations.”

The Oregon State Parks System has provided Oregon’s residents and visitors with reputable park services since its initiation in 1922. Originally, the department saw its role as a protector of the scenic resources related to highway travel and emphasized land acquisition. From the department’s first land acquisition in 1922 until now, OPRD has acquired over 95,000 acres of diverse, historic and scenically treasured public land. This is largely due to OPRD’s origin within the early State Highway Division. OPRD did not become a separate department from the later Oregon Transportation Department until 1989. Much of OPRD’s role has been shaped by its connection with Oregon’s highway locations and their enjoyment. The early park system was built upon a framework of roadside rest areas and scenic corridor preserves. The early 1930s saw the introduction of master planning for state parks and this led to the
development of day use areas with their associated recreational activities, such as picnicking, cooking, swimming, boating, fishing, walking, and relaxing. Developed overnight camping facilities were not widely available in Oregon’s state parks until the 1950s. The demand for such facilities began to boom in the post WWII period. OPRD expanded its role to include recreation development beyond just rest area facilities to include campgrounds and more developed day use and swim areas. Today OPRD has 53 parks with overnight accommodations.

As life styles have changed so have approaches to camping, and OPRD has tried to diversify the types of camping provided in its parks. The current OPRD role for camping includes providing tent sites, full RV hookup sites, hiker-biker sites and close by, walk-in tent camping. Very few OPRD properties offer dispersed or pack-in camping. Most OPRD camps are considered to be “high amenity” within a scenic setting, including flush toilets, showers and access to water, garbage and electricity somewhere in the camp. The camps are generally not far from a state highway. In recent years, OPRD has been constructing yurts or cabins in many of its larger camping parks in an effort to extend the camping season. Group camping and horse camping are also popular and growing in state parks across the state.

Another common OPRD role is providing high quality grounds and facilities for accessing adjacent resources such as lakes, ocean beaches, rivers and other attractions. In the 1970s, with the advent of a variety of natural and cultural resource protection laws, OPRD reassessed its scenic lands and traditional access sites as high quality natural and cultural resources. Master planning for protection and public access to OPRD’s parks began in the 1970s to address this emerging dual role. Recently, OPRD has been acquiring a few very high quality natural and cultural areas for the purpose of protecting their resource values and providing appropriate levels of public access for recreation and interpretive purposes.

Existing Recreation Uses and Facilities

The facilities in the park are generally grouped by use areas including day use, overnight use and park operations. There is one major day use area, South Falls, which has 550 parking spaces and contains the majority of the day use buildings including a lodge, kitchen shelter, log cabin and several picnic shelters. The major day use facilities are concentrated around the South Falls waterfall. The trails in the day use area all lead to the South Falls overlook, which provides the best view of the waterfall. The south end of the day use area has open play areas that entertain informal Frisbee and baseball games, as well as a swimming area in a dammed section of the river.

Other day use areas are spread along Highway 214 including the South Overlook, Winter Falls Trailhead, North Falls Overlook, and North Falls Trailhead. These day use areas are small in size and provide parking, orientation to the park, access to trails, or views of natural features. The major trail in the park is the Canyon Trail, a nationally recognized trail that leads hikers along the banks of the north and south forks of Silver Creek and passes by 10 waterfalls. Biking and hiking trails connect with this trail to form loop trails on the west side of Highway 214. On the east side of Highway 214 there are hiking, biking and

A group of visitors at the popular North Falls trailhead (OPRD, 2007).
equestrian trails, but they are not used to the same extent as the Canyon Trail. A recent park survey found that 90% of park users go to the Canyon Trail and its associated access trails, while only 10% of hikers use the east side trails in the park.

Overnight use in the park is mostly on the east side of Highway 214 in the former Recreational Development Area that was developed by the National Park Service (NPS); however an exception is the North Falls Group Camp on the site of a former CCC camp. The quality natural resources at Silver Falls have restricted development and constrained opportunities for more overnight use. Camping in the park is located in two areas, at the North Falls Group Camp and the Family Campground. The North Falls camp is, as the name suggests, a group camp only. The Family Campground is located near the central entrance to the park and contains 52 electrical sites and 45 tent sites. Other overnight use is focused around The Ranches (two buildings accommodating 100 persons each) and the Howard Creek Horse Camp (5 equestrian camping sites). There are also 14 cabins in the park; 4 in the RV portion of the Family Campground and 10 adjacent to this area across the creek. Park operations are concentrated around the central entrance including staff accommodations, an administration office and the maintenance yard. Other unique facilities at the park include a youth camp at Silver Creek, a conference center at Smith Creek, and a large meeting hall in the North Falls Group Camp.

Strike a balance between recreational use, development and resource protection

Existing Facilities at Silver Falls

Park Operations Area:
Administration Office (former Caretaker’s Residence)
Staff Housing
Two Fee Booths (without bathrooms)
Maintenance Yard
Storage Yard
Registration Building

Day Use Areas:
South Falls day use area
North Falls Parking Area
South Viewpoint
North Falls Viewpoint
Winter Falls Parking Area
Equestrian Parking Area

Overnight Areas:
Family Campground (77 sites – 37 with electrical hook-up)
North Falls Group Camp (60 site – 26 with electrical hook-up)
Howard Creek Horse Camp (5 sites)
The Ranches (2 buildings with 100 bunks each)
Central Entrance Cabin Area (10 Cabins)

Other Facilities:
Smith Creek Conference Center (accommodates max of 85 people)
Silver Creek Youth Camp (accommodates maximum of 200 children)
North Falls Meeting Hall
Map Showing Existing Developed Areas and Newly Acquired Property at Silver Falls State Park (OPRD, 2007).
EXISTING CONDITIONS
SILVER FALLS STATE PARK
The Recreation Setting

A full range of recreation providers, including public and private providers, offer outdoor recreation opportunities and support facilities in the Marion County area. In addition to Silver Falls State Park, there are two state parks in proximity to the foothills of the Western Cascades. Detroit Lake State Recreation Area offers amenities with over 300 camping sites. Access to the lake, which is over nine miles long with more than 32 miles of shoreline, affords opportunities for all types of water sports: fishing, boating, swimming, water skiing, and personal watercraft. The North Santiam State Recreation Area offers access along the Santiam River for boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking and wildlife viewing.

The Shellburg Falls Recreation Area lies to the south of Silver Falls State Park in the Santiam State Forest and is managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. It offers recreational experiences including camping, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian riding and wildlife watching. There are two developed trails. The first is the Shellburg Falls Trail, which is for hiking only, that winds its way through giant Douglas fir and hemlock trees to Shellburg Falls. The second trail is the Shellburg Creek Trail, a multi-use trail for hiking, equestrian riding and mountain biking. There is also a small campground near the trailhead that has four sites.

The Silver Falls Tour Route along Highway 214 is a 55-mile drive from Woodburn to Turner. The route winds through a portion of the Willamette Valley settled by German pioneers, Swiss monks, and more recently Latin and Russian Americans. The route takes in several towns, forest, agricultural land and, of course, Silver Falls State Park, as it passes through the foothills of the Cascades. One of the major stops along the tour route is Mount Angel, a German-motif town, which includes the 122-year-old Benedictine monastery, Mount Angel Abbey. The major festival in the town is Oktoberfest, which attracts 350,000 people a year. Another of the main attractions along the tour route is the Oregon Gardens where thousands of plants are displayed in more than twenty specialty gardens. The Oregon Garden is located on 80-acres and is just south of Silverton. The specialty gardens include water features, the Conifer Garden, garden art, wetlands, a Rediscovery Forest, a children’s garden, the 400-year-old Signature Oak and the Gordon House designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Silvertone is another major destination including a historic downtown and a thriving arts community. Its small town atmosphere lends itself to a growing tourist destination. The historic downtown district and surrounding hill-top mansions bring thousands of visitors to the city every year, which has led to a boom in bed and breakfast establishments as a base to explore specialty shops, galleries and eateries. The arts scene has been supported with the Silvertone Fine Arts Festival as its centerpiece. Other festivals pay tribute to the area’s legendary residents, from Homer Davenport, the turn-of-the-century political cartoonist, to Al Faussett, who took the plunge over Silver Falls in a canoe. At the north end of the Silver Falls Tour Route is the small town of Turner surrounded by Willamette Valley Vineyards, one of the state’s largest wineries.

Salem, the capital city of Oregon and its second largest city, lies in the center of the Willamette River valley, 47 miles from Portland. Salem is located an hour from Silver Falls to the east. The city offers a wide array of tourist attractions, ranging from historic sites to sports tournaments, theater and music.
IV. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

This chapter provides a summary of key resource inventories and assessments that were used in completing the master plan. Detailed mapping of key resources contributed to the completion of the Composite Suitability Assessment, which is discussed in the Suitability Assessments chapter. Detailed maps and other background information on the park resources are filed at the OPRD headquarters office in Salem. The resource maps are also kept on file in the administration building at Silver Falls State Park.

Silver Falls State Park is located in the western Cascades ecoregion of Oregon, in the western-most foothills of the Cascade Range at elevations ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 feet. The Cascade mountain range was formed by volcanic eruptions and flows, and is dominated by deposits of basalts, andesites, and pyroclastic rocks (Franklin & Dyrness 1988). The ecoregion is dominated by forest cover, primarily Douglas fir-western hemlock, Pacific silver fir, and mountain hemlock. The park is primarily within the western hemlock climax forest zone.

Prior to European settlement, the area within the park boundaries was likely much more open due to routine fires managed by Native American tribes living in the area. During the period of early European settlement, fire regimes were suppressed, causing a build-up of fuel loads in the forests as dense young trees invaded understories and formerly open areas. Dry weather and human activity caused accidental fires that became major burns crossing large sections of the Smith Creek and Silver Creek valleys. A major fire in 1865, known as the Silverton Fire, burned a significant area within and adjacent to the study area. In addition, these areas were heavily logged from the 1850s up to the 1930s. Only the trees in the canyon bottoms and on higher steep terrain were spared. Logging rail lines, skid roads, and wagon roads crisscrossed the area within the park during this period. The creeks were also used to transport logs down river. Farming was the other major industry in the area. However, the climate and soils led to poor yields and the agricultural production was classified as marginal. A small logging community grew up around where the South Falls day use area is located. This town, known as Silver Creek, was eventually abandoned as logging activities subsided. In the 1930s CCC crews began a major reforestation program, reportedly planting a million trees within the current day park boundaries. Guided by NPS landscape architects, the goal was to restore native habitat. The forest we know at Silver Falls today is a direct result of natural and human forces shaping the landscape.

Natural Resources

The park as a whole is located within the Douglas fir and western hemlock forest zones, with a few herbaceous–dwarf shrub bald ridge tops. The western hemlock climax forest zone has a wet maritime climate. The primary tree species in undisturbed communities include: Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla), and western red cedar (Thuja plicata). Red alder (Alnus rubra) and bigleaf maple (Acer macrophyllum) occur in some areas of recent disturbance and in wetland or riparian zones. Understory vegetation under natural conditions can be dominated by sword fern (Polystichum munitum), salal (Gaultheria shallon), oceanspray (Holodiscus discolor), wood sorrel (Oxalis oregana), Pacific rhododendron (Rhododendron macrophyllum), or skunk cabbage (Lysichiton americanus). Old-growth associations typical of this zone include Douglas fir/oceanspray, western hemlock/golden chinquapin (Castanopsis chrysophylla), western hemlock/Pacific rhododendron/dwarf Oregon grape (Mahonia nervosa), western hemlock/sword fern, and western hemlock/sword fern/wood sorrel (Franklin & Dyrness 1988).

In the last sixty years Silver Falls has come to be dominated by second growth Douglas fir forest communities. This is in keeping with its location within the Douglas fir–western hemlock forest zone and the plantings by the CCC in the 1930s. Various ages of this species occur with only a few sites having trees older than 100 years old. Western hemlock is often mixed with dominant Douglas firs as a shade tolerant
second canopy layer. Occasionally, western hemlock is dominant in places that either are old-growth or were old-growth hemlock, but lacked a Douglas fir seed source. This is not a common naturally occurring phenomenon and may be explained by the CCC plantings in the 1930s. Other dominant canopy species are primarily associated with riparian zones, wetlands, and developed sites. Some old-growth patches remain, including areas along the Buck Mountain trail and near the Conference Center. Isolated giant trees are also scattered in areas otherwise dominated by second-growth communities. The recently acquired property that extended the northern edge of the park has been used primarily for Christmas tree farming or was recently clear-cut for timber. The privately owned lands surrounding Silver Falls have been used for various agricultural pursuits including Christmas tree farms, hay, pasture, row crops, berries and timber, as well as some residential development.

**Plant Communities and Conditions**

The park is located at the fringe of the Douglas fir and western hemlock forest zones. About 8,300 of the park’s 9,000 acres are covered with second growth and residual old-growth conifers – primarily Douglas fir and western hemlock. Deciduous forest areas also occur in the park, and are characterized by red alder and big leaf maple in the lower elevations and along the creeks. There are a few small open meadows scattered through the park and one large meadow at The Ranches. This meadow existed prior to homesteading in the 1800s, and the current vegetation composition supports this theory.

There are several good to excellent quality native plant communities in Silver Falls and a few units within the newly acquired property to the north of the park could become high quality native

**Excellent quality native grassland habitat**

plant communities with management. The plant communities of high priority for protection and management are those areas where wetland, riparian, old-growth or native grassland habitat occurs. The wetland and riparian communities are dominated by red alder, salmonberry, Pacific ninebark, and in some cases slough sedge and skunk cabbage. These units are widely scattered throughout the park including portions of the developed areas in the park including the South Falls day use area, Family Campground, Howard Creek Horse Camp and Silver Creek Youth Camp. They are usually dominated by native species and are susceptible to disturbance.

*Meadow with CCC tree plantings (OPRD, 2007).*
Resource Assessment

Douglas fir or western hemlock dominate most forest areas. Trees are typically larger than 24 inches in diameter, with some areas still classified as old-growth habitat. These forest areas are located around and in the North Falls Group Camp, South Falls day use area, Family Campground, Howard Creek Horse Camp, Smith Creek Conference Center and Silver Creek Youth Camp. Typically these units are on the margins away from the primary development or in the remote regions of the park and are relatively undisturbed. All other forested areas are dominated by the red alder, salmonberry community and typically are primarily native species.

Grassland habitats in the park are both indigenous (in that they were present prior to settlement in the 1800’s) and cultural resources. The cultural aspects of the meadows include remnant agricultural areas (The Ranches), or designed open areas dating from the development of the park in the 1930s (Smith Creek Conference Center meadows, Silver Creek Youth Camp meadows and South Falls day use area meadows). Most of these communities do not fall within community types that have been previously classified (i.e. in Kagan, et al. 2004) as they are disturbed or early seral. However, substantial portions of The Ranches and Howard Creek meadows complexes fall within a high quality classification for native plant communities.

Wildlife

The Smith Creek, Howard Creek and Silver Creek drainages and their adjacent upland forests provide good wildlife habitat in the park. However, beyond the park boundaries where adjacent landowners have clear-cut the forest or on farmland, wildlife habitat sharply drops off. The park is becoming an important habitat island for species that are losing habitat in the surrounding landscape. The park is large enough to protect the integrity of its interior habitats, and is managing young portions of the forest to improve habitat in these areas. The park includes several habitat types that are important to predominant wildlife management objectives in Oregon today.

The mature coniferous habitat includes areas of moderate to mature aged Douglas fir and western hemlock with the structural characteristics of late successional habitat. This type of habitat is of special concern for this area of the state. This habitat has been relatively undisturbed, having escaped most major fires and logging. This habitat has a large amount of dead wood in various stages of decay and is important to the northern spotted owl, pileated woodpecker, northern flying squirrel and amphibians. The moderate aged coniferous forest provides important habitat for species such as the sharp-shinned hawk, golden-crowned kinglet, Vaux’s swift and Douglas squirrel. Moderate age stands are more common in Oregon than mature stage and therefore are not considered to be quite as critical for protection as the mature forest. Stands of mixed Douglas fir and deciduous trees are widespread in the park and represent a variation of the forest habitat that is important to neo-tropical migrant birds. These stands occur in the park with a generally good structure and are relatively undisturbed. There are also areas of hardwood forest habitat that are extensive in the park, especially along the drainages and in the former areas of repeated disturbance. They include mostly maple and alder. These habitats are very common in Oregon, but are still important habitats for the big brown bat, various bird species and amphibians.

Northern Spotted Owl (OPRD, 2005).
The riparian and wetland areas provide important additional habitat in the park including forest wetlands, shrub-scrub wetlands and emergent wetlands. They all contribute to the diversity in species and provide areas for many amphibians in various stages of their life cycles. The wetlands are also important watering areas for all of the wildlife in the park. The creeks are home to populations of native cutthroat trout which have been isolated from other populations by the waterfalls. All of the riparian habitats in the park are very sensitive to disturbances caused by construction or heavy use. A few upland meadow areas occur in the park. The majority are openings in the forest that have been created through former development, for example, portions of the Howard Creek Horse Camp and the area known as The Ranches. These meadow areas are large enough to provide browsing for ranging herbivores, including deer and elk.

**At-Risk Species**

Spotted owls and Townsend’s big eared bats are listed as candidate species that are known to occur in the park. Recent studies indicate that northern spotted owls can be found in the late succession forest at the park (more than 80 years old). In addition it is likely that the following amphibians may be present in the park. All of these species are on the state’s sensitive list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Rana cascadae</em></td>
<td>Cascade Frog</td>
<td>Meadows that remain wet in summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rhyacotriton cascadae</em></td>
<td>Cascade seep salamander</td>
<td>Cold, clear springs and small headwater streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aneides ferreus</em></td>
<td>Clouded salamander</td>
<td>Forests, including forest edges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Batrachoseps wrightii</em></td>
<td>Oregon slender salamander</td>
<td>Mature and old-growth forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rana aurora</em></td>
<td>Red-legged frog</td>
<td>Marshes, ponds and stream with little flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ascaphus truei</em></td>
<td>Tailed frog</td>
<td>Cold, fast flowing forested creeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bufo boreas</em></td>
<td>Western toad</td>
<td>Forested and brushy areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Natural Heritage Information Center data did not show any records of at-risk plant species at Silver Falls. Occurrence of such species is possible within specific areas identified within the park. Areas where the species are most likely to occur in the park that would have potentially suitable habitat, are generally described with a table opposite that accompanies the description.

Gorman’s aster (*Aster gormanii*) occurs on dry cliffs or talus slopes. Thus, it may occur on basalt cliffs or outcrops. Potential habitat for Gorman’s aster in the area of interest is on the cliffs behind the Winter Falls turnout and along the nearby trail.

Cliff paintbrush (*Castilleja rupicola*) occurs in crevices of rocks, cliffs and outcrops. Thus, it may occur on basalt cliffs or outcrops. Potential habitat for cliff paintbrush is on the cliffs behind the Winter Falls turnout.

Tall bugbane (*Cimicifuga elata*) occurs in moist woods with north-facing slopes, particularly where bigleaf maple occurs. There are north-facing slopes at the forested slope behind the Winter Falls turnout and at the newly acquired northeast land parcel on a slope dominated by bigleaf maple and conifers.

Cold-water corydalis (*Corydalis aquae-gelidae*) occurs in moist to wet forests, particularly along undisturbed stream banks. Potential habitat for cold-water corydalis within the park includes the forested stream and pond corridor on the newly acquired northeast land parcel, along the small streams at the North Falls Group Camp, along the forested stream corridor at the Conference Center, and along the stream corridor at the Howard Creek Horse Camp.

Short-pointed cyperus (*Cyperus acuminatus*) occurs in open wet areas and tolerates alkali conditions. Potential habitat for short-pointed cyperus is along the buffer around the south end of the Campground.

Willamette Valley larkspur (*Delphinium oreganum*) occurs on prairies and on basaltic cliffs. Potential habitat for Willamette Valley larkspur is on the cliffs behind the Winter Falls turnout, The Ranches and Howard Creek.
### Table Showing Rare Botanical Species Known/Suspected from the Willamette Valley and West Cascades Ecoregions of Marion County, Oregon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Global Rank</th>
<th>Federal Status</th>
<th>State Status</th>
<th>Habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aster gormanii</strong></td>
<td>Gorman's aster</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dry cliffs, talus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Castilleja rupicola</strong></td>
<td>Cliff paintbrush</td>
<td>G3S2</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crevices of rocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cimicifuga elata</strong></td>
<td>Tall bugbane</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Moist woods, NW and NE aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corydalis aquae-gelidae</strong></td>
<td>Cold-water corydalis</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Moist to wet forests, undisturbed stream banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyperus acuminatus</strong></td>
<td>Short-pointed cyperus</td>
<td>G5S1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open wet low places, tolerant of alkali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delphinium oreganum</strong></td>
<td>Willamette Valley larkspur</td>
<td>G1QS1</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Prairies and basaltic cliffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delphinium pavonaceum</strong></td>
<td>Peacock larkspur</td>
<td>G1QS1</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Roadsides and open fields to dry hillsides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dermatocarpon luridum</strong></td>
<td>Brook lichen</td>
<td>G4G5S1S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocks in streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erigeron cascadensis</strong></td>
<td>Cascade daisy</td>
<td>G4S4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocky places at mid to high elevations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Euonymus occidentalis</strong></td>
<td>Western wahoo</td>
<td>G5S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Western Cascades forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horkelia congesta</strong></td>
<td>Shaggy horkelia</td>
<td>G4T2S2</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Open sandy or rocky flats to open woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Howellia aquatilis</strong></td>
<td>Howellia</td>
<td>G2S1</td>
<td>LT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ponds and lakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huperzia occidentalis</strong></td>
<td>Fir club-moss</td>
<td>G5S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaded conifer forest along streams, rooted in logs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leptogium rivulare</strong></td>
<td>Lichen</td>
<td>G3G5S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocks in streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lomatium bradshawii</strong></td>
<td>Bradshaw's lomatium</td>
<td>G2S2</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Wet meadows and emergent wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Common Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Global Rank</strong></td>
<td><strong>Federal Status</strong></td>
<td><strong>State Status</strong></td>
<td><strong>Habitat</strong></td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lycopodium annotinum</em></td>
<td>Stiff clubmoss</td>
<td>G5S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moist conifer forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lycopodium complanatum</em></td>
<td>Ground cedar</td>
<td>G5S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moist conifer forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mimulus tricolor</em></td>
<td>Three-colored monkey flower</td>
<td>G4S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wet clay soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nephrora occultum</em></td>
<td>Cryptic paw lichen</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Old-growth trees, high in branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pilophorus nigricaulis</em></td>
<td>Lichen</td>
<td>G3S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outcrops and talus slopes, north facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Platismatia lacunosa</em></td>
<td>Lichen</td>
<td>G3G4S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Branches and boles of trees, both hardwoods and conifers in moist uplands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Poa laxiflora</em></td>
<td>Loose-flowered bluegrass</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openings in alder forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pseudocyphellaria rainierensis</em></td>
<td>Old-growth specklebelly</td>
<td>G3G4S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tree trunks in old-growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Romanzoffia thompsonii</em></td>
<td>Thompson mistmaiden</td>
<td>G3S3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small to large forest openings in moist seeps over bedrock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rotala ramosior</em></td>
<td>Toothcup</td>
<td>G5S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emergent riparian wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Scirpus pendulus</em></td>
<td>Drooping bulrush</td>
<td>G5S1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marshes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sisyrinchium sarmentosum</em></td>
<td>Pale blue-eyed grass</td>
<td>G2S1</td>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Open wet meadows in forest openings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tetraplodon mnioides</em></td>
<td>Moss</td>
<td>G5S1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Utricularia minor</em></td>
<td>Lesser bladderwort</td>
<td>G5S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shallow water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brook lichen (*Dermatocarpon luridum*) and Leptogium rivulare occur on rocks in streams. Potential habitat for the aquatic lichens within the park includes the stream newly acquired northwest land parcel, North Fork of Silver Creek, South Fork of Silver Creek, Howard Creek and Smith Creek.

Western wahoo (*Euonymus occidentalis*) occurs in shaded moist draws and ravines. There are many potential habitat areas within ravines. Areas include: the two relatively older forests within the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels; the south end of the Conference Center; all along the north and east edge of Silver Creek Youth Camp; the northwest section of the North Falls Group Camp; and along intermittent drainages along the north side of the South Falls day use area.

Fir club-moss (*Huperzia occidentalis*) occurs in shaded conifer forests along streams and is rooted in logs. Potential habitat areas include: the stream corridors in the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels; North Fork Silver Creek; South Fork Silver Creek; Howard Creek; and Smith Creek.

Bradshaw’s lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*) occurs in wet meadows and emergent wetlands. There is limited habitat available in the Park due to the primarily forested and shrub cover. Potential habitat is located at the ponds within the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels, The Ranches and Howard Creek.

Stiff clubmoss (*Lycopodium annotinum*) and ground cedar (*Lycopodium complanatum*) occur in moist conifer forests that are relatively undisturbed. There are many potentially habitat locations within Silver Falls for these species. Areas include: the two older forest areas within the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels; the south end of the Conference Center; Silver Creek Youth Camp; the entire eastern forested edge of the Howard Creek Horse Camp; the northern side of the South Falls day use area; and the North Falls Group Camp.

Cryptic paw lichen (*Nephroma occultum*) and old-growth specklebelly (*Pseudocyphellaria rainierensis*) occur on old-growth trees. The two old-growth sites within the park are located in the Howard Creek Horse Camp area and the south end of the Conference Center.

Pilophorus nigricaulis occurs on rock outcrops and talus slopes that are north facing. The only potential habitat is on the cliffs behind the Winter Falls turnout and along road shoulders, characterized by exposed boulders.

Platismatia lacunosa occurs on the branches and boles of trees, both hardwood and conifers in moist, cool upland areas, especially red alders. There are several areas of mixed alder and coniferous forest including: the older forested areas on the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcel; the North Falls Group Camp; the drainages within the South Falls day use area; Smith Creek Conference Center; and Silver Creek Youth Camp.

Loose-flowered bluegrass (*Poa laxiflora*) occurs in openings in alder forests. Loose-flowered bluegrass may have potentially suitable habitat on the edges of these communities or in small openings such as may occur in the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels, the South Falls day use area, the riparian area at the Howard Creek Horse Camp, the open area at the North Falls Group Camp, and the riparian area at Silver Creek Youth Camp.

Toothcup (*Rotala ramosior*) occurs in emergent riparian wetlands. Potential habitat locations are along the ponds on the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels.
Cultural Resources

The master planning process includes a study of the cultural resources at Silver Falls, conducted by the University of Oregon entitled, “Cultural Landscape Report for Silver Falls State Park.” Silver Falls is regarded by many as Oregon’s premier state park. Oregonians were drawn to the area by its exceptional natural beauty as early as the late 1800s, and it is without a doubt that this enduring beauty is the reason for the park’s high regard. As is often the case with such places, the settlement of the American West both threatened and conserved the Silver Creek watershed, and so the story of Silver Falls State Park is one of natural wealth and cultural foresight. The park owes much of its beauty to Oregon’s natural history. Silver Creek flows through the lush western foothills of the Cascades, a volcanic mountain range named after the countless waterfalls that pour over its rugged topography. The cultural history of the park is significant because it is tied to the origins of the parks movement that flourished with federal support during the New Deal of the Depression Era. Here again the beauty of the falls, captured in the images of a Silverton photographer spurred the creation of Silver Falls State Park. Bolstered by the ranks of the CCC and the Works Project Administration (WPA), the National Park Service (NPS) and Oregon’s first superintendent of state parks Samuel H. Boardman developed Oregon’s largest state park. The park is a fine example of NPS master planning during the Depression Era. NPS master planning aimed to balance the goals of conservation and recreation, forming a design philosophy that honored each new park’s natural setting. During the Early Rustic Era of 1931 to 1947, Silver Creek Falls State Park and the Silver Creek Recreational Development Area were created with these goals in mind. The forests were replanted and the rustic style of buildings and structures blended with the landscape’s scenic beauty.

Historic Significance of Silver Falls State Park

Currently the park contains two historic districts listed on the National Register: The Silver Falls State Park Concession Building Area and the Silver Creek Youth Camp. Further historical analysis indicates that in addition to these districts, there are other character areas that are worthy of historic protection. They are the Canyon Trail, the turnouts and overlooks along Highway 214, the reforested areas of the park from the 1930s, and the Smith Creek Conference Center. These character areas contain extant architecture, landscape architecture and natural features that were critical to the larger master plan prepared by the NPS for Silver Falls State Park. The four major character areas are discussed in more detail below.

Forests were replanted and rustic style buildings were blended into the landscape.

South Falls day use area: Within the South Falls day use area the current National Register Nomination includes most of the extant buildings from the period of significance. Buildings such as the Concession Building, the Stone Kitchen and the Log Cabin are excellent examples of the Rustic Style. Each of these buildings exhibit the high quality workmanship of the CCC and the WPA. However two latrines built in the same Rustic Style are outside of the current historic district boundary. These buildings exhibit native stone walls, heavy timber framing and the rare craftsmanship of the
Early Rustic Era. Furthermore, stonework along the banks of the South Fork of Silver Creek is currently outside of the historic district. The original parking area is intact as well, although the stone curbing that once distinguished the planted parking islands is missing.

**Silver Creek Youth Camp:** The Silver Creek Youth Camp contains the most extensive collection of Rustic Style buildings in Silver Falls State Park. The youth camp contains four cabin groups comprised of six youth cabins, two leaders’ cabins, a washhouse and a unit lodge. The youth cabins and leaders’ cabins are framed with peeled logs and clad with cedar shakes. In each cabin group the unit lodges are the most impressive buildings and display native stone fireplaces, peeled log framing and cedar shake siding. In addition to the four cabin groups, the buildings of the youth camp’s administrative group are excellent examples of the Rustic Style. Only the Camp Office/Administration Building is non-contributing.

**Smith Creek Conference Center:** Originally known as the Smith Creek Youth Camp, this area had two cabin groups like the Silver Creek Youth Camp. Today, however, only one cabin group is intact. It has six youth cabins, two leaders’ cabins and a washhouse. The unit lodge in this group is non-contributing but compatible. The cabins in this group are framed in rough sawn timbers and clad in cedar shakes. The timbers were milled on site. In the administrative area of the Smith Creek Youth Camp, the Dining Hall and the Administrative Building are excellent examples of Rustic Style architecture from the period of significance.

**Canyon Trail:** The principles of the naturalistic style of landscape architecture guided the construction of the Canyon Trail. The trail was a high priority in the park and CCC crews began work on the trail as soon as they arrived. The path was carved into the canyon wall behind South Falls, Lower South Falls and North Falls. Minor blasting was used to create the trail behind South Falls. Afterward, CCC crews used hand tools to disguise the evidence of blasting and rounded the stone’s rough and broken edges. None of the Canyon Trail’s original log bridges, railings or wooden stairways remains. However, some original stonework is intact, and the trail is the only path that allows visitors to experience all of the canyon’s ten falls.

During the period of significance, Silver Falls State Park was developed in two pieces: Silver Creek Falls State Park and the Silver Creek Recreation Demonstration Area. The youth camps in the RDA are possibly the best examples of the Recreation Demonstration Area concept west of the Mississippi River. RDAs flourished during the Roosevelt Era in the late 1930s to provide outdoor recreational facilities for children living in urban areas. The Silver Falls day use area and the Canyon Trail were designed by the NPS around one of the state’s most popular outdoor areas, the ten waterfalls of Silver Creek. Together, Silver Creek RDA and Silver Creek State Park were designed to provide both recreational opportunities and protection of the Silver Creek watershed.

**Association with significant events: the beginnings of Oregon State Parks, NPS master planning, and Roosevelt’s New Deal (Criterion A)** Silver Falls State Park is Oregon’s largest state park, and is an excellent example of the Depression Era’s national park movement. As one of the state’s primary beneficiaries of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, Silver Falls State Park is a legacy of state and federal conservation and recreation goals. In 1913, the Oregon State Highway Commission was established and became the first organization to manage the Oregon State Park System, and Oregon’s first state parks were small waysides along the state’s highway system. By 1921 the NPS was advocating a comprehensive system of parks that included national, state, county and municipal units. And in 1925 the NPS mandated comprehensive planning for national parks. Refined during the 1920s and 1930s, this master planning process guided the development of Silver Falls State Park (originally known as Silver Creek Falls State Park) and the Silver Creek Recreational Demonstration Area.
Silver Falls State Park was established in 1931 with the purchase of 100-acres of land around the 177-foot South Falls. Several citizens of the nearby community of Silverton, most notably June Drake, brought the area to the attention of the NPS. Drake's photographs of the ten falls in the Silver Creek canyon spurred the NPS and Oregon's first superintendent of state parks, Samuel H. Boardman, to create the park. Boardman described the original 100-acre purchase around South Falls as, "the nest egg which hatched into a completed Silver Falls State Park." Due to limited funds there was very little development in Silver Falls State Park, but help was on the way. In 1933, the "Emergency Conservation Work Act" (ECW) created the CCC and authorized President Roosevelt to use CCC crews for the development of state and county parks. CCC enrollees established a work camp at Silver Falls State Park in 1935.

Federal legislation continued to benefit state parks when the Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA) program was created under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. This program purchased land that had been severely degraded by natural resource extraction or poor agricultural practices. The goal was to rehabilitate the land with erosion control, fire prevention, intelligent planting and sound planning. RDAs were developed on such lands to provide states with outdoor recreation areas. Initially developed by the NPS, RDAs were ultimately intended to become part of the state park system. Four types of RDAs were identified in the program, and Silver Creek fell into the category of "... areas adjoining state scenic areas which could be redeveloped for recreational use." And in 1934, the Silver Creek RDA was established on the severely logged land in the headwaters of the Silver Creek watershed.

The historic Silver Creek RDA is a very rare example of an ambitious experimental park from the New Deal Era. Although the proposed RDA boundary contained 18,785.15 acres, the Silver Creek Recreation Area encompassed merely a third of the proposed acreage in 1947. With 6,052.58 acres, the RDA contained two operational youth camps. In terms of the master plan, these two camps were the most developed areas in the RDA, and they were separate, well-defined nodes that provided a distinct purpose (youth camping). Surrounding these youth camps, the previously logged forest had been replanted by the CCC to both protect the Silver Creek watershed and improve recreational opportunities (adhering to Wirth's balance of conservation and recreation). These camps were connected to the nearby Silver Falls State Park. The youth camps provided overnight camping near the falls of Silver Creek. This provided a much-needed amenity in the area, because under Boardman's guidance, overnight camping was prohibited in State Parks. It is interesting to note that during the development of the park, Boardman knew the RDA and Silver Falls State Park would merge, therefore bending his rule on overnight camping. His signature of approval...
is on most of the plans for the youth camp, and Boardman was immensely proud of the RDA. In 1951 he wrote that “two more camps should be constructed in the park” (which was part of the original master plan) … and “build more camps for the boys and girls for a better world.”

To the north of the RDA across Highway 214, Silver Falls State Park had grown to 1,904.71 acres. The South Falls day use area was the most popular and extensively developed area of the park. The development of the RDA increased attendance in the park, and the South Falls day use area was the primary visitor’s destination in the master plan. It was designed to accommodate the crowds that exceeded 5,000 visitors each week during the summer months. The South Falls day use area was built next to the park’s main attraction, South Falls. The day use area served as the main trailhead to another extensively designed area of the park, the Canyon Trail, also known as the Trail of Ten Falls. The Canyon Trail circumnavigated the rugged terrain along the North and South Forks of Silver Creek, allowing visitors a chance to experience the falls and natural beauty of the canyon. Engineered and designed by the NPS and built by the CCC, the Canyon Trail was listed as one of the park’s most significant features.

On November 24, 1947 the state of Oregon accepted the lands of the Silver Creek RDA, and Silver Falls State Park grew to 7,957.29 acres. With the land merger the efforts of NPS planners, CCC work crews and the Oregon State Highway Commission were realized. Boardman felt triumphant and described Silver Falls State Park as “one of the best state parks in the nation.”

Excellent Craftsmanship: National Park Service rustic and naturalistic styles (Criterion C)
As part of the NPS master planning process, development within Silver Falls State Park was intended to harmonize with the natural setting. During the 1920s and 1930s the NPS codified the Rustic Style of architecture and the Naturalistic Style of landscape architecture. Both of these styles grew out of the Picturesque Movement of the 19th-century and the Shingle style of the late 1800s. Rustic architecture is constructed with native materials and characterized by hand-hewn building techniques. Naturalistic landscape designs incorporated the same local or regional character, and both styles subjugate built works to the natural environment through use of discrete sites, appropriate scale and landscaping with native plants. During the Depression era the CCC and the WPA created some of the nation’s finest examples of Rustic Style architecture. Their standard of high quality craftsmanship has yet to be repeated on such a broad national level.

From 1935 until 1942 the CCC and the WPA built the cultural resources of Silver Falls State Park in accordance to the Rustic and Naturalistic styles. Within Oregon’s state park system, Silver Falls State Park and Honeyman State Park contain the most extensive and well-preserved recreational facilities built by CCC and WPA labor. Features like the Canyon Trail contain remnants of native stone walls and sections of the trail were seamlessly engineered into the canyon’s rugged terrain to allow visitors to walk behind South Falls, Lower South Falls and North Falls. The buildings of the South Falls day use area were set back from the canyon rim, so their presence would not intrude upon the natural beauty of the falls. In the Silver Creek and Smith Creek Youth Camps, clusters of sleeping cabins were arranged around central play areas.
These cabin groups were purposely located out of sight in the forested fringes of the cleared play fields. All of the architecture adhered to the Rustic Style’s emphasis on high quality, handcrafted, native materials.

**Summary:** Although Silver Falls State Park and the Silver Creek Recreational Demonstration Area were originally developed as separate units, by 1950 they were a single park under one master planning effort. From the period of significance, the Canyon Trail, Smith Creek Conference Center, Silver Creek Youth Camp, South Falls day use area, the turnouts and overlooks along Highway 214, the reforested portions of the park represent the most outstanding examples of the application of the rustic style philosophy in the park. Some of these areas, though, have been changed over time and although they retain integrity, it is diminished, especially at Smith Creek Conference Center, the turnouts along Highway 214 and the Canyon Trail. Rehabilitation and restoration work will be required to enhance the historic character of these areas. Despite these changes, all of the areas mentioned above contribute to the period of significance for Silver Falls State Park. Silver Falls contains in essence two historic parks. The first is a classic example of NPS rustic master planning, Silver Creek State Park with its impressive day use area and the Canyon Trail, which is unsurpassed example of a naturalistic trail that manages to blend into nature without impairing the natural beauty of the waterfalls it accesses. The Silver Creek Recreational Demonstration Area is a very rare example of an ambitious park development from the New Deal Era that aimed at combining conservation with outdoor youth education. The replanted forest and Silver Creek Youth Camp are outstanding examples of the application of this theory and their continued success today is a testament to the early conservation policy applied by the FDR administration.

**Archeological Resources**

An inventory of the park and a review of report findings were conducted in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). To date, significant sites have been found at the park and are recorded in the park’s archaeological database. Prior to any activities that would disturb these sites, state law requires further investigations following SHPO protocol.
V. RECREATION NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The master planning process includes an assessment of recreation needs and opportunities based on statistical trend data and issues reported in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), user statistics gathered at the park, the experience of park staff, and other pertinent information provided by other recreation providers and user groups.

The primary recreation activity that Silver Falls could provide is hiking along the Canon Trail to view the waterfalls. Other activities that are compatible with or that support the primary recreation activity include walking for pleasure on other trails, camping, biking, horse riding, bird watching, nature/wildlife observation, sightseeing, outdoor photography, picnicking and visiting cultural/historical sites.

The Oregon Outdoor Recreation Survey was conducted over a one-year period by Oregon State University’s College of Forestry as part of the 2003-2007 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Estimates for annual recreation use, by activity, are made for each of the 11 SCORP planning regions and statewide. Recreation participation estimates for individual recreation activities were measured in “User Occasions.” A user occasion is defined as, “each time an individual participates in a single outdoor recreation activity.”

The facing table shows annual participation estimates for SCORP Planning Region 2 (including Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Hood River, Yamhill, Clackamas, Polk and Marion Counties), for those activities compatible with interpretation of the history of the Fort. The most popular activities are walking for pleasure on trails, bird watching and nature/wildlife observation. A facility such as a trail with appropriate parking at the trailhead could accommodate a number of the most popular outdoor recreation activities (walking for pleasure on trails, bird watching, nature/wildlife observation, outdoor photography and day hiking).

Table Showing Annual Recreation Demand In SCORP Region 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Activity</th>
<th>User Occasions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking For Pleasure On Trails</td>
<td>7,453,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird watching</td>
<td>6,446,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature/Wildlife Observation</td>
<td>6,200,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sightseeing/Driving For Pleasure</td>
<td>4,745,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling</td>
<td>3,526,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Photography</td>
<td>1,825,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>1,782,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Cultural/Historical Sites</td>
<td>1,385,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Hiking</td>
<td>1,281,218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another method of identifying facility need is to make comparisons of how recreation participation for a comparable set of activities changes over time. For the 2003-2007 SCORP analysis, recreation participation estimates from the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Survey were compared to participation estimates from the 1986-1987 Pacific Northwest Outdoor Recreation Survey. Many of the 76 outdoor

Cycling on the trails is a popular activity (OPRD, 2007).
recreation activities from the 2003-2007 study were not directly comparable to 1987 activities. For this analysis, we are able to make direct comparisons to four recreation activities in the table opposite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Activity</th>
<th>2007 User Occasions</th>
<th>1987 User Occasions</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature/Wildlife Observation</td>
<td>8,573,512</td>
<td>2,422,761</td>
<td>+254%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sightseeing/Driving For Pleasure</td>
<td>6,107,192</td>
<td>3,621,994</td>
<td>+69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Photography</td>
<td>2,452,490</td>
<td>1,520,137</td>
<td>+61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Hiking</td>
<td>2,023,615</td>
<td>1,676,404</td>
<td>+21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, a facility such as a trail could accommodate an increasing demand for three of the top four growth activities in this area of the state (nature/wildlife observation, outdoor photography, and day hiking). In addition, a visit to Silver Falls should be tied to other nearby destinations to satisfy the demand for an increasing number of people who are on driving tours through the area.

Marion County Statistics
Silver Falls State Park is located in Marion County, which is located south of the Portland metropolitan area. Marion County stretches from the Willamette River to the Cascade Mountains encompassing nearly 1,200 square miles. Most of its population of 306,665 is within a 30 to 60 minute drive from the park. The county has 20 cities including the State Capitol, Salem. It is the largest producer of agriculture among Oregon’s 36 counties. Marion County’s economy is also based on government, with 38 of the largest state agencies based here, and on education as the site of Willamette University, Chemeketa Community College, and Corban College.
Recreation Needs and Opportunities

Table Showing Statistics for Marion County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Quick Facts</th>
<th>Marion County</th>
<th>Oregon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population, 2006 estimate</td>
<td>311,304</td>
<td>3,700,758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, 2000</td>
<td>284,834</td>
<td>3,421,399</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons under 5-years-old, percent, 2005</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons under 18-years-old, percent, 2005</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons 65-years-old and over, percent, 2005</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2000</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>22.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing units, 2005</td>
<td>115,500</td>
<td>1,558,421</td>
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<td>Homeownership rate, 2000</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
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<td>Households, 2000</td>
<td>101,641</td>
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<td>Persons per household, 2000</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<td>Median household income, 2004</td>
<td>$40,702</td>
<td>$42,568</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per capita money income, 1999</td>
<td>$18,408</td>
<td>$20,940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons below poverty, percent, 2004</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Quick Facts</th>
<th>Marion County</th>
<th>Oregon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private non-farm establishments, 2004</td>
<td>7,675</td>
<td>105,449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private non-farm employment, 2004</td>
<td>94,543</td>
<td>1,355,542</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private non-farm employment, percent change 2000-2004</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-employer establishments, 2004</td>
<td>15,354</td>
<td>236,812</td>
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<td>Total number of firms, 2002</td>
<td>20,694</td>
<td>299,505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturers shipments, 2002 ($1000)</td>
<td>2,185,182</td>
<td>45,864,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade sales, 2002 ($1000)</td>
<td>1,727,477</td>
<td>56,855,958</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail sales, 2002 ($1000)</td>
<td>2,985,346</td>
<td>37,896,022</td>
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<td>Retail sales per capita, 2002</td>
<td>$10,124</td>
<td>$10,756</td>
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<td>Accommodation and foodservices sales, 2002 ($1000)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5,527,223</td>
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<td>Building permits, 2005</td>
<td>1,984</td>
<td>31,024</td>
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<td>Federal spending, 2004 ($1000)</td>
<td>2,098,333</td>
<td>21,870,896</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography Quick Facts</th>
<th>Marion County</th>
<th>Oregon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land area, 2000 (square miles)</td>
<td>1,183.95</td>
<td>95,996.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons per square mile, 2000</td>
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<td>35.6</td>
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<td>FIPS Code</td>
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<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan or Micropolitan</td>
<td>Salem,</td>
<td>OR Metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Area</td>
<td>OR Metro Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Indicators

OPRD also relies on visitor use statistics for the parks and anecdotal information provided by park staff, other recreation providers and recreation user groups. The following indicators that pertain specifically to recreation at Silver Falls State Park were considered in the recreation needs assessment:

- The park’s natural features and day use facilities at South Falls were the top two motivating factors behind visitors’ decision to select the park for an overnight stay.
- The vast majority of visitors regarded Silver Falls as their ultimate destination, rather than a stop on the way to some other goal.
- Nearly half of all visitors who camped, stayed three to five nights. About a quarter stayed two nights.
- Popular features in the park included the Canyon Trail, the swimming area at South Falls and the day use areas.
- The majority of visitors were highly satisfied with their park experience. Relaxation, camping, trails, swimming and scenery; all rated at the top of the satisfaction scale.
- Visitors were interested in seeing expanded campground services, more extensive trails and better signage for orientation.
- Visitors asked if interpretive activities and recreational opportunities for the whole family could be expanded. Trails and programs that emphasize natural resources were particularly in demand.
- The current number of picnic shelters in the park does not meet visitor needs. Often, groups book them and this does not leave any available for individual use.
There are not enough picnic areas in the park. The existing picnic areas are overcrowded and there are not enough picnic tables during peak periods. Parking can be a problem at the park. On summer weekends, up to 200 vehicles a day are turned away from South Falls when the lot is full, causing some to park on the shoulder of Highway 214.

In addition, OPRD completed a Visitor Study for Silver Falls State Park in 2007. This report describes the results of a study of visitors staying overnight at a Silver Falls State Park RV or tent campsite, cabin or at The Ranches Lodge during May to September 2006. A total of 783 questionnaires were successfully distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 546 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 70% response rate.

Summary of the Overnight Visitor Study for Silver Falls

This report describes the results of a study of visitors staying overnight at a Silver Falls State Park RV site, tent site, cabin or at one of the ranch lodges during May to September, 2006. The Silver Falls Overnight Visitor Study was conducted during a period from January through April, 2007 by the Planning Section of OPRD. The study methodology and report follow a standard visitor survey process developed by the University of Idaho for the National Park Services’ Visitor Services Project (VSP). A total of 783 questionnaires were successfully distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 546 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 70% response rate.

26% of visitor groups were in groups of two people, 30% were in groups of four or five, and 79% had fewer than six people. 57% of the visitor groups were family groups. 10% of visitor groups had members with disabilities or impairments that affected their visit, with mobility being the primary type of disability.

52% of visitor groups arrived by auto, van or truck, and 39% by either towing a trailer, fifth wheel, motor home or RV. 70% of overnight visitors stayed at an RV or tent campsite and 24% at a cabin. For campers, 45% require no electrical power and 40% require a 30-amp power supply. Only 2% of campers require a 100-amp power supply.

Most visitor groups took either Highway 22 East to the park exit (34%) or I-5 South to the Woodburn exit (34%) and followed 214 to the park. The order of park sites visited were: RV/Tent Campground, South Falls day use area, and the Trail of Ten Falls. Park sites visited by most groups included the RV/Tent Campground (79% of visitors), South Falls day use area (66%), Trail of Ten Falls (51%), North Falls Trailhead (41%), North Falls Viewpoint (39%) and Winter Falls Trailhead (35%).

The top ways visitors would prefer to learn about the culture and natural history of the park on a future visit included: participating in an interpretive nature walk (46% of visitor groups), attending a campfire program (42%), interacting with an interpretive exhibit in a visitor/interpretive center (41%) and reading an illustrated brochure (39%).

Most commonly used trails included the Trail of Ten Falls / Canyon Trail (58% of visitor groups), Campground Trail (49%), Rim Trail (39%), Bike Path (36%) and the Winter Falls Trail (30%).
Subjects that visitors would be most interested in learning about on a future park visit included: waterfalls (76% of visitor groups), Native American history (56%), early settlement (55%) and geology (52%). The least preferred subject was early park development (25%).

75% of visitor groups reported an interest in visiting a new interpretive/visitor center if it were located somewhere in the South Falls area or at the central registration area on a future visit. Preferred services/facilities at a new interpretive/visitor center included: evening programs such as owl walks (57% of visitors), interactive exhibits of natural and cultural history (55%), an introductory video telling the story of the creation of the park (50%), and welcome and orientation information on the park and trails (50%).

The top things that visitors would like to change about the park included adding simple comforts such as water, benches, and restrooms (42% of visitors), additional cabins (27%), historical interpretation/education (26%) and RV camping (23%).

90% of visitor groups reported using one of the hiking/biking/equestrian trails during their visit. Most commonly used trails included the Trail of Ten Falls/Canyon Trail (58% of visitor groups), Campground Trail (49%), Rim Trail (39%), Bike Path (36%) and the Winter Trail (30%). The least used trails were the Lost Creek Trail (1% of visitor groups) and Rackett Ridge Trails (1%).

Trails along Silver Creek are a popular destination for visitors in the South Falls day use area (OPRD,2007).

This historic sign along the crowded Canyon Trail marks Lower South Falls (OPRD,2007).
VI. SUITABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Resource Inventories

OPRD prepares resource inventories and assessments as a basis for park development and management decisions. Key inventories and assessments are summarized in the Resource Assessment chapter. Detailed mapping of key resources is completed as part of the inventory and assessment process. The resource maps and reports are not published in the master plan document. Rather, they are available for viewing at the OPRD headquarters office in Salem. The maps are also available for viewing at the headquarters office in Silver Falls State Park.

The following resource inventories, assessments and related maps were completed for this master plan:

- Native Plant Communities
  - Plant Association
  - Age class of the trees
  - Degree of native species (as a percentage)
  - Degree of disturbance (human or natural causes)
  - Rareness ranking (based on rareness for existing species association)
  - Wetlands (based on indicator species)
  - Habitat Value
- At-risk Species
- Surface Water Features
- Cultural Resources
  - Historic Boundary
  - Historic Character Areas (day use and park operational areas)
  - Historic Linear Features (roads and trails)
  - Historic Vegetation
- Scenic Resources and Recreation Settings (not mapped)
- Slope Suitability (as a percentage)
- Resource Suitability Assessments and Composite Suitability
- Opportunity Assessment.

Natural Resource Suitability Assessments and Composite Suitability

OPRD rates the suitability of lands within the park based on the resource assessments listed above. Park resource areas are mapped and coded to represent their relative values for protection or development. A Composite Suitability map is produced for the natural resources that characterize these areas using multiple levels of suitability, or suitability classes. Suitability Class 1 represents resource areas that are highly valued for resource protection and often have the greatest constraints to development. At the other end of the spectrum, Suitability Class 4 represents areas that have the lowest value for resource protection and the least constraints to development. The natural resource assessments are discussed below in relation to the composite suitability mapping criteria.

Native Plant Community

The plant association suitability ratings were used to determine the appropriate locations for development or restoration in the park along with ratings of other factors including known occurrences of sensitive species, wetlands and habitat. The ratings range from 1 to 4. Rating 1 is reserved only for polygons located within special management designations (Natural Heritage site, ACEA or RNA). Rating 2 refers to largely native and undisturbed areas that are uncommon and possibly diverse or mature coniferous forests. Rating 3 is given to polygons that are common, moderately disturbed or non-native areas. Rating 4 is mostly disturbed or non-native areas.
In producing the composite suitability plant community maps, the condition rating given to each plant community was considered together with the state and regional conservation status of the plant community to determine the appropriate composite suitability rating, as indicated in the table below. The statewide conservation status of most native plant communities is documented by the ONHIC. If the plant community was not documented by ONHIC, a new name was created. Using this method a plant association name for each discrete association was created with a related mapping code for each of these associations. Attributes for each plant association were collected including age class of the trees, degree of native species, degree of disturbance, rarity ranking and forest type indicators (mature or diverse). These attributes were used to produce a suitability rating for each plant association, which could then be factored into the larger composite suitability map that included the other inventories and assessments listed below.

### At-Risk Species

Available information on at-risk plant and wildlife species that occur in and near the parks was compiled and mapped in the resource assessment process (at-risk species is defined in the Heritage Assessment chapter). Sites identified within the parks were assigned a composite suitability rating 1, as indicated in the table opposite. For certain species, more information is currently being produced. When available, this new information will be used, as appropriate, to refine the master plan, including the Composite Suitability maps and any affected development or management concepts.

### Surface Water Features

Surface water features identified in the resource assessment process were assigned a composite suitability rating of 2, as indicated in the table opposite. These features include identified streams, intermittent creeks, and ponds. Also included are wetland native plant communities identified by ONHIC.

### Habitat Types

Habitat types are represented by native plant communities in the resource assessment process. There are no modifications to the composite suitability ratings on the basis of habitat types.

### Natural Resource Composite Suitability Ratings

The table below summarizes the factors used to determine the suitability class of natural resources as illustrated on the Composite Suitability maps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE / CONDITION</th>
<th>SUITABILITY RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At-Risk Species Present</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Water Features:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Streams, intermittent creeks, ponds</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wetland native plant communities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Plant Association:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Special management designation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Largely native and undisturbed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Common or are moderately disturbed or non-native</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mostly disturbed or non-native</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed or Recently Graded</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Resource Assessment

At Silver Falls State Park the CCC landscape has been continually managed since the 1930s by following the rustic and naturalistic approach to park design and recreation. The legacy of applying this approach to the park is observed in the well-maintained landscape, the craftsmanship applied to new structures and the blending of built features into their natural surroundings. In essence, the historic period for the park has never ended as the institutional knowledge of park staff has been passed down from one generation to the next. In acknowledging this legacy it is important to ensure the cultural resource assessment does not hinder or obstruct this approach, instead it needs to embrace the efforts of the park to maintain its legacy yet remain vital. While this treatment principle provides an opportunity for a historic property to continue to function through time, the incompatible alteration can cause substantial loss of historic integrity. The challenge is to tailor development to fit within the historic setting in a way that will not impair the historic character. The following values have been applied to features within the historic district (except for significant natural resources):

- Protect, preserve and repair historic landscape characteristics and features
- Make compatible alterations and additions
- Replace missing features
- Remove incompatible features.

These types of values are based on a rating system that is able to describe whether a character area is contributing or noncontributing to the period(s) of significance within the historic boundary of the study area. The contributing areas are assigned an integrity value of high or diminished. The noncontributing areas or features are assigned two classification types. The first describes if a historic area or feature is no longer evident or has been removed and overlaid with a new land-use or feature. The second noncontributing classification describes a situation where new construction or modern development has occurred within the historic boundary. This information is factored into the master planning decision-making process. The ratings do not include an evaluation of the potential historic character after treatment (development) has been completed. They refer only to the existing condition. The table below summarizes this classification system and includes the classification codes applied to the character areas or features.

### Table Showing Historic District Significance Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance Ratings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTRIBUTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH High Integrity (inside of Period of Significance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID Diminished Integrity (inside of Period of Significance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONCONTRIBUTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE No Longer Evident* / Overlay** (outside of Period of Significance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC New Construction and Development*** (outside of Period of Significance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No Longer Evident: Missing historic feature / area
** Overlay: Redesign and construction of major historic feature/area after the period of significance.
*** New Construction and Development: Design and construction of feature/area in historic district after the period of significance.

Archaeological Resources

Information on archaeological sites, documented in SHPO files, was compiled and mapped. Under state law, this information is confidential, not intended for general public disclosure. As such, the information was not factored into the composite suitability maps. The status of these sites requires archeological investigations prior to commencing with any activities that could potentially disturb artifacts that may be present. OPRD coordinates with the State Historic Preservation Office in formulating park master plans and implementing planned park projects.
Glossary of terms for Cultural Resources:

**Historic District**: contains character areas (day use areas, roads, trails, overnight use, park operations, etc.).

**Character Areas**: area containing landscape characteristics (and the features associated with each characteristic).

**Landscape Characteristics**: planned development, buildings, major structures, minor structures, circulation, vegetation, topography, views, co-opted natural systems, land-use and traditions.

**Features**: are grouped into landscape characteristics (i.e. circulation includes roads, sidewalks, trails, etc.).

**Significance**: historic significance + integrity = national / state / local significance.

**Historic Significance**: period of significance based on secretary of interior standards applying criteria A, B, C, or D.

**Integrity**: evaluation of existing character areas and the existing historic landscape characteristics. If enough character areas and landscape characteristics have integrity then the district has integrity. On a finer scale, a judgment is made as to whether the character area or landscape characteristic has high integrity or diminished integrity.

**High Integrity**: the character area or landscape characteristic remains intact from the period of significance.

**Diminished Integrity**: changes to the character area or landscape characteristic via manipulation of the setting, including modern uses or incompatible alterations to the historic fabric. Enough character remains to say it still has integrity, but is diminished when compared to intact characteristics.

**Other Assessments**

**Scenic Resources and Recreation Settings**

Scenic resources and recreation settings identified in the resource assessment process were not factored into the composite suitability maps. This information is factored into the master planning decision-making process. The major scenic resources are iconic or outstanding views of the waterfalls, from the rim of the canyon and across open meadow areas. In addition, it is important to screen modern intrusions that impair the view of outstanding natural and cultural resources.

**Slopes**

Information on slopes was factored into the master planning decision-making process. At Silver Falls the slope suitability rating was applied to the site based upon steepness of slope and its unsuitability for development.

**Opportunity Area Assessment**

The resource assessments listed above are all considered in making master planning decisions. The composite suitability map is compared to the remaining assessments in making master planning decisions. These other maps, including the cultural resource, scenic resource recreation setting and slope suitability maps, use criteria that does not fit within a composite suitability assessment. In making planning decisions, the values from these assessments are applied to various sites and tested to see where proposed goals and objectives can be met. In some circumstances, there is also an overlap between cultural and natural resources. In this case, the cultural values outweigh the natural values. An exception is where law protects a natural resource.

After comparing natural and cultural values, the master planning process considers the scenic and slope assessments. The scenic assessment is important as it can include areas important to the park that may not be considered significant in the cultural and natural assessments. The slope suitability assessment is then applied to remove potential opportunity sites that would be too steep to build on. Opportunity areas that can be considered for development result from this process. It is important to note that not all opportunity areas will be developed. In addition, this process highlights areas where the resources constrain development. Generally, this leads to guidelines that will strengthen protection of these resources.
The South Falls Lodge is a classic example of a NPS designed rustic style building. The plan below shows an artist’s impression of the building from the 1930s and the photo above shows the building as it is today (OPRD, 2007).
VII. ISSUES

Understanding the Issues and Reaching Consensus

The issue scoping process provides a public forum for discussing important issues and identifying potential solutions. Those involved in this process include an advisory committee, OPRD staff, affected agencies and interest groups, and members of the general public. This chapter represents a summary of comments made at meetings with these groups, correspondence received during the written comment periods, and responses from a visitor survey for the park. The broad-based input from many people and interest groups indicated there is a concern that the park needs to better meet recreation needs, especially in regards to trail use (hiking, biking and equestrian), overnight use (individual and group camping and cabins) and day use facilities. There was a great turnout from both equestrian and biking groups and their comments were much appreciated and have greatly shaped their particular interests in this master plan. The local community also turned out in great numbers and had some strong opinions about protecting their privacy and a desire for an improved park presence at the north end of Silver Falls. They also asked for considerable development of the newly acquired northeast land parcel. The local community also identified Silver Falls as a major attraction for the area, which helps drive the trend towards a growth in tourism for the region. Many parties noted the park was perceived as a green island serving local communities as a neighborhood park, as well as proving to be a national draw, based on the quality and quantity of waterfalls found at Silver Falls. The need to continue conservation of the canyon areas and remnants of old-growth forest was seen as a priority; some commented on the improved management over the last decade of the natural resources in the park.

In developing a master plan to provide a multi-dimensional vision for this popular recreation area, outstanding natural resource and significant historic site, OPRD received comments from a diverse and passionate audience. Many of the comments were positive and reflected the diverse array of opportunities for recreation at the park, such as, “We all enjoyed the stay. My family all love to play at the swimming area. We liked to walk behind the falls and along the creek. We love the rain forest of Silver Falls, very different than other parks.” Another comment noted, “We have camped at the park many times and really enjoy hiking all the trails and photographing the waterfalls and other natural wonders.”

Some comments talked about the work of the park staff and the need for more facilities: “We wish our visit was a bit longer, but will make sure it is this year. You have a nice, well-maintained park and we look forward to our visit. Thanks for all your efforts. It shows! Take care,” and “I love it, it is beautiful, and I was totally bummed when all the tent sites were full and we had to get a cabin, but then I fell in love with the cabin!” The problem of not enough overnight sites for groups was also mentioned: “Won’t be returning next year - we have come two years in a row. Getting reservations was a nightmare - park too full????”, as well as, “we came every year to the group RV sites. Some electric hookups would be great. More group sites would be good too.” Other comments noted the beauty of the park along with the need to not over develop Silver Falls: “We always have a great time being in the outdoors. Please keep the focus on nature and peaceful areas.”

All of the stakeholders asked for a coherent long-term vision for the park to ensure recreation opportunities were balanced with wise resource stewardship. One comment summed up a lot of responses about the park as the word “gem” was continually being used in reference to the park, “We loved it - it was our first time and we feel we found a gem - we have shared our good visit info with lots of friends and family.” However, a general view also held that Silver Falls needed to better serve the recreational needs of visitors and provide a stronger staff presence in the north section of the park. The newly acquired property was well received by most groups affording an opportunity for the park to better serve neighbors,
provide much needed recreation enhancements and alleviate stress on valuable natural resources in other areas of the park. There was a strong consensus that compromise was essential between the diverse group of stakeholders associated with the park for an integrated plan that guided stewardship of the outstanding natural features, protected historic sites and enhanced visitor services.

“We love the rain forest of Silver Falls, very different than other parks.”

Identifying a Master Planning Issue

Issues that can be addressed in a master planning process are reflected in the master plan goals, development concepts and/or resource management guidelines. Not every issue identified in this chapter is determined to be appropriate as a master plan goal, development concept or management guideline, therefore, the reader should not assume that all of the issues are addressed as such. Issues that cannot reasonably be addressed in the master planning process are noted and passed on for consideration in other appropriate OPRD programs.

General Parameters for Issue Scoping

Typical Most Frequently Addressed in OPRD Master Plans:

- Natural, cultural and scenic resource management
- Recreational uses and facilities
- Major partnership opportunities
- Property ownership or lease recommendations.

Issues Generally Not Addressed in OPRD Master Plans:

- Routine facility maintenance and rehabilitation
- Park fees and budgets
- Park rule enforcement
- General park administration
- Project costs and funding
- Park naming.

Summary of Issue Scoping Comments

The following is a summary of the issues and interests raised in the issue scoping process. The issues raised reflect the question or understanding of the commenter(s) and their perspectives. No attempt is made to correct any factual errors. The issues help define what should be more fully addressed in the master plan.

Trail Uses in the Parks: The need to enhance trail uses within the park was mentioned in various comments. Comments suggested improving trails on the east side of Highway 214 for hiking, biking and equestrian use. Access to trails in this area needs to be improved with better connections from the highway and park roads as between day use areas and the campgrounds. Other comments suggested improvements to the Canyon Trail asking for less formal trail surfaces, better directional signage and that path widths be kept to a minimum to protect the “natural” feel of the trail. It was also suggested that views needed to be opened up on the east side of the park. Trails that followed ridge lines were great places for viewing opportunities; formerly open areas along these ridges were now enclosed by young forest.

Local and Regional Connections: Better connections to areas outside of the park were identified including bike routes to nearby Silverton, Stayton and Sublimity. The Silver Falls Tour Route was identified as having great potential, but is currently under utilized, needs better planning and is
not very well marketed. There was also consensus that the park should work with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to provide a trail connection between Silver Falls and Shellburg Falls.

**Camping:** Most comments about camping recognize that public campgrounds are in short supply relative to demand. Many people recognized that there was limited land at the park to provide for a major expansion of camping facilities, but additions were possible in existing developed areas and the newly acquired northeast land parcel. Many comments recommended that OPRD consider opportunities to provide yurt or cabin structures. In addition, a limited number of backcountry camps were proposed for remote areas of the park. Other comments described how a camp store would better serve the public, more privacy on existing campgrounds and better shower and restroom facilities.

**Equestrian Community:** The equestrian community asked that the park retain the five primitive sites at Howard Creek Horse Camp. These were viewed as a popular location for the horse riding community, which they themselves had helped establish. In addition, there were comments asking for more horse camping sites including a ride-in camp in a remote area of the park, expanded day use areas with better access to trails, and new, as well as improved, equestrian trails on the east side of the park.

**Park Neighbors:** The adjacent landowners to the park strongly supported increasing a park presence at the north end of Silver Falls. Vandalism and theft has proved to be a problem over the last few years in this section of the park. It was pointed out that with more staff and better park facilities, this will aid in protecting both the park and surrounding land owners. The neighbors at the north end of the park asked that development respect the boundary of their properties and not to allow park developments too near their homes. Other comments included requests to improve visitor orientation and parking facilities to prevent visitors from parking on road shoulders, especially North Fork Road.

**Group Picnicking:** Group picnicking at Silver Falls is commonly booked to capacity. The need to provide more group picnicking and more picnic shelters was mentioned in several comments.

**Biking Community:** The biking community asked for better biking facilities to be developed at Silver Falls. The types of biking activities requested were storage facilities for road bikes that travel through the park, an overnight biking camp, bike rental opportunities for families to ride between trailheads, day use and overnight areas and better mountain biking trails on the east side of the park. Also, a request was made for a beginners free-style course that would compliment the expert course under construction at Shellberg Falls.

“provide a stronger staff presence in the north section of the park.”

Equestrian usage in the Howard Creek day use area (OPRD, 2007).
Swimming Facilities: Comments were received that the park could improve its swimming facilities, especially at the South Falls day use area where a long, asphalt pad currently serves as a “beach-style access” to the dammed area of the creek.

Interpretation: OPRD has developed a Regional Interpretive Framework for the state park system. This document identifies Silver Falls State Park as a key location for orienting visitors and interpreting resources related to the natural and cultural history of the region. In addition, an opportunity exists to interpret more of the natural and cultural resources found throughout the park. Other comments described a need for more interpretation in relation to the trails system and other day use areas. However, it was also noted that some areas should be specifically designed not to have interpretation; these areas would be for decompression away from an overload of information. The South Falls Lodge and the North Falls Meeting Hall were described as places where interpretation should not take place. There was also discussion about interpretive themes at Silver Falls. Many comments were made regarding the need for guided tours along the trails and better interpretive brochures. Requests were made for more programs and activities that catered to children and youth groups.

The idea of a new interpretive and event center was discussed and a majority stated that the historic district in the South Falls day use area was the best place for a building. It was suggested the center be medium size and focus on the work of the CCC. It was also noted the location is good for exploring the wealth of nearby natural resources, especially South Falls waterfall. The majority of comments covered eight major themes including the waterfalls, old-growth forest, wildlife, early conservation work, Native American, early homesteaders, the logging industry, as well as the CCC work in the park. Some noted that the themes were so interrelated they should not be explained separately. For instance, one comment noted that after logging in the 19th Century, the CCC workforce planted over one million trees in the park and this is now valuable habitat for northern spotted owl.

Access and Circulation: It was agreed by all that there is a need to improve arrival, orientation and access at Silver Falls. The majority of comments focused on the lack of visible boundary signs for the park, where to go for information and registration and, once in parking lots, where to go for various attractions and trails. Some comments indicated that even the waterfalls are hard to find and that other attractive areas of the park, especially on the east side, are difficult to access. It was noted that there was a need to better define park entrances, day use areas, remodel road intersections and improve parking opportunities, as well as provide more trailheads. There was a feeling that the park should also provide alternative forms of transport including shuttles and rental bikes. Also, there was a request for better universal access trails, with the North Falls noted as a potential location to provide universal access to a waterfall from the North Falls parking lot.

The difficulty in visitors orientating themselves while in the park was also noted. Trails need signage and maps to better inform users of where they are in the park, how they can get to a destination, and what they will find at that destination. However, it was also noted that sightlines, enhanced trailheads, improved circulation and a more cohesive signage system
would also benefit orientation, especially if combined with better maps and orientation signage.

**Concessions in the Park:** There were numerous comments indicating the need for a park store that could sell a range of basic items including newspapers, camping accessories, interpretive materials, snacks, maps and postcards. This store would serve the overnight users and day users alike. The currently under-used Log Cabin was noted as a good location for such a store. There were also comments regarding the food served at the park. Comments described the current food arrangement as adequate, but other comments noted that there was a need for improved food services including gourmet coffee and snacks. It was suggested this could be in the form of a bistro-style café either at the new north entrance to the park or at South Falls day use area. There was consensus that the current snack cart at South Falls day use area also needs to be replaced with a more permanent structure.

**At-risk Species:** The diverse ecology of the study area provides habitat for several rare species. The park is large enough to provide potential habitat for a variety of rare plant and animal species. The habitat for species “listed” as threatened or endangered under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts is especially important for the northern spotted owl.

**Ecological Restoration Interests:** While recognizing that this is a heavily used state park and that the demand for recreational facilities is increasing, there are several plant communities that are worth protecting and managing to develop into late seral communities. These communities are grassland, wetland/riparian communities or older Douglas fir and Western hemlock forests. These areas are biologically appropriate for restoration activities. Primarily, the grassland environment at The Ranches, as well as the old-growth and medium age forest on the east side of the park. Additionally, while the newly acquired northeast and northwest land parcels are highly disturbed from clear cutting and commercial Christmas tree farming, there are communities worth conserving on these sites as well. By protecting and enhancing the stream corridors and wetlands on these parcels, it will further enhance the drainages in and upstream from the park. There is also an opportunity to provide migratory corridors for wildlife species, especially in sections of the park that contain young coniferous forests; managing some of the areas to create wildlife corridors and grazing areas would benefit diversity in the park. There are also several forested areas remaining on the new land parcels that would be worth managing to promote transition to later seral stages.

**Invasive Species:** Many areas within the study area are dominated by non-native species that are of concern to OPRD. Several of the plant communities in the park are dominated by species such as Scotch broom, Himalayan blackberry, or evergreen blackberry. Because these areas are so dominated by invasive species, it makes sense to try an eradication program to reduce significant seed sources. Scotch broom can be removed by pulling young plants, cutting older plants to the ground and then spot applying an herbicide such as Roundup. Herbaceous areas could also be burned in a controlled manner to control invasive species. Cutting and spot applying herbicide over a three-year period can remove blackberries. Blackberry thickets in significant concentrations could also be burned. In several areas of the park, invasive species only have significant concentrations in a small, defined area, primarily patches of Scotch broom. These areas should also be managed before they dominate the native plant community.

**Historic Sites:** The subject of homesteading, logging and the CCC work at the park was also discussed. The neighbors asked that the homesteading history at Silver Falls be better expressed, especially at the north end of the park. They asked that orchard trees within the park are preserved and could be replanted on the newly acquired land parcels. The work of the CCC was also seen as something that needs to be appreciated better and that the park needs to tell the story better of their history and the buildings and structures that resulted from their efforts.
**Archeological Sites:** Archeological investigations in the past have identified evidence of prehistoric human occupation in the park. Furthermore, based upon recent developments in understanding settlement patterns, OPRD’s archaeologist has identified areas of study that may reveal more potentially significant sites. Under state law, information regarding archeological sites is confidential, not intended for general public disclosure.

“We loved it - it was our first time and we feel we found a gem - we have shared information on our visit with lots of friends and family.”

**Park Administration:** Staff stated the current administration building also does not meet park needs. The existing administration office is in the old caretaker’s residence where conditions are cramped and there is no storage area or a large meeting room. On the newly acquired northeast land parcel, a house has been identified that would serve as a headquarters for the park if it was rehabilitated. It was noted that a compatible adaptive use would need to be found for the old caretaker’s residence. With the need for staff housing identified, comments indicated this building would be a good location for future permanent staff house. Also, an improved maintenance yard and shop is needed to better serve the park.

**Existing Facility Rehabilitation, Changes and Upgrades:** Comments from OPRD staff indicated various existing park facilities that need rehabilitation or upgrading to function appropriately. In addition, several of the park use areas could benefit from the addition of accessory facilities or other minor changes. Such changes can generally be implemented without mention in a park master plan.
Below is an overview of general issue scoping comments for Silver Falls:

- Consider the potential for a new day use area at the north end of the park to better serve visitor needs with the potential to cover campground registration/day use fee collection.

- The local community and visitors need facilities and activity areas that can accommodate their needs. Investigate the potential of providing better day use opportunities that can accommodate their needs more efficiently and with a greater capacity (for instance, consider adding more picnic shelters). Also, reevaluate existing developed areas to maximize their use and meet existing and future recreation trends.

- It is essential to keep in mind that despite the size of the park the important natural and cultural resources contained therein will still limit development. The park has a maximum carrying capacity, especially regarding parking areas and overnight accommodations and this must be recognized. Recognizing the carrying capacity will aid resource protection and help retain the park’s vitality.

- Examine the administration and operational needs of the park including potential for a new headquarters building that will better serve the public. Also consider a new maintenance facility that will improve operations. Also consider new or improved staff housing for permanent and seasonal staff.

- Some of these issues will involve rethinking the current organization of park circulation. Consider reworking the highway intersections at the north and central entrances to solve traffic problems and create a sense of arrival. Also consider the potential for improving the turnouts and overlooks in the park, with attention paid to creating a cohesive set of day use areas that accommodate all types of needs and provide access to areas appropriate for recreation.
VIII. GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This chapter establishes OPRD's goals and strategies for development and management of the parks in the planning area. The goals and strategies are based on consideration of the resource suitability assessments, recreation needs assessment, and evaluation of the issues identified in the master planning process and summarized in this master plan. Below is a summary of the major goals and strategies:

Goal 1: Preserve and rehabilitate outstanding cultural and scenic resources.
Goal 2: Conserve and restore outstanding natural resources.
Goal 3: Provide new and enhance existing recreation opportunities and experiences.
Goal 4: Promote public understanding and enjoyment through resource interpretation.
Goal 5: Provide for cohesive, safe, efficient, identifiable and pleasant access and circulation.
Goal 6: Provide for adequate management, maintenance, rehabilitation and park operations.
Goal 7: Form partnerships and agreements to aid in achieving goals.

Goal 1: Rehabilitate and protect outstanding cultural resources

Civilian Conservation Corp's (CCC) work and Rustic Park Planning: 1931-1972

Built by the Civilian Conservation Corp's (CCC), the inspiring cultural heritage in the park not only has to be preserved to retain its historic character, but also managed to retain the vitality of the park through the wide range of recreational opportunities available to the public. This is vital for Silver Falls; to recognize the work of the CCC and their built legacy, yet realize the park is also historically significant for the way in which it was master planned. The NPS style of master planning from the 1930s, referred to as the “golden era,” in park design in the United States, relied on a comprehensive approach that led to a unified design, which emphasized the blending of built features with their surrounding environment. This approach called for flexibility in the way day use and overnight areas met visitor needs. Features could be altered, removed or added to accommodate emerging visitor needs, yet the park as a whole was held within a cohesive framework that retained the unique character of the rustic style, which was so popular in its day and with future generations.

Protecting all of the park’s cultural resources will require the establishment of stewardship guidelines. Silver Falls is acknowledged as one of the best examples in the country of early park planning and design that followed a philosophy referred to as the rustic or naturalistic style. Unique to Silver Falls State Park is that the CCC approach to park facility design is still alive today including the legacy of applied craftsmanship, the use of sustainable materials and the attempt to blend built features into their surrounding. This ethic is displayed today in the rustic style and naturalistic approach applied to park facilities and landscaping by the maintenance staff including restoration of a rustic style kitchen shelter, a naturalistic style planting scheme for the historic meadow in the South Falls day use area, the maintenance of historic views from the south falls overlook to the waterfall and the new compatible entrance to the park at the south overlook. Therefore, the planning philosophy from the 1930s has been kept alive by park staff and is continually applied to facility improvements and new developments. In effect, the historic period never ended and this park still embodies and applies the rustic and naturalistic approach to park planning and management developed in the 1930s. Continuing this legacy will require that the institutional
knowledge of the staff is passed on to the next generation of employees at Silver Falls. The historic boundary should be extended to encompass all aspects of historic master planning for the park including roads, overlooks, turnouts, Smith Creek Conference Center, Canyon Trail, CCC forest plantations, and a larger area around the South Falls day use area. The recent cultural landscape report noted that although the buildings in the park and a portion of the landscape were on the National Register of Historic Places, the boundary needs to be extended to cover large portions of the park that were omitted from the original nomination. The State Historic Preservation Office agrees with the findings in this document including the boundary extension to encompass the areas described in the report. There needs to be a comprehensive set of guidelines developed for the cultural landscape that ensure the historic features and character areas are preserved. Where the integrity of the cultural landscape is diminished or there is a need for a new feature (facility, universal access path, additional parking etc.), rehabilitation guidelines should be established to ensure all modifications to the landscapes historic character are compatible.

The park was designed with a dual mandate; to provide visitors with a wide variety of recreational activities and protect the outstanding natural features they had come to see. In carrying out the design for the park, CCC workers constructed Silver Falls in the classic rustic style that is a trademark of early park design in this country. Silver Falls, along with Timberline Lodge, Honeyman Memorial State Park and Crater Lake National Park, are the best surviving examples of Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) built parks in Oregon. The rustic stone work and axe-cut wood used in construction of the buildings, walls and shelters created a back drop that complemented the impressive natural setting that included access to dense forest, canyons, ridges and of course, the waterfalls. Protecting and rehabilitating the outstanding cultural resources in the park is a major goal of the master plan and will ensure modern developments are sympathetic to their surroundings.

Silver Falls City, Logging, Trains, Homesteading and Orchards – 1850 to 1930

The falls of Silver Creek have been a popular outdoor destination for Oregon’s residents since statehood. During this Silver Falls City Era in 1865 and again in 1886, two large fires burned though most of the forest within the current boundaries of Silver Falls State Park. The fires and excessive logging in the Silver Creek watershed left a greater impression on the landscape than the small town that sprang up near South Falls around 1890.

This Era begins roughly at the beginning of pioneer settlement in the vicinity of Silver Creek and ends when the Oregon State Highway Commission purchased the land around South Falls in 1931. This period is intended to capture the era of development that was centered around Silver Falls City, a small town that was platted in 1888. The town site was organized around a county road that crossed the South Fork of Silver Creek a few hundred feet above South Falls. The center of Silver Falls City was located in the main parking area of the South Falls day use area, and was supported economically by logging and to a lesser degree by farming. At the end of the Silver Falls City Era, the town was largely abandoned and people came to the area to see South Falls, paying a ten cent admission fee to the owner of the falls D.E. Geiser.

Native American Presence – Prehistory to Current Day

The traditional cultural values of the landscape within the park are not fully understood and need to be identified by OPRD to ensure their ongoing protection. The park is considered to be a traditional cultural property that retains spiritual value by the tribes including the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.
Goal 2: Protect and restore outstanding natural and scenic resources

In creating Silver Falls large areas of logged and marginal land were reforested, drainages were protected, and patches of old-growth were retained; conserving, enhancing and restoring these areas will require wise stewardship.

1. Silver Falls is the largest forest in the State Park system. It has cultural resource values as a large portion of the existing forest was planted by CCC as part of an ecological restoration project for the area and it also is viewed as an increasingly rare habitat island in the lower foothills of the western Cascades. Therefore, there needs to be an approach to stewardship of the park’s resources that can address both. Developing clear boundaries for the natural areas that need to be conserved will ensure these areas are easily identified and protected from future development. When Silver Falls was created in the 1930s, the east side of the park was a massive restoration project centered around small areas of old-growth forest. Today, this section of the park is still managed to encourage old-growth and this philosophy will be continued. In addition, the park will encourage more wildlife corridors along the east boundary that will provide a more diverse habitat for wildlife. The west side of the park, including the Canyon Trail and the lower reaches of the Silver Creek drainage (within the park boundary), need to be better managed from a natural resource perspective. The Canyon Trail brings visitors into a fragile habitat and should be maintained to minimize impairment of the surrounding natural resources.

2. Locate and design recreational uses and facilities to avoid significant impacts on important natural resources. The assessments of resource suitability prepared for this master plan will serve as a guide for the selection of sites and design standards. Development plans will be prepared that describe and illustrate the locations, sizes and types of proposed facilities and any related measures that are needed to enhance, protect or mitigate impacts on important natural resources.

3. The natural areas need reinforcement and enhancement of the stewardship guidelines ensuring the health of the plant communities. There are a number of natural areas in the park that are threatened by a variety of issues. These issues include the open area where forest is encroaching on native grasslands, maturating trees planted en-masse in the 1930s that are thwarting the development of a diverse age mix in the forest, and the management of the buffer areas between the natural and developed areas.

4. There is a need to expand the scope of work to identify all of the potential habitats for at-risk species found within the park boundary. This necessitates the list of at-risk species is updated and a plan for monitoring these species is more fully developed. In addition OPRD will need to work with interested agencies to protect at-risk species habitats, and identify opportunities to improve key habitats to assist with species survival and recovery. The known sensitive species that are in transition therefore need constant monitoring and the program should be expanded to complete an exhaustive survey targeted at identifying potential species.

5. A program for controlling exotic plants at Silver Falls needs to be developed in-line with regional policy, as well as ensuring that conflicts with cultural resource values placed upon certain species, is resolved. A recent vegetation survey for Silver Falls identified invasive exotic species found within the park boundary. Plants such as Himalayan blackberry (Rubus discolor) and Scotch broom (Cytisis scoparius) are highly invasive and have established themselves in the newly acquired land parcels, as well as at The Ranches. OPRD needs to respond to this challenge and is beginning to develop a parkwide program to manage invasive exotic species.

6. One important aspect of visiting the park is the views of some of the major features at Silver Falls. These views range from panoramas,
encompassing the broad landscape, to directed vistas of waterfalls or rustic style buildings. The issue arises when the maturing forest obscures the views, the focus of the view has been lost over time, or the viewing point itself has been removed. Major views are seen from planned overlooks (sometimes referred to as viewpoints), along trails, from buildings, and in developed areas. These views can be panoramic or framed and both direct the visitor to a major feature, be it cultural or natural. The park needs to review whether more of these view areas need to be designed, if current viewing areas no longer apply and could be better placed, or if current viewpoints can be enhanced.

Goal 3: Enhance recreation opportunities and experience

Provide visitors to Silver Falls with a wealth of new and enhanced recreational experiences. The size and diversity of Silver Falls makes the park an excellent location for a wide variety of recreational activities. The park is often referred to as a “gem” and OPRD strives to provide a variety of recreation opportunities that are consistent with its mission and role as a recreation provider in this green island. Development or rehabilitation of recreational facilities will be guided by indicators of need, the recreation settings, resource suitability, and the capacity of the park to accommodate use without overcrowding, degradation of recreation experience, or conflicts with other uses.

The need for enhancing and increasing day use experiences for park visitors is recognized, but some of the future activities can be anticipated. This is based on the anticipated increase in demand for recreation and recognizing the park needs to meet future visitor expectations. The anticipated increase in future demand for recreational activities includes activities such as picnicking, hiking, biking, heritage tourism, and back country camping. Fulfilling this need will meet Goal 2 of OPRD’s Target 2014 initiative; “promote outdoor recreation in Oregon.”

1. Park staff and surveys have indicated an emerging trend with a high demand for more picnicking facilities in parks. Silver Falls will provide these facilities to enhance picnicking opportunities, especially group picnicking, and related outdoor games.
   - Picnicking facilities can be improved to attract more use and bring back this traditional activity. This can be achieved by expanding the picnic areas at South Falls day use area and adding new picnic facilities at the North Falls parking lot, the new North Falls day use area, the new parking area that provides access to the Winter Falls trailhead and at the Smith Creek Conference Center, as well as discrete locations along the Canyon Trail.
   - Group picnicking and general group day use is growing in demand and includes groups of many sizes. Therefore, provide more group picnicking opportunities at South Falls day use area and North Falls day use area.

2. The current number of sites for traditional forms of camping in the park is too low. Additional traditional camping can be provided without impacting the natural and cultural resources at Silver Falls. However, the locations for camping need to make use of existing developed areas or the newly acquired land parcel in the north of the park.
park. Discrete areas in the east of the park not easily accessed offer potential for nontraditional forms of camping. Meeting this demand for “varied, high-quality overnight experiences” will fulfill Goal 7 of OPRD’s Target 2014 initiative.

- Continue the camping provided at the current campground and provide additional camping to double the number of current campsites. Moving the maintenance yard to the newly acquired northeast land parcel will allow for the development of a campground in this location.

- Amenities at the existing campground need to be updated and expanded where possible. Improve the experience at the campground with the construction of a new amphitheater and parking area that better meets the needs of the visitor. This needs to be located in a central location. Also, consider adding a new playground near the amphitheater.

- Develop primitive walk-in campsites in the remote east sections of the park to support the use of the perimeter trail.

- Retain the five existing equestrian campsites at Howard Creek. Provide additional sites at the newly acquired northeast land parcel, as well as a concession-run riding facility. Also, add a small ride-in camp, accessible from the day use parking area, near the south entrance to the park.

- Provide group camping facilities that will meet the needs of visitors who RV and tent camp. The newly acquired northeast parcel of land affords the best opportunity to meet this need.

- Explore alternatives for developing more camping facilities outside of the park by working with other agencies and local private groups. Potential sites, located outside of the existing state park, have been identified for further study. These other sites are discussed in the “Areas of Interest” chapter.

3. Expand and improve alternative overnight opportunities in the park.

- Winterize and add adequate shower/toilet facilities at the Old Ranch. Rehabilitating this popular building will ensure that The Ranches remains a great location where groups could gather in a peaceful and remote location within the park.

- Provide new cabins or small lodges at Howard Creek. When the park was built in the 1930s this portion of the park was set aside for mixed overnight use, particularly with families in mind. Currently there are five primitive equestrian sites that will be retained. The day use horse staging area and the horse riding concession will be moved to new locations. The new cabins will be built within resource constraints.

- Enhance retreat uses at the conference center to provide improved meeting spaces, additional capacity for dining, more parking spaces, increase overnight accommodations, and improved recreation opportunities including a recreation building, picnic shelter and barbecue. The wetlands around the site will limit development and the significant cultural resources require that new designs blend with the existing rustic style. In addition, the historic landscape will be restored to convey the principle of naturalistic design that call for the blending of buildings into the landscape and the creation of sightlines between the major features.

- The youth camp is an outstanding cultural resource, possibly the best existing Recreational Development Youth Camp in the US. The camp functions as it always has and needs some important enhancements if it is to continue functioning (it has been in continuous use as a youth camp since the day it opened in 1937). These changes include a new meeting hall, extending the dining hall, relocating the swimming pool, adding new shower blocks and restoring the historic
landscape. Also, the central core of buildings needs to be winterized to extend the shoulder season use of this camp.

4. Design recreation facilities to accommodate universal access. Also, explore opportunities to provide special accommodations in excess of minimum universal access opportunities.

- Consider universal access needs especially in developed areas such as the South Falls day use area and the new North Falls day use area and campgrounds. In addition, developed the North Falls parking lot to meet all universal access needs including a trail that will access the Upper North Falls. Consider improvements for: parking, sidewalks, trails, picnic tables, and site furniture (signs, drinking fountains, etc.).

- Consider universal access to park trails activities on the east side of the park for varying levels of access, especially sport wheelchairs.

5. Support swimming activity at South Falls day use area. Improve swimming area by replacing the asphalt shore along the edge of creek with a durable, but less heat absorbent material.

6. Support biking opportunities in the park for a variety of users. This will include new and enhanced mountain biking opportunities on the east side of the park. Also provide rental bikes at the new North Falls day use area and the South Falls day use area. Create opportunities for families to cycle along multi-use trails from the campgrounds to a centrally located amphitheater. Ensure that road bikers are able to stop at the park and store their bike if they wish to go for a hike or enjoy day use facilities. Provide a free style bike course for beginners at the newly acquired northeast land parcel. In addition, a new biking event will be held annually at the park each spring to bring together all types of biking enthusiasts within the community.

7. Support equestrian opportunities in the park including improvements to the trails on the east side of Highway 214. Also, provide a short riding trail at the newly acquired northeast land parcel. The new concession facility will also be located on this newly acquired land.

8. The park will continue to serve the local community and support community events in the park.

- Understanding local community needs and whether these needs are being met will ensure the park serves a very important stakeholder. Silver Falls is a neighborhood park for the residents of Silverton, Sublimity and Stayton. The park will continue to provide for activities such as group picnicking facilities and the swimming area. Also consider improving connections between the park and the residents of Silverton (other than by car). Silverton is a one-hour bike ride from the park and here is also potential to provide a shuttle service between the park and the town.

- The park will continue to support and provide for events such as the Mothers Day, Al Faussett Day and Holiday events. It will also continue to hold the trail running race, family reunions, day meetings and other types of services for the local community.
Goal 4: Promote public awareness, understanding and enjoyment through resource interpretation

Silver Fall’s past is significant and well documented; can we share that past with a wider audience? There is a good understanding of how the historic landscape at Silver Falls evolved and what remains from that past, however this past is only currently known by a handful of individuals. Sharing the natural and cultural heritage of Silver Falls with a wider audience is important to preserving the ecosystems including the old-growth and canyons with their outstanding waterfalls, as well as preserving the legacy of the CCC, and educating Oregonians about their shared past. The major development concepts relating to the park’s natural and cultural significance include:

1. Sharing and interpreting park history with a wider audience: The variety of classic CCC construction work and landscaping at Silver Falls makes it a great place for interpretation. The historic features are too numerous to mention. Some of the highlights include the South Falls Lodges, the Silver Creek Youth Camp, the naturalistic rock work that carved trails behind the waterfalls, the Canyon Trail, the meadow areas at Smith Creek and South Falls, the rustic bathrooms and the reforested area on the east side of the park. It is commonly known that these areas and features were built by the CCC, what is less well-known is the master planning that went into designing and laying out these areas in the 1930s. It is the legacy of the historic master planning combined with the craftsmanship of the CCC that make Silver Fall’s historic landscape significant. Interpreting the resources at Silver Falls in a moderately sized interpretive building is crucial to meeting Goal 5 in OPRD’s Target 2014 initiative. This goal states OPRD’s need to “deliver world-class experiences to park visitors.”

2. Environmental Education: The interpretive and event center can also serve to interpret the natural resources found in and around the park, especially for school groups with environmental education programs. To meet this need hiking trails will be developed that connect the interpretive center with the resources including the creek adjacent to the proposed building, a wooded trail and South Falls itself. These trails will also include short loop trails for younger students and longer options that are beneficial for older students and adult groups. Ideally, the environmental education programs will take place with 15 to 30 students in a group with the interpreter. The kitchen shelter and picnic shelters near the interpretive center will provide lunch spots for school groups, as well as additional meeting space in good weather.

3. Interpretation of the natural and cultural resources at Silver Falls is a recognized need; how should this occur? Selecting the right themes and how they are communicated to the public will require input from many sources to provide the world-class experience that the park should deliver. Using the selected themes, stories will effectively convey these concepts. Communicating the stories will require a strategy to identify the delivery of the message including Ranger led programs, panels, handheld devices, brochures, junior ranger programs, etc. What also needs to be more clearly defined is the form that interpretation should take, be it in the interpretation center, at an exhibit in the headquarters building, at the new amphitheater, along a trail, at a viewpoint or in the historic developed area. Guided by the schematic designs provided in this master plan and in the interpretive plan, OPRD’s interpretive program will further develop the interpretive themes at Silver Falls.

4. Create a coordinated approach to interpretation along trails including interpretive trails that are typically ¼ to ½ mile loops and long distance trails with interpretive stops. The larger trails network can be utilized to provide a coordinated series of interpretive stops that will educate the visitor about the rich heritage and outstanding natural resources at the park.
Goal 5: Provide for good access and circulation with identifiable, pleasant, safe and case-sensitive designs.

The development of recreation facilities will include a system of roads and trails that are safe, sensitive to the surroundings, identifiable and pleasant to the visitors. Entering and moving through the park can prove to be a difficult and sometimes disorienting experience. The north entrance is not clearly defined at the boundary. With the highway dividing the park, entrances to the overnight and day use areas are not clearly defined and can also disorient visitors, unsure which side of the park to enter. Defining access and enhancing visitor orientation will also go towards meeting OPRD’s Target 2014 initiative by improving “customer service.”

1. The three major entrances into the park are along Highway 214. The first is at the south entrance. This entrance has recently been redesigned to provide a parking area where visitors can enjoy views of the Willamette Valley. The large compatible rustic entrance sign also marks the boundary to show visitors they are entering the park along Highway 214. The central entrance is a four-way intersection with access to South Falls day use area on the west side and the east side providing access to the major overnight areas, youth camp and conference center. The north entrance to the park is not clearly defined, except for small entrance signs. Inside the park there are a number of smaller day use areas that are in the form of trailheads and overlooks. Over the years these entrances and day use areas have been modified; no longer forming a cohesive whole and often disorienting visitors due to the lack of information regarding what they can do or where they can go once the stop at these areas. There is a need to reorganize the entrances for safe access to the park and redesign entry signage that enhances the gateway experience for the visitor, as well as to recreate a cohesive set of trailheads and overlooks along Highway 214 and inside the park roads. Working with Marion County and ODOT it will be possible to identify and implement case sensitive design measures to help manage traffic flow issues in this area and undesignated parking along Highway 214.

- Improve the central entrance to the park by removing the current exit road on the east side and redesigning the four-way intersection. OPRD will work with ODOT to examine whether the intersection should be a standard intersection of a single lane round-about (a single lane round-about is the safest form of intersection and also the most friendly to bicycles).
- Rehabilitate the Winter Falls parking lot to provide temporary parking only. Construct a new parking lot for 40 spaces one-quarter mile up the highway where there are better sight lines. Across the road will be another new parking area, again for 40 vehicles, that will provide improved access to the east side trails for hiking, biking and equestrian use.
- Enhance the North Falls Overlook to provide more clearly delineated parking areas, a walkway, stone wall edge, a viewing area, interpretive signage and restoration of the historic viewshed.
- Redesign the North Falls parking area to provide universal access for seven vehicles. This parking area will serve as a new universal

View from the recently improved South Viewpoint (OPRD, 2007).
access trailhead that will lead to Upper North Falls. New universal bathrooms, picnicking facilities and signage will also be added. In addition, the area will be enhanced with designed native plantings.

- Enhance the South parking area to provide a site for an equestrian host camp and maximize parking spaces. This parking area will also serve as the new trailhead for the ride-in equestrian camp.

- Redesign the parking area west of The Ranches on the Silver Creek Youth Camp Road. This parking area will provide additional access to the east side trails for horse riding, biking and hiking.

- Plant, remove and prune designed landscape areas where needed, to beautify roads and parking areas, retain scenic views, and provide visual buffers within the park.

- Develop an orientation and wayfinding map/brochure is a critical strategy for providing good access and circulation.

2. Make full use of hiking opportunities by providing a rich trail experience that caters to a variety of users. Consider a trails plan that includes design of new trails, assessment of current trails, and long-term maintenance issues. Achieving this will meet Goal 2 of OPRD’s Target 2014 initiative to: “Promote outdoor recreation in Oregon.” This can include, but is not limited to:

- Redefining and improving the trail system. Install adequate signage for trail orientation. Add structural trail improvements where needed. Add new trails where desirable and feasible. Relocate certain trails where needed to address site issues or avoid redundancy.

- Enhance existing trails in and between developed areas for greater connectivity, reducing pressure on overused areas and providing small loop hikes.

- Consider longer hiking loops through undeveloped areas of the park. Historically, there were trails around the park. These trails are now overgrown, but afford a potential route through the natural areas. In addition, consider new trail that will meet equestrian, biking and hiking needs. With connections to existing trails and enhanced directional and interpretive signage there is potential to create a comprehensive trail system with routes varying between 1 to 12 miles in length. Hiking through the natural areas in the park has the potential to provide some very scenic routes with amazing views not only of the waterfalls, but from ridges, inside the forest, along creeks and across meadows.

- Consider long-term and annual maintenance issues, as well as funding issues, using national organizations and adopt a trail group to help with development and maintenance (for example, biking community, equestrian community, scout groups, and Appalachian trail group).

3. Encourage a shuttle service that will provide an alternative form of transport between the day use areas, trailheads, overlooks, conference center, youth camp and overnight areas. Experiment with shuttle uses during peak periods to avoid traffic congestion, lessen parking pressure and reduce carbon monoxide emissions. Arrangements can be worked out for central drop off and pickup locations between the major sites. Also, explore using the shuttle for OPRD employee uses, major park events and sharing the vehicle with other parks when appropriate.

4. Provide a welcome area at the central entrance to the park that provides information, registration and orientation. A visitor center and public information building and associated parking at the central entrance will increase visitor understanding of the park, both in terms of its amenities on offer and how to access them. Road realignments will be needed to make this concept work and it will also have to be phased to tie in with current registration facilities. When the welcome center is built, the existing structure can be relocated to the South Falls day use entrance. The new
parking for the welcome center can also be used as parking for the new amphitheater, especially for evening programs.

5. Provide better access controls as needed along major park roads or at major access areas. Install gates where needed to keep unauthorized vehicles out.

**Goal 6: Provide for adequate management, maintenance, rehabilitation and park operations.**

The park needs to ensure that administrative and maintenance operations can meet the future needs of visitors, maintain more facilities and continually maintain/manage the significant natural and cultural resources.

- Relocate the existing maintenance facility to the newly acquired northeast land parcel. This new facility will have easy access off Highway 214 that will require no mitigation. The facility will include a new building that can handle all of the parks maintenance needs and provide adequate parking. In addition, the adjacent barn and surrounding area can also be used as a storage area.

- The current headquarters, in an old caretaker residence, does not meet park needs. This is a very important issue that needs to be fully addressed as the future of the park lies in the hands of those who care for it. Relocate the headquarters into the existing building on the newly acquired northeast land parcel. The new building can also serve as a welcome center for overnight group and day use visitors.

- There is a need for seasonal and staff housing in the park. With a need for permanent staff houses and a dorm that will accommodate seasonal staff. Consider locating these structures on the site of the newly acquired northeast land parcel. Also rehabilitate the old caretaker residence so that it can be used as staff housing.

- In allocating state park operational and facility investment funds, provide adequate support for the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing buildings, roads, trails and utilities, and provide an adequate level of oversight and enforcement in the parks, especially in the north section where vandalism and theft are a concern of neighbors.

- Recreational activities and facilities will be managed, maintained, rehabilitated and operated as needed for the safety, satisfaction and enjoyment of the visitors and local citizens.

- Develop a maintenance and management plan for the trail system. Work with hiking, biking and equestrian groups in developing and implementing the plan.

- Develop a preservation maintenance and management plan for the historic areas within the park. Work with local universities and historic groups in developing and implementing the plan.
Goal 7: Form partnerships and agreements to aid in achieving goals.

The preceding goals refer to projects that may require agreements with other agencies and interest groups for implementation. OPRD will work with interested agencies and organizations to formulate or update agreements as appropriate for park development and management projects. OPRD will:

- Work with ODF, BLM, County and other interested groups on feasible projects for the creation of new local and regional trail links, ecosystem resources and habitats of conservation concern. For instance there needs to be a trail connection between Shellburg Falls and Silver Falls State Park. Also, work with appropriate partners to pursue scenic highway and scenic biking routes between Silverton area, Mt. Angel, Sublimity, Stayton and Highway 22 corridor. Consider including the Silver Falls Tour route as part of this project to enhance this route and take better advantage of tourism opportunities.

- Work with friends group to collaborate on interpretive services and recreation opportunities as well as advocating for park projects.

- Work with neighboring landowners and affected land management agencies to control invasive species.

- Work with other agencies and interest groups to restore and conserve important riparian and forest areas within the park boundary.

- Pursue partnerships or acquisitions to provide additional mature forest habitat within the Silver Creek and Smith Creek watershed by pursuing partnerships with or encouraging adjacent private forestland owners to provide more dispersed recreation opportunities for the public.

- Work with appropriate partners to explore any needed changes to existing lease agreements that would enable or facilitate improved management of recreation activities or provide greater flexibility to enter into partnerships for resource management within the lease areas.