

## PEAR Team Meeting 10 – Meeting Notes– March 27, 2024 12-2 pm

### Welcome & Icebreaker – Janette 12:05 pm

Icebreaker asking the group to respond to the prompt below.

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- Favorite emoji or dessert
- (In the chat) How would you define Interpretation?

### Facilitators Present:

Janette Chien, she/her, State Parks DEI Director

### PEAR Team Present:

Reco Bembry, he/him, President Big Tent Coalition

Jeff Vassallo, he/him, Parks Area Manager

Stacey Coltrain, she/her, Ranger 1 Sequim Bay & Ramble wood Retreat Center

Curt Fackler, he/him, Campground Host WA & AZ

Cassandra Alarcon, she/her, Parks Admin Assistant 3 Operations Division

Mary Brown, she/her, Seattle Guide Manager

Denice Rochelle, she/her, Bronze Chapter

Lynn Makowsky, Project Specialist 2 Spokane

Alyssa Smith, she/her, Boating Education Specialist/Life Jacket Loaner Program

Clare Delong, she/her, Parks Communications Director

Robin Waldroop, she/her, Community Member

Natasha House, she/her, Deputy Director Administrative Services

### Observers Present:

Tonna Jensen Sigler, she/her, State Parks Administrative Assistant

Emily Jacobs, she/her, Parks Interpretation Program Manager

Heather Carrington, Parks Administrative Assistant 2 Central Lakes

Michelle Burke, she/her, State Parks Property & Acquisition Specialist

Heidi Olmstead, Community Member

Kelsie Mullin, Birch Bay & Larrabee State Park

Edmond Lee, community member, retired from State service,

### Agenda

Janette welcomed the group at 12:05 and reminded the group we will record the presentation portion of the meeting. Janette reminded the team of our community norms that we came up with as a group. We can work to support one another to be accountable for these norms. Please reach out if you would like to make any adjustments to these community norms.

Janette welcomed our new members including parks staff Alyssa Smith, Natasha House, and community member Robin Waldrop. Each member was invited to introduce themselves and share what brought them to the PEAR Team.

Alyssa Smith, Works in the Recreational Boating Safety Program. She is a Boating Education Specialist and manages the Life Jacket Loaner Program. She is dedicated to making these programs more accessible, inclusive and equitable.

Natasha House has participated in DEI work at other State Agencies. She has a passion for the work and believes in improving it in all areas of our agency.

Robin Waldrop from Kitsap County believes in inclusion and believes in the DEI philosophy. She was raised on a State Park in Washington.

Janette started the meeting with our check-in, reviewed the agenda and shared that we have Emily Jacobs the Interpretive Program Manager with us today.

- Equity Impact Review (EIR) Topic: **Interpretation**
  - Small group discussion
- Updates
  - DEI Consultant job posting
  - Everyone Outdoors
- Closing

Janette prompted the group with a warmup question to answer in the chat. How would you describe Interpretation?

- Telling a story of a place
- Conveying a message
- Interactive education
- Breaking down a message or history into smaller pieces
- representation or perspective of something
- A way to tell a story of a place or resource in a way to educate and protect these places/resources.
- education, a kind of translation of complex concepts?

- sharing information about a subject through differentiated approach and being receptive to input from communities/stakeholders
- Making information available
- Point of view from a certain person with that shares their experiences or ideas.
- Interpretation is like storytelling, you are providing information about resources.
- Contextualizing a place to enhance the experience
- Point of view
- Engaging the public with a space
- Interpretation - leading and providing guidance regarding persons, places, or things, providing expertise and knowledge, guidance,,,,,
- Stories about the land and area and history. Education about the land and area. Interaction with the public on land and area.
- defining in various circumstances

### Equity Impact Review (EIR) Interpretation

Janette welcomed Emily Jacobs, the Interpretive Program Manager. Emily Jacobs has been an interpreter for over twenty-five years, working as a seasonal Park Ranger with the NPS, an instructor at an outdoor science school, and a naturalist at a nature center. More recently, she managed an interpretive program in Yosemite, reaching tens of thousands of visitors a year. She is a Certified Interpretive Trainer and a Certified Interpretive Guide. She holds a Master of Science in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Interpretation/Environmental Education from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. Prior to working for Parks, she spent the last decade as the Certification and Training Program Manager for the National Association for Interpretation. Since 2022, she has been the Interpretive Program Manager—overseeing and coordinating the interpretive program statewide. When Emily is not on the road, she and her husband love to play outside with their dogs and ride their road bikes just about anywhere.

Emily shared that she is delighted to be here to talk about Washington State Park Interpretation. The Interpretive program is within our Operations Division and has two arms, the field practitioners who are doing programs in our parks and then we have the headquarters program. Emily manages the headquarters program of which the exhibit program and the focused traditional arts are part of. And then we have our field staff, which I have the real pleasure of working with and advising, but not directly supervising.

When we think about interpretation, or we think about interpreter. What do we mean from a State Parks perspective? Well, these are the individuals if you think about going to visit a park, these are the individuals for supposed to be translating the cultural and natural landscape, helping to tell the stories of our places with guests. We do that in a variety of ways. Some of the ways are quite traditional, so that kind of quote unquote, classic Ranger talk that Emily was doing when she worked in a number of national parks across the country, on slide 9 you can see a photo of Aaron Webster at Cape Disappointment doing that here.

When we think of interpretation we think of a lot of side and evening programs like the one that's happening at Sun Lakes Dry Falls (slide 8). We also often think when we see field staff interacting with youth, often they are interpreters. We see people who are giving school field trips for individuals that might be facilitating a Junior Ranger program.

And here, within parks, we have individuals who get to do this work full-time, and then we have a lot more individuals that will do this as sort of a supplemental duty. If we talk about those folks that, do it full time, that our interpretive specialist within state parks, I'm all of you know, we have a lot of parks, 124 to be exact. And within those, we only have 13 management areas that have interpretive staff. Of those we're talking about about 30 parks that have regular programming places like Fort Flagler, Lake Sammamish, Riverside and Gingko State Park.

There are 25 positions within our interpretive series, at least in the field. There are a handful more interpretive staff that work out of headquarters with Emily but out of those 25 positions only 17 are full-time and the other 3.4 are spread out seasonally. For example, Lime Kiln State Park in the San Juan islands has an interpretive specialist that only works half of the year.

We record statistics of the field programming that our interpretive staff is facilitating and report it to the Governor's office on an annual basis. Emily is very interested in coming up with other ways to measure success because she doesn't believe attendance is the only way. Interpretation has a long tradition of measuring the number of visitors who came to our experiences. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year there were about 219,000 visitors across the state who came to our experiences.

When we talk about experiences what do we mean? Slide 10 shares a pie graph representing the types of programming.

- Informal/Pop up 46%
- Walk/Talk 39%
- Youth Focused 6%
- Other 5%
- Curriculum 2%
- Event 2%

Geographically our interpreters are spread out across the state. Slide 10 shows a Map of Washington State divided into Park's management areas. The blue dots in the bright green areas represent interpretive specialists working out of interpretive centers. We have over 20 interpretive and visitor centers. Many of our interpretive centers have fulltime staff who are based out of there. We are often talking about one staff who is having to manage and serve the public in a very large geographic area.

For example, in the Southeastern part of the state Mary Keffer is an Interpretive Specialist 2 operating the Sacajawea Interpretive Centers. Many of our interpretive series interpreters have to clean the restrooms but she's also supposed to be provided

programs at Fields Spring about two hours or up in the Steptoe region which would be almost a three-hour drive. Due to this most of the programming happens at the interpretive center. That is one limitation to keep in mind as we think about the diversity of parks and the physical geography to travel between them.

### Exhibit Program

Our Exhibit Program is run out of headquarters. We have one full-time individual, Sam Wotipka, working as our Exhibit Program Manager. He currently has two people reporting to him on a temporary basis and we're hoping to make those permanent. One of Sam's largest projects is maintaining and updating our 22 major interpretive facilities. Many of these interpretive centers are spread across the state. Many of these interpretive centers due to staffing largely are no longer open. For example, the Fort Columbia Interpretive Center is only when we have camp hosts and volunteers that can come before the quarters there are closed entirely. We have exhibits open every day like Dry Falls but over half of the exhibits are from when the facility originally opened in 1966. The Spokane House was also put in in 1966 and the exhibits that visitors experience today are still from 1966.

If we were doing exhibit work, for example, we started to work with the Muckleshoot Tribe to redo the exhibits at Federation Forest, we put together an amazing plan. We wrote the exhibits, but then we've never been able to receive legislative funding because now this is a million-dollar project because we're not just updating the exhibits we're also making these facilities ADA accessible.

Sam helps maintain over 900 outdoor exhibits across the state. This could be a wayside exhibit - a kiosk in a parking lot at a trailhead. Wayside exhibits tell you the story of the landscape that is directly in front of you.

### Folk and Traditional Arts Program

The other arm of the headquarters program is the Folk and Traditional Arts Program. We have one staff person who is in charge of this program. It's uncommon for a State Parks Agency to host this program. Usually this might be under Arts WA or Humanities WA, two programs in Washington State that also have Folklorists. 2024 is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this program. Our program currently has its foundation in providing events across the state to highlight populations and cultures that may not always feel comfortable in our parks to give them an opportunity to come and celebrate their heritage. We host a Cambodian festival on an annual basis. This can be a place for people to give performances where they are able to demonstrate and highlight a particular part of their tradition. We also put on a concert series across the state and partner with various communities like Outdoor Asian who did a beach cleanup with us.

This program is very events based but they have also done oral history projects and created a film with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe that will be shown in the new visitor center that will be opening this spring at Mount Saint Helens. Emily shared a map of where the locations are taking place. Due to only having one staff person based in Olympia there

is no surprise that most of these events are taking place on the NW side of the state. We do have professional states that we loan out for these events. We have a stage in Paco we just don't yet have the staff capacity to build relations with people in Central and Eastern Washington.

### Future of Parks Interpretation

Emily has given us a snapshot of the current program and is also very hopeful for the future. When Emily interviewed at Parks one of her questions was, how serious are you about interpretation? She wouldn't be with Parks today if she didn't hear a lot of commitment to interpretation. She's heard people say that they've been with Parks for 20 years and have never seen this kind of commitment. Interpretation is called out in the commission and director's priorities of A Welcoming Parks System over the next biennium.

Emily prompted the group for questions. No questions were asked.

### Challenges/Parameters.

Interpretation is happening in a dispersed way across the state, light touch. We have full-time individuals who are really working deeply and doing some pretty incredible work and then we have passionate, amazing folks that are trying to include interpretation in their jobs that don't often include it. For example, we have an enthusiastic Park Ranger 2 operating out of Lake Wenatchee, he's really into dark sikes programming. He's also facilitating groups that are coming in.

We are still figuring out what kind of stories we want to tell and perhaps more importantly, what are the stories for us to tell. In 2015 the updated Interpretive Policy was approved by the Commission. One item specifically outlined is that State Parks would not do any tribal interpretation without their participation. Over the last 9 years sometimes it has taken us a bit longer to get projects done but when done they are very impactful.

One example of this in a park is at Steamboat Rock State Park with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. We've had other tribal communities on the west side say we really love what you did at Steamboat Rock can you do that here? We put in an outdoor wayside exhibit. (Slides 25-27 for photos) With the new exhibition at the Mount Saint Helens Visitor Center the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's story will be integrated throughout the entire exhibition. We're excited and honored to work with them in this work.

Another parameter or challenge is the stories within our parks themselves. We think about a lot of the landscapes that State Parks manages, often if they do have a historic bend, they tend to be European American centric. For example, we manage the Jackson House which was a home that originally a group of settlers'/colonists got together and said hey, we think this territory should be a state. And that's where the decision happened.

We have several military forts, for example, that we are telling the story of coastal defense, some of which predates World War I and World War II. We are a bit limited in the idea of whose history has been preserved and whose history is currently being told, or that we have the limitations to tell within that.

Janette and I thought it would be interesting to share with you the major stories that have been identified by my predecessors and within the agency ten major stories that our Parks are representing. We recently created a new attendance form and within that data we are reporting to the Governors Office Emily has added a new question asking what topic their program is focusing on. These topics include, WA Geology, Astronomy, Water quality, Native American Heritage, Euro American Heritage, Climate Change, WA Wildlife, Other. Some of the other columns include, story time, climate change, interpretation career paths. We should have thousands of responses soon because every individual program is being logged this way.

Emily shared that as she's thought about the stories, we are telling she thinks there are some opportunities for partnerships that we could explore. For example, Gingko Interpretive Center – it's along the Columbia River near Vantage and we're largely telling the story of the petrified forest. It's very geology centered and there's not a lot about native peoples that's being told in the Interpretive Center. Some of that is because the exhibits are from 50 years ago. Some of that is because 30 minutes away is the Wanapum Heritage Center. We've been encouraging people to go to the Wanapum Heritage Center to hear from the tribe themselves and have them tell their story. Emily also shared about partnership ideas with museums where if you pay to get into one perhaps you could also enter the other.

Another opportunity is to look at the acquisition policy within our Real Estate Program what if we thought from an interpretation lens about new lands we could acquire. Lands that are telling stories of Asian Americans or Black Americans in Washington State. The Interpretive Program used to be in Parks Development with the Real Estate Program and was moved to Operations last July.

Emily also shared that the Junior Ranger Program is upcoming on our radar. This is for kids aged 5-12 and we have one book that operates across the entire state. We'd like to be able to accommodate different stories, hopefully funding in the next biennium. We're going to be getting some staff who could be creating topic specific Junior Ranger Programs. A Junior Ranger that specializes in historic preservation or desert landscapes. They could earn patches or different badges as you made your way across the state. The other thing we want to do in this next refresh is to have a little bit more of lens towards reaching students, reaching children and adults. We could have a Senior Ranger Program or what would it look like if we designed for neurodiversity. We can find ways to make it more accessible, the Junior Ranger Program is currently also translated into Spanish but what other languages do we need to include? How could we design the workbook pages to be more friendly? For example, to folks that have autism.

## Questions/Comments

Q: Will that new interpretation log be available on a platform?

A: It's online-- it's a Microsoft form and yes, Parks will be given the URL

Heather shared feedback that she would like to participate in helping expand the Jr Ranger program.

Q: Really enjoyed the information. You mentioned sharing access do you have partners in the administrative services to work on this.

A: Emily shared she just submitted the interpretive strategic plan and until leadership has approved, we can't explore, likely next biennium.

Q: Categories for program data, I keep thinking that people completing this survey is going to funnel this information into categories. Can we add categories? We aren't capturing stories of people of color. I think for me it's kind of an emotional visceral reaction of automatically filtered into an "other" category? it reminds me of patterns of automatically filtering certain communities into "other"

A: Emily shared that most interpreters are white and aren't telling stories of people of color because they aren't their stories to tell, or we don't have recordings. Janette suggested using a DEI category or at least creating some kind of option instead of just funneling into "other".

Q: What is the track / trajectory for a park interpretation specialist? (meaning the education / professional requirements)??

A: We currently have an interpretive series starting with an Interpretive Aid (highschool or college) Interpretive Specialist 1 - a seasonal position or solely based out of an Interpretive Center, Interpretive Specialist 2 - area interpreters, and Interpretive Specialist 3 - focus on more than one area or working as a filler position for example, there was one person that was hired to develop the Junior Ranger Program.


Q: In our area, a lot of our waysides include tribal history and we have a lot of guests interpretation (friends group, etc) i.e. beach naturalist, geologist etc that include the tribal history and plant use. Those guest interpreters & waysides aren't from the tribe, are those the conversations we should be having with interpretation?

A: Yes please! We are also trying to do a better job supporting volunteers and Friends groups. Tools and training on interpretation as well as better guidance about topics they should be covering (or perhaps not). Many tribes (for example) don't want us sharing the story of medicinal plants-- others are fine with it but we need to make sure they are comfortable before we just start telling that story. For now, folks can work with me but in the long term I am hoping to have a new position-- Regional Interpretive Specialist-- that could provide more field support for things just like this.



Q: I'm just wondering how to get more black and brown people interested in these interpretive Specialist roles.

A: Emily shared that at Nisqually State Park For example, we are working with Nisqually Indian Tribe to determine if they would like a Native interpreter. We often assume that have the privilege to be an intern. Holistically the profession of interpretation knows there is a lot of work to do. Often time Interpreters of Color must carry the burden of the emotional trauma associated with certain stories.

A potential resource for this effort: [The Unspoken Truths | Seattle, WA](#), Delbert Richardson, Interpretive, Historical Contractor regarding the Black Experience, George Bush, the first Black pioneer to settle in what is now Washington, holds historical significance.  [His migration is depicted in a series of paintings by artist Lawrence, housed in the Washington State Historical Society's collection. Welcome | BHS \(bhswa.org\)](#) Emily- all our new updates at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Cape Disappointment and Sacajawea highlight his story.

Appreciate the thoughtful reflections regarding the inclusion of multicultural "lens" stories and historical contributions of all Washingtonians "Washington State Historical Society" [Welcome | BHS \(bhswa.org\)](#)

I have been an interpreter host at Fort Columbia, really enjoyed the experience. In AZ I lead nature hikes, these activities really widen the experience of the visitor.

Folks need money for their labor. Livable wages. Emily - Yes, I've also been wondering if we could provide remote internships-- especially for our more rural parks.

Seattle Parks is continuing to offer the paid youth internship in this field via their Career Exploration program. Partnering with these entities longer term to potentially gain interpretation staff that's reflective of community, and a corps of employees that can support each other with similar lived experience can help build toward success.

Emily shared that as we are grappling as an agency of what stories we are telling maybe we should just focus on stories about fauna and flora. History is complicated and we should be having those conversations in a very authentic way. Are we over focusing on some topics and not covering other stories? If so, why? Is it a management issue, do staff need more training, are people uncomfortable.

[10 minute break](#)

Return 1:20

[Small group work](#)

Janette welcomed the group back from break and reviewed the questions below. She will offer 3 sets of questions.

1. Your experiences with Interpretation

2. Forms of Interpretation

3. Interpretive Content

Group 1

Names: Jeff, Mary, Reco, Cassandra, Heather

**Consider your experiences:**

What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...

- How would you describe them?
- What did you find meaningful about it?
- What were you wanting more of? Or less of?

How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?

When starting at Parks, I was able to do walks through old growth forests, and the environment around them, being able to provide programs to educate children. Highlight of career.

Gravitate towards at leisure interpretation (like interp boards). But got to have a great experience with an interpreter that was very enthusiastic and engaging, which left a lasting impression. Fossils ARE cool

- Other

What are some barriers that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation? (e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff)

Interp panels, signs - at leisure

Digital - touch pad, new technology, solar powered - Engaging and helpful

Utilization of interp centers - you can gather and q&a, go further into the stories about people/places – Easier to tailor to meet needs of the park guests

QR Codes

IDEA: States Park - Listen to interpretation, knows where you are, pings a pop up

Barriers - access to parks, \$\$, inclusive of all age groups and neurodivergence, parks staff can be intimidating, interp staff look like rangers, look like an authority figure

[Community Van - King County, Washington](#) great resource!

### **Consider Interpretive Content:**

What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?

- What makes you feel connected to your parks?
- What interpretation or stories brings you to the park?
- What kinds of stories do you want more of?

What approach to interpretive content feels equitable (the quality of being fair or just)?

Stories about the history of the land, the original stewards, the nature currently and the past.

Not well known stories, from people of color, more stories about native climbers, not mainstream.

What was here, how it was formed, what was lost – causes done by man and nature, changes in landscape

Approach

Unbiased stories - NO AGENDA! What is actually happening here? Like to see big picture, not just the nice/comfortable version (EQUITABLE)

Unifying in story

Being knowledgeable, knowing the facts as best as possible.

Group 2

Names: Clare, Kelsie, Alyssa and Michelle

### **Consider your experiences:**

What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...

- How would you describe them?
- What did you find meaningful about it?
- What were you wanting more of? Or less of?

How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?

[\(take notes here!\)](#)

Amber at Lake Sam is amazing talking paddling and safety they way she tells stories and staff based.

BCNational parks animal safety and putting the onus on humans. Good references to First Nations at several parks, other places its in a process and moving forward. Geological history and History of Peoples. NPS Mt Rushmore safety support, using members of Sioux Nation - in retelling history from their perspective and in group, some protective safety nets for impacted communities sprang up, appeared to helped each other deal with exhaustion related to retelling their communities' stories.

History slides shown in the shelter at Larabee. Wayside self guides signs. Larrabee had a self guided shore-line tour that is debunk now. Recent Flora and Fauna talk with beach naturalist at Birch Bay. Love the self-guided rainforest story at the Quinault half-mile nature trail.

*(copied from Teams chat)* In our area, a lot of our waysides include the tribal history. And we have a lot of guest interpretation (friends group, etc) i.e. beach naturalist, geologist etc that include the tribal history and plant use. Those guest interpreters & waysides aren't from the tribe, are those the conversations we should be having with interpretation? .....Yes please! We are also trying to do a better job supporting volunteers and Friends groups. Tools and training on interpretation as well as better guidance about topics they should be covering (or perhaps not). Many tribes (For example, ) don't want us sharing the story of medicinal plants-- others are fine with it but we need to make sure they are comfortable before we just start telling that story. For now, folks can work with me but in the long term I am hoping to have a new position-- Regional Interpretive Specialist-- that could provide more field support for things just like this.

First Day hike at Larrabee with beach trail interp.

Informal walk and talk and signage. History reading or talking about history. People that are local and have been around for a while. Audio tours are really cool.

Auto audio tour. Pull up and turn radio to a different frequency. Mostly written word but audio is really nice. Very nice to have Fort Flagler, Fort Casey, Fort Worden for folks putting audio and maps together. More stories of history, protections before the forts were there.

Trails & even trailhead wayside info have little or no accessibility or ADA access.

In Monticello in Louisiana interpreter person of color was talking about the garden. These were his ancestors. What happened to his people and also the pride he has with the garden.

Directions in all languages... Interp signs and education signs in more than English.

### **Consider forms of Interpretation:**

What forms of interpretation resonate with you and why? For example, :

- Informal walk and talks -

- In-person programming (e.g. camping 101, guided nature walk)
- Interpretive Centers -
- Virtual interpretation -
- Other

What are some barriers that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation? (e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff)

Informal walk and talks - great for different groups to engage (book walks, more accessible methods for folks to engage)

- In-person programming (e.g. camping 101, guided nature walk)
- Interpretive Centers - great for geology, natural forces Signage or plaques
- Virtual interpretation - helpful for at own pace, bringing in tech/translation, etc
- Other

Video is less compelling, history is great to read.

Audio tours very helpful as experiencing sights/sounds, great to discuss afterwards.

Robin had experience with NPS, Civil War sites > auto audio tours via radio frequency

**Consider Interpretive Content:**

What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?

- What makes you feel connected to your parks?
- What interpretation or stories brings you to the park?
- What kinds of stories do you want more of?

What approach to interpretive content feels equitable (the quality of being fair or just)?

Ones that incorporate the history of the land and the impact of people across the ages, explaining how we arrived where we are at. How does that change the visible landscape/flora/fauna.

Ones that challenge taught perspectives (Lies my teacher told me type perspective)

Fair/just: being thoughtful and soliciting and incorporating multiple community perspectives.

**Group 3**

**Names: Denice, Curt, Stacy, Natasha, Lynn**

**Consider your experiences:**

What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...

- How would you describe them?
- What did you find meaningful about it?
- What were you wanting more of? Or less of?

How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?

[\(take notes here!\)](#)

-Reading placards, interacting with interpreters. Placards don't have any personality, just informational. Interpreters were passionate and excited to answer questions, even if questions were off topic. Being able to interact with a person makes a big difference and is preferred.

-Telling more than one story, because there's different people. Telling diverse stories. Has been an interpretive host. There's value in hands on learning, not just from behind a screen.  
-Going on field trips with her child, sees placards but would prefer human interaction. The more interactive the better, get kids off devices. Tactile experiences.  
-Provides programming at Parks, interactive and tactile programs are better. Short and informative programs work well for students. Programs about what to bring on a hike, matching animals to casts of their tracks.

**Consider forms of Interpretation:**

What forms of interpretation resonate with you and why? For example, :

- Informal walk and talks
- In-person programming (e.g. camping 101, guided nature walk)
- Interpretive Centers
- Signage or plaques
- Virtual interpretation
- Other

What are some barriers that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation? (e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff)

-People might not know about the opportunities, how do we get the word out?  
-Language barriers, are materials provided in different languages? Are interpretive opportunities equally accessible?  
-Representation is important! I wouldn't feel comfortable or wouldn't assume that a law enforcement ranger would be a good resource to approach for interpretation. How can we increase diversity in hiring?  
-Information has stayed the same at some parks for years.  
-How do we learn about all of the different opportunities?  
-Barriers to acquiring materials for staff. Departments are understaffed and don't have the capacity to develop materials in other languages.

**Consider Interpretive Content:**

What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?

- What makes you feel connected to your parks?
- What interpretation or stories brings you to the park?
- What kinds of stories do you want more of?

What approach to interpretive content feels equitable (the quality of being fair or just)?

-Have programming that is region specific. Programs that tell stories specific to each area, and in multiple languages.  
-Geological information about the State is intriguing to adults, children, and families. It spurs conversations about other stories and types of history.  
-How the park and land is currently being managed, and with what partnerships. Who is involved? Are we respecting partnerships, perspectives, and cultural needs? How can we be transparent about all of this?  
Ditto!  
Stories un-biased Ditto!

-Cleanliness of the park helps with feeling connected. Who wants to visit a messy park?  
People remember their experiences, and what turns us off or what we like.  
-Safety, knowing that there's other people and Rangers around. We don't want to go  
somewhere that we don't feel safe. If we see parks that are messy, are others encouraged to  
treat it poorly too?

### Updates

- DEI Consultant Job Posting
- Everyone Outdoors Program
  - We received 53 applications this month!

### Closing

Janette ended the meeting at 2:02 pm

- I'm grateful for Emily, thanks for all that you do and for joining us today!
- Thank you so much Emily! I'm leaving the conversation noodling about the ways to leverage technology with interpretation.
- How great Parks is by having this wonderful discussion and how much we need to do! To make it even better!!



# PEAR Team Meeting 10

March 27, 2024





Community Norms	Practices
<b>GOAL ORIENTED &amp; STRUCTURED MEETINGS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitators provide agenda, meeting notes, and organization</li> <li>• Time checks – limit tangents to keep us on track</li> <li>• PEAR Team meetings recorded during presentation portions</li> </ul>
<b>THOUGHTFUL PARTICIPATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center PEAR goals to empower discussions</li> <li>• Raise your virtual hand</li> <li>• Balance speaking and active listening</li> <li>• Open-minded observations and feedback, lean into curiosity, ask questions before assuming, seek to understand</li> <li>• Use accessible language (explain acronyms, terms, etc.)</li> <li>• Practice compassion, patience, and understanding</li> <li>• Trust the process; be open to feedback</li> <li>• Trust that we are stronger together than alone</li> </ul>
<b>RECOGNIZE EACH PERSON HAS UNIQUE EXPERIENCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak your truth</li> <li>• Appreciate everyone’s differences and commonalities</li> <li>• Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community</li> <li>• Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.)</li> <li>• Notice and re-consider blanket statements</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgment-free zone</li> <li>• Recognize this is an intergenerational space</li> <li>• Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space</li> <li>• Take care of yourself</li> <li>• Acknowledge intent, assess impact</li> <li>• Honor confidentiality for the group’s contributions</li> </ul>



# Welcome New Members!

## **Parks staff**

Alyssa Smith

Natasha House

## **Community Members**

Robin Waldrop



# Let's check in!

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- Favorite emoji or dessert



# Agenda

- Equity Impact Review (EIR)  
Topic: **Interpretation**
- Small group breakouts
- Updates
- Closing



# Warm up question...

## How would you describe Interpretation?

### Type in the chat





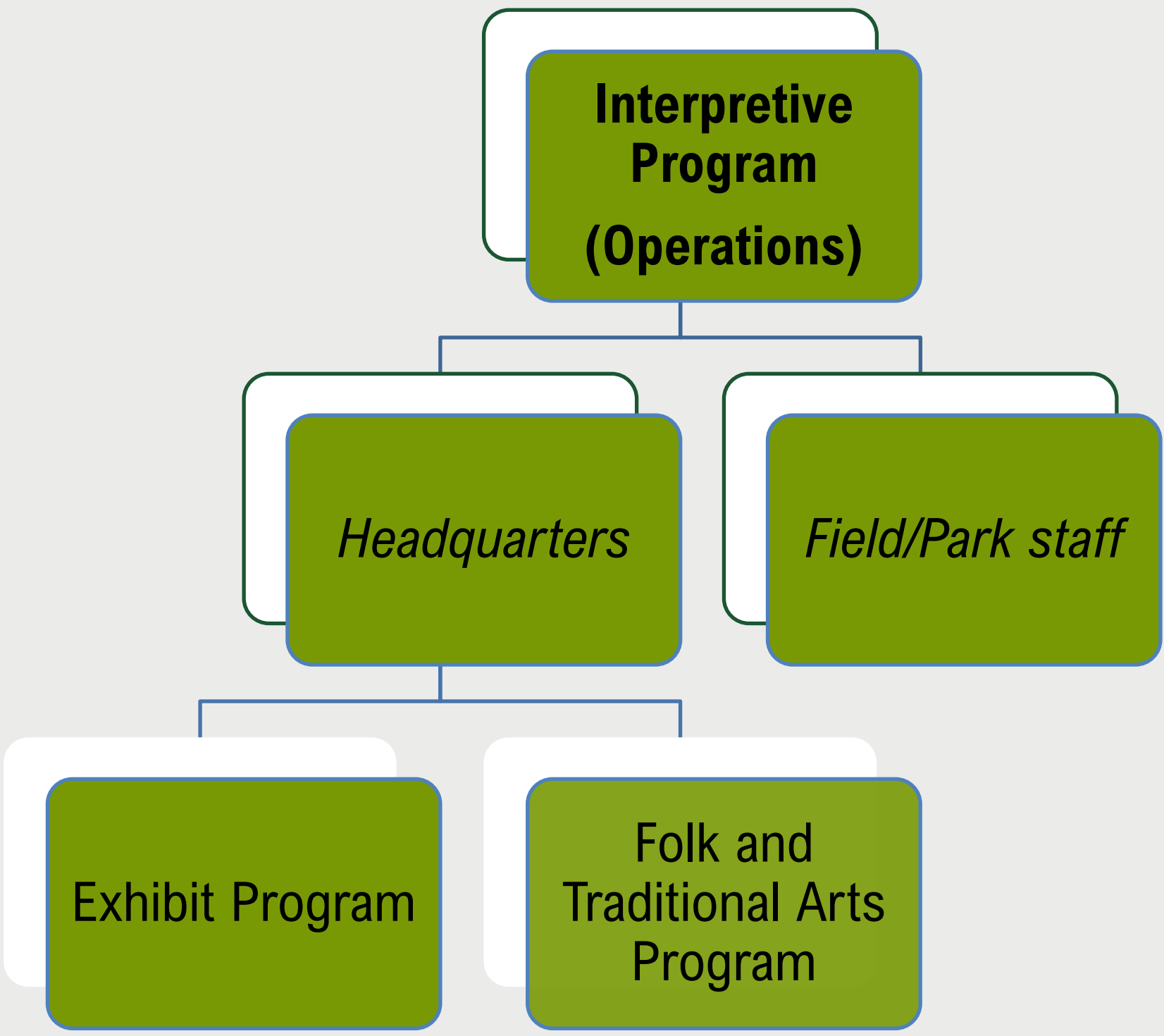
# *Interpretation in Washington State Parks*

## **PEAR Team presentation**

Emily Jacobs, Interpretive Program  
Manager



# Overview of interpretive program



# Notes from the Field: What *is* an interpreter?





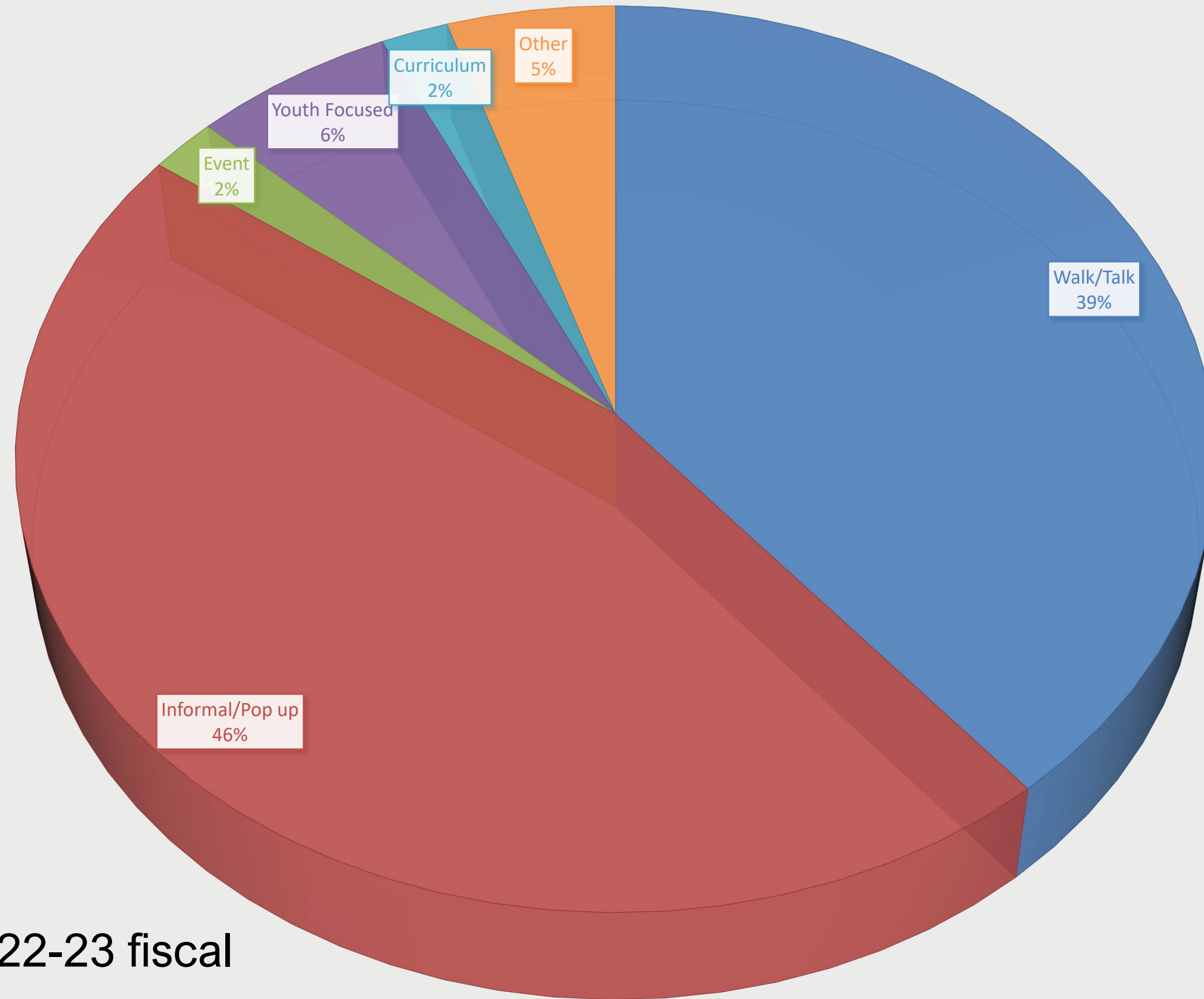


# Field staff

- 124 Parks
- 13 areas
  - Programming in 30 parks
  - Fort Flagler, Gingko, Lake Sammamish, Riverside
- 25 positions
  - 17 FTE
  - 3.41 FTE



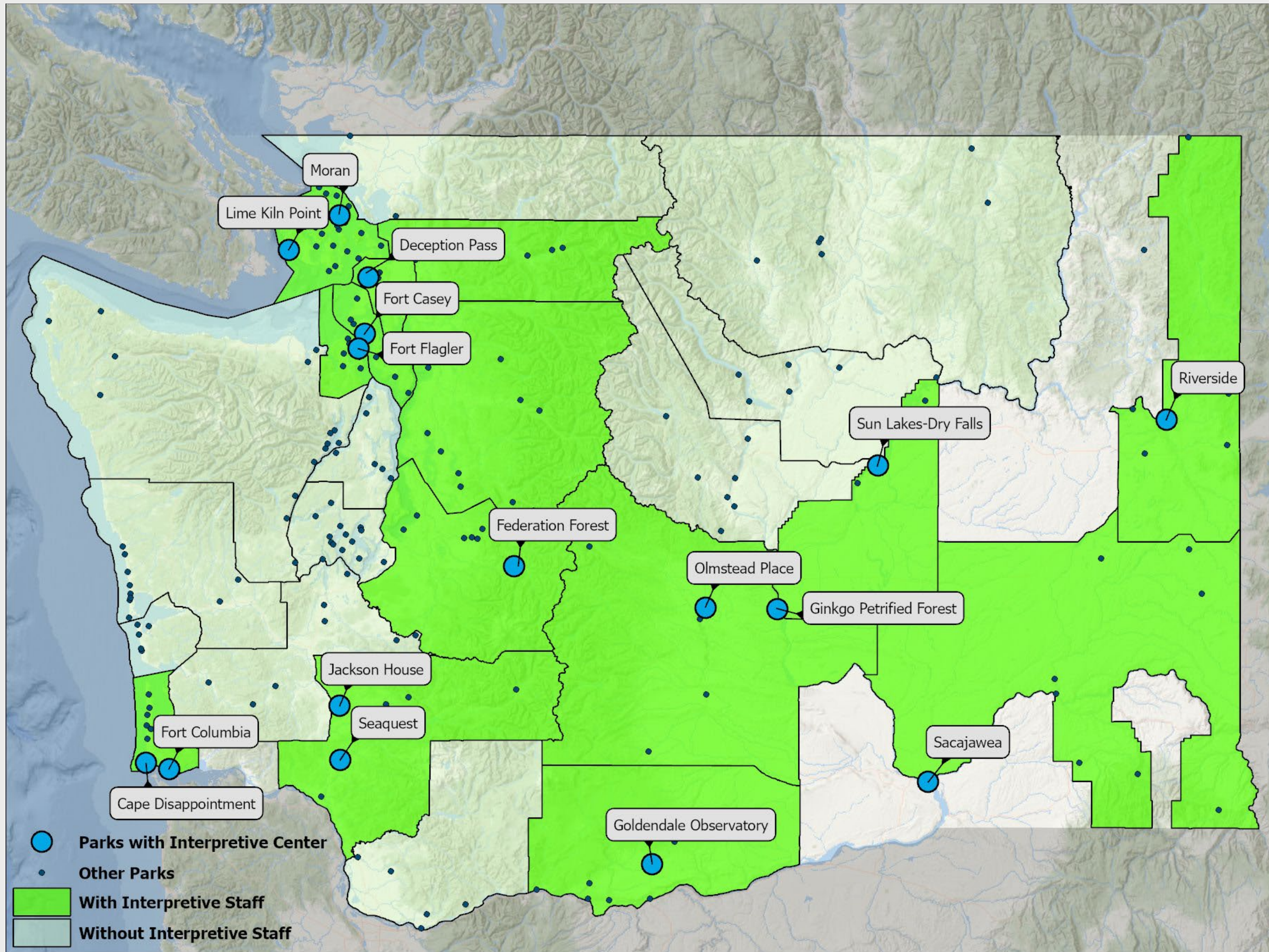
## TYPES OF PROGRAMMING



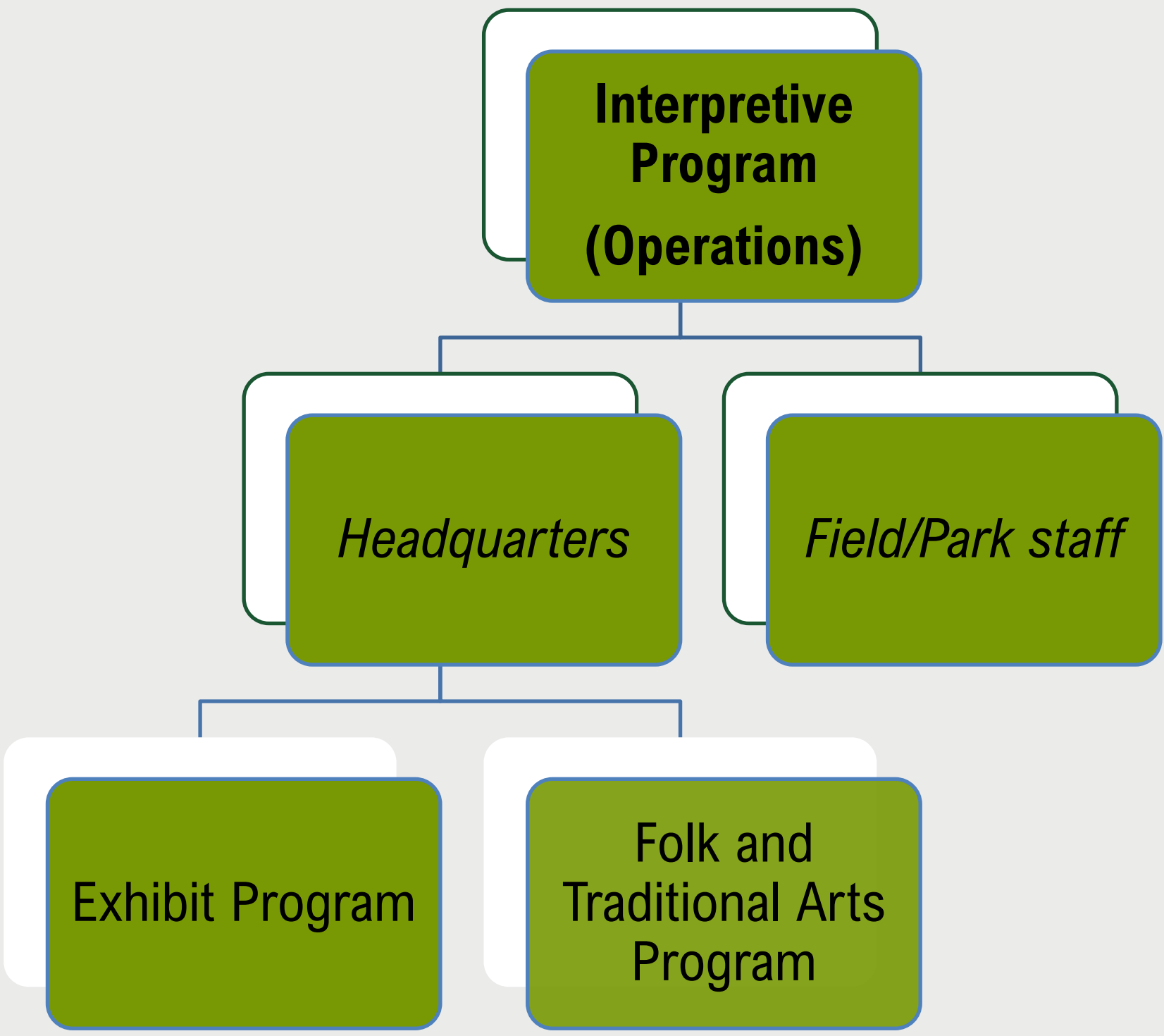
- *Field Programming:*

- 219,034 visitors in the 2022-23 fiscal





# Overview of interpretive program



# Exhibit Program

- 22 major interpretive facilities



# JEFFERSON'S DREAM for the West

4

*"A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye."*

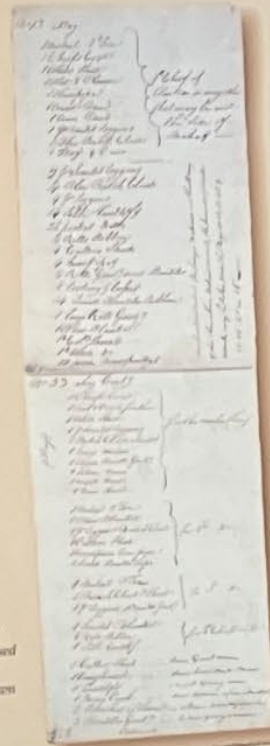
—President Jefferson's vision for the United States Inaugural Address, 1801

**L**ong before the Lewis and Clark Expedition left St. Louis, President Thomas Jefferson envisioned a nation stretching from ocean to ocean. Most importantly, he wanted to locate the most "practicable water communication across this continent for the purposes of commerce." In 1803, Jefferson instructed Captain Meriwether Lewis to find that route. Lewis quickly enlisted the help of his friend, William Clark, and together they recruited the "Corps of Volunteers for Northwest Discovery."

Clark inventoried the supplies Lewis requisitioned from Army storehouses and armories, and purchased from Philadelphia merchants. He also assigned Lewis "Indian presents" to specific tribes, as shown on this page of the lengthy "Baling Invoices."



Plan de la Ville de St. Louis des Illinois (Plan of the Town of St. Louis, Illinois), 1796  
The Corps of Discovery departed St. Louis with about 45 men and many tons of supplies. At the time, the bustling city of nearly 1,000 people was the gateway of the Missouri River fur trade.



## How Big was the Keelboat?

Lewis had a Pittsburgh boat builder construct a flat-bottomed riverboat—called a keelboat—to carry the many men and tons of supplies.

The metal frame you see here approximates the shape of the keelboat's cabin and indicates the width of its hull at the waterline. The length of the boat stretched more than twice the length of this room. The keelboat carried about 12 tons of cargo.

**PERCEPTIONS CONTINUED**

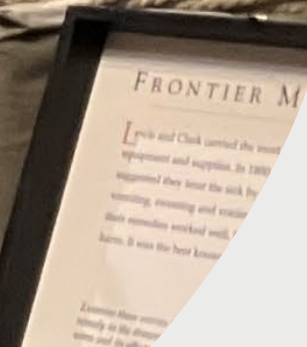
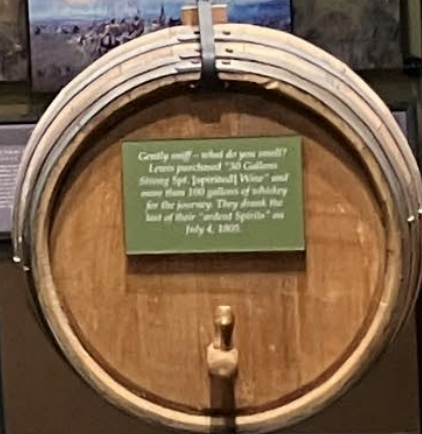
Lewis and Clark's expedition was the first to cross the continent from east to west. They traveled through uncharted territory, facing numerous challenges and hardships. Yet they persevered, bringing back valuable information about the interior and the Native Americans living there.

Examine the maps below. Lewis and Clark used to learn about North America.

**WHAT THEY TOOK**

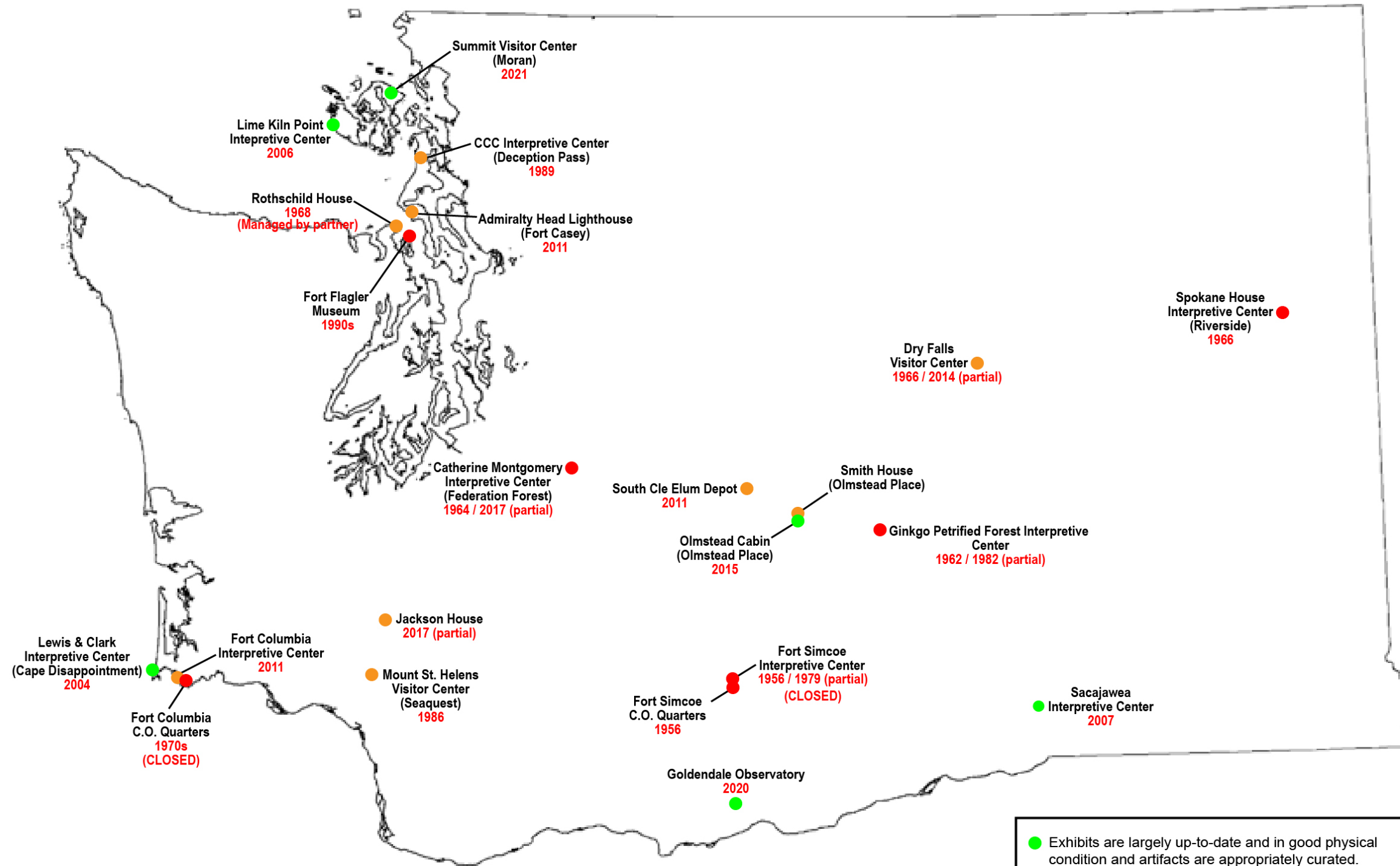
Congress appropriated \$2,500 for the Expedition. Lewis purchased gifts, weapons, equipment, navigational instruments, medicines, clothing and food. He requisitioned supplies from the government armory at Harper's Ferry and purchased supplies in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and St. Louis.

Provisions for the expedition were...  
A Portable Writing Desk...  
Lewis and Clark carried the most...  
equipment and supplies. In 1803...  
suggested they take the risk by...  
venturing, arduous and tedious...  
their resources worked well...  
learn. It was the best known...



# Washington State Parks Major Interpretive Facilities

(Last Comprehensive Exhibit Update)



- Exhibits are largely up-to-date and in good physical condition and artifacts are appropriately curated.
- Significant volume of out-dated exhibits and/or multiple artifacts inappropriately curated.
- Majority of exhibits are very out-dated or in poor condition, artifacts are not being adequately protected.

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# Exhibit Program

- 22 major interpretive facilities
- 900 outdoor interpretive signs





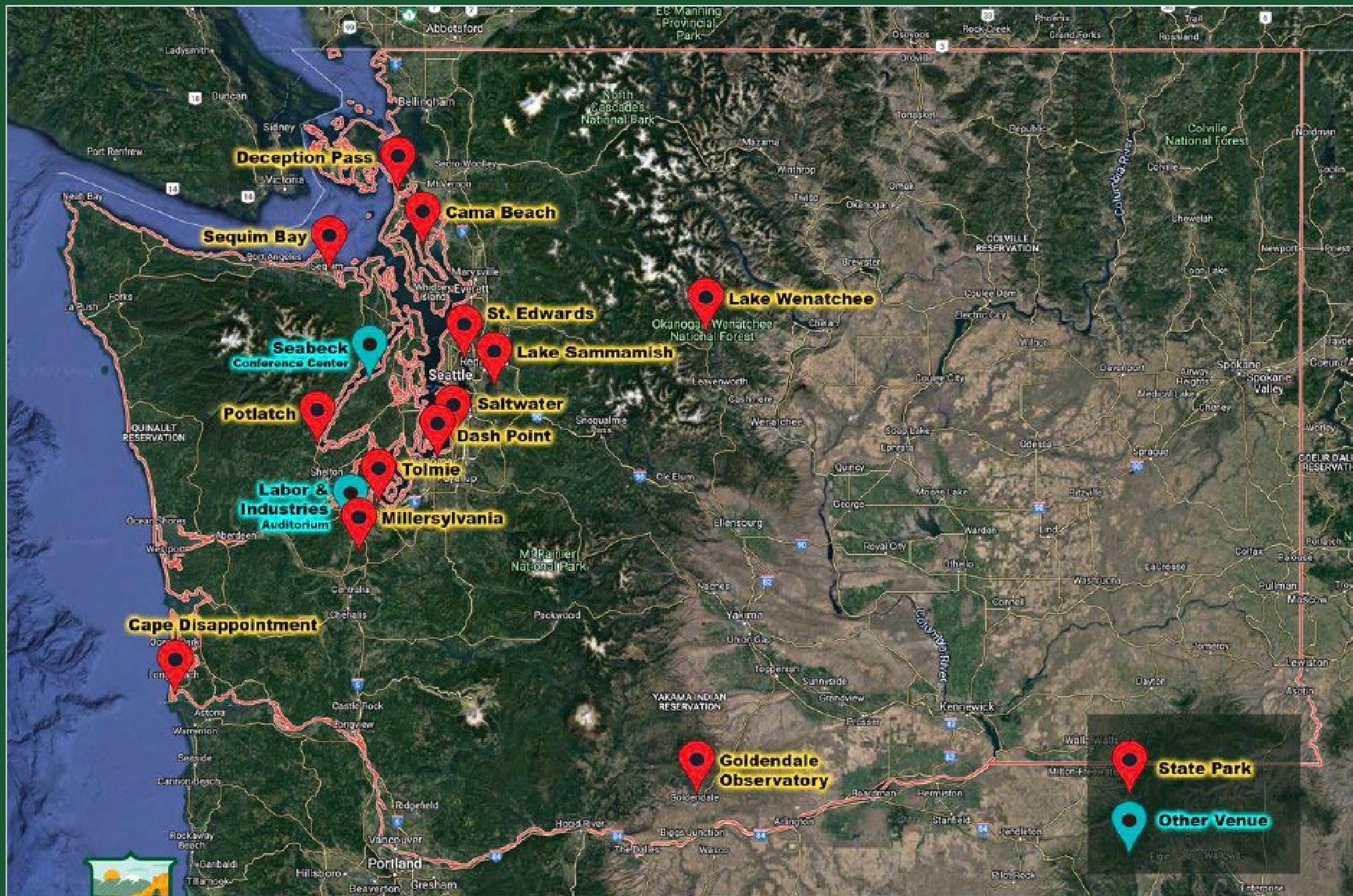


# Folk and Traditional Arts Program

- 2024 marks our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



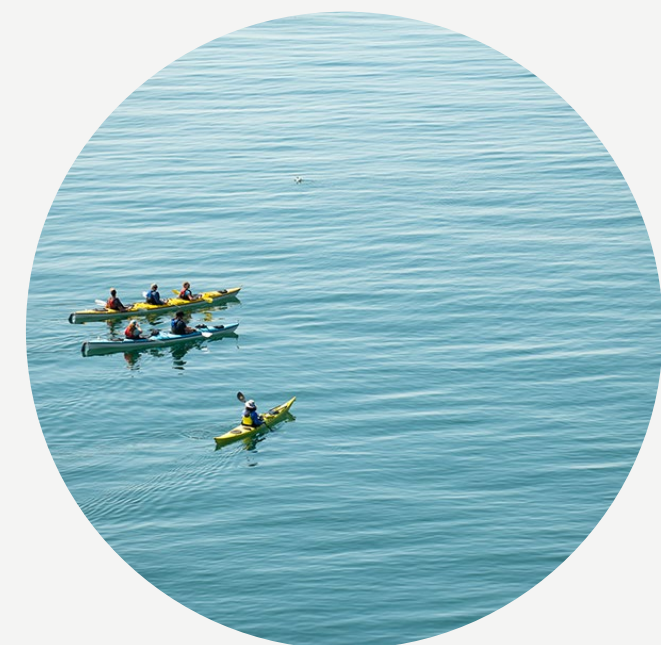




**A Map of Folk & Traditional Arts Program Event Locations in 2023**



# Future of Parks Interpretation?



**25-27 Director and WSPRC Commission Priorities—  
*A Welcoming Park System***



# Challenges/Parameters

- Interpretation is happening in a dispersed way across the state, light touch
  - Limited staff—both PR1 and Interpreters
- We are still figuring out what kind of stories we want to tell & is not ours to tell
  - Building relationships (examples)



# **Steamboat Rock State Park**

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation







Coyote could not get up the courage to ask the Chief for his daughter. Coyote thought, "I know, I will ask my brother Fox to go to the Chief in my place."

Coyote told Fox, "This is what you will say: 'Coyote is a good hunter and will be a good provider. He is good looking and very powerful. Tell the Chief he will be very lucky to have me for a son-in-law. I will marry their daughter and they will prosper, for I will give them many presents.'"

Fox went to the Chief and his wife and told them all that coyote had asked him to say.

The Chief thought, "This is good. Coyote will bring fine things to this land," and agreed to the marriage. But the Chief's wife would not agree. She would not hear of such an ugly one marrying her beautiful daughter. So the Chief agreed with his wife.

Fox went back to Coyote's camp and said, "Coyote, I have bad news for you. They won't have you for their son-in-law." Coyote was hurt. →



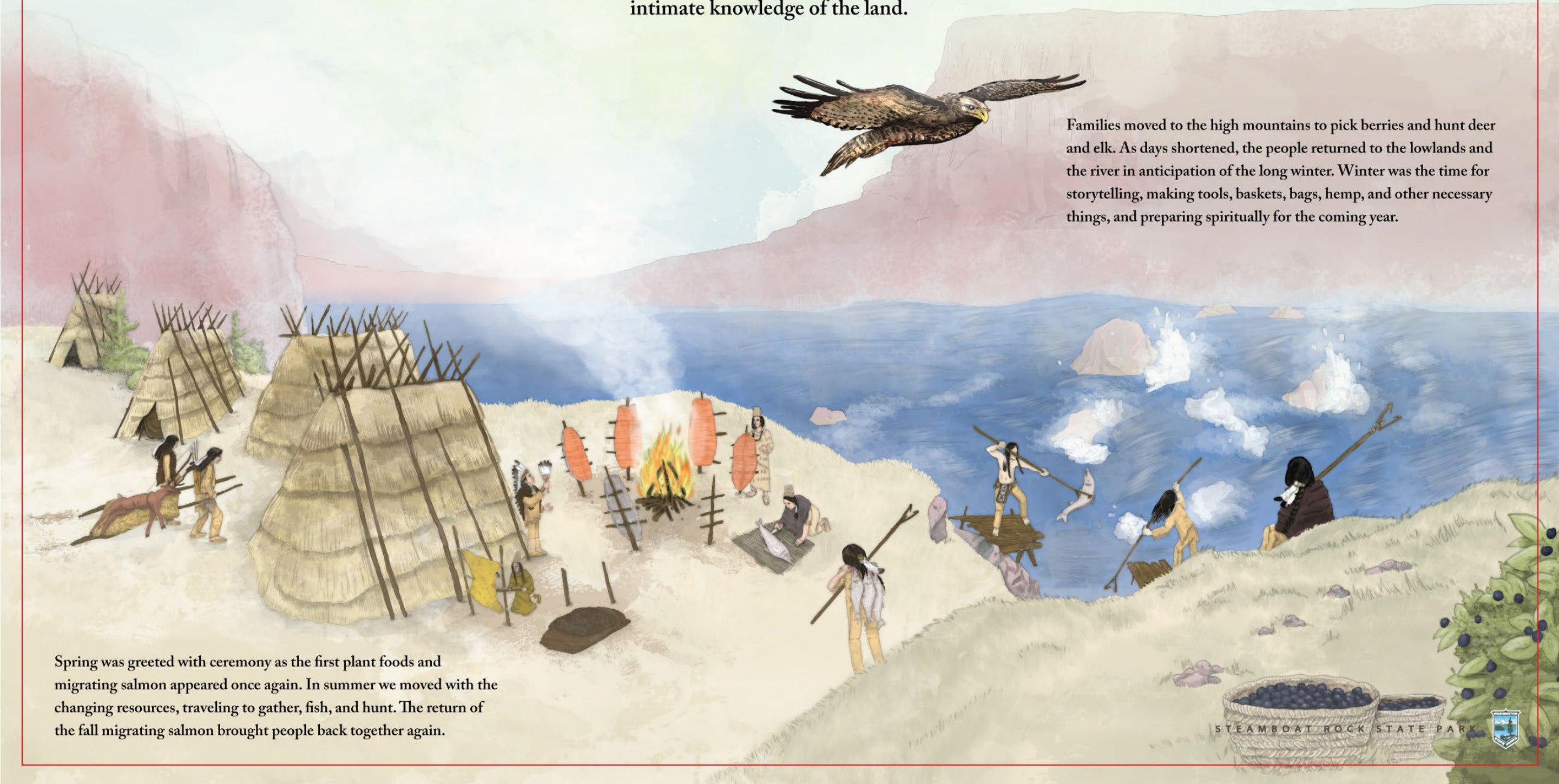
# A Land of Plenty

The Grand Coulee and Steamboat Rock are located within the traditional territory of the Nespelem, Sanpoil, and Moses-Columbia and Okanogan tribes, which are members of Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The natural universe and its rhythms shaped native people's daily existence. Day-to-day interactions with the landscape were dictated by the changing seasons. Seasons and the bounty they provided varied from year to year, making it critical to have intimate knowledge of the land.

Families moved to the high mountains to pick berries and hunt deer and elk. As days shortened, the people returned to the lowlands and the river in anticipation of the long winter. Winter was the time for storytelling, making tools, baskets, bags, hemp, and other necessary things, and preparing spiritually for the coming year.

Spring was greeted with ceremony as the first plant foods and migrating salmon appeared once again. In summer we moved with the changing resources, traveling to gather, fish, and hunt. The return of the fall migrating salmon brought people back together again.



# Challenges/Parameters

- Interpretation is happening in a dispersed way across the state, light touch
  - Limited staff—both PR1 and Interpreters
- We are still figuring out what kind of stories we want to tell & is not ours to tell
  - Building relationships (examples)
- Stories within our Parks – *program data*





# Challenges/Parameters

- Partnership Opportunities
  - Museum entrance + Discover Pass
- Real Estate Acquisition Policy
- Junior Ranger
  - Neurodiversity
  - More accessible



**BREAK!**



# Small group breakouts

I will offer 3 sets of questions

1. Your experiences with Interpretation
2. Forms of Interpretation
3. Interpretive Content

You will have time in your breakout rooms for **each** set

Focus on one set for each breakout (don't skip ahead)

Capture group notes on shared doc



# Consider your experiences:

**What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...**

*–How would you describe them?*

*–What did you find meaningful about it?*

*–What were you wanting more of? Or less of?*

**How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?**





# Consider the forms of Interpretation:

- What **forms** of interpretation resonate with you and why? For ex:
  - Informal walk and talks
  - In-person programming (e.g. camping 101, guided nature walk)
  - Interpretive Centers
  - Signage or plaques
  - Virtual interpretation
- What are some **barriers** that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation?  
(e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff)



# Consider the Interpretive Content:

- What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?
  - What makes you feel connected to your parks?
  - What interpretation or stories brings you to the park?
- What kinds of stories do you want more of?
- What approach to interpretive content feels equitable (the quality of being fair or just)?



# Small groups - share out



# Updates

- DEI Consultant Job Posting
- Everyone Outdoors Program



# Everyone Outdoors Program

- Provides applicants with the opportunity to apply and receive free **annual Discover Passes**.
- Open to applicants Washington-based **groups or organizations** that face barriers to outdoor access.
- The three agencies will fund up to \$1,000 in passes each month. Requests not funded in the current month will roll over to the next month.



# 2024 PEAR Workplan / EIR (Equity Impact Review)

Date	EIR Topic	EIR Priority Category
Jan 17	Volunteer program	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
Feb 7	HR Staff recruitment	Workforce Development
March 27	Interpretation	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
April 24	Interpretation continued & DEI Roadshow Data	Workforce Development
May 15	Parks Planning public input process	Community Engagement
June 5	Partnerships program	Community Engagement
July	NO MEETING	
Aug 21	TBD	
Sept 18	Conversation with Commissioner Danenberg	Community Engagement
Oct 16	Reservations program	Visitor Experience
Nov 20	TBD	
Dec 18	2025 work planning	

**Ongoing:** DEI Learning, PEAR team feedback, reflection on PEAR team "roles in social change ecosystem"

**Future Possibilities:** PEAR team community building, participating in Parks events



# Closing

