

Washington Waysides - Curating an Experience of the Given at Tipsoo Lake

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Abstract

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A fundamental quality linked to the core of who I am is a passionate desire to explore the amazement of the world around me. Experiencing new and unfamiliar places for the first time seems always to awaken something new within me, a truly exciting feeling that adds to the structure of my very being. I believe that the world and the self are inherently connected. New experiences of the world can impact the experience and understanding of the self and, in turn, a heightened awareness and understanding of the self can yield an enriched perception of the world. The world and the self, then, re-define one another constantly.

Environments and spaces affect the body, and this is in part how we remember them - through the effect had on all the senses of the body and on the body itself. Architecture, as part of the built environment situated within a natural context, is the means through which many of us connect to the world. Dwelling amongst architecture permits the constructed world around us to serve as shelters for our bodies, identities,

and minds. By offering an opportunity for personal and poetic meaning to emerge through experience, architecture can successfully mediate between the outer world and the internal world of the self, projecting frames of perception and understanding.

My intention with this thesis is to discuss experience, and how the specificity of place and the given natural characteristics inherent within a specific place can be mediated by architecture to foster personally rich and meaningful mental connections that can simultaneously remind and connect the presence of oneself to the presence of the world.

Scenic byways in the state of Washington offer an abundance of opportunities to view and explore much of the precious splendor the state has to offer. Rest areas and turn-outs along Washington's scenic byways and in the state's national parks are often the gateways to new experiences, and as such can be the promotional vessels that shape meaningful connections between the world and the self. The presence of the human body, the presence of the natural environment, and the acknowledgment of the two could suggest an intimate opportunity for the implementation of architecture as a third presence. This is what I'm referring to as the new Washington Wayside - a theoretical notion that attempts to attain a renewed focus on an already existing infrastructure. Rather than design a kit-of-parts or a one size fits all fix, however, the project in this thesis will utilize place specific implementations to re-envision an existing wayside in Washington. The result of the investigation aims to encourage consciousness of place as a primary driver for future wayside development in the state and elsewhere.



curating an experience of the given
at Tipsoo Lake

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1 Place and Self Awareness

1.1 Preface

I've always loved traveling. In most cases, it seems as though traveling awakens something deep within that helps me to understand a little bit more about who I am internally. Through each experience, new and unfamiliar aspects of the world come into focus before me, opening the doors to an internal process of personal reflection, contemplation, and understanding. Of course, not all new travel experiences are memorable. And not all memorable travel experiences are meaningful. But there is something undeniably compelling to me about the prospect of feeling newly connected to myself and to the world; it makes me feel whole.

I've often spent days contemplating when, where, how, and why I would travel. I would pour over tourist maps, read guide books, research online, and write out detailed itineraries. The amount of time I would spend in the planning phase would ignite a spark of passion and curiosity for the chosen destination that would remain with me throughout my journey. But the

path of my research would almost always serve the role of 'prefacing' my experiences, often shaping attitudes and opinions about things before actually seeing them. Setting up unrealistic expectations for things isn't a wise idea, but it's in our nature to do so with places we've never been to before. How else does a person decide to go to a place for the first time? They probably heard about it somehow, formed an opinion, and decided to go there. But once they got there, how did the physical reality compare with their formed mental reality? For some, the physical reality might be disappointing. For others, it might be extraordinary. To me, the inherent link between mental image and physical reality can pose many challenges - setting up false ideals and impure attitude, however, it can also pose many opportunities - to explore how the mind and the body relate to space and time. ■

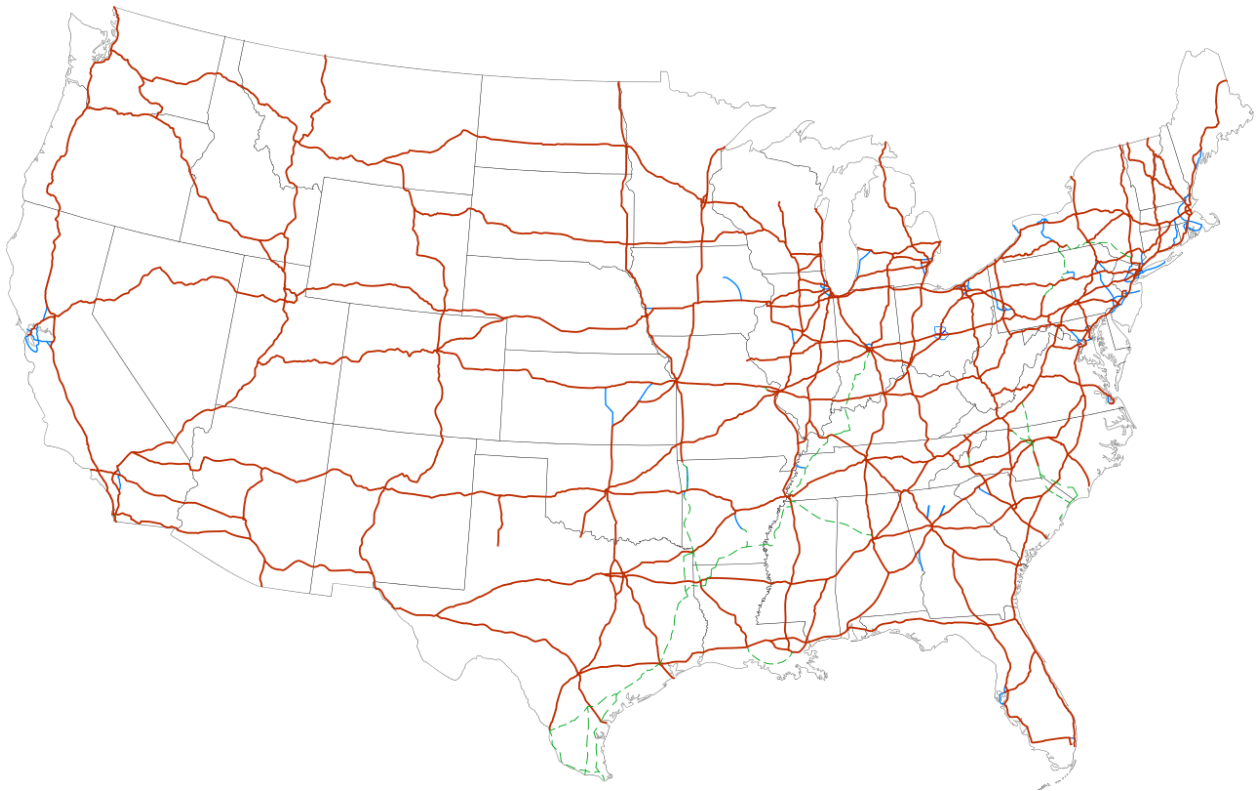


Figure 1.1 map of the United States highway system

1.2 Lava River Cave

The following account chronicles a travel experience in my recent past that exemplifies the impact new experiences can have on self awareness and personal understanding. It details the sequence of events that unfolded before me as I explored an ancient volcanic cave in the high desert of Eastern Oregon. Special attention has been paid to moments of experiential and phenomenological significance with the aim of highlighting how spatial and temporal characteristics of place can connect the external world to the internal world of the self.



Figure 1.2 *inside Lava River Cave*

I arrived in Bend Oregon very early on a crisp spring morning, eager to make my way to the Lava Lands Visitor Center located about 12 miles South of the city in the Deschutes National Forest. Driving along, the sweet smell of sage brush and juniper filled the air as a blood orange sun rose over craggy mountains dotting an unfamiliar horizon. A surprising and refreshing aromatic reminder of the night's rainfall, to my novice nose the smell served as a gesture that seemed to welcome me to this new and unfamiliar land. After a quick inquiry at the visitor center I made for an intriguing natural feature in the Newberry National Volcanic Monument called Lava River Cave. The name alone was enough to entice me.

The drive up to the cave site featured a dense assortment of Ponderosa Pine and bitterbrush, a unique ecosystem that appeared to be thriving among the occasional assortment of large lava rocks and patchy wide spreads of ancient lava flow remnant from a volcanic eruption long ago. When I arrived, the harsh morning sun cascaded vibrant beams of daylight through evaporating moisture emerging through the Ponderosa Pines. I parked my car and stood in the parking lot for a few minutes observing how the light beams cast a spotlight on an unsightly pit-toilet. Guided by this quiet ambiance, I proceeded toward a small wooden information stand manned by a tall ranger with a wide hat. The ever present sound of the buzzing of nearby bees and flies was of a noticeable volume even as my heavy leather boots crushed along the gravel path before me. The ranger greeted me excitedly and to my amazement he informed me that I was the first visitor of the day. With the realization that there wouldn't be any people in the cave ahead of me, a rush of childlike anticipation surged through my whole body.

After passing by the information stand and picking up a brochure about the cave, I proceeded toward a precarious looking structure perched at the edge of a steep drop off. Standing at the structure I was greeted by another ranger who handed me a head

lamp through a small, high-legged window. The ranger made sure I tested out the head lamp to see if it worked before heading down. Having left my cellphone in my car as a means of ensuring a distraction-free experience, it never really occurred to me until just then the possible danger of being stuck down there without a light.

Equipped with my working head lamp I made for the cave's entrance. With no physical features extruded above ground level, the only sign that indicated the cave's presence was a deep hole in the ground that dropped off steeply next to the structure where I received my head lamp. The path down into the hole was a narrow spiral that hugged tightly to the perimeter. On the way down there was a series of informative signs illustrating the story of the cave and its surrounding ecosystems. Of peculiar interest to me along the way was a sign that read, "Lava River Cave - Explore the Inside of the Earth." Sparked with a heightened sense of wonderment, my mind began racing with deep thoughts about the mysteries concealed within subterranean worlds.

At the end of the narrow spiral path, at the bottom of the collapsed hole in the ground just before the mouth of the cave, a large sign read "leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs." Having not brought a camera, I modified the sign in my mind's eye to read "leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but memories." I then switched on my head lamp and descended into the void guided by a rusty metal staircase. In the beginning, visibility was zero. There was no discernible way to make any sense yet of where or how I would move forward save for the few feet of staircase I could see before me. The power of the sun's nurturing light quickly fell as the cave angled slightly in a direction away from the cave's mouth. Turning here I passed into what felt like an abyssal portal; with nothing ahead of me but the blackness of the inside of the Earth.

Once my body was fully immersed in the blackness

the first thing I noticed was how tremendously cold the air temperature had suddenly become. I must have been unaware of the change while my eyes had my brain distracted as I made my initial descent. I tilted my head lamp down and pulled out of my pocket the brochure I had picked up earlier and began scanning it to see what other surprises I might be in store for. Sure enough, it was stated that the cave maintains a consistently cool 40 degrees Fahrenheit year round. Reaching into my coat pockets, I pulled out two leather gloves and promptly put them on. With the light still on the brochure I continued reading, learning about how the cave was formed by a fast moving underground ancient river of molten rock. In 1923, the first archaeologist to explore the cave, Ira A Williams, named the cave "Lava River Tunnel." The term tunnel stood out to me and I grew curious.

Realizing that I had quickly become distracted looking at the brochure and was spending too much time prefacing my experience, I folded up the brochure and put it back into my coat pocket and tilted my light dead ahead. This was precisely when I realized how black the blackness really was. I had been immersed for just long enough to realize that the sun was no longer going to play any further role in the experience. Tilting my light down at the ground, I saw vast piles of scattered rocks. These had likely fallen into the cave from the hole in the ground where I entered. A frighteningly narrow metal walkway, rusted and covered with muddy footprints left by non-present people, dizzily meandered its way over and alongside the rocks, forcing my attention and light exclusively toward the ground surface. Gradually, the rocks all but completely diminished, leaving me in a damp, empty chamber. Atmospherically different, the damp chamber had me suddenly feeling very alone. Unaware of nothing but the ground surface so far, I tilted my light up and scanned the chamber. Through frantic panning my brain began to piece together the geometry of the space, revealing an impressive natural barrel vault made entirely of ribbed and jagged dark lava rock. Suddenly

William's term 'tunnel' was beginning to make sense.

The perfect shape of the chamber instantly called to mind the sensation of walking through the remnant of a deep abandoned subway tunnel from a city long extinct. Inquisitive about the geologic history of this location inside the earth, my emotions had me recalling the moment when Equality 72521, from Ayn Rand's *Anthem*, first encountered a subterranean structure remnant of a time in human history that had long surpassed the understanding of his own time. The combined sense of curiosity and caution felt by Equality 72521 as he began to make sense of his subterranean discovery was equally felt as I began to observe, touch, and question my own subterranean world.

Walking over to one of the cave walls, I gently caressed a deep crack and ran my finger along its path. Cool and damp to the touch, the crack and the lava rock wall seemed gentle and still amongst me - a direct contrast to its violent and dramatic forging in the chaos of the ancient world. Touching the cave connected me to its presence. Suddenly its silence became its symphony, its voice and its aura. I switched off my head lamp and stood among the native blackness feeling nothing but my own body and the body of the cave. My brain was forced to abandon its reliance on my sense of vision. And as it searched desperately in the darkness for any sign of familiar stimuli, a flood of sensory deprivation filled my entire being. Everything was silenced. I couldn't see, I couldn't hear, I couldn't feel, and I couldn't think. But my brain refused this deprivation and quickly made apparent to my consciousness that there was in fact a world around me and that I was, in fact, a being in that world. I began to notice faint dripping sounds coming from water droplets falling from the cave's ceiling. I could feel a previously imperceptible cool breeze as it brushed past my cheeks causing goosebumps to crawl up my arms. And I could feel the sandy surface of pulverized lava rock crushing beneath my heavy leather boots as I took a small step forward. A sense of place was

emerging through a new conditioning of my brain; a sense of place without vision. In that moment I was aware of myself and I was aware of the cave. I was whole. And every aspect of the sunlit world above was temporarily made unmemorable and seemed undesirable.

Startled when I switched the head lamp back on, my eyes began to re-take control of my brain and I proceeded to walk forward. The combined heightened sense of place and sense of self I experienced with the light switched off completely modified my mental state of mind and began to cause a noticeable shift in how I perceived and made sense of the rest of my journey. With the above world and the trials and tribulations of the life it promotes in the far recesses of my consciousness, it was just me and my environment, alone together, but together not alone.

Blissful euphoria graced my sense of bodily being as I continued along from one part of the cave to the next, learning, inquiring, and sensing as I experienced. At one critical point, the cave ceiling began to lower, compressing me into a crouching position. As the back of my coat scratched gently along the damp surface of the ceiling, I grew anxious fearing if the cave were to collapse on me. To my amusement, as I emerged from the compression, a vast chamber presented itself to me as a silent subterranean cathedral blessed by a divinity of darkness. The scale of the space was of an immeasurable magnitude, probably made more apparent having just emerged from a compressed space. Standing there, I was compelled by amazement to feel greatly humbled to be a body among such a wondrous inner worldly jewel.

An abundance of scattered rocks were pushed close to the walls of the cavern, clearing out a nave in the center to walk through. Toward the opposite end of the cavern was a subsidiary lava tube, a cave within a cave, gloriously illuminated by the beam of my head lamp. Could this be the altar? I couldn't take my attention off of it except to occasionally tilt my

head up to admire the atmosphere above me.

The approach to the altar ended with a slight change in elevation downward to a small opening. I pulled out my brochure, noting that this feature was called "Two Tube Tunnel." Just barely narrow enough for me to walk through, this small alter within my subterranean cathedral hugged my body closely, prompting a consideration of myself and the divinity of the darkness. Small holes in the ceiling within the narrow passage opened up to the vast space beyond, offering no visible sense of what might be up there. The sheer lack of information presented by the black voids had me questioning whether I was truly subterranean or somewhere on the moon!

Beyond the cathedral, another tunnel revealed the presence of what was made to look like an inside the earth "garden." Populated with an abundance of stalagmites and rocky pinnacles, and literally fenced off like a garden for protection and preservation, the extruded formations stood to me as monuments dedicated to the presence of the divinity of the darkness I sensed just moments ago in the cathedral. Realizing their fundamental solitude in their location, the very act of the creation of the extruded formations revealed to me the significance of the impact of time. The linear process of time, the natural cycles of the Earth, and the motion of the universe all played a role in how the stalagmites and pinnacles before me came to exist as they do. And all of these cycles transcend a realm that stretches far beyond the boundaries of my own existence, making my place in it all ever the more obscure. As I walked by, I contemplated, wondered, and fantasized about the significance of any one person's existence in the world, ultimately deciding my only choice was to give in to the nature of the unknown and to simply keep walking.

I couldn't walk very much further, however, for at the end of the passage before me was the end of the explorable cave. I approached with caution as the ceiling and floor began to converge, compressing

my body into a crouching position once again. The beam of my head lamp cast a curious glow on what appeared to be a brightly colored object in the distance ahead. Having not seen such a brightly colored presence for quite some time, I inquisitively moved toward it, all the while, as the cave forced my body into a crawling position. Face to face with the sandy floor of the cave, I wafted away kicked up dust from my view and came upon the mysterious object. It was a highly reflective aluminum sign with cautionary words forbidding further movement. Laying there, at the end of the line, I couldn't help but wonder what lie concealed in the darkness of the void beyond. One last time I switched my head lamp off and remained in place for as long as I could bare it. Laying there, eyes closed, satisfied with the totality of my experience and with my sense of bodily existence, I heard for the first time the echo of a distant human voice. I switched my head lamp on and opened my eyes. ■

Figure 1.3 at the end of the explorable portion of Lava River Cave



1.3 Speaking to What's Within Us

The account of my experience in Lava River Cave highlights an important notion about how human perception and emotion can shape and define the human experience. While my experience in the cave heightened my awareness of myself and my environment, other people exploring the same cave in the same isolated context could come back and tell a completely different story. In fact, an infinite array of possible stories is potentially conceivable. Each story would be a function of each individual's unique way of sensing and feeling along with how what they sensed was felt and interpreted in the brain. I believe that the stunning sensory excitement of the natural world can shape human emotion and thought.

To quote naturalist Sir David Attenborough, "an understanding of the natural world and what's in it is a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment."¹⁹ He has said also, "people must feel that the natural world is important, valuable, beautiful, wonderful and an amazement and a pleasure."¹⁹ I believe Sir David to be right about this and strongly believe that the amazement of the natural world and its

powers is what speaks to what's deepest within us. What's critically important is that we're acknowledging this and passing this on to future generations so they can experience it, see it, and be moved by it just as we have been. ■

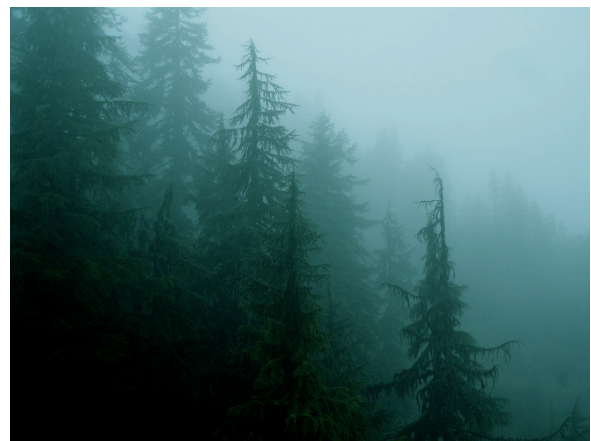


Figure 1.4 *Canon Beach, OR (top), Pacific Northwest forest (bottom)*

2 Self Location Through Architecture

2.1 Ocularcentric World

We live in a culture of images. Every day each and every one of us is bombarded by thousands, if not millions, of images. Within our ocularcentric culture, the dominance of the eye and the significance placed upon the act of seeing has led to a suppression of the other senses. Photography, for example, tends to produce the illusionary effect that the world is more available than it actually is. And by offering high definition windows into unfamiliarity, the unfamiliar can suddenly appear familiar.

But vision is only one of many senses that, in isolation, is only responsible for a fraction of the reality of how we humans experience ourselves in the world. "Our body is both an object among objects and that which sees and touches them."¹⁴ "The dominance of the eye and the suppression of the other senses tends to push us into detachment, isolation, and exteriority."¹⁷

When we rely too much on what we can sense with our eyes, it becomes possible for the information received



Figure 2.1 Herbert Bayer - *Lonely Metropolitan*
"vision and the tactile sense are fused in actual lived experience"¹⁶

by our other senses to fade into the background. The produced effect by the conscious combination of all the senses, however, is how we make sense of ourselves and the world around us.

Our relationship to our immediate environment and how we sense it heightens our awareness of our very existence and of our place amongst everything else.

An increasingly automated, insulated life, fueled by our culture's obsession with images, denies us the feeling of being related to the world. Edward T. Hall states that "man's relationship to his environment is a function of his sensory apparatus plus how this apparatus is conditioned to respond."⁸ With an unavoidable flood of images dominating so much of how we live day to day, from advertisements, to movies, to the photos we view and share with others on our mobile devices, we've become unconsciously conditioned to the presence of 2D representations of the world.

The truth is, however, while we might live in an image dominated condition

day to day, where we truly live is "... in worlds of the mind, in which the material and the mental, as well as the experienced, remembered and imagined, completely fuse into each other."¹⁷ We may rely heavily upon what we can see with our eyes, but internally, the brain is receiving and processing information from all of our senses simultaneously. The information we tell our brain to focus on, however, can be a result of conditioning it to prefer our eyes. But when we can pause for a moment and take a little more time to process our surroundings, the sensory rewards can be rich. The multi-sensory characteristics of my personal experience in Lava River Cave serve to highlight an important notion about how the combined spatial sensory perception of a place can influence and modify the internal world of the mind.

"Environments and spaces affect the body - this is, in part, how we remember them - through the effect had on all the senses of the body and on the body itself."¹⁶ Since living in the world inherently involves the daily stimulation of all the senses, the environments and spaces we interact with hold a unique and precious importance to us physically and psychologically. ■

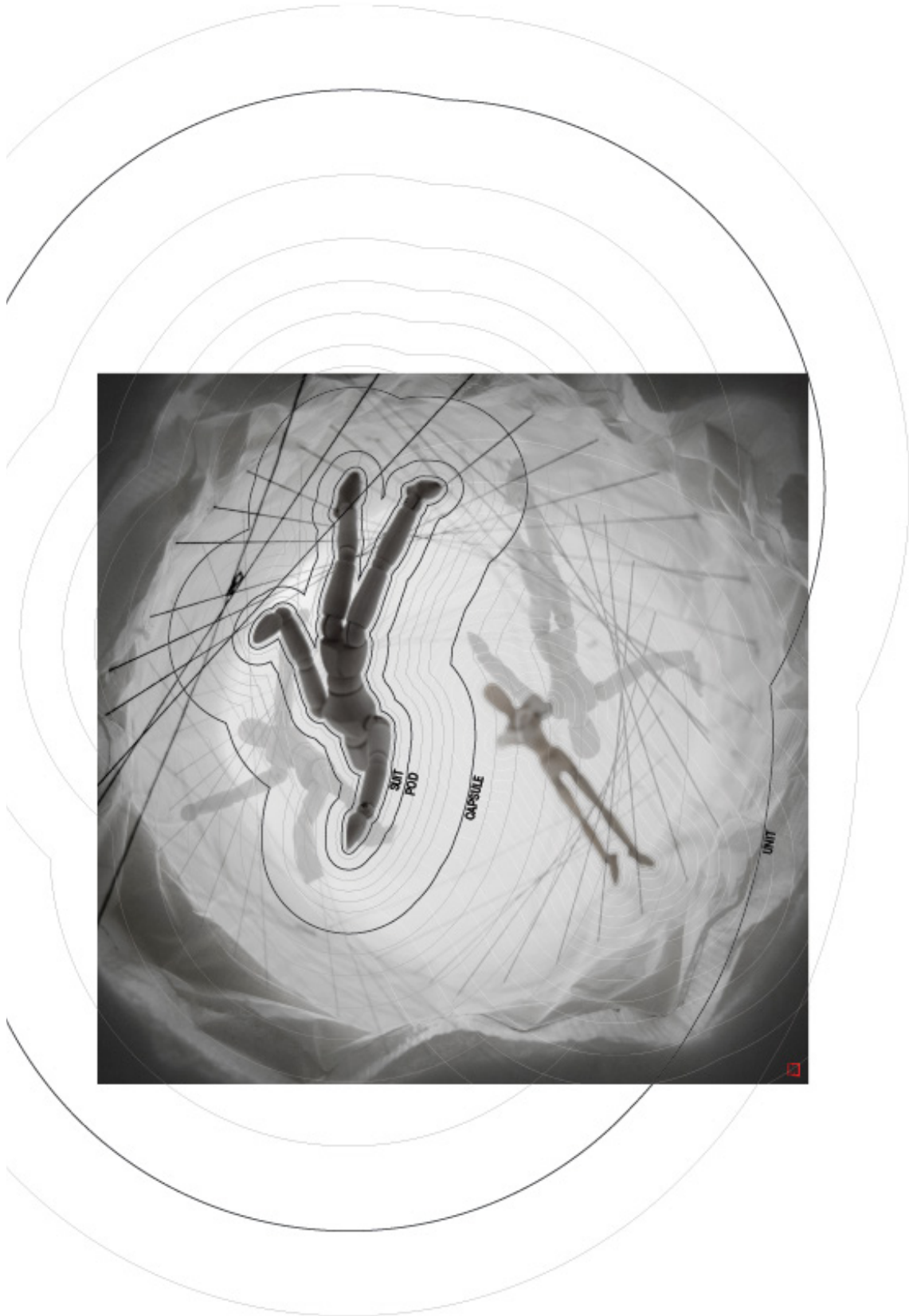


Figure 2.2 thresholds and the body in space ¹²

2.2 Mind and Body

The power of how our environment can affect how our minds and bodies relate to one another is of great significance to the realm of architecture. Juhani Pallasmaa, architect and theoretician, suggests that “we know and remember who we are and where we belong fundamentally through our cities and buildings, our constructed world, the human - architecturally humanized - microcosm.”¹⁷ Pallasmaa, highlighting how science can provide empirical evidence for emotional and psychological responses to our environments, quotes neuroscientist Fred Gage,

“While the brain controls our behavior and genes control the blueprint for the design and structure of the brain, the environment can modulate the function of the genes, and ultimately, the structure of the brain. Changes in the environments change the brain, and therefore they change our behavior. In planning the environments in which we live, architectural design changes our brain and our behavior.”¹

While it can be easily overlooked, the role of the architect is not just to design physical spaces and physical realities, but it is also to design mental spaces and psychological realities as well. With this in mind, “the most important sense in architecture is not the sense of vision, but rather an existential sense,”¹ one’s sense of being in the world.

Since it is “...impossible to detach the image of the self from its spatial and situational existence” because “the body and its movements are in constant interaction with the environment as we experience it, the world and the self re-define one another constantly.”¹⁶ Understanding the pure presence of the body in combination with the image of the world can yield a continuous existential experience.

“Architecture strengthens the existential experience, ... and this is essentially a strengthened sense of self.”¹⁶ The connectedness I felt between myself and Lave River Cave when I switched off my head lamp and resided in the cave’s “native darkness” strengthened how I perceived myself to exist amongst the



Figure 2.3 Rene Magritte - *The Lovers*, 1928
"in heightened emotional states and deep thought, vision is usually repressed." ¹⁶



Figure 2.4 Henri Cartier-Bresson - Alberto Giacometti on rue d'Alesta, Paris, 1961
"a surprising similarity between an artist's own character and his work that underlines the interaction of the artist's sense of self and his work."¹⁷

space that my body inhabited. "Man's sense of space is closely related to his sense of self, which is an intimate transaction with his environment."⁷ The personal transaction each and every one of us exchanges with a place when we experience it is shaped by how the environment internally touches us through its external physical characteristics.

Architecture, as part of the built environment, is the means through which many of us connect to the world. More than just background stages, buildings, whether we choose to look at them or not, "...are not abstract, meaningless constructions, or aesthetic compositions, they are extensions and shelters of our bodies, memories, identities, and minds."¹⁷

Since everyone possesses a unique way of sensing and feeling, the experience of any environment or work of architecture is inherently individual and unique. These unique individual

experiences cannot be pre-determined. However, a work of architecture can serve as a vessel to facilitate a multitude of personal possibilities.

Appealing to the bodily senses, "a bodily reaction is an inseparable aspect of the experience of architecture."¹ Requiring action and lived experiences to be understood, architecture has to be lived and felt rather than formalized intellectually. Despite the fact that "architecture is inherently scientific, approaching design in a personal and poetic manner, with personal memory, confessions, interpretations, projections of life, etc. can yield moving buildings with significance greater than that which scientific analysis could provide."¹

I believe that by offering an opportunity for personal and poetic meaning to emerge through experience, architecture can successfully mediate "... between the outer world and the inner realm of the self, projecting frames of perception and understanding."¹



Figure 2.5 *dwelling amongst architecture can help us experience the world*

A building borders the mundane nature of the physical, scientific world with the imaginative, emotional, and expressive nature of the mental and lived world.

“The meaning of art and architecture is outside of the work itself, and it always reaches beyond itself.”¹ One of the aspects of architecture that makes it meaningful to us has to do with how we dwell. We dwell in both space and time, light and shadow. As human beings, we have an innate need to dwell and to feel rooted in the continuity of time. Architecture can facilitate this experience by focusing our attention on our existence in the present and connecting us with time and tradition. For example, - “the door handle is the handshake of the building...through impressions of touch we shake the hands of countless generations.”¹⁶ Touching the handle of a door is a tactile act that takes place in the present and has taken place in the past. This one object mediates between our present world and the world of the

past. Dwelling in a space allows time for the mind to wander and ponder connections between past, present, and future. Architecture, as a vessel, can accommodate and inspire an individual to dwell through impressions of time, materiality, and light.⁹

Dwelling amongst architecture can help us experience the world. Buildings, unlike mountains or canyons, are designed and constructed entities - made by humans, for humans. Built architecture is placed in the setting of the natural world and as such prompts an interaction with forces that are both unpredictable and uncontrollable. Sensible architecture acknowledges its natural setting and responds to it responsibly and wisely.¹¹ When designed, detailed, oriented, and constructed just right, a building and its environment reinforce one another and yield a rich and rewarding human experience.

The experience an individual has while

in an environment can be heightened by the presence of architecture - it can prompt an individual to see, think, feel, and dwell in ways they might not have done otherwise because the immediate perceived scale of a building is more comprehensible and readily relatable than is the vast scale of the natural world. ■



Figure 2.6 mind map: quotes from sourced research material were cut up and taped to a board, upon which hand written notes and string were used to connect points of interest and draw comparisons.

2.3 Precedent Analysis

To further understand how architectural interventions can foster personally rich and meaningful interactions with the world and the self, a number of architectural typological precedents were explored as a starting point for the investigation of this thesis. Each typology explored was researched with regard to how architectural interventions exemplify existential bodily experiences.

The first typology explored was small chapels (Figure 2.7). The chapel is the quintessential manifestation of the power of architecture to capture and inspire human emotion. Small scale precedents were selected over larger works to explore how architecture can be compelling and spiritually moving at an intimate, bodily scale. Light, shadow, materiality, texture, and color give way to sublime spaces charged with embodied meaning and emotion.



Figure 2.7 assorted small chapels

The next typology explored was trekking cabins (Figure 2.8). Remote, off-the-grid, and typically only accessible by trails, trekking cabins act as both a shelter and as a destination for traveling backpackers and hikers. Deliberately and intimately designed works, the very nature of what a trekking cabin is compels its occupant to dwell. As stated earlier, “dwelling amongst architecture helps us experience the world.” These small vessels facilitate experiences for transient travelers, inviting an exciting opportunity for architectural design.

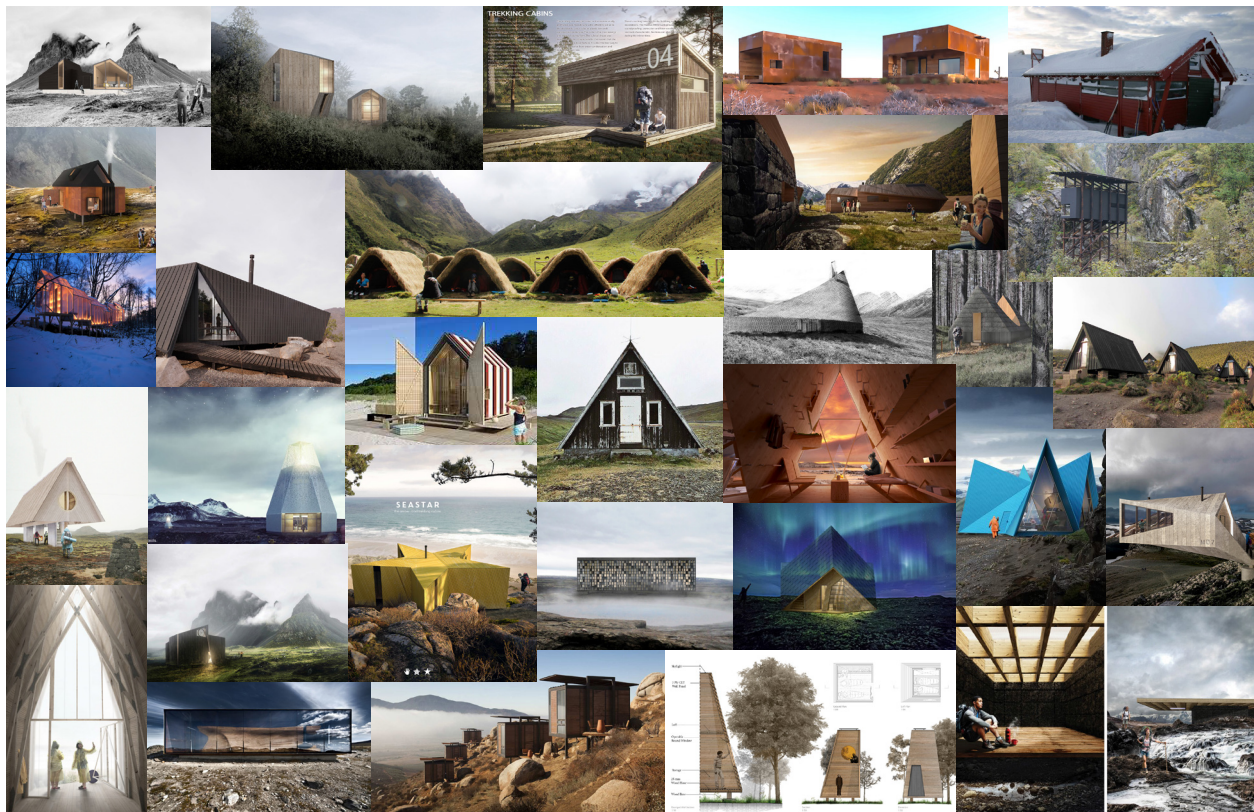


Figure 2.8 assorted trekking cabins

Finally, the third typology explored was rest stops and view points (Figure 2.9). Combining the sublime nature of the small chapel with the transient nature of the trekking cabin, the rest stop and view point both offer an exciting architectural challenge. Rest stops act as service areas for travelers by car, and view points offer stunning natural vistas to travelers by car or by foot.

There could be a million reasons for why a person might be driving on a highway, but at some point, sooner or later they'll need to stop, rest, re-fuel, etc. Roadside rest areas offer a chance to provide travelers with something more than just a quick restroom break or a gas station. View points typically include roadside turn outs for cars to safely pull off the roadway and admire the view. Some view points offer access to trailheads and other pedestrian networks. Combining the services inherent in a roadside rest stop with the natural splendor and intrigue of the view point could yield a designed architectural intervention capable of providing visitors with a personal, curated experience of nature, and in turn, a provoked internal understanding of themselves - self-location. ■



Figure 2.9 assorted rest stops and view points

3 Washington Waysides

3.1 Opportunity

The state of Washington offers an abundant variety of rich, inspiring landscapes. Threading the state's natural wonders together, an extensive network of scenic byways (Figure 3.1) affords an exciting opportunity to get away, explore, and experience places of natural and personal significance.

Rest areas and turn outs along Washington's scenic byways and in the state's national parks provide drivers with an opportunity to momentarily pull off the road and escape the chaos of the modern world. Leaving the stress of daily life behind, scenic byways and the rest areas along them are in greater psychological demand now than ever before. What attracts people to Washington's scenic byways, and what provokes people to pull off the road depends entirely upon individual preference and personal desire.

"We must, above all, take human nature into account. If around the bend of the road a park visitor has

his first good look at a glacier, it is fairly certain that he will wish to pause while he regains his normal breathing. Most likely he has come a long way to see this sight and he should be permitted some leisure in viewing it."¹³

According to a historic report published in 1952 by the Highway Research Board, 'Parking Turnouts and Rest Areas,' "a rest area, as distinguished from a turnout, implies that certain facilities are provided in addition to an attractive setting or a view...we call them waysides."¹³ Their development was urged "...as a part of the complete American highway, as an extension of highway services to meet a demonstrated need for safety and for the conservation of attractive areas."¹³ Waysides offer quiet places for people to pause, think, reflect, and observe nature, acquire information about their location, use a comfort station, have a quick meal, etc.

3.1 Opportunity

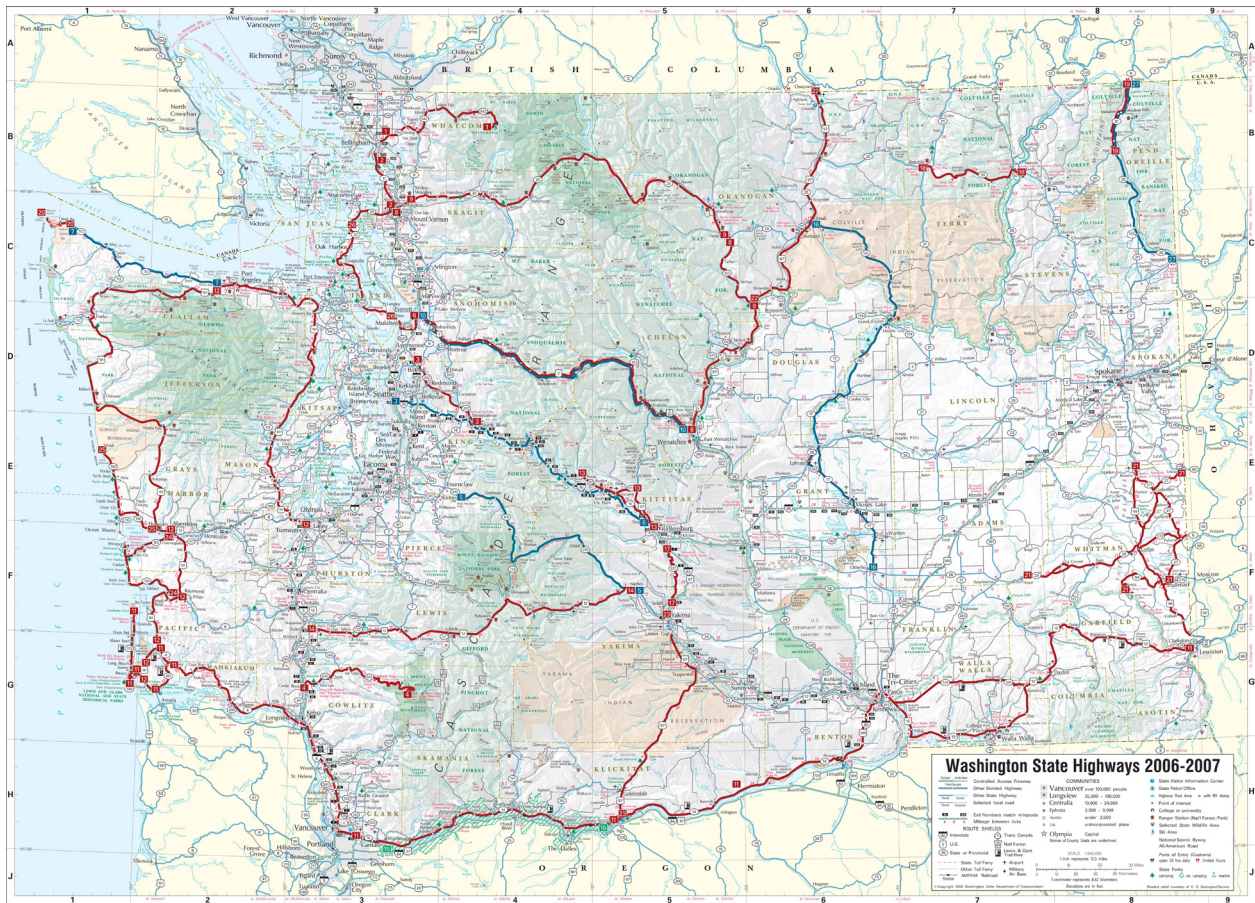


Figure 3.1 map of Washington State Highways

These specially designated destinations of distance and solitude can serve as precious and necessary reminders of the presence of oneself in the world. The presence of the human body, the presence of the natural environment, and the acknowledgement of the two could suggest an intimate opportunity for the implementation of architecture as a third presence. This is what I'm referring to as the new Washington Wayside - a theoretical notion that attempts to attain a renewed focus on an already existing infrastructure. It will be a destination offering a unique experience, simultaneously promoting a broad connection to the world and an inward connection to the self. Architecture will be deployed and used as a focal point for the curation of a personal experience of the surrounding natural environment.

Although waysides already exist in some form in the state of Washington and elsewhere, the investigation in the remainder of this document aims not to suggest a kit-of-parts or a one size fits all fix, but rather to highlight and encourage the importance of place-specific implementations. Many existing wayside facilities fall short on delivering meaningful personal experiences, and this is likely due to the absence of a strong, integrated architectural presence.



Figure 3.2 typical roadside signage indicating the presence of an upcoming rest area



Figure 3.3 Crown Point Vista House, along the Columbia River Gorge



Figure 3.4 comfort station at Sunrise, Mt. Rainier National Park



Figure 3.5 typical comfort station structure seen throughout the state of Washington



Figure 3.9 another example of a typical comfort station structure, this one includes unsheltered vending machines



Figure 3.6 some waysides offer a visitor information structure



Figure 3.7 many wayside comfort stations are constructed from inexpensive, economic materials



Figure 3.8 many wayside comfort stations lack unique architectural character and exhibit a static appearance

The figures on this page illustrate the typical architectural character of waysides in the state of Washington. Structures are usually surrounded by a vast area of paved parking. Blank walls are adorned with signage indicating the name of the wayside along with visitor maps and area information.

The structures are typically simple in form and constructed from inexpensive, economic materials such as brick, concrete masonry blocks, concrete, wood, and stone.

While these structures all tend to be humble in character, their general appearance seems to evoke a lack of interest for their surrounding context. Many of the structures look essentially the same and could easily be located anywhere.

The Crown Point Vista House (Figure 3.3) and the comfort station at Sunrise in Mt. Rainier National Park (Figure 3.4) both exemplify architectural character more conscious of its surrounding context. Buildings such as these enhance the visitor experience by providing a more memorable visual character and design. If this idea could be applied to the buildings in Figures 3.5 - 3.9, it becomes possible to imagine how a new attitude toward wayside design could shape experience. ■

3.2 Site Selection

The picturesque beauty of the Pacific Northwest is readily attainable and accessible via Washington’s scenic byways. For the purpose of this investigation, a site selection exercise was undertaken, examining locations restricted to the state’s scenic byways to ensure the presence of a stunning natural condition.

The Highway Research Board report states, “the key to good site selection lies in a thorough study of all potential rest-area sites over a whole route between major control points, such as large towns or mountain passes. Rest areas should be located at climax points (the very best natural rest-area



Figure 3.10 Locations of the sample of nine selected sites for further examination

sites available) of each primary highway route.”¹³ Although an essentially endless array of possible site locations exist, the following sample of nine sites was chosen for further examination (Figure 3.10). Together, these nine sites reside in nearly all of the state’s regional biomes - from the mountains, to the desert, to the ocean, and to the rainforest. While it is possible to imagine investigating more sites than these nine, this thesis does not intend to discuss site variety in great detail. Instead, the sample of nine chosen sites aims to visualize the possibility of an imagined, expandable network of new Washington Waysides.

and design. The matrix below (Figure 3.11) lists the nine chosen sites and a set of criteria for evaluation. Each criteria item was marked and scored as applicable to each site. The resulting total ‘score’ for each site was then measured against the site’s emotional potential to determine one site to examine in further detail. ■

Once the sample of sites was selected, each location was emotionally and logically evaluated. The purpose of evaluating the sites was to determine a likely candidate for further exploration

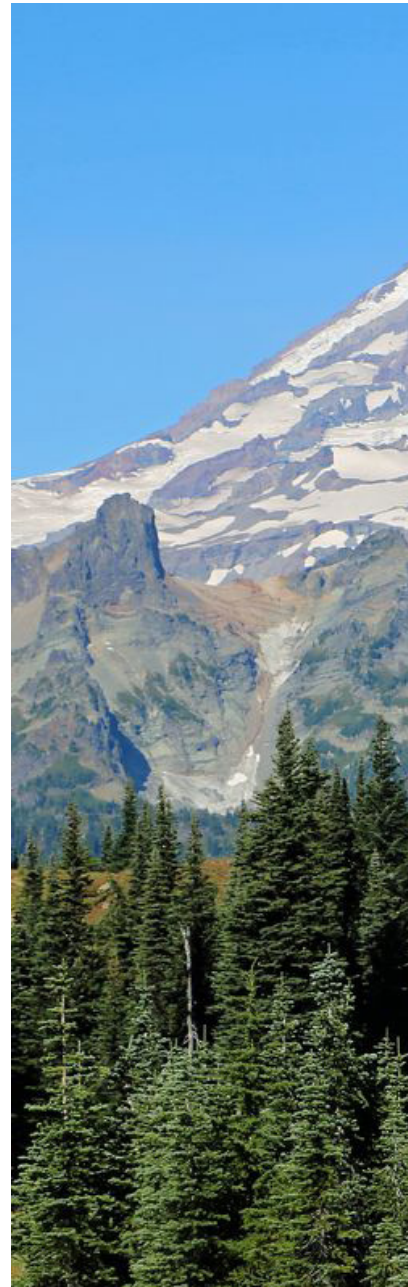
Site Selection Matrix	accessibility			natural hazards	proximity			erosion potential	flooding potential	natural			infrastructure					total		
	year-round access	accessible by road	accessible by trail		near water	near destination	nearest city (mi) (population 15,000+)			seasonal view	unchanging/ reliable view	desirable view orientation	approx. elevation	location/ climate (mountain, sea, forest, desert)	cellular dead-zone	electricity available	sewage available		drainage available	existing site development (some, none)
sites under consideration																				
Blake Island			1		5	1	14		2		4	SE	25	sea		3	2	3	some	17
Bowman Bay	3	5	2		5	4	8					W	25	sea		4	1	2	some	26
Frenchman Coulee	3	5	1	3			38	3			4	N	1,200	desert	3				none	10
Kalaloch	4	5	2	2	5		73	2			2	W	100	ocean	2	3	1	3	some	23
Lenore Lake	3	5		3	3	2	32		3		5	NW	1,200	desert	4	3			none	19
Olympic Hot Sp. Rd.		2	4	4		1	19	3		3		SE	1,500	forest	4				none	1
Ross Lake Overlook		4	4	2	4	3	93	2		2		N	2,200	forest mountain	3	3			none	15
Sun Lakes - Dry Falls	3	5			2	2	42	3			5	SE	1,600	desert		2	1	1	some	18
Tipsoo Lake		5	3	3	4	3	66		1	4	5	W	5,300	mountain	3				some	15

Figure 3.11 site selection matrix

3.3 A Special Place

A curious result of the site selection exercise was how it made visible the critical quality of emotional evaluation over numeric evaluation. The site selection matrix generated total 'scores' for each site based on a series of generic criteria. When examining the results it became clear that the numeric totals were of little justification to the real human experience potential of each location. To put it in another way, it just didn't seem reasonable, or even fair, to explain away the majesty of a mountain with a few numbers and a matrix. Simply put, the site selection exercise served to convince me that it was necessary to spend the rest of my energy working on a thesis set in a location I believe to be a special place.

One such special place, and a stunning natural feature iconic to the state of Washington, is the magnificent stratovolcano Mt. Rainier. ■





3.4 Tipsoo Lake Indigenous Significance

Until as recently as the 1960s, it was believed that the indigenous peoples to the Pacific Northwest made little to no use of the mountain and its resources. But efforts in the 1970s and 1980s quickly put an end to that belief when scientists uncovered stunning archaeological evidence suggesting otherwise. Studies conducted throughout the 1990s analyzing the lithic scatter (or debris of tool making) of several notable sites in and around Mt. Rainier concluded that people had in fact been using the mountain and its resources for thousands of years - perhaps even upwards of 8,000 years.⁴

Mt. Rainier is divided into distinct bio and climatic geological zones - the lower forest zone, the subalpine zone in the middle, and the high alpine (or glacial) zone near the peak.⁴ The indigenous peoples were foragers, they were hunter-gatherers. For most of the year, they likely would have resided in the lower forest zone and probably created impermanent settlements near river valleys. During the sunnier, warmer months, they would often create temporary 'base camps' up in the subalpine zone.⁴ The grassy

meadowlands of the subalpine zone yield an awe inspiring variety of plant and animal life. Due to the presence of a tremendous amount of snow in winter, the grasslands beneath the snow need a large quantity of stored energy to survive the winter - therefore when the snow melts the grasses explode with a collage of wildflowers to soak up as much of the sun as possible. While fleeting, this burst of energy yields a natural bounty rich in every way. The indigenous peoples were aware of this and took advantage of the splendor while they could, fashioning baskets from tree bark to pick huckleberries and gather other natural resources as needed.

One particular site, near present day Tipsoo Lake, is one such subalpine meadowland. Archaeological evidence points to the significance of this area to the indigenous peoples for use as a foregoing site and temporary base camp for thousands of years. Today, access to the Tipsoo Lake site is afforded by state route 410, better known as the Chinook Pass Scenic Byway (Figure 3.13). One of a multitude of scenic byways threading through the state of Washington,

3.4 Tipsoo Lake - Indigenous Significance

Chinook Pass runs adjacent to Mt. Rainier National Park and serves as one of only a handful of mountain passes traversing over the imposing Cascade mountain range. The route is only open from early May through mid-October, as heavy snowfall in winter in combination with the road's narrow width and sharp turns requires it be closed for safety. Interestingly, because Chinook Pass remains closed for more than half of the year, prohibiting continuous human activity, the human use reality seen at the Tipsoo Lake site today re-iterates the human use reality seen at the site throughout human history. ■



Figure 3.13 Chinook Pass Scenic Byway (SR 410)



Figure 3.14 view toward Tipsoo Lake and Mt. Rainier, looking West

3.5 Tipsoo Lake Wayside Significance



Figure 3.15 wooden boardwalk trail at Tipsoo Lake (left), wildflowers in the meadow (right)

Tipsoo Lake has historically been utilized as a foraging ground and place of respite due to its strategic location amongst Mt. Rainier and due to its bountiful plethora of wildlife. Today, Tipsoo Lake is utilized as a hiking area and place of respite due to its strategic location along the perimeter of Mt. Rainier National Park and because of its position relative to the Cascade mountain range separating Western Washington from Eastern Washington. The site has essentially always been a wayside. And, in fact, there is an existing wayside facility present on the site today. Which is what makes Tipsoo Lake an ideal candidate for further examination in this investigation for a new Washington Wayside. ■



Figure 3.16 view across Tipsoo Lake toward Mt. Rainier, looking West

3.6 Site Overview Water and Vehicular Flow

As an overview, Tipsoo Lake is actually three interconnected lakes (Figure 3.17) - with water flowing into them from the above alpine glacial zone. Water traverses down rocky slopes into the valley where the largest of the lakes resides. This water then flows into Chinook Creek which then cascades down a ravine all the way down into the lower forest zone - making visible the impact one bio climatic ecological zone can have on another.

Water, and how it flows, is an important aspect and a defining characteristic of this site. The flow of water (Figure 3.18) through the site is a result of forces originating in the nearby peaks and valleys of the surrounding mountains. Additionally, cars, and their movements, are another important aspect and defining characteristic of this site in today's terms. The flow of cars through the site is the result of travelers with varied intentions - some may be traveling from Seattle to a destination somewhere over the Cascade mountains in Eastern Washington. Others may be traveling from somewhere in Eastern Washington over the Cascade mountains to Seattle. And others may

be traveling to and from Mt. Rainier National Park.

Today, the flow of cars through the site is due to the presence of Chinook Pass. the road itself, while permitting a consistent flow of cars while it's operational, however, actually obstructs the critical flow of water through the site. The presence of Tipsoo Lake is the result of millions of years of geologic evolution. After successive eruptions of nearby Mt. Rainier, the subalpine valley where the lakes now reside began to shift from one climatic zone to another. Around the time of the construction of Chinook Pass in 1916,⁴ water flowed into the Tipsoo Lakes from the glacial alpine peaks of the climatic zone above, much as it still does today. Glacial snow melt arising from atop the adjacent peaks send an extraordinary amount of water down through rough rocky slopes, clear meadows, and steep bluffs.

Because of the construction of Chinook Pass, the natural flow of water into the Tipsoo Lakes has been disrupted and forced into a series of small drainage pipes and blocked by road berms, retaining walls, and other man-made



Figure 3.17 study area - existing site conditions

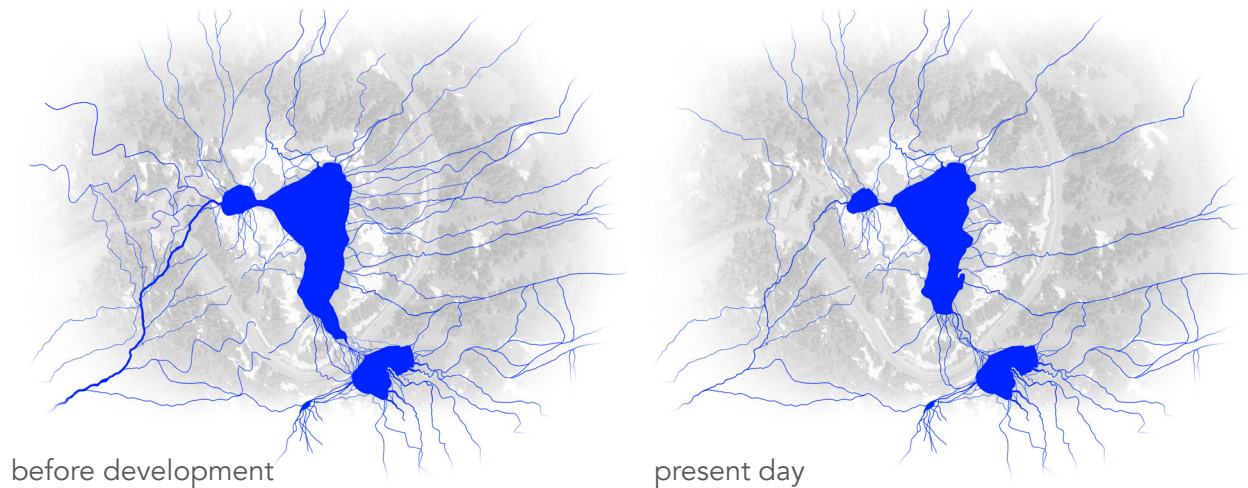


Figure 3.18 the Tipsoo Lakes and Chinook Creek, water flow

infrastructure. A likely result of this is the slight re-maneuvering of water flow into the ravine South of the lakes. Without man-made interference, the Southern base of the largest lake was likely much larger, as water from the smaller lake to the South (higher in elevation) once flowed freely into the largest lake. This would have had a major impact on the amount of water flowing into and through Chinook Creek, impacting habitats not only in the surrounding meadowlands, but in the valley of the climatic zone below as well.

The natural flow of water is of critical importance to a balanced natural environment. When iterating ways to improve current development on the site, restoring as much of the original flow of water is ideal. More detail regarding the restoration of water flow and the importance of a balanced, connected environment will be discussed in Chapter 4. ■

While water flows from one climatic zone to another, and while vehicles flow via Chinook Pass, people move to, from, and within the site in a variety of ways.

Visitors to the site arrive either one of two ways (Figure 3.20) - from over the cascades to the North, if coming from Eastern Washington, or from closer to Mt. Rainier National Park to the West, if coming from Western Washington and Seattle. Visitors approaching from Eastern Washington or over the Cascades receive their first intriguing glimpse of the site through a small parting of trees along the road. Their view is likely directed downward into the small valley where the lakes reside. The glimpse is subtle, but the surprise of the presence of the site probably sparks intrigue and curiosity.

After a brief glimpse, traveling South down Chinook Pass, the road takes a steep turn to the West, where a small vehicular turn out presents itself to satisfy those who long to stop (B-Figure 3.21). At the turn out, a small-narrow space invites visitors to take in a quick view before heading on their way. With only enough room for approximately five vehicles, if an individual is interested in lingering, a larger, main parking area the next stop North up the road (A-Figure 3.21) is more accommodating.

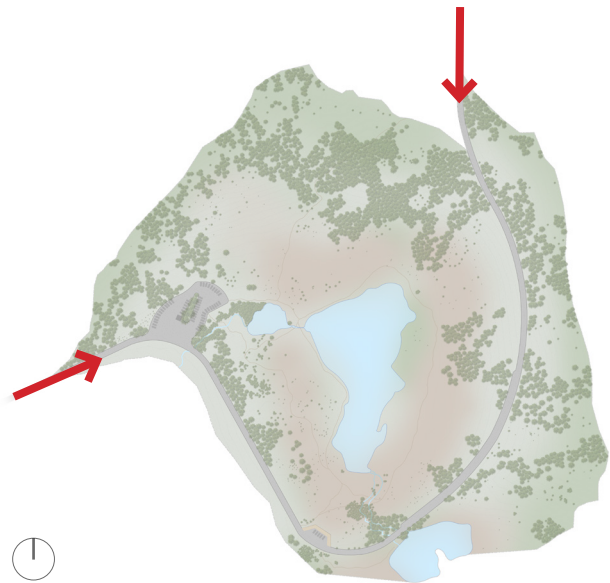


Figure 3.20 arrows indicate direction vehicles travel to access the site

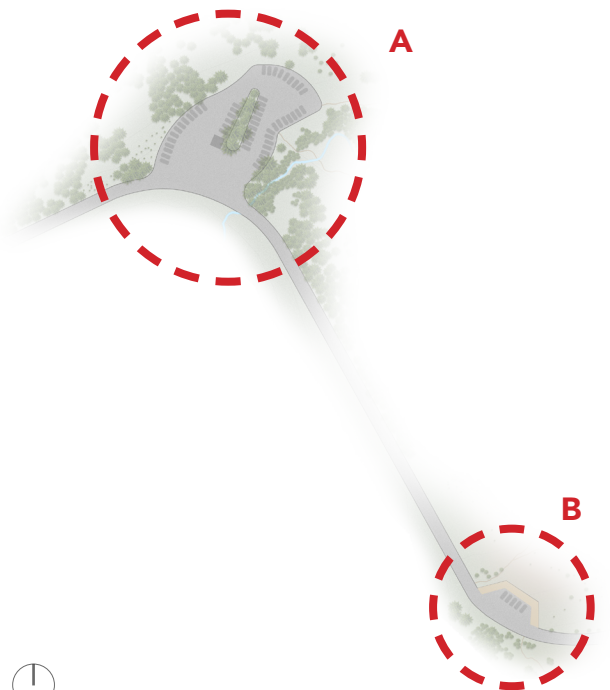


Figure 3.21 main parking area, existing conditions (A) roadside turn out, existing conditions (B)

The main parking area is the primary location where visitors arriving from either direction converge. There, a small comfort station is available for use and features a relatively standard pit-latrine toilet configuration (Figure 3.22). The building exemplifies a subdued version of National Park Rustic Architecture found and founded in nearby Mt. Rainier National Park. The main parking area offers approximately 56 parking spots and features picnic tables and waste receptacles along its perimeter.

A network of trails threads through the site (Figure 3.23). One, the Wander Loop Trail, offers a short, relatively flat, walking loop around the largest of the three lakes. Another trail, the Naches Peak Loop Trail, loops around the entire valley by ascending Naches Peak to the East and descending to connect with the smaller, southerly lake by the road. The Naches Peak Loop Trail also serves as a critical link between the Eastside Trail (which turns into the Wonderland Trail in Mt. Rainier National Park) and the Pacific Crest Trail (which traverses from Mexico to Canada).

Two main trailheads provide access to these trails. The wander loop trailhead is adjacent to the main parking facility. The Naches Peak loop trailhead is at both the main parking facility and across the road from the smaller roadside turn out.

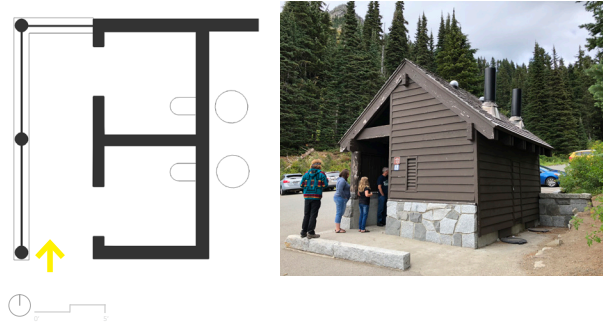


Figure 3.22 existing comfort station (right), plan diagram (left)

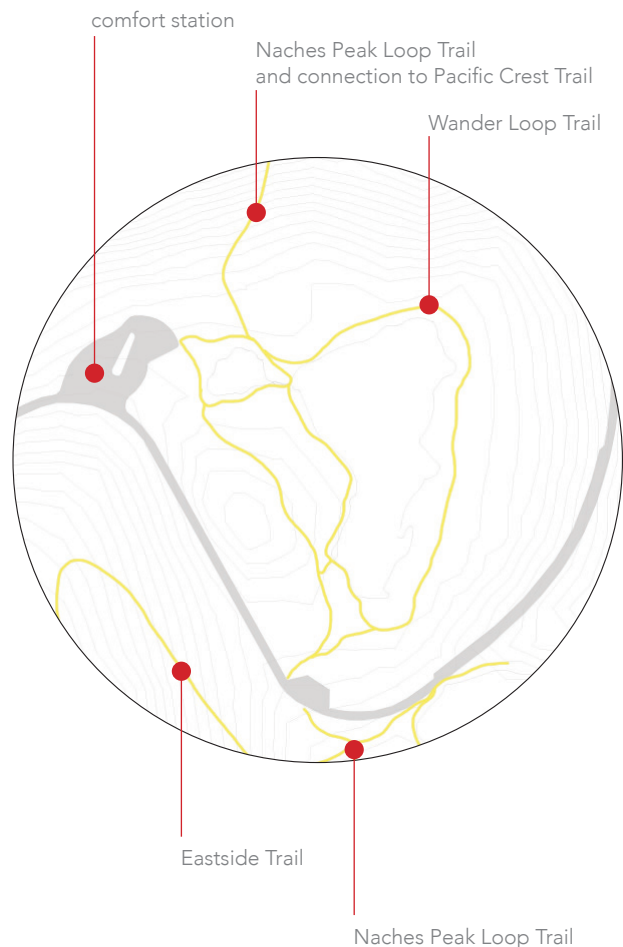


Figure 3.23 a network of trails threads through the site

The roadside turn out and the main parking facility provide access to the site by car. Trails provide access to the site by foot. Although a traveling motorist may be able to see the site from their car, the true magic of the given natural characteristics of the location is felt on foot, in the open.

This is a site of tremendous physical and visual variation. A short walk around the Wander Loop Trail in springtime will reveal tall, lush green grasses and vibrant red huckleberries. In summer, the wildflower bloom takes over the meadowland and bathes the site with a rich tapestry of vibrancy. In autumn, the colorful array of wildflowers gives way to the shifting colors of deciduous brush and low-lying scrub.

While seasonal variation is imminent, so to is the shifting of lighting conditions from hour to hour on any given day. Due to its high elevation and proximity to other mountain ranges and valleys, air pressure and air currents are swift at Tipsoo Lake. The combined effect of this yields ever shifting light as clouds roll in and out unannounced and disappear as if they'd never even been present. Solar analysis (Figure 3.26) and false color imaging (Figure 3.25) illustrates the extraordinary variance in light conditions. This place is a dream for photographers and amateurs alike!

When viewed through the lens of the site's vegetation, variety, hardiness, and delicateness all play a role in shaping its varied quality. Trees are tall, slender, and present themselves as proud pinnacles amongst the vibrancy of the world below while simultaneously paying their respects to the shadow of nearby Mt. Rainier.



Figure 3.24 *through the lens of the vegetation*

3.7 Site Overview - Human Flow

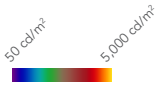
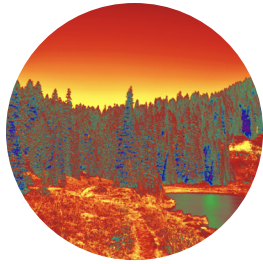
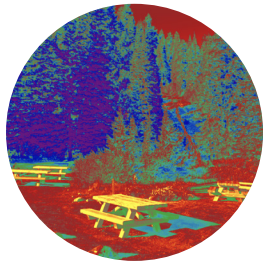
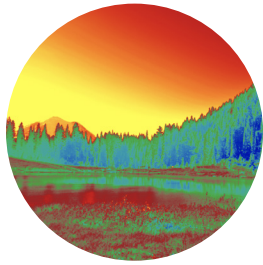
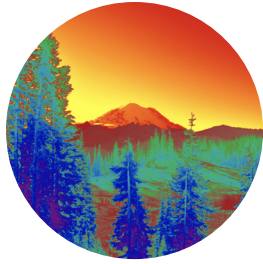


Figure 3.25 false color image analysis

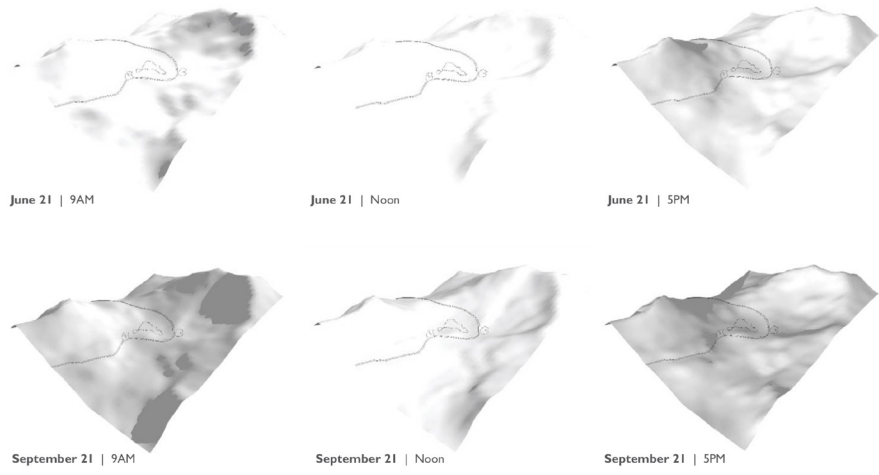


Figure 3.26 selected solar analysis - considering the site is not accessible during the winter months, solar analysis was not conducted for the Winter Solstice or the Vernal Equinox.

I believe the preciousness of this site lies in its variation. It's an ever-shifting place of extraordinary contrasts and stunning views. For these reasons I see it meaningful to imagine how it could be possible to encourage and inspire more visitors to appreciate what this special site has to offer. The rest of this investigation will examine how a new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake could curate an experience of the site's given natural splendor through meaningful experience and a consciousness of place through architecture. ■

4 The New Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake

Today, rest areas and American highways are intertwined, and drivers have now come to expect such rest areas to be present alongside their chosen route of travel.

“They expect, with some justification, provisions for comfort, rest and a little recreation as well. Although the primary consideration has been to provide rest areas for rest and comfort, the added possibilities of interest and passive recreation may well be considered in future planning. For example, the interests provided by a vista, a historic spot, an unusual forest cover, a geographical phenomenon would seem naturally to complement the primary consideration of rest and comfort.”¹³

There are many reasons for turnouts in parks. “They are a little different from those things which cause motorists to stop along other highways. In the parks

there are simply more of them, partly, perhaps, because we do not have so much competition with gas stations, hot-dog stands, and other private roadside developments.”¹³

Tipsoo Lake is both a stunning natural destination and a wayside. But its wayside characteristics, as they currently exist, are lacking experientially. To improve upon the wayside notion of the Tipsoo Lake site, built architectural interventions will serve to compliment the given natural architecture of the existing conditions. ■



Figure 4.1 *Chinook Pass features sharp turns and a narrow road width*

4.1 Parking

When visiting the site, all of its unique and precious characteristics become evident the moment a visitor steps out of their car. Therefore that moment of stepping out of the car becomes a critical moment to the beginning of a visitor's experience. The new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake aims to provide the highest quality experience from the moment a visitor steps out of their car to the moment they step back in it, regardless of how long or how short their stay may be.

The current parking facility (Figure 4.2) is greatly inefficient, featuring a limited number of parking for how vast the paved surface is. In the middle of this vastness, the current comfort station stands isolated in the center of a sea of asphalt (Figure 4.3). It's a condition that does the presence of the comfort station little justice. However, its redeeming characteristic is the fact that it is unmistakably and easily identifiable from both the road and from within the parking facility. A wayside at a critical location along Chinook Pass, the immediate visibility of the comfort station is one of great importance to motorists. This permits the site to function more like a roadside wayside, allowing for both quick stops and longer stays.



Figure 4.2 main parking area, existing conditions

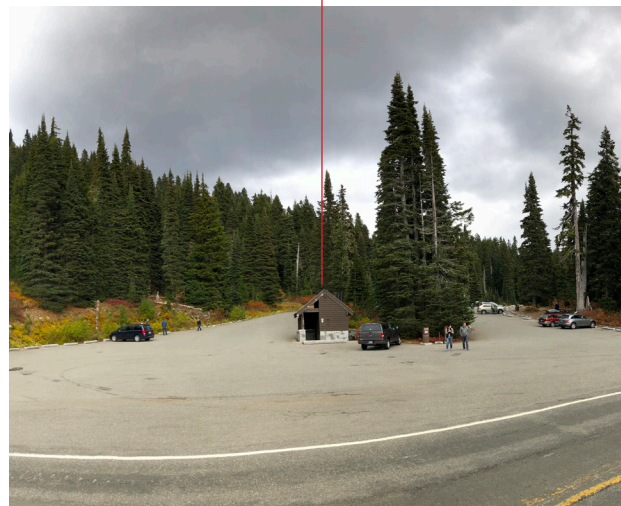


Figure 4.3 the existing comfort station is surrounded by a sea of asphalt

main parking | assessment of existing

- inefficient land use
- paved area too large for current occupation
- inadequate drainage from parking
- flow of Chinook Creek restricted under Chinook Pass
- poor threshold from Chinook Pass to parking area
- existing comfort station sits in isolation
- existing comfort station standard pit-latrine, non eco-friendly
- trailhead obscurely placed



Figure 4.4 the existing parking area features a vast paved surface



Figure 4.5 immediately adjacent to the parking are small picnic areas

4.1 Parking

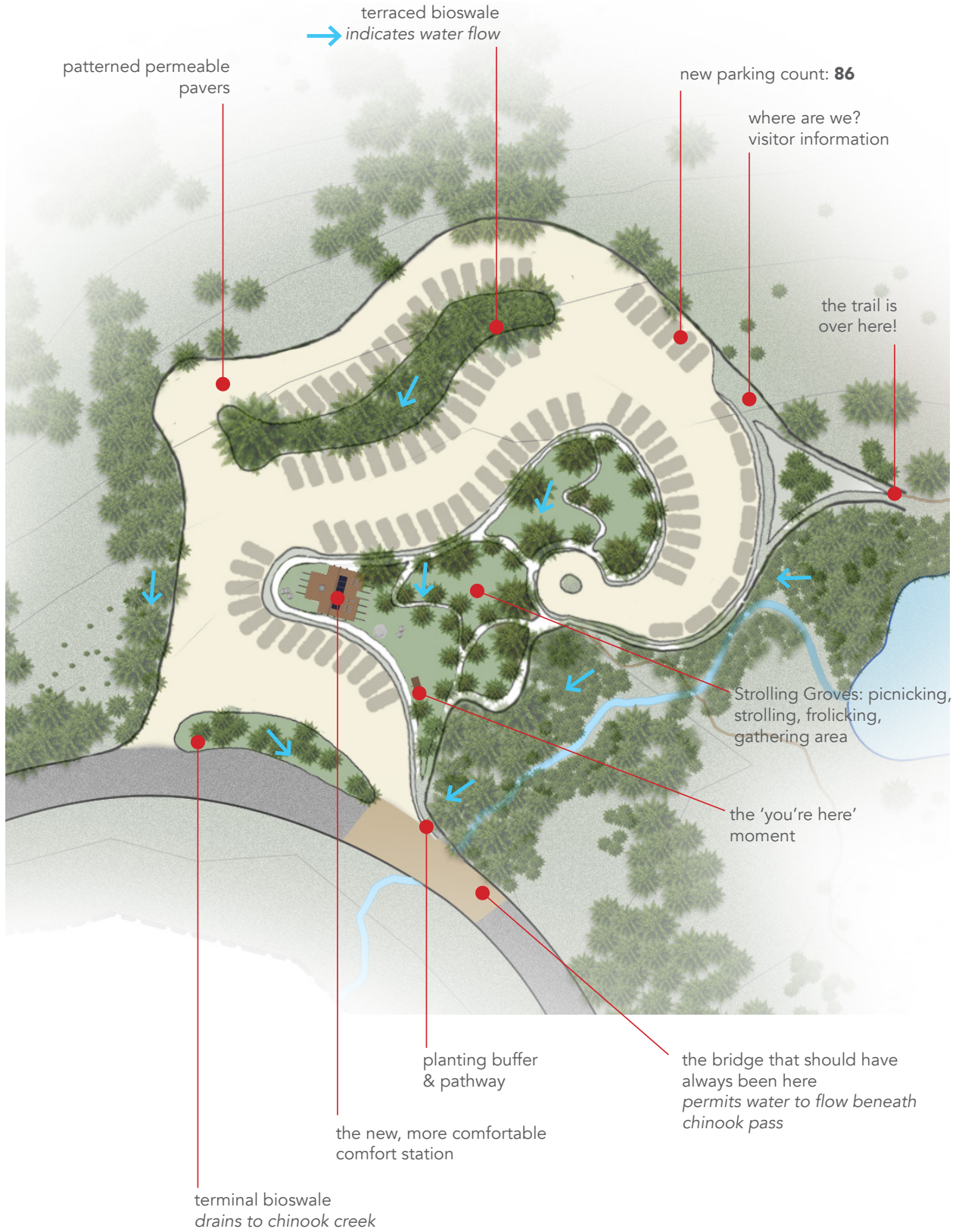


Figure 4.6 re-envisioned main parking facility

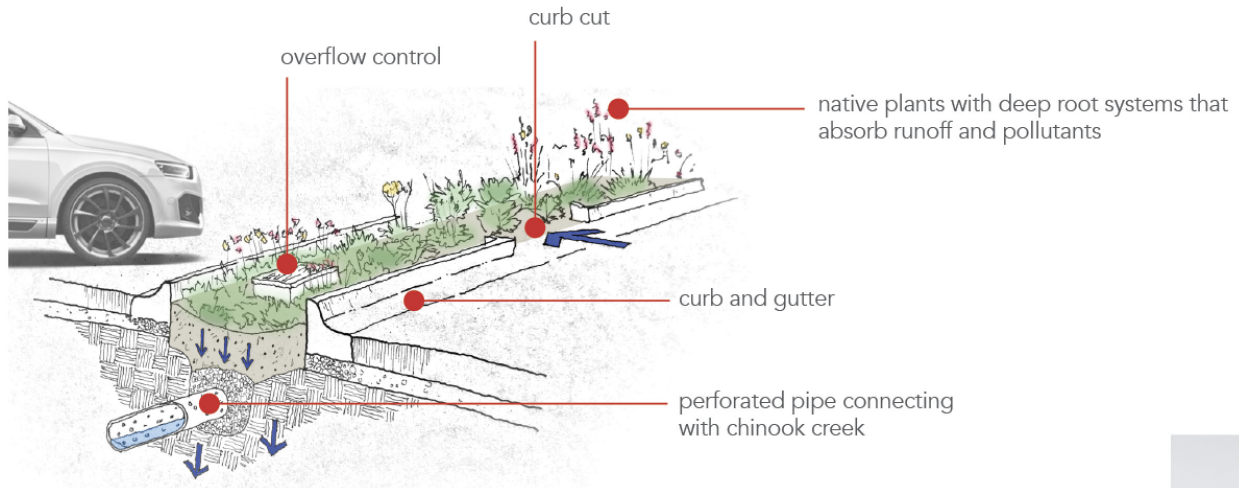


Figure 4.7 section at bioswale buffer zone between parking and pedestrian pathway

The new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake begins with a re-envisioned main parking facility (Figure 4.6). It features a more organic configuration as a result of both a desire to increase its efficiency and to respond more sensibly to the natural contours of the site. The curves and turns of the new parking plan allow for an increased overall number of parking on the site, up to 86 stalls (compared to 56 currently offered), while simultaneously yielding a ground-to-paving ratio that is more reasonable than what currently exists.

Upon arrival, visitors will note the improved quality of the paving of the new parking facility. Permeable pavers with patterns adorn the parking lot, rather than conventional asphalt. It's not a standard parking lot. It's a living system designed to be as much a part of the site as the lakes themselves. A series of terraced bioswales make up the new landscaped medians around the parking. The placement of the swales aims to permit water to flow freely across and through the parking facility.

Water and runoff from higher elevations is gradually filtered and treated through the bioswales as it makes its way down to lower elevations before finally returning to Chinook Creek.

In the new parking facility, the flow of water and the flow of cars have been considered together, to yield an environmentally sensible solution that goes a step further from simply covering over the site in asphalt. While filtered runoff makes its way to Chinook Creek through swales and permeable paving, water from the Tipsoo Lakes and Chinook Creek itself is now able to flow freely into the ravine to the South by means of a small wooden bridge just after the southern entry into the new parking facility. The bridge is a small effort with a big impact. It requires a portion of the paved road to be demolished, eliminating any resistance water might encounter, and eliminating the need to control water flow with pipe infrastructure underneath the road.

The parking was once immediately adjacent to the creek - not any longer! Now, visitors are encouraged to stroll, linger, relax, and enjoy themselves in one of several manicured natural landscape 'rooms,' referred to as the Strolling Groves, that serve to act as a mediating space or buffer between the parking, the creek, and ultimately the rest of the site experience. Those who choose to gather here can do so comfortably and not at the expense of the person or persons who simply came to get lost in the moment someplace along the Wander Loop Trail by the lake. These new natural 'rooms' within the Strolling Groves offer picnic tables for visitors to enjoy a meal, and an informative welcome point with improved signage and visitor information.

The new parking facility is more than just a parking facility, it is also an interconnected new experience on the site. All parking zones are threaded together with a network of paved pathways to promote effortless accessibility. These same pathways traverse into the Strolling Groves, connect with the new comfort station,

and terminate at the Northeastern point of the parking facility to yield a new trailhead for the Wander Loop Trail that loops around Tipsoo Lake. Each pathway is adjoined by a small bioswale buffer zone (Figure 4.7), further separating the parking experience from the walking experience. This integrated network of pathways stitches together the experience of the parking lot, the experience of the Strolling Groves and picnic areas, and precedes or is preceded by the experience of the Wander Loop Trail, greatly improving the overall quality of the visitor experience from beginning to end. ■

4.2 Comfort Station

The new more comfortable comfort station is the upgraded result of an idea that owes its existence to the placement of the original comfort station. Similar to the original comfort station, the new more comfortable comfort station has been designed and sited to be equally as visible directly from Chinook Pass to visitors approaching from either direction. While alternative site locations could certainly have been considered, clear visibility was of the highest importance. As a roadside wayside in a strategic location, it's the only easily accessible comfort station for quite a long stretch, including what's available in nearby Mt. Rainier National Park. Therefore the comfort station itself becomes the iconic, identifiable symbol of the new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake.

Short-term parking is provided directly in front of the new structure for those who simply wish to use the restroom and get back on their way. For those who desire to linger longer and park elsewhere in the parking lot, access to the comfort station is equally as simple. The paved pathways that traverse the entirety of the improved parking facility

include easy access (even for those in wheelchairs) to the comfort station from both the front and the rear.

Architecturally, the new more comfortable comfort station has been designed to be a sensitive, responsible structure that meets the needs of those who will utilize it while all the while remaining conscious of its place in its natural context. The original comfort station, with its characteristic National Park Rustic architecture, has been preserved as a base, and remembered fondly, but upgraded, in the architectural language of the new structure.

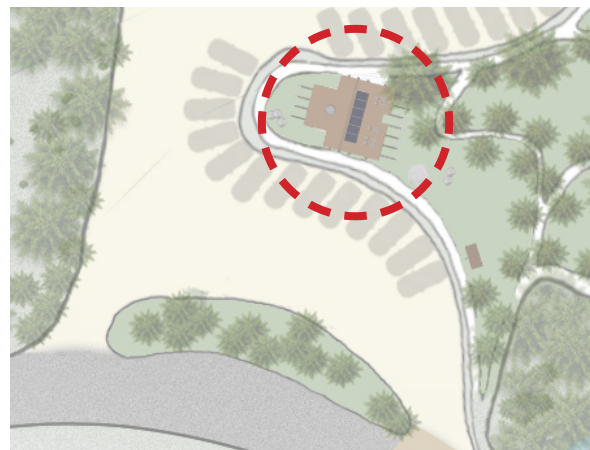


Figure 4.8 *new comfort station, site plan*

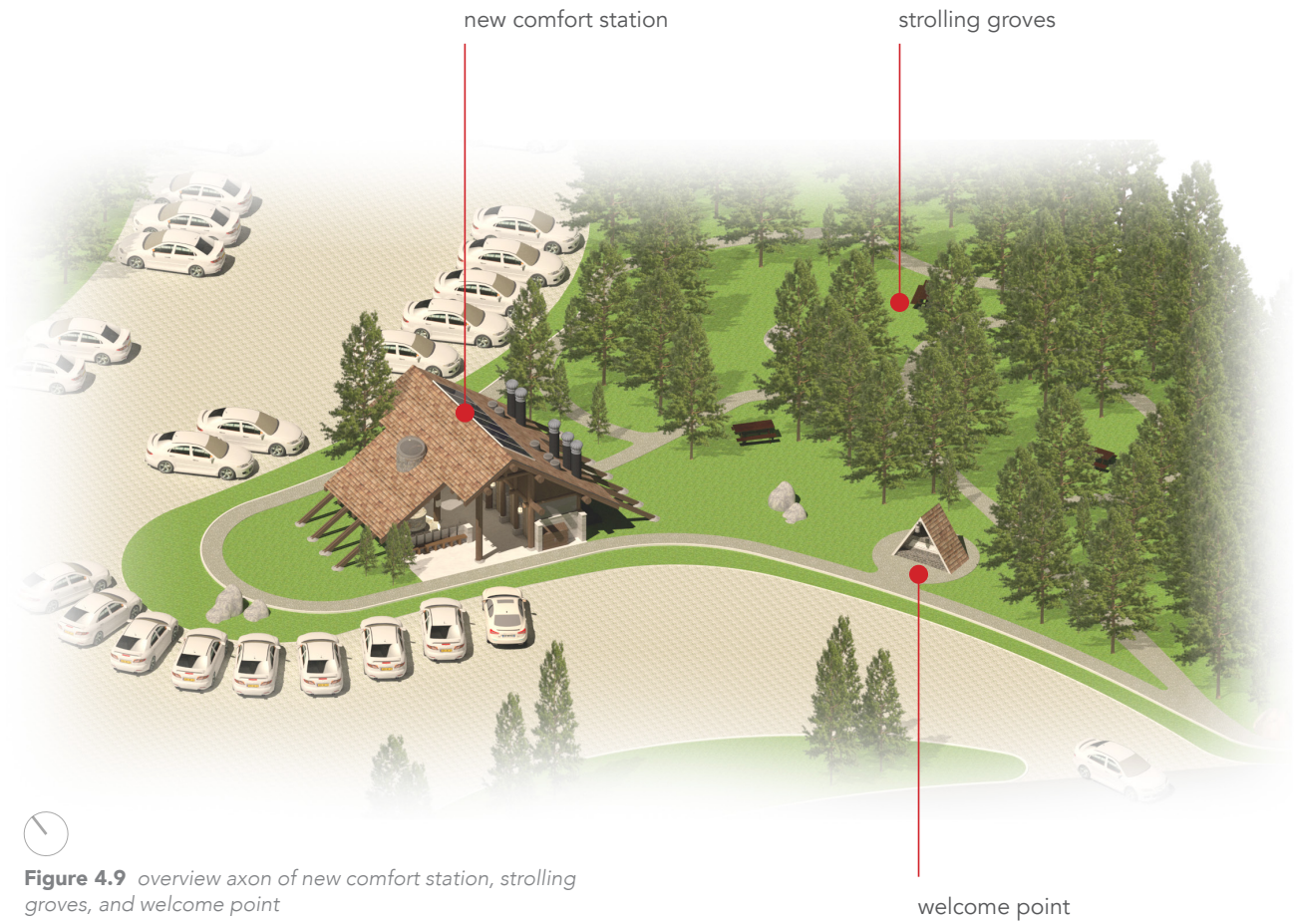


Figure 4.9 overview axon of new comfort station, strolling groves, and welcome point

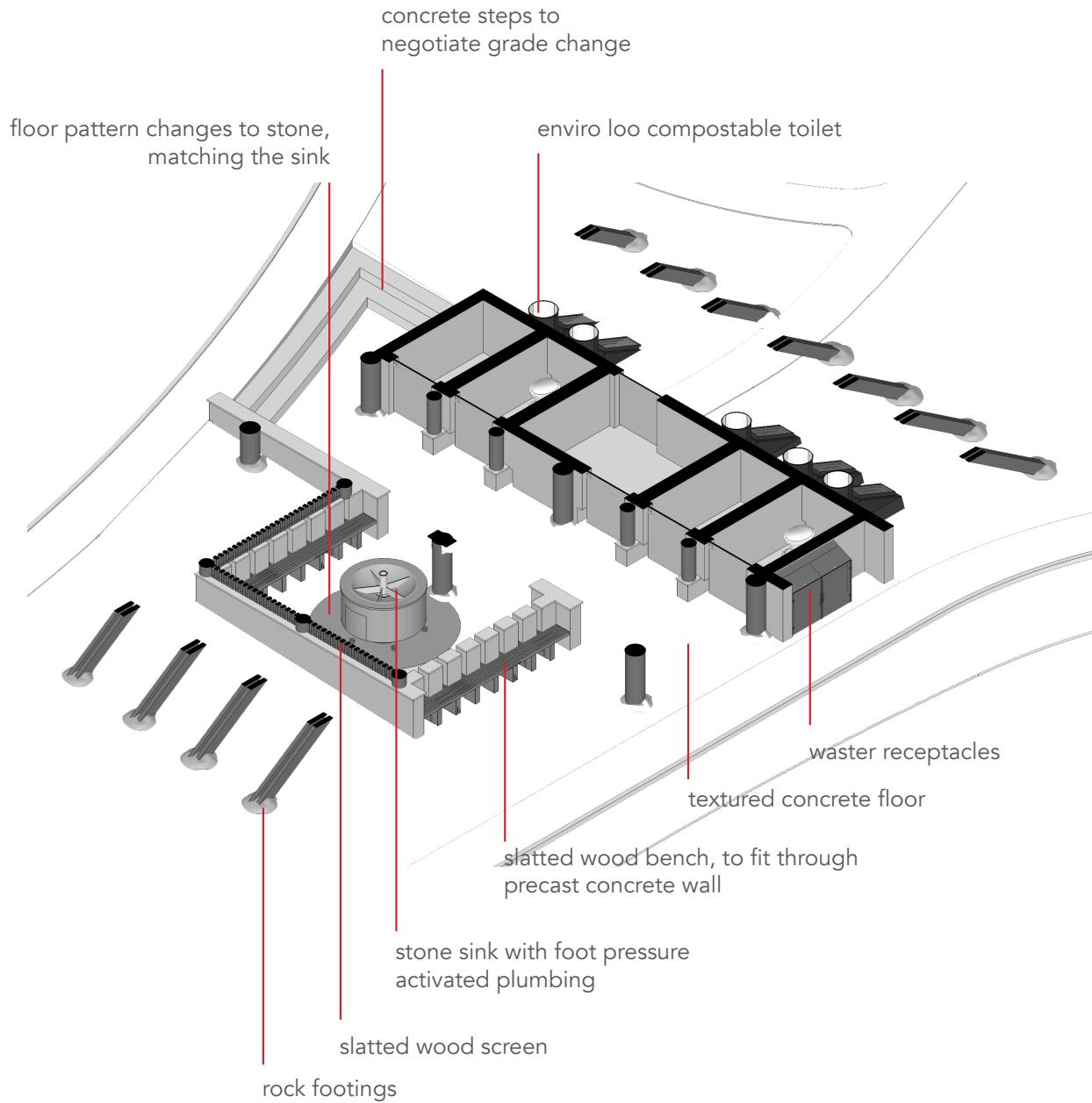


Figure 4.10 new comfort station, plan axon

The new structure is divided into what is essentially three separate zones (Figure 4.11):

- 1 - five all-gender toilet stalls
- 2 - a through way egress zone
- 3 - the social hand-washing zone

Together, these three zones are wrapped under one roof, specially designed to be steep and broad enough to adequately shed snow in winter (Figure 4.12). Framing members extend from the roof all the way down to the ground, where they're anchored with rock footings (Figure 4.13), physically and poetically anchoring the building's presence to its natural context.

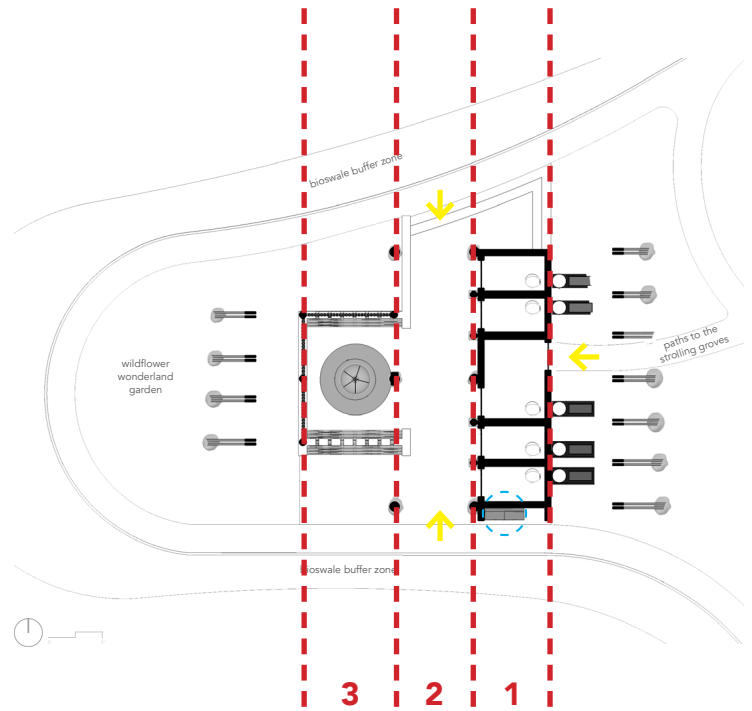


Figure 4.11 new comfort station, plan

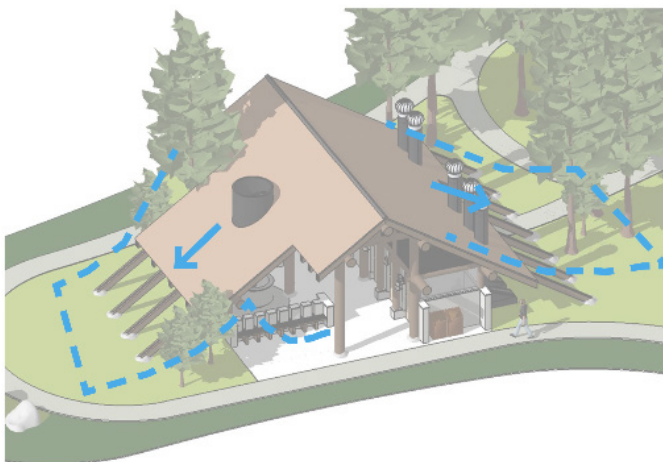


Figure 4.12 winter snow shed



Figure 4.13 framing members extend from the roof to rock footings

As Chapter 3 illustrated, many of the existing wayside comfort station facilities in the state of Washington are rather uninspiring and disconnected from their context. The new more comfortable comfort station at the new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake has been designed, first and foremost, with nostalgia and tradition in mind. It is largely a heavy timber structure, taking advantage of locally sourced timbers and stones for its construction, as is common throughout the Pacific Northwest region. The design, while new, evokes a feeling of familiarity and presents itself in an un-intimidating and subdued manner to be both visible from the road and to blend into its surrounding context. Using the original comfort station's physical design as the primary source of construction inspiration, the goal of the new structure is to facilitate a new human experience, rather than to exemplify or illustrate a new architectural aesthetic.

The new structure features an open-air configuration, permitting light and air to flow freely through (Figure 4.17). Essentially exclusively a roof, the only doors are those of the toilet stalls. The openness of the structure's North and South facing facades allows for visitors using the comfort station to remain connected to the surrounding context.

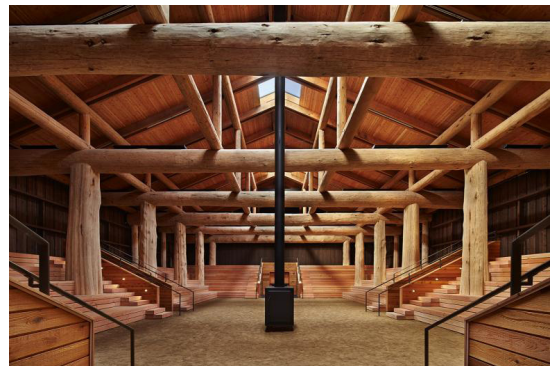


Figure 4.14 rustic comfort station, location unknown (top), Muckleshoot Smokehouse - interior (middle), through egress (bottom)

4.2 Comfort Station



Figure 4.15 view from Chinook Pass, looking northwest



Figure 4.16 view from Chinook Pass, looking northeast

4.2 Comfort Station



Figure 4.17 view toward comfort station from parking, looking north



Figure 4.18 view from wildflower wonderland garden, looking northeast

4.2 Comfort Station



Figure 4.19 approaching front of comfort station, looking northwest

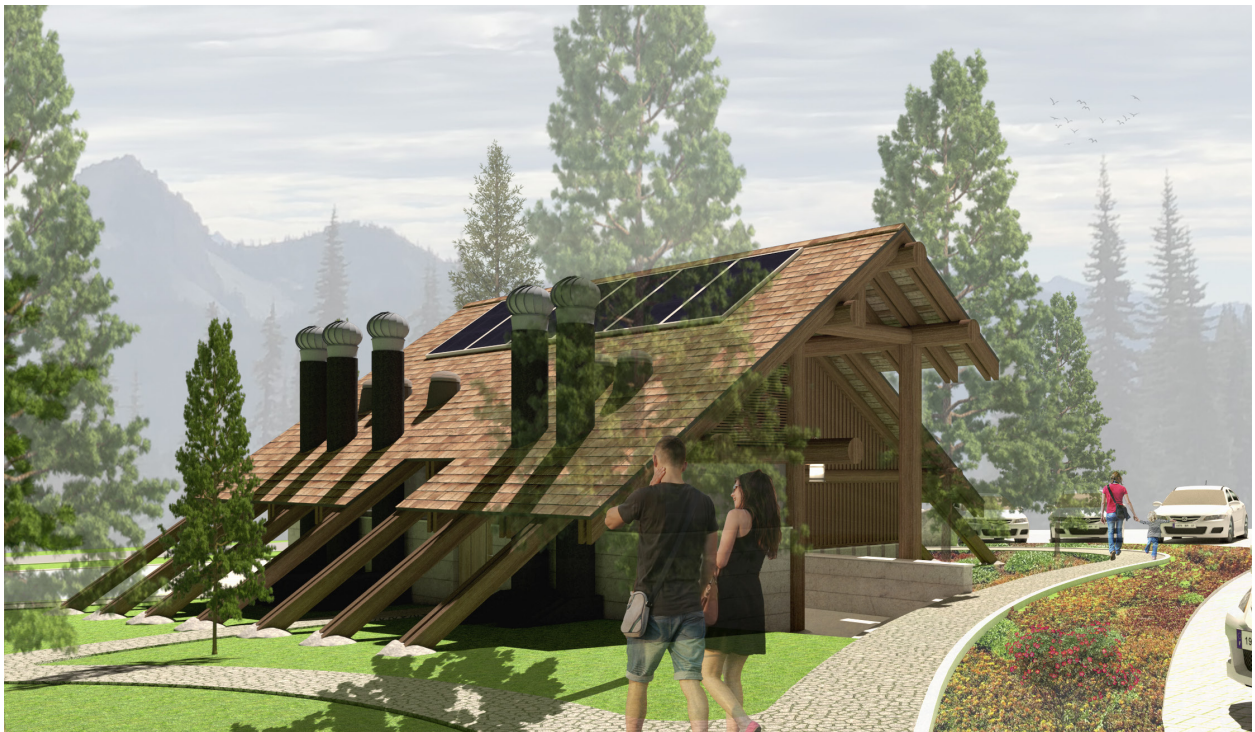


Figure 4.20 approaching back of comfort station, looking southeast

Taking a look at the toilet stalls, the new all-inclusive comfort station features an all-gender accommodating configuration, with four all-gender toilet stalls and one larger stall for handicapped persons and families. Each stall is surrounded by textured precast concrete walls up to approximately neck height. Atop the precast concrete walls sits a translucent and foggy channel glass wall, permitting silhouettes of individuals on either side to be detectable. Above the channel glass wall, the structure is open air to the roof to promote air ventilation across all five stalls and through the entire structure. Stalls are entered by large, heavy wooden doors. But they're not just made this way to withstand the elements or to be decorative - for they can also be used as portals for memories, as visitors may carve their name or other personal identifiers into the doors by happen-stance.

Each stall features a state-of-the-art enviro loo compostable toilet (Figure 4.21), utilizing the power of the sun for decomposition and thus requiring little to no maintenance or upkeep.⁶ While several other compostable toilet options were considered, the enviro loo hits all the marks while being the most environmentally suitable compostable sanitation device for this specific site and simultaneously requiring no water, no electricity, and no mess.

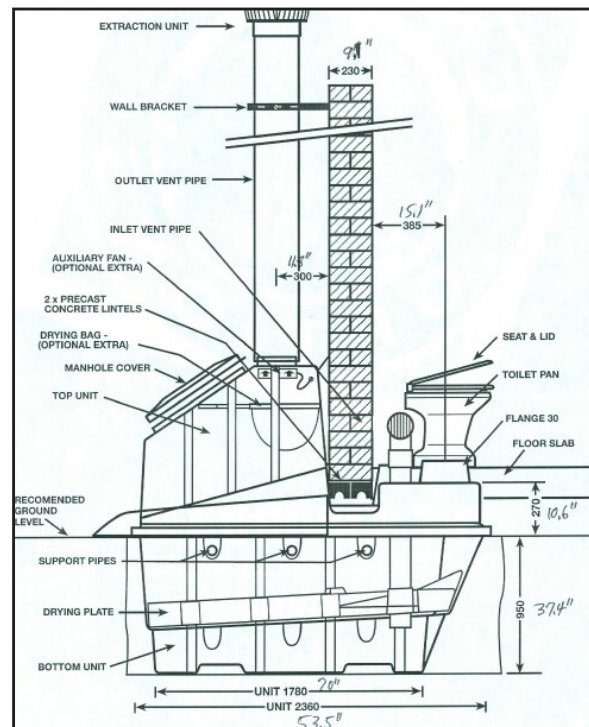


Figure 4.21 section of Enviro Loo compostable toilet⁶

Visitors who use the stalls then converge into the social hand washing zone (Figure 4.23) in what is the base of the original comfort station. This is the moment where, no matter the reason, everyone comes together communally and mutually. A stone wash basin carved from local granite, sits in the center. While the floor of the rest of the building is simply concrete, a small human-sized standing area on the floor around the sink is also made of granite. This highlights the sink's importance and serves as the theoretical hearth of the new comfort station.

The wash basin itself contains five 'portable sinks' - pressure operated by a foot pump below the wash basin. Each sink is fed by a clean water tank. Used water returns through a drain into a waste/gray water tank (Figure 4.24). Park staff and rangers can easily access these tanks by a small cabinet door at the base of the wash basin and can empty or replace tanks as needed.

A heavy timber column adjacent to the sink is affixed with two hand-dryer units operated with minimal electricity served via a series of photovoltaic arrays affixed to the roof's Eastern slope (Figure 4.25). When drying hands, visitors will be facing either North or South looking outward toward the new structure's immediate surroundings.



Figure 4.22 interior of comfort station as seen from front entrance, looking north



Figure 4.23 view from stone sink, looking southeast

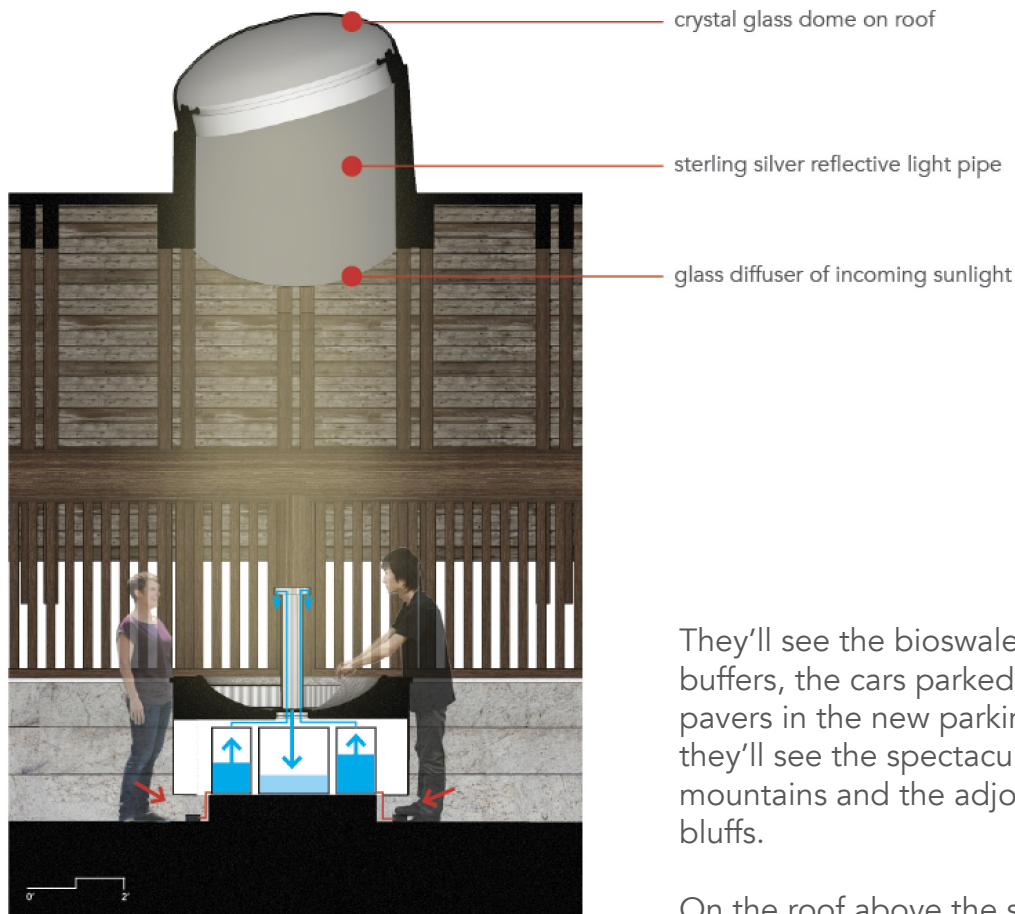


Figure 4.24 sink and lightway, section detail

They'll see the bioswale planting buffers, the cars parked on permeable pavers in the new parking lot, and they'll see the spectacular beauty of the mountains and the adjoining forested bluffs.

On the roof above the sink, as well as in the stalls above the toilets, sits a lightway. Composed with glass crystal and a sterling silver reflective light pipe (Figure 4.24) - the lightway is designed to precisely direct available sunlight downward, bathing the sink and toilet stalls with a flood of illumination. The lightway is more than just an illuminator, however. Although the roof covering the new structure is indeed large, the lightway re-connects the presence of the sun to the experience below. While photovoltaic arrays supply a limited power resource to a series of small lamp fixtures, the use of the sun's natural light is not intended to be ignored.

4.2 Comfort Station

pv array

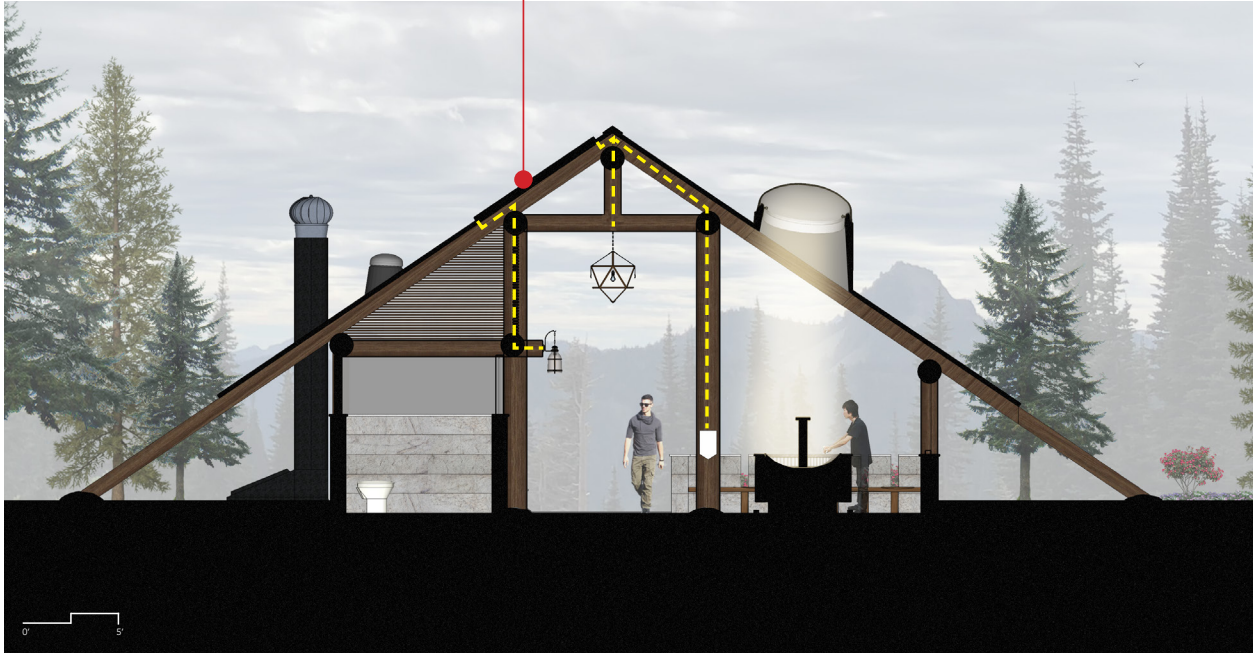


Figure 4.25 transverse section at sink, looking south

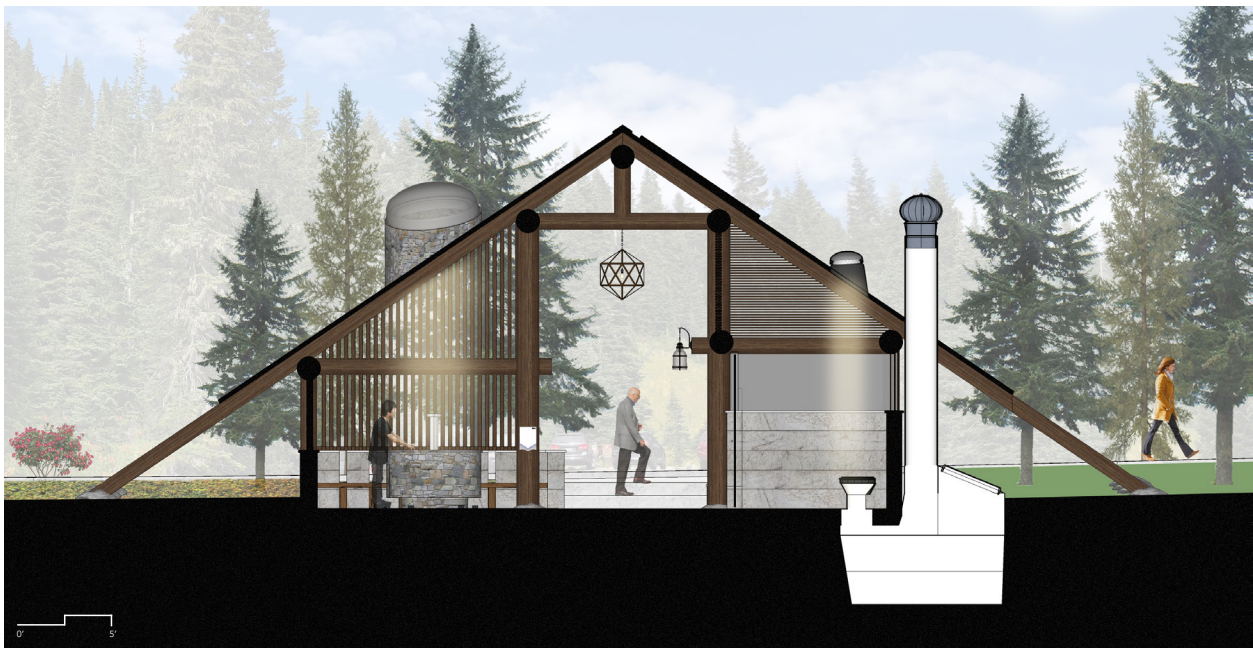
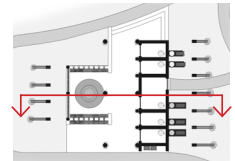
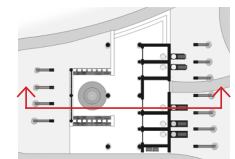


Figure 4.26 transverse section at Enviro Loo, looking north



4.2 Comfort Station



Figure 4.27 longitudinal section at egress, looking west

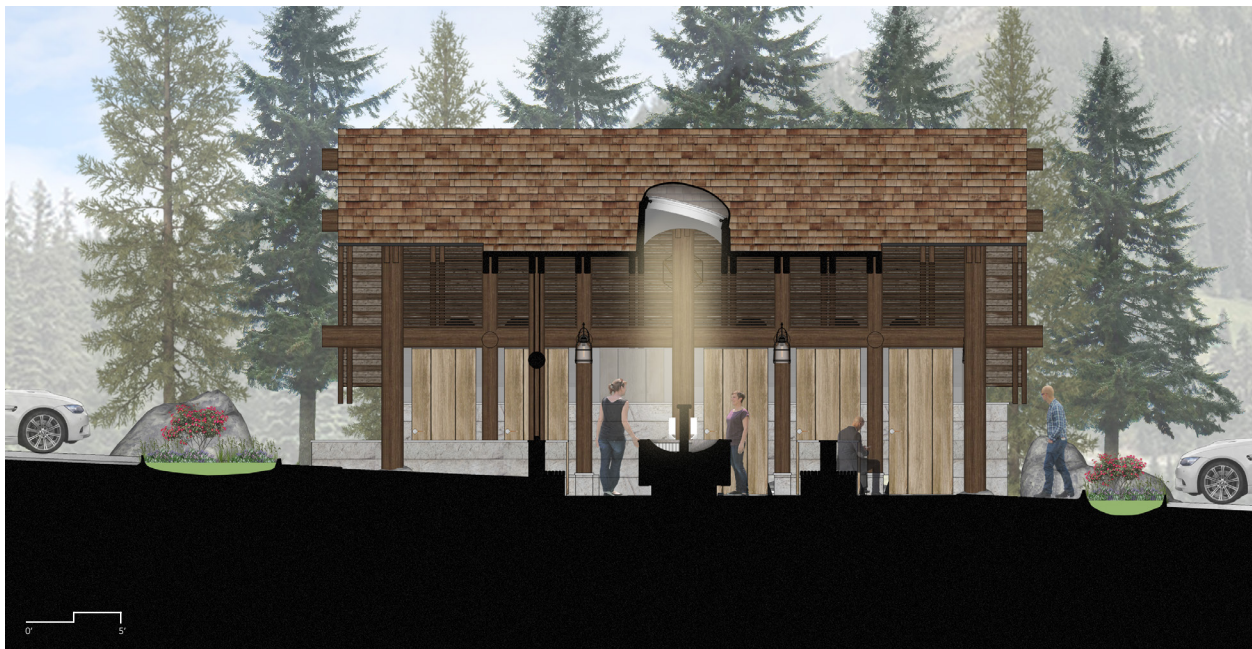
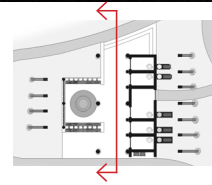
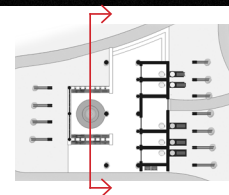


Figure 4.28 longitudinal section at sink, looking east



While the experience of standing at the social hand washing station directs attention in an inward-focused manner toward the wash basin and those around it, the free-flowing openness of the structure's North and South facing facades is anything but inward focused. To reiterate an important point about this site, water is of critical importance. With the social hand washing experience placed within the new more comfortable comfort station, visitors converge to acknowledge water as the hearth of their experience. It's not fire, light, or air that prevails, but rather, water that becomes the characteristic element of the experience of the new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake.

The design of the new comfort station structure is one that echoes tradition with the richness of the site's given natural characteristic of water. The design and structure itself, while potentially more expensive than an all-concrete design, justifies itself by yielding lower operational costs, simpler maintenance efforts, and a unique social experience for visitors overall. As the Highway Research Board report suggests, "cleanliness and sanitation with economy should be major objectives in all rest area programs."¹³ ■

4.2 Comfort Station

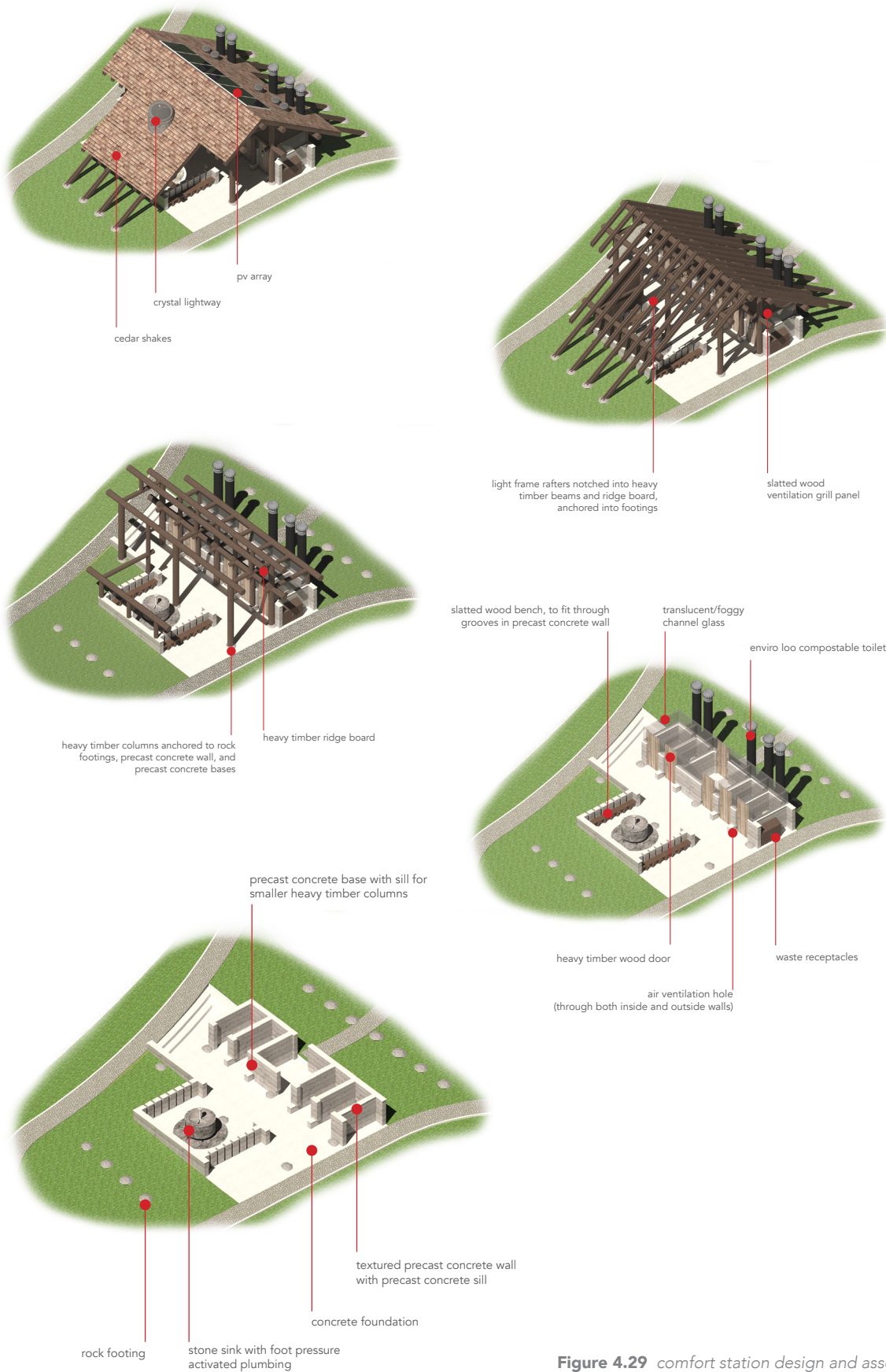


Figure 4.29 comfort station design and assembly

4.3 Prospect Point

A little further South down the road from the main parking facility, where the small roadside turn out once stood, a new destination offers visitors another kind of experience. Prospect Point is a junction. It's the place where hikers converge, where curious individuals stop for a glance or a rest, or where photographers seek out spectacular vistas.

The intention of the design of Prospect Point is to take what it already is in its existing condition and dramatically improve the fundamental elements that define it. First and foremost, the existing roadside turn out is just that, a roadside turn out (Figure 4.30). Prospect Point will also be a roadside turn out (Figure 4.33). This means it will retain a relatively small surface area and will feature a direct-off-the-road, safe area to momentarily park a car and enjoy the view. The existing roadside turn out features a design that makes it possible for a visitor to observe the view while remaining in their car, as well as providing a small walkable area to be able to enjoy the view from outside a car (Figure 4.32). Prospect Point will retain this quality and enhance the visitor experience by providing

improved viewing opportunities and improved accessibility options to trails beyond the roadside turn out.

The pedestrian experience at this location in its existing condition is not safe (Figure 4.31). Cars travel fast around the bend and no markings on the road indicate the presence of any kind of pedestrian crossing. "It is usually unsafe, and always uncomfortable, to stop on the pavement of any road when the next car along may be that man in a hurry or that driver engrossed in the scenery."¹³

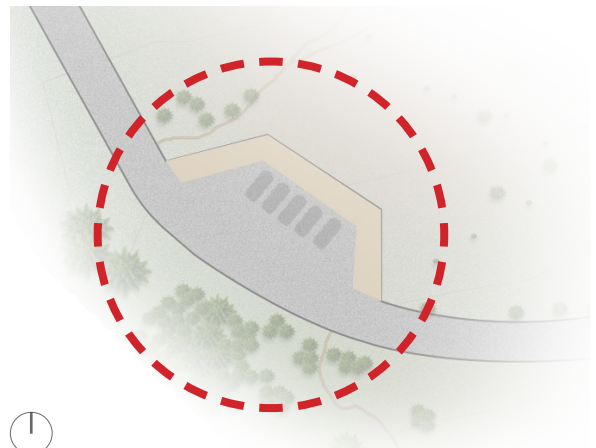


Figure 4.30 roadside turn out, existing conditions

roadside turn out | assessment of existing

- crossing Chinook Pass to get to the trail on the south side of the road is dangerous and unmarked
- cars travel too fast around curve
- water flow from south lake to north lake restricted under Chinook Pass - affects amount of water draining into the north lake
- visitor information signage is antiquated
- no seating or waste receptacles present
- narrow standing area to take in the view, can get crowded - little desire to linger



Figure 4.31 the site today lacks any kind of marked, designated pedestrian crossings over Chinook Pass



Figure 4.32 a small paved sidewalk and a visitor information sign is all the currently resides at the roadside turn out



 **Figure 4.33** Prospect Point, plan

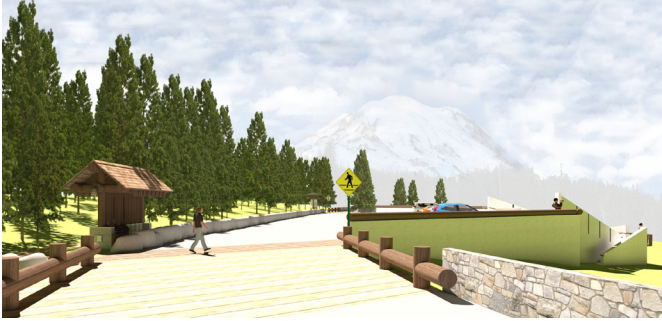


Figure 4.34 view toward Prospect Point and trailhead pavilion, from bridge, looking west

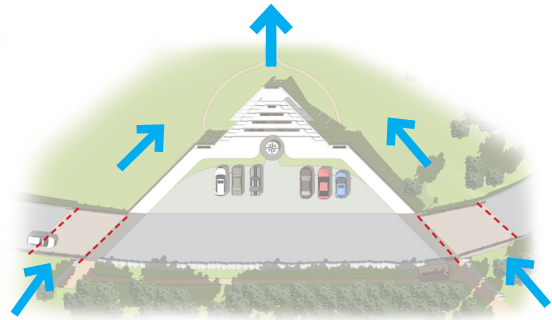


Figure 4.35 waterflow (blue arrows) under bridges (dashed red lines)

Now, extending from Prospect Point over the road are two pedestrian crossing zones. The crossing zones now offer a seamless connection from the trails on the South side of the road to the meadow and Tipsoo Lake on the North side of the road. As the site exists today, no intuitive way for traversing from the roadside turn out to the meadow exists. Prospect Point now provides easy access and greater experiential richness.

Adjacent to each crossing are wooden bridges on Chinook Pass. Placed with a similar intention as the bridge by the main parking facility, water can now flow freely across the site without the restriction of limited pipe infrastructure underneath the road (Figure 4.35). The bridges, made of large timbers, reminiscent of wood bridges found in nearby Mt. Rainier National Park, encourage drivers to slow down and become hyper vigilant to their surroundings. Pedestrians can now cross here with ease.

Along the South side of the road past the crosswalks, a new connector trail links the Eastside Trail with the

Naches Peak Loop Trail, providing a transition opportunity that does not currently exist as seamlessly. Two small information pavilions offer hikers with area information, maps, and waste receptacles. The larger pavilion to the South acts as the new Southerly trailhead for the Naches Peak Loop Trail. Considering how heavily trekked this trail is in Summer, a larger pavilion offers a more enriching experience than currently exists. The smaller pavilion at the North end of the connector trail serves as an important connection point for more robust backpackers and backcountry hikers using the Eastside Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail. Here, hikers can read trail bulletins as well as sign a hiking registry.

Prospect Point offers an expanded parking area, offering spots for up to nine cars as opposed to the five currently offered. A small landscaped median between the road and the parking lot serves as a buffer zone between the activity of Chinook Pass and the tranquility of Prospect Point. Patterned permeable pavers are again used here just as in the main parking facility by the new comfort station.

4.3 Prospect Point

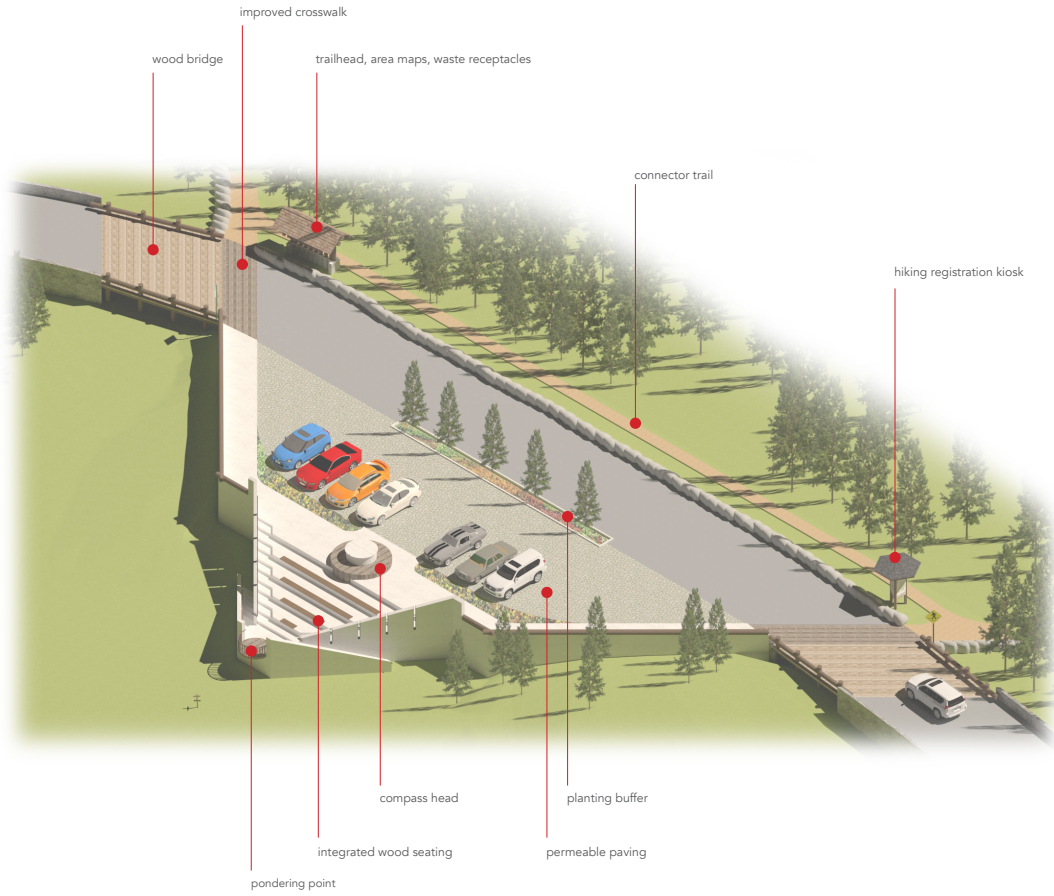


Figure 4.36 overview axon of Prospect Point

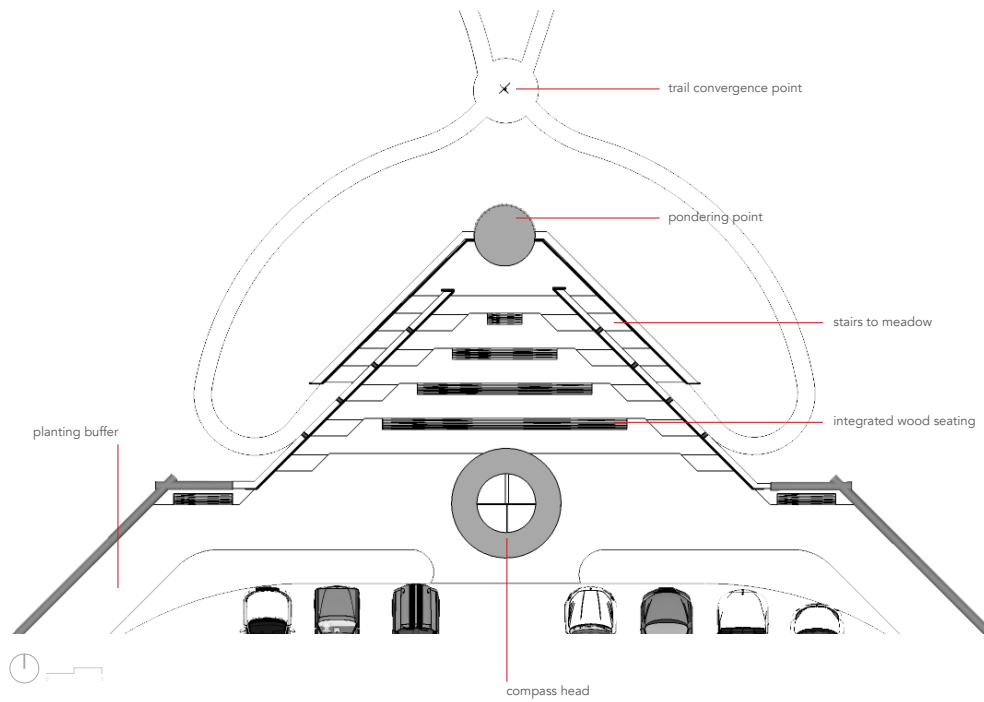


Figure 4.37 Prospect Point, plan

Upon arrival to Prospect Point, visitors will note a spectacular and unobstructed vista looking out toward Tipsoo Lake, Naches Peak, and Yakima Peak (Figure 4.38). The existing conditions only permit such views. However, Prospect Point offers a chance to linger more comfortably and more meaningfully. A concrete structure extends from the car park zone, converging toward and descending down toward the view. It is called the viewing vessel. Human-height concrete walls gradually diminish to railing-height while small slits in the walls lined with reflective black granite provide quick glimpses to the landscape beyond. While the walls are placed to concentrate the view, they do not intend to completely obstruct the awareness of what lies to either side of them.

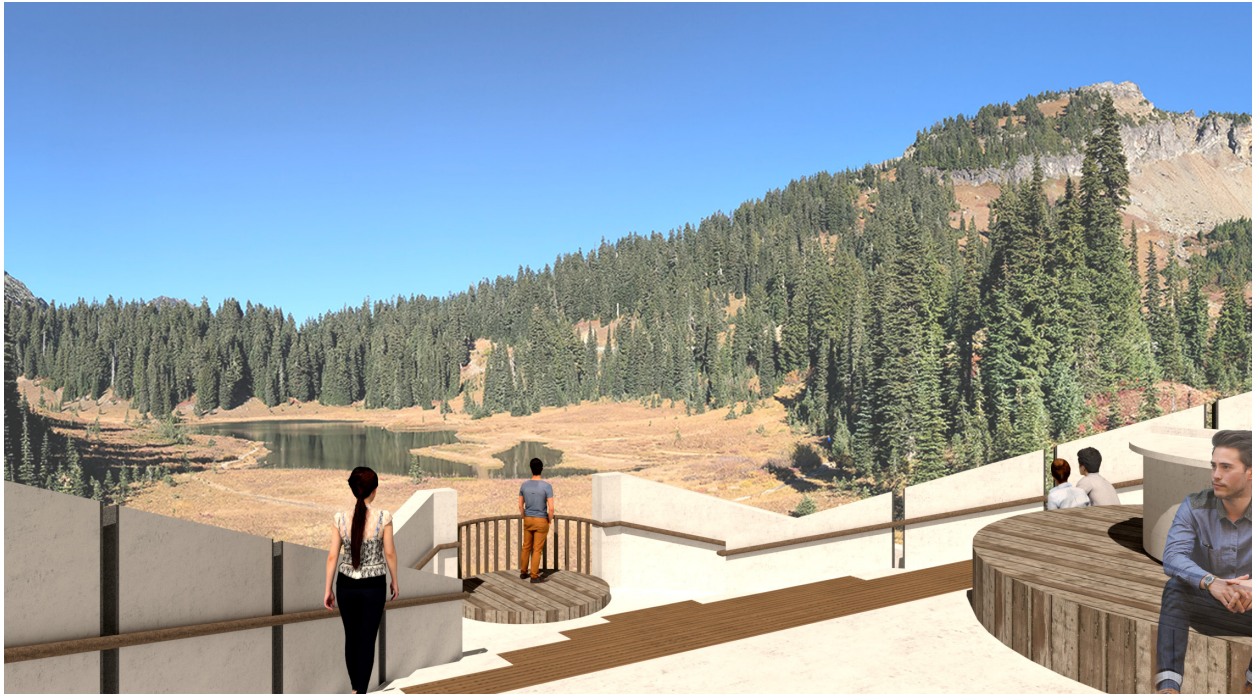


Figure 4.38 view toward Tipsoo Lake, looking northeast

Approaching from the top of the viewing vessel, a circular concrete compass head offers an informative bearing while a wood platform surrounding it provides seating. Walking down, wood is used again as both a handrail and inlaid into the concrete to form more seating in a theatre-like configuration (Figure 4.40). At the bottom, the concrete cuts away to a small viewing platform called the pondering point. Wood is again used, as it's the material that intimately links the human touch to the place. Having descended down the concrete steps, the pondering point viewing platform requires visitors to step up in order to access it. This move separates previously performed actions, yielding a new quality to the experience of the view.

The deliberate and intentional circular shape of both the compass head and the wood viewing platform are designed to echo that of the stone wash basin in the new more comfortable comfort station. From Prospect Point, the stunning view out toward Tipsoo Lake dominates the visitor experience and reiterates the significance of water to the understanding of the place. Standing at the compass head, a bearing out

toward the lake is presented. Hikers can use this bearing to orient themselves toward the trails, and motorists can use this bearing to orient themselves toward their destinations. The wood platformed pondering point serves as a point for an emotional and personal bearing. Here, visitors can intimately connect with Tipsoo Lake, the surrounding meadow and peaks, and the internal world of



Figure 4.39 looking down toward the viewing vessel at Prospect Point

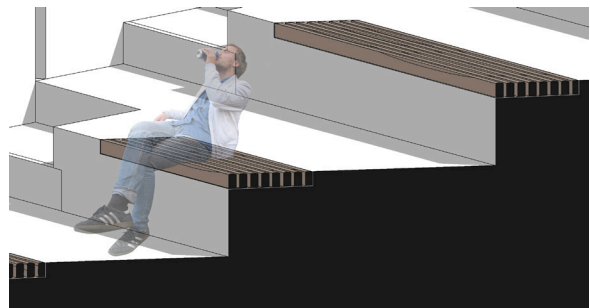


Figure 4.40 wood is inlaid into the concrete to form theater-like seating

4.3 Prospect Point



Figure 4.41 view from meadow, looking south



Figure 4.42 longitudinal section through Prospect Point center axis, looking west

From the meadow level, on either side of the viewing vessel, another pair of converging concrete walls ascends from railing height up to frame the wood viewing platform and Prospect Point. Hikers from the Wander Loop Trail can see the slope of the concrete walls and infer the structure as a means of ascending up to the road. Visible from the approach toward the viewing vessel and Prospect Point from the meadow level, wooden handrails jutting out slightly from the concrete walls confirm the new structure as both a utility and a view point.

Together, the new parking facility and the Strolling Groves beside it, the new more comfortable comfort station, Prospect Point, and the viewing vessel combine to form the new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake. While the two built architectural interventions, the comfort station and the viewing vessel, serve two distinctly different functional purposes and visibly convey two distinctly different architectural languages, they belong together as part of the new array of enhanced experiential possibilities available to visitors at the new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake. Not intending to re-shape the fundamental essence of the existing conditions, the new architectural interventions are re-designs of the original; experiential upgrades thoughtfully considered and meaningfully detailed. ■

4.3 Prospect Point



Figure 4.43 view from meadow, looking east

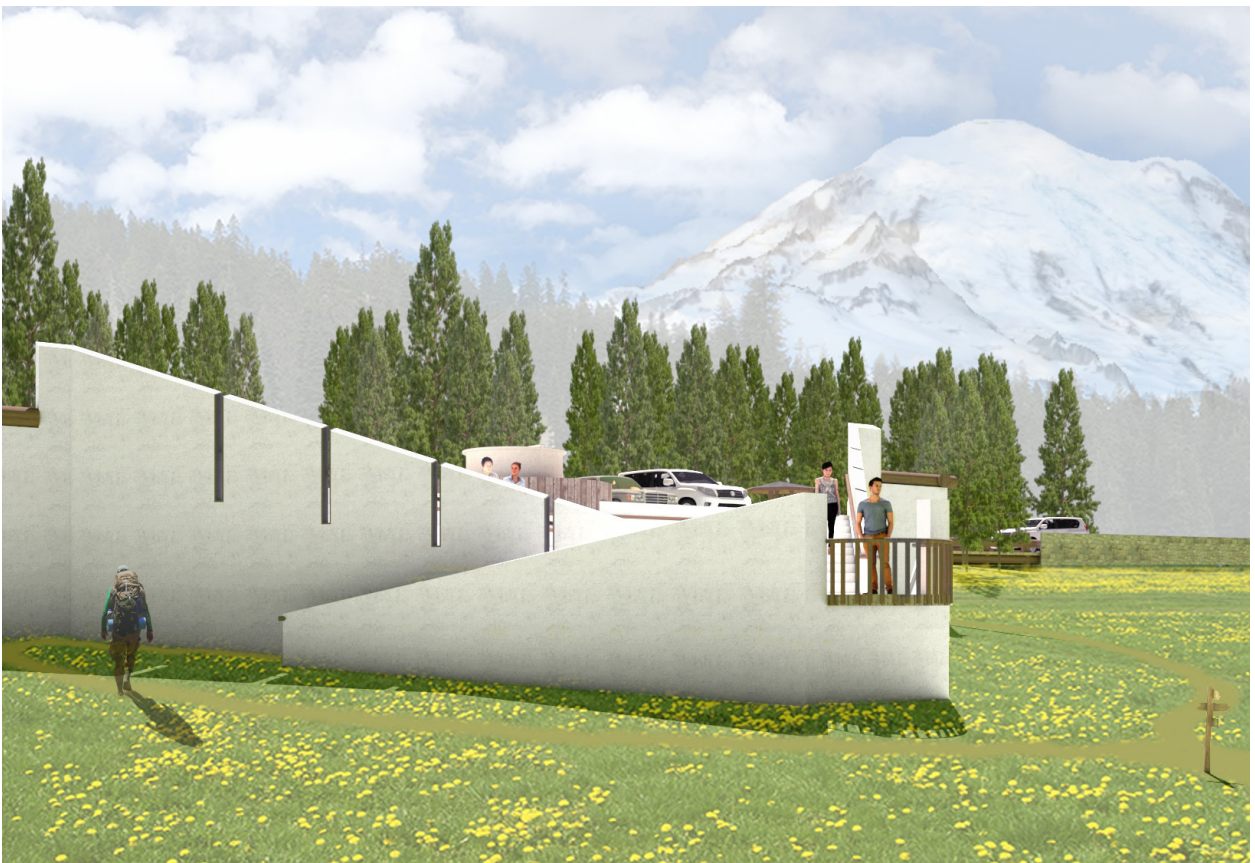


Figure 4.44 view from meadow, looking southwest

5 Knowledge of Place and Self

Together, the new more comfortable comfort station, the parking area and Strolling Groves that surround it, and Prospect Point combine to form a new Washington Wayside. The new Washington Wayside at Tipsoo Lake was designed to be both an improvement of and an extension of what was already present on the site. It was also designed to be a unique attraction of its own, adding to the multitude of possible experiences able to be had on the site.

Mt. Rainier is a special place, and Tipsoo Lake is an even more precious, strategic natural wayside. It's the place families return to year after year. It's the place where magnificent wildflower blooms inspire joyous wandering, frolicking, and pondering. And most of all, it's the place that's always there - a dependable, accessible roadside wayside that's always available to those who happen upon it, to those who find they need it, and to those who seek it out deliberately as a destination within itself.

It's a new Washington Wayside that aims to foster rich and meaningful

personal experiences, memories, and imagination, and one that aims to inspire ideas for future wayside development and improvement across the beautiful state of Washington and elsewhere. To reiterate, of critical importance to the theoretical notion of the new Washington Wayside is that it aims not to suggest a kit-of-parts or a one size fits all fix, but rather to highlight and encourage the importance of place-specific implementations.

Successful future wayside development could be made stronger, and more architecturally and experientially enriching, through an integrated design approach that appreciates and acknowledges the given natural characteristics inherent within a specific site. Built architecture is placed in the setting of the natural world and as such prompts an interaction with forces that are both unpredictable and uncontrollable. Sensible architecture acknowledges its natural setting and responds to it responsibly and wisely.¹¹

Because our relationship to our immediate environment and how we

sense it heightens our awareness of our very existence and of our place amongst everything else in the world, waysides can serve a unique double purpose: being an infrastructure service amenity, as well as being the critical link that can inspire an individual to establish a meaningful relationship with their surroundings.

Gary Snyder, in his essay, *Re-Inhabitation*, asks,

“How does knowledge of place help us to know the self?

The answer, simply put, as he states, is that “we are all composite beings, not only physically but intellectually, whose sole individual identifying feature is a particular form or structure changing constantly in time...Part of you is out there waiting to come into you, and another part of you is behind you, and the ‘just this’ of the ever present moment holds all the transitory little selves in its mirror...

Thus knowing who and where are intimately linked.”²⁰

Connecting the presence of oneself to the presence of the world. ■

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