

Chilkoot River Corridor Interpretive Site Plan

Final Report



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Introduction

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Background of the Project

What is the CRC?

The Chilkoot River Corridor Working Group was formed in 2000 as a community collaborative. As a stakeholder's working group, it has representatives from agencies, residents, commercial interests, conservation organizations, hunters/fishers, Native organizations and at-large members.

The CRCWG was formed in response to increased use of the Chilkoot River Corridor by visitors, who come to fish, view Brown Bears and enjoy recreational opportunities. The Chilkoot River Corridor has important socio-economic value to Haines. The Corridor is the ancestral home of the Chilkoot Tlingit. Preliminary archeological surveys have identified several hundred sites and carbon dating indicates use for at least 2000 years.¹ In 2002, the estimated economic significance to Haines was \$3.5 million.² The Corridor draws thousands of visitors to fish and view wildlife, as well as a variety of other recreational activity.

Stakeholders met to identify and plan management strategies. They developed a vision and goals³. The CRCWG worked with agencies to develop cooperative management agreements, to post signs to reduce negative impacts

Chilkoot River Corridor Working Group Overall Vision

Haines residents, descendants of the Chilkoot area, commercial operators, and government agencies work together to develop and implement management guidelines that protect and sustain the natural, historical, cultural, social and economic resources of the Chilkoot River Corridor for the generations to come

Resource Management Guidelines

Natural Resources

The fish and game species, watchable wildlife, critical habitat areas, native plant species, quiet, clean air and water and scenic beauty are identified and recognized as fundamental to many of the areas other resource values and strategies are in place to ensure that natural resource values are sustained and protected¹. Biological research and data collection activities needed to fully understand habitat use, fisheries and wildlife population health and natural cycles of abundance are funded by appropriate agencies. Fisheries and management data-collection systems use best available technology to provide timely salmon escapement information for management decision-making and minimize physical obstructions to salmon migration.

Historical Resources

Special attention is given to ensure that graves, Native house-sites and other identified historic artifacts of traditional and customary Tlingit use are protected from further harm.

Cultural Resources

The Chilkoot Culture Camp continues to operate as an important cultural and educational resource, particularly for children. The culture camp is actively involved in enhancing Tlingit artistry and identity, and the general practice and understanding of Tlingit culture.

Socio-Economic Resources

The public's outdoor recreational, traditional and customary¹, residential, and commercial use of the area is consistent with natural resource and historic site

¹ Radio-carbon date of 2160 from Prang, Tom, "Chilkoot River Corridor Archeological Information and Interpretation Project", Sheldon Museum, November 2003, page 6

² Sheldon, Burl, Report on the Chilkoot River Corridor Strategic Planning Project, Haines, Alaska, December 2003

³ See Appendix B

along the corridor, and to develop a Monitor program. They developed a Code of Conduct and an informational brochure to be distributed to the public. They implemented an archeological survey, and worked with local residents to post no trespassing signs on private property and to protect bear habitat.

The Monitor Program was developed to provide education and interpretation to visitors during the peak tourist and fishing season. The Monitor walked along the Corridor speaking with visitors and monitoring bears. The CRCWG found that the Monitor Program impacted human behavior such that bear-human conflicts were minimized. The first two years of the Monitor Program were funded through the Alaska State Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

CRCWG Accomplishments

- Expanded State Parks' authority to manage lands along the corridor, which was written into the Haines' State Forest Plan (with assistance from a Borough Resolution).
- Had "No Camping or Overnight Parking" signs erected along roadway (with assistance from a Borough Resolution).
- Created the concept of the River Monitor program.
- Developed a Code of Conduct for the region.
- Procured funding for the compilation of archeological information in the area.
- Prepared educational flyer "Respecting Chilkoot, A Community Treasure" to provide to visitors, which highlights code of conduct, bear safety, and cultural/historical significance of area.
- Worked with the William's family to have their allotment on the heavily-bear-traveled far side of the river posted, to mitigate conflicts between bears and humans.

The Interpretive Site Plan

In line with goals III, IV, V, VI, IX and X⁴, the CRCWG sought to develop an interpretive site plan for the Chilkoot River Corridor. Their aim was to explore the possibilities of using interpretation to meet their goals and deal with some of the issues at the Corridor.

A CRC Natural Resource and Native History Interpretation Planning Project was funded in cooperation with the Coastal Zone Impact Assessment Program and the Haines Chamber of Commerce. The contractors were Haines residents Tim Shields and Pam Randles who worked with the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

During the initial phase of planning for the interpretive site plan, the CRCWG voted to have oversight during the planning process. Their expressed wishes

⁴ See Appendix B

were to be involved at all phases of the planning. Their first task was to develop a broad range of options for interpretation. To this end, they developed a matrix for interpretive development.

Matrix for Interpretive Development

A matrix of possibilities was developed to look at a broad spectrum of interpretive options. The CRCWG had discussed interpretive development at variety of levels, from minimal to major development. They also discussed a variety of approaches and media. A matrix was developed to help visualize the range of options.

Levels

Level 1 - Minimal onsite or offsite interpretation dealing mainly with safety. No changes to the resource. No widening of the road, development of pullouts, building of decks etc. No interpretive developments that will require archeological clearances. This level requires little cost. This level could include interpretation that does not require changes to the site or disturbance of the resource. The Monitor program, print media, volunteer training programs, media campaigns or development of a non-profit would be at Level 1.

Level 2 - Presentation of basic level interpretation concepts and themes. Placement of minor interpretive infrastructure within the existing resource. Minor development cost and basically no alteration to the land. This level could include a few signs, entrance totems, in addition to any of the interpretation in Level 1.

Level 3 - Expansion of the interpretive program beyond the basic level. A branching out of the concepts into more in-depth interpretive themes. Minor interpretive infrastructure developments with supporting minor alteration to the land. This level could include any interpretation from previous levels as well as interpretive sites with more than one sign, minor widening of the road to accommodate sites, a visitor guide or other expansions of program.

Level 4 - Integrated interpretive program using various media to develop interconnecting concepts. Interpretive developments that require moderate alteration of the land, and archeological clearances. This level could include any development from previous levels. It could also include building structures such as an entrance kiosk, observation deck(s) or boardwalks.

Level 5 - Interpretive developments that require major expenditure, alteration of management agreements, alteration of the existing resource. In addition to anything from previous levels, this level could include construction of a pedestrian bridge alongside the existing bridge over the Chilkoot River, displays

or spotting scopes placed on that walkway, a camp host program, or development of specialty books.

Level 6 - A completely integrated interpretive program with an ultimate solution to traffic problems. Requiring major road development, purchase of land. In addition to all the above, this level could include construction of a visitors center with parking, alternate road access, interactive interpretive displays, or a shuttle to take visitors to the river road.

The CRCWG decided that they wanted to stay at levels one and two for this project. They had already developed a brochure (Level 1 Module B) and the Monitor Program (Level 1 Module D)

Modules

The modules included a variety of media or approaches to interpretation that could be scaled down or up depending on the level of development.

Module A: Onsite interpretation that requires no development. This could include marking bear crossings as no parking or standing zones. It could also include training volunteers to work with the Monitor.

Module B: Entrance - Orientation to the Chilkoot River Corridor (CRC). The CRCWG felt that the public needed to know they were entering a special place when they came to the CRC. They wanted to signify this at the entrance. The entrance could have minimal signs to indicate location, or it could have totems, larger signs, a kiosk with information and an iron ranger (to request funds to maintain CRC programs) or a gate, fee station and parking.

Module C: Interpretive Displays. This module could include interpretive signs, observation decks with signs, signs and displays on a pedestrian bridge or interactive displays in a visitors' center.

Module D: Monitor Program. The CRCWG developed the idea of a CRC monitor who would walk the site during the main visitor season and talk with visitors. The Monitor would explain and interpret the ecology of the area, especially bear behavior and human behavior in bear country, as well as inform visitors of regulations. The Monitor Program was initiated in the summer of 2002 with funding from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. It has been continued since then with the help of Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. This program could be expanded to include several Monitors so as to be able to maintain a presence around the clock. It could also be expanded to include a training program for volunteers. The CRCWG and the Monitors have also stated

that the Monitor needs to have enforcement powers, which would necessitate training at the Trooper Academy or hiring a Game Warden or Park Ranger with that authority.

Module E: Print Media: Print media could include any material from brochures to books. The CRCWG has already designed and printed a brochure describing the Chilkoot wildlife and Native history. Other possibilities include a series of brochures dealing with wildlife and ecology, Native history, fishing, bears, etc. The interpretive signs could be reproduced as postcards to inform and to raise funds. A Visitors guide could be developed. Posters or flyers could be developed, as well as specialty books about the Chilkoot.

Module F: Media Campaigns: Media campaigns using the local radio station, library and museum, and print media could be developed to publicize the themes chosen by the CRCWG (behavior in bear country, Chilkoot Salmon ecology, the Salmon Forest, and Native history and culture). These could include public service announcements during the visitor season, or presentations about the Chilkoot. A campaign could also include all the media mentioned above. A campaign focuses efforts on communicating a particular message to the public.

Module G: Interpretive Infrastructure. This module includes construction of displays, decks, boardwalks, or buildings in support of interpretive programs. The CRCWG has discussed kiosks, observations decks, boardwalks, a pedestrian bridge, a visitor center and parking. Parking and traffic are large and thorny issues for development of the Chilkoot.

Module H: Non-Profit and Volunteers: The possibility of forming a non-profit Friends of the Chilkoot organization was discussed. This organization could advocate for the Chilkoot, develop interpretive campaigns, recruit volunteers, raise funds for media or infrastructure development, or develop other projects around Chilkoot issues.

Module I: Major Developments in Support of Interpretive Development: Several major developments have been discussed:

- widening the road and/or increasing parking
- building an observation deck encircling Deer Rock
- building a pedestrian bridge over the Chilkoot River that would hold large groups of bear watchers and contain spotting scopes and signs
- building an alternate road to the campground to alleviate traffic on the existing road
- building a visitor center on Lutak Road that visitors would pass as they leave Haines going to the Chilkoot

* * * * *

The CRCWG chose to work on Modules A-D for this project at Levels 1 and 2. They chose to develop designs for four interpretive signs, entrance totems, bear crossing markers and the Monitor Program. The four sign designs are to deal with salmon and the weir, behavior in bear country, the Deer Rock story, and the Salmon Forest.

In the matrix that follows, the darkly shaded sections represent interpretation that was already started by the CRCWG, and the lighter shaded areas represent the focus of this interpretive design project.

Matrix for Interpretive Development

Levels = are defined by the amount of physical change or development necessary to the base resource, the cost of development and the amount of interpretive development.

Modules = are defined as the media or approach to be used to convey the interpretive message

Levels	Module A On site interpretation which requires no development	Module B Entrance - Orientation to the CRC	Module C Interpretive Displays	Module D Monitor Program
Level 1 - Minimal onsite or offsite interpretation dealing mainly with safety. No changes to the resource. No widening of the road, development of pullouts, building of decks etc. No interpretive developments that will require archeological clearances. This level requires little cost.	Marking the bear corridors and warnings on the road. Develop interpretive workshops to train interpreters guiding people in the CRC.	Print media- i.e. brochure that presents the elements of importance about the CRC, which could serve an introduction to it. [DONE]	none	Hire a monitor that would track bear movements and angler's behavior. Their purpose would be help visitors avoid unsafe situations, give interpretive talks, volunteer training. Ideally this person could enforce regulations.
Level 2 - Presentation of basic level interpretation concepts and themes. Placement of minor interpretive infrastructure within the existing resource. Minor development cost and basically no alteration to the land.		Entrance totems - to present a visual entrance to the CRC and communicate the entrance to a culturally important area.	The placement of up to 4 interpretive displays within the CRC, each addressing one of the main problems experienced there. They would be general in nature and placed in the CRC in a fashion that requires little to no alteration of the landscape. They each	
Level 3 - Expansion of the interpretive program beyond the basic level. A branching out of the concepts into more in-depth interpretive themes. Minor interpretive infrastructure developments with supporting minor alteration to the land.		Entrance totems plus an interpretive/informational component, i.e. brochure racks or interpretive displays.	Interpretive sites developed, each containing 2 or more interpretive signs. These displays are associated with minor widening of the road at strategic locations to accommodate them. This represents interpretively, a building upon the basic themes develop	
Level 4 - Integrated interpretive program using various media to develop interconnecting concepts. Interpretive developments which require moderate alteration of the land, and archeological clearances.		Entrance totems + an associated interpretive facility. Kiosk with a series of displays and accommodation for parking.	Larger display development including viewing areas or decks. Displays will expand in number allowing further development of themes and be placed in developed interpretive areas. They may become part of viewing decks at Deer Rock, Culture Camp, or the weir	
Level 5 - Interpretive developments that require major expenditure, alteration of management agreements, alteration of the existing resource.			Construction of a pedestrian bridge in conjunction with the existing road bridge over the Chilkoot River. Additional displays would be placed along the pedestrian bridge.	Develop a camp host spot to provide a larger more consistent presence.
Level 6 - A completely integrated interpretive program with an ultimate solution to traffic problems. Requiring major road development, purchase of land		Visitor center contact station with associated parking, requiring the purchase of land outside of the present CRC.	In addition to the above interpretive developments, interpretive displays of an interactive nature would be placed in the to be developed visitor center.	Provide office space in the developed visitor center

Module E	Module F	Module G	Module H	Module I
Print media	Media Campaigns	Interpretive Infrastructure	Non Profit Volunteers	Major Developments to support Interpretive development
Develop a brochure to be an orientation piece to CRC. Develop instructional materials for guides to the CRC.	Radio spots and public service announcements aimed to alleviate identified problems in the CRC	None	Friends of Chilkoot Non-profit. Provide interpretive programs, raise money for interpretive expansion, and educational media etc.	None
		Entrance Totems & Standard for basic level interpretive displays. These should be located in an area that will not affect cultural resources.		None
Visitor guide to augment the above brochures		Entrance totems should include brochure rack and/or display standards		Widening of the road in selected locations.
Targeted brochures dedicated to specific user groups dealing with specific problems/situations		Development of viewing decks or viewing areas in addition to expanded widening of the on interpretive areas to accommodate parking.		Development of a boardwalk type deck encircling Deer Rock. Widening of road at interpretive sites and development of associated parking.
Development of specialty books dealing with the interpretive themes important to the CRC		Construction of interpretive displays and standards to be used on a pedestrian bridge paralleling the existing road bridge over the Chilkoot River.		Construction of a pedestrian bridge parallel to the existing road bridge over the Chilkoot River.
		Development of a visitor center and associated parking lots on land yet to be purchased.		Construction of a new high road that could be incorporated into a loop system for the CRC. Development of a visitor center and parking lot.

Entrance Design

The CRCWG decided that the entrance to the Chilkoot should be clearly delineated. They wanted to focus the attention of visitors on respecting the area as the traditional home of the Chilkoot Tlingit, respecting the wildlife and habitat, and respecting each other. To identify the area as Tlingit, they decided to install totem poles. In discussion with Tlingit leaders, it was decided that one totem should represent the Raven-Sockeye Clan and the other should represent the Eagle-Bear Clan. The Tlingit community is working on a plan to carve these totems and install them with the proper ceremonies. Below is a sketch of the general design for the entrance and the text for the entrance sign. The final design will be made according to Tlingit tradition, carved by Tlingit carvers, and installed with appropriate ceremonies.

Welcome to the Chilkoot River Corridor

Please Respect

The Home of the Chilkoot People

The wild Creatures that Live here

Other visitors

Gunalcheesh ho ho!

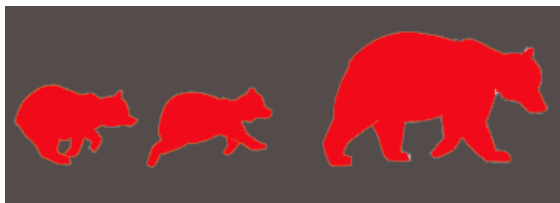
Thank you very Much!

[insert sketch]

Bear Crossings

Bear Biologist Anthony Crupi has identified several road crossings that are used regularly by bears going to and from the river. One of the issues at the Chilkoot is that visitors do not know about these crossings and park or stand in them, preventing bears from crossing. At the peak of the season, the entire road may be blocked, prohibiting bears from getting to or from their main food source at that season. This can present a potentially hazardous situation to both bears and people.

During the summer seasons of 2002 and 2004, the Monitor marked bear crossings and found that people generally would avoid parking or standing in the crossings. The Monitor proposed painting a marker on the pavement as well as posting the crossings with signs. He proposed that the crossings be 150 feet in length. Below is the pavement marking design. The CRCWG felt either red or yellow paint would be most visible.



Weir sign

Currently, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has a small sign at the weir that they use for posting salmon counts during the summer migrations. The CRCWG wanted to maintain this, but to add information about the salmon that migrate up the Chilkoot, the operation of the weir, and the objection of the Tlingit to the weir. The sign is to be located at the downstream side of the weir, facing downstream. It is to be placed low so as not to obstruct the viewshed and be tilted and oriented in such a way that both walkers and drivers could read it. All signs will be made in the shape of a Chilkat blanket. A section of this sign will be made of a material that can be written upon with a dry erase marker so that weir technicians can mark population numbers. Graphs showing population fluctuations over time and seasonal migration times by species will be included, as well as a diagram of a fish scale showing annular rings. An aerial view of the weir will also be included. The background shows a water surface eye view of the weir facing upstream with the various species of salmon depicted.

[Insert jpeg]

Bear Safety Sign

The primary purpose of the bear behavior sign is to alert visitors, mainly fishermen and bear watchers, to the presence of bears and safe behaviors around bears. The CRCWG decided to approach this subject carefully through the use of cartoon scenarios, and to tell the story of one particular female bear and her cubs. Each cartoon has a caption, and the story is placed at the bottom of the sign surrounding photographs of the female bear and her cubs. The CRCWG wanted this sign to be located at the angler hole just downstream from the weir. This sign may be duplicated and located in other heavily used places as well.

[Insert jpeg]

Salmon Forest Sign

The focus of the Salmon forest sign is to point out to visitors the interactions and interdependence of the animals and plants at the Chilkoot. The CRCWG wanted the sign placed in two locations, at the Lake and at Deer Rock. The sign is to be placed in such a way that the viewer can look from the sign directly at the forest and see the elements that make up the Salmon Forest. The title of the sign is: "The Salmon Forest: The Ocean Feeds The Land". The sign has a diagram that depicts how the salmon pick up nutrients from the ocean and bring them back in their bodies to the river and forest, and how other organisms depend on the salmon for nutrients. Then the young salmon migrate to the ocean to continue the cycle. The labels in the signs are color coded to match the diagram and to show viewers how the cycle plays out.

[Insert jpeg]

Story of Deer Rock sign

The sign describes the significance of Deer Rock to Tlingit history and culture. It tells the story of how the ceremony of peace was performed at Deer Rock and shows how it may have looked. It also explains how the rock came to be in pieces. The sign will be placed at Deer Rock.

[Insert jpeg]

Monitor Program

The CRCWG established the Monitor Program in 2002. The purpose of the Program was to inform visitors about the ecology of the area, with special emphasis on the bears, and to help visitors to understand how their behavior impacts the bears and how they should behave to be safe in bear country. The Monitor works during the busiest time of the summer, during the busiest time of bear viewing. S/he walks along the road talking with visitors, explaining what is being seen, explaining appropriate behavior and cautioning visitors.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game funded the monitor program initially in the summer of 2002. The CRCWG wanted to continue the program because it has worked to increase awareness of visitors. During the summer of 2004, ADF&G requested that they be allowed to continue planning for this program, so this project did not continue working on the program design. The CRCWG is seeking funding through a reciprocal services agreement between Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Haines Consolidated Borough.

The Future

The Interpretive Site Planning Project developed a planning matrix for interpretation at the Chilkoot River Corridor. It also developed designs for four signs, the entrance to the Chilkoot River Corridor, and Bear Crossings. As this document goes to print, the Alaska State Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is seeking funding to fabricate and install six signs along the corridor (2 Bear safety, 2 Salmon Forest, 1 Deer Rock and 1 Wier). The CRCWG is seeking a reciprocal services agreement for funding of the Monitor Program with the Haines Borough, Alaska State Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Alaska State Department of Fish and Game. The Tlingit community is discussing the entrance totems. (bear crossings)

Appendices

Appendix A: Chilkoot River Corridor Working Group

Members of the CRCWG:

Agency Representatives:

Joel Telford, DPOR, Chair

Polly Hessing, ADF&G

Resident Representatives:

Sally MacGuire, LLUSA

Lori Teel - Crupi, Lutak Resident Association

Ann Myren, alternate

Commercial Representatives:

Dan Egolf, Alaska Nature Tours

Steve Hay, Yeshua guided Tours

Shane Horton, Chilkoot Lake Tours

Ned Rozbicki, alternate

Conservation Representatives:

Tim McDonough

Norm Blank, alternate

Native Community

Charles "Snuffy" Paddock, Chilkoot Indian Association

Ray Dennis, Luk'aaxadi Clan

Tommie Jimmie, Kaagwantan Clan

Community-at-Large

Andy Hedden

Appendix B: Chilkoot River Corridor Working Group Priorities for the Chilkoot⁵

Overall Vision

Haines residents, descendants of the Chilkoot area, commercial operators, and government agencies work together to develop and implement management guidelines that protect and sustain the natural, historical, cultural, social and economic resources of the Chilkoot River Corridor for the generations to come

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Cultural Resources

The Chilkoot Culture Camp continues to operate as an important cultural and educational resource, particularly for children. The culture camp is actively involved in enhancing Tlingit artistry and identity, and the general practice and understanding of Tlingit culture.

Socio-Economic Resources

The public's outdoor recreational, traditional and customary¹, residential, and commercial use of the area is consistent with natural resource and historic site stewardship. Appropriate information is provided to the public to educate guide public use and minimize human impacts to natural and historic resources. Human use is periodically evaluated to identify changing trends and patterns of use, and to address possible resource degradation.

- Goal I: Improve State Agency Ability to Manage Recreational Use
- Goal II: Reducing Overnight Use and Roadside Camping along the CRC
- Goal III: Reduce Human-Wildlife Conflicts and Monitor and Improve Visitor Activity and Behavior

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Taken from Sheldon, Burl, "Report on the Chilkoot River Corridor Strategic Planning Project, December 2003

- Goal IV: Help Visitors Reduce Impacts to the Area by Developing a Code of Conduct to Help Them Self-Monitor
- Goal V: Minimize Impacts to Chilkoot Historical Resources
- Goal VI: Increase Public Awareness of Chilkoot's Cultural Significance
- Goal VII: Support the Purposes and Continuity of the Chilkoot Culture Camp
- Goal VIII: Conserve Habitat and Scenic Values
- Goal IX: Provide Brown Bears Undisturbed Route of Access/Egress to Chilkoot River Feeding Areas
- Goal X: Identify and Interpret Brown Bear Habitat and Use Patterns to Augment Agency Data Needs and Guide Future Facility Development/Improvement Decisions
- Goal XI: Limit Future Impacts of Motorized Use on Chilkoot Lake
- Goal XII: Utilize Best Available Technology to Monitor Fisheries Escapement and Minimize Obstructions to Fish Passage
- Goal XIII: Improve Lakeshore Parking Areas to Better Accommodate Larger Vehicles and Reduce Congestion