Fire & Ice Scenic Loop
Corridor Management Plan
Fire & Ice Scenic Loop
A Discovery of Mount St. Helens
Corridor Management Plan
for the

Fire & Ice
Scenic Loop

Incorporating:

Spirit Lake Memorial Highway, SR 504
Lewis River Road, SR 503
Lewis and Clark Trail, State Scenic Byway, SR 14
White Pass National Scenic Byway, US 12
National Forest Road 90
National Forest Road 25
Curly Creek Road
Wind River Road

Prominent Branch Routes:
SR 505
SR 502
National Forest Road 99

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Project is funded by the Federal Highway Administration and developed with the assistance of stakeholders from Cowlitz, Lewis, and Skamania Counties, in coordination with Clark County, Washington State Parks, Gifford Pinchot National Forest and the Mount St. Helens Volcanic National Monument.
Fire & Ice Scenic Loop
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- Looking Forward, Strategic Investment Plan (2012)
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- Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land Management Plan

White Pass Scenic Byway
- Corridor Management Plan (2008)

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
- Corridor Action Plan (2001)

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
- Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan (2011 Update)

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
- Strategic Plan 2009-2015

City and County Comprehensive Plans and Policies

The public involvement process for the Corridor Management Plan includes outreach to engage low-income and minority populations in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), in developing this plan, followed the provisions of Title VI, which ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any federally funded program or activity, whether on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex.
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Preface

In 2009, a “Ring of Fire” committee was created with the goal of establishing a scenic loop around Mount St. Helens to tell the story of the region’s dramatic geological history. The scenic loop would serve as a distinct destination for visitors to Southwest Washington, and could serve as a catalyst for increasing the length of visitor stays by keeping visitors within the region and exploring more places, rather than returning back to Portland or Seattle for their overnight stays.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is envisioned to serve as an inspiration for communities in and around Mount St. Helens and Southwest Washington, increasing their capacity to attract more visitors through nature- and recreation-based tourism. Efforts to enhance the scenic loop can assist in protecting significant natural and cultural features while increasing knowledge of the region’s unique environment and natural processes. It is hoped that projects resulting from this plan will increase access for families, seniors and the physically challenged, and will aid in the discovery of the history and culture of the region.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, by linking together a wide range of activities—such as hiking, exploring waterfalls and lava tubes, watching wildlife, bicycling, rock climbing, and camping—can extend the usual day trip spent in the car into a weekend or week-long outdoor experience connecting with nature, creating memories for a lifetime.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan adheres to Federal Highway Administration guidelines, addressing each of the requisite fourteen points. These points cover the basic requirements of a corridor management plan and include major items such as maps, strategies for maintaining intrinsic qualities, road safety recommendations, plans to minimize anomalous intrusions, and goals for public participation. A listing of the fourteen points required by the FHWA can be found in Appendix 1 of this plan.

This plan was produced with the guidance of many dedicated individuals, representing a number of public and private organizations and covering the entire geographical base of the scenic loop. Each participant contributed their time and expertise to make this plan a reality, drawing from a wide range of personal and professional experience. It is hoped that these talented and generous individuals will keep the momentum going as the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop moves from the planning stage to the implementation stage.

Corridor Management Plan, May 2015
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Fire & Ice Overview

GEOLOGIC HISTORY

On May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted, spreading more than 900,000 tons of ash across Washington State. This cataclysmic event caused the deaths of 57 people and the destruction of 250 homes and 47 bridges. Overall, $1.1 billion in damages was recorded. Temperatures reached 800 degrees Fahrenheit as a mushroom cloud rose 15 miles into the sky, turning the daylight dark. The eruption took 1,280 feet from the top of the mountain and left a massive crater. Hot ash sparked forest fires, while snow melt from the top of the mountain caused widespread flooding; 150,000 acres of forest was destroyed. This was the first volcanic eruption on the United States mainland since 1917.

Since 1980, plant and animal life has slowly returned to Mount St. Helens and the surrounding valley. Native wildflowers and grasses now cover most of the gray ash soils.

Today, Mount St. Helens serves as a scientific, scenic, and recreational destination for visitors from all over the world. This corridor management plan for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop intends to capitalize on the worldwide interest already shown in the mountain as a destination by serving as a focal point for regional partners to work toward the improvements needed to accomplish the shared goals of increasing tourism and building the local economy. This plan is designed to help preserve the area’s natural resources, provide for educational and scientific opportunities, and honor our natural and cultural heritage while building economic opportunity.

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT — ROUTES AND CORRIDORS

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and the White Pass National Scenic Byway are three regionally scaled and nationally significant destinations that are the primary draw for visitors to Southwest Washington. They form the backbone of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is located in Southwest Washington. It ties together the Washington State side of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and Mount Rainier National Park, and encompasses Mount St. Helens National Monument, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and the White Pass National Scenic Byway. The loop includes State Routes 503 and 504, which run in an east-west direction along the upper and lower portions of Cowlitz County.
The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop incorporates approximately 345 miles of roads, which include the following segments:

- Interstate 5, which forms the western portion of the loop, primarily serves as the main access to the Mount St. Helens region.
- Portions of the 572-mile Lewis and Clark Trail Scenic Byway that travels through Clark and Skamania Counties along the Columbia River (SR 14);
- The Spirit Lake Memorial Highway (SR 504), a Washington State Scenic Byway and a US Forest Service Scenic Byway;
- The Lewis County portions of the 119-mile White Pass National Scenic Byway along U.S. Route 12.
- SR 503 and the SR 503 Spur in Cowlitz County, which run primarily along the Lewis River;
- Wind River Road and Curly Creek Road from SR 14 in Skamania County, meeting up with Forest Road 90, and leading to the Pine Creek Information Station; and
- Forest Road 25 from Randle, on the eastern end of Lewis County, providing access to the east side of the Monument and the Windy Ridge Observatory via Forest Road 99.

SR 505 through Toledo in Lewis County is a prominent branch route along the Loop. Additional noteworthy branch routes include SR 502 through Battle Ground in Clark County, and Forest Road 99 in Skamania County.

The various primary routes that make up the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop may be organized into six general corridors. Each corridor is defined by its own unique destinations and distinctive character. These corridors are organized as follows:

- **The Lakes Corridor**
  - SR 503, SR 503 Spur
  - SR 502 (Prominent Branch Route)
- **The Primitive Corridor**
  - National Forest Road 90
  - National Forest Road 25
  - Curly Creek Road
  - Wind River Road
  - National Forest Road 99 (Prominent Branch Route)
- **The Discovery Corridor**
  - SR 504/ Spirit Lake Memorial Highway
  - SR 505 (Prominent Branch Route)
- **The White Pass National Scenic Byway**
  - U.S. 12
- **The Lewis & Clark State Scenic Byway**
  - SR 14
- **Interstate 5**
Organizing the Fire and Ice system into corridors allows for a more strategic approach to both planning and marketing. For instance, the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop provides a range of offerings which attract a wide variety of visitors. Marketing the corridors based on their respective offerings will ensure visitors are accommodated, and that their expectations are met or exceeded. Furthermore, the varying conditions and potential for development between the corridors also necessitate different approaches to planning. In order to effectively plan for development and an improved transportation system, we must focus on the specific needs for each corridor and identify solutions that are context-appropriate.

1.2 Purpose of the Corridor Management Plan

The purpose of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan is to identify, conserve, and enhance the scenic, historic, natural, archaeological, cultural, and recreational qualities of the region. A sound approach will bring economic benefits from increased tourism throughout the planning area. The corridor management plan can play an important role in helping to maintain the distinctive features of the region. This plan aims to provide transportation agencies and funders with a clear statement about the region’s desire to protect and maintain its exceptional qualities. It will also give engineers and designers the reference point they need to provide flexibility in the design process for bridges, safety projects, and for meeting the needs of residents and visitors. This plan intends to provide guidance to all relevant governmental agencies in making funding decisions as well as to private land and business owners seeking to make investment decisions in the region.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is intended to provide direction for residents, business owners and other interested stakeholders so that they may contribute to the development of the region as a tourist destination in a meaningful way.

1.3 Planning Context and History

In 2009 the Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee (MSHAC), formed at the request of the Congressional Delegation from Lewis, Skamania and Cowlitz Counties, released a series of recommendations for the area, covering access, infrastructure, recreation, conservation, science, industry, tourism, and management.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop was identified by the Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee as a means to expand tourism, outlined in their July 2009 recommendations to the Washington State Congressional Delegation regarding future opportunities for expansion of Mount St. Helens tourism, marketing, and development activities.

The Ring of Fire Committee was created to establish a scenic loop around Mount St. Helens, following the recommendations of the MSHAC. The group wanted to tell the story of the region’s dramatic geological history and create excitement for the area as a destination for visitors to Southwest Washington. The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop was viewed as a catalyst for local communities to develop more attractions and activities in the region in order to increase the length of visitors’ stays. The Ring of Fire Committee identified the key elements integral to
the promotion of the region, which included geology, recreation, nature, communities, and cultural resources. A draft vision was established:

To create and launch a regional organization whose focus is to create, promote, and maintain a new tourism loop through Skamania, Clark and Cowlitz Counties.

Lewis County’s involvement was introduced in subsequent meetings as a critical element and linkage to the loop via White Pass National Scenic Byway.

The Ring of Fire Committee identified the need to establish a scenic loop to support expansion of tourism and economic opportunity. The group realized that the lack of year-round accessibility along several sections of the loop presented a fundamental limitation to achieving this goal. Campgrounds, trailheads, horse camps, ATV trails, snow parks, and interpretive centers were all cited as being integral to the expansion of focused tourism in the Mount St. Helens region. The need to inventory geologic, cultural, historical, visitor services, and shopping opportunities was identified as an important step. In 2010 the Committee explored needs for regional marketing, expanded visitor services, website coordination, visitor maps, and promotional events.

Over the years, the original “Ring of Fire” committee has evolved with the addition of new partners into the Fire & Ice Steering Committee, but their commitment to the region has remained steadfast. Three technical teams, spanning the areas of Transportation, Tourism and Marketing, and Culture, History and Outdoor Recreation have been added to provide their particular expertise to the project. This plan is in direct response to the efforts of the MSHAC and the Ring of Fire committee. It intends to build upon existing activities while providing a focused approach to the most viable alternatives.

A north—south connection between these three highways is essential for attracting visitors from the state of Oregon. This connection is intended to offer a slower paced and highly scenic alternative to travelling Interstate 5 between the White Pass National Scenic Byway along U.S. 12 and the Lewis and Clark Trail Scenic Byway along SR 14.

Designation and creation of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will elevate the region’s profile on a national level, with the expansion of collaborative efforts across the region, and through the development of new opportunities to enjoy this rugged territory. Tourism-based entities will benefit through the creation of a cohesive, multi-faceted marketing campaign, including coordinated branding, signage, and a web presence. Stakeholders across the region will benefit from economic activity generated by an increase in visitors. Tourists will benefit from strategies designed to make travel easier, more appealing, and more extensive, with multi-day itineraries and events.
The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan will serve as a mechanism by which the region’s stakeholders are encouraged to collaboratively identify and prioritize improvements to enhance the visitor experience associated with the Scenic Loop. It is hoped that future projects will focus on improved connections between existing byways and expanded access to sites near the gateway communities of the Mount St. Helens National Monument. These efforts will increase awareness of the Scenic Loop region, allowing local residents to share their unique “back yard” with the world beyond.

1.4 Vision and Goals for the Scenic Loop

In conjunction with other regional tourism related partners, create, promote and enhance a tourism loop around Mount St. Helens that encompasses Skamania, Lewis and Cowlitz Counties to encourage economic opportunities presented by the Monument in Southwest Washington.

- Increase the length of visitor stays along designated routes.
- Enhance user experience through road safety improvements.
- Identify opportunities to provide the visitor expanded recreational opportunities, enhancing economic vitality.
- Identify opportunities to expand seasonal recreation, services for visitors, tourism infrastructure, and marketing opportunities.
- Develop shared priorities and a long-term partnership structure to coordinate economic development and tourism opportunities for the region.
- Examine and pursue funding opportunities for recommended investments.
- Promote the Scenic Loop region through the experience of cultural, historical, and natural amenities.

1.5 Partnerships

The Fire & Ice Steering Committee and Technical Teams are a dedicated group representing all points along the route, including: Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Clark Counties, as well as the Cowlitz Tribe, and the many cities and villages located along the route. Steering Committee and Technical Team members come from a variety of private and public sector backgrounds and each has a specific expertise to share along with their passion for the region. County officials, environmentalists, tourism professionals, and recreational enthusiasts have all made important contributions to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan and are expected to play a substantial role in its implementation.

The Fire & Ice partnership will engage tourism and business partners, non-profit groups and all stakeholders along the loop route in effective public participation to identify tourism needs, including year-round recreation, marketing services (including branding, signage, and event coordination), inventories of cultural and geologic features, itinerary development, funding, and accessibility improvements.
Three technical teams, representing the functional areas of Transportation, Tourism and Marketing, and Culture, History and Outdoor Recreation, contributed to the development of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan. A listing of the major topics discussed by the technical teams can be found below.

TRANSPORTATION
- Determining transportation capacity and safety, as well as appropriateness of roads to serve as primary routes for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop: SR 503, SR 504, SR 14, Wind River Road, Curly Creek Road, USFS 90 and USFS 25
- Identification of upgrades needed in order to ensure safety and capacity along these routes
- Feasibility of identified upgrades and of new construction
- Identification of appropriate sites for tourism-oriented development along the routes (i.e. resorts, restaurants, gas stations)

TOURISM AND MARKETING
- Tourism opportunities that will increase the number of visitors and encourage overnight and extended stays
- Facilities needed to compel visitors to stay longer
- Approaches for developing partnerships with tourism and marketing organizations to work together on shared priorities
- Identification of potential funding opportunities
- Methods to involve local businesses in marketing efforts
- Structuring the scenic loop organization for long-term sustainability
- Balancing of competing interests and promotion of a wide variety of recreational pursuits without interfering with current and future scientific work
- Marketing approaches to visitors as an overnight destination
- Linkages with Mount Rainier and the Columbia Gorge as part of a regional marketing strategy
- Encouraging better cooperation and participation with private businesses surrounding the loop
- Involving local residents and front-line employees as cultural ambassadors knowledgeable of Mount St. Helens history and culture

CULTURE, HISTORY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
- Inventory of existing services and attractions in the Scenic Loop region
- Packaging attractions to compel visitors to stay longer
- Areas in need of protection due to environmental, cultural or historical sensitivity
1.6 Public Participation

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan is designed to foster and encourage collaboration between two well-established scenic byways: White Pass Scenic Byway along U.S. 12 and Lewis and Clark Trail Scenic Byway along SR 14. Community participation in the planning and implementation of activities and events covered by the plan will engage a wide range of residents, business owners, and interested stakeholders. A public involvement plan was developed to ensure a transparent process with multiple opportunities for engagement.

Community Representation

Three representative groups have been identified to provide input, guidance, and direction to the creation of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan:

- **Steering Committee**: The Steering Committee is representative of the geographic region covered by the Scenic Loop and includes key members of the public sector. Its responsibilities include:
  - Project direction and oversight
  - Development of the vision statement
  - Development of goals and objectives
  - Review of the draft Corridor Management Plan
  - Recommendation of the Corridor Management Plan to the CWCOG Board

- **Technical Teams**: The Technical Teams include representatives from the private and public sectors and include economic development professionals, tour operators, business owners, and public works personnel. The Technical Teams are responsible for providing detailed information and recommendations according to their area of expertise:
  - Transportation
  - Tourism and Marketing
  - Culture, History and Outdoor Recreation

- **Stakeholders**: All interested stakeholders and members of the public have been welcome to attend and provide input at Fire & Ice Scenic Loop meetings and events. Members of the public were invited to comment on the draft plan through public notice in regional media and by updates to the project website.
Community Understanding
Public participation has been integrated throughout the development of the Corridor Management Plan, as transparency has been essential to the process. The Fire & Ice website was used to provide stakeholders with a way to follow the scope of work, timelines and deliverables to ensure a transparent process. Stakeholders have had access to the project overview, meeting agendas and minutes, and draft revisions.

Community Input
Meetings have been held with the Technical Teams specific to the scope of work and tasks. The Steering Committee has also held open meetings that comply with all Open Public Meetings requirements and all meetings have been publically noticed at least 10 days in advance. One public meeting was held to introduce the draft Corridor Management Plan. This meeting was open to all interested parties and those attending had the opportunity to review the draft and provide comment. An open house was held towards the end of the planning process in order to receive public input on the draft plan and suggestions for modifications.

Community Advocacy
Input and information for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan has been sought from a wide variety of stakeholders, including: elected officials from all regional jurisdictions, city and county staff, business owners, area non-profits, outdoor enthusiasts, conservation groups, tourism professionals, and other interested parties. The draft Corridor Management Plan was posted on the Fire & Ice website and has met all requirements for public comment outlined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Avenues for Future Public Participation Opportunities
Public awareness and participation are integral to the success of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. These two aspects are mutually reinforcing. More people are likely to participate in the activities of the scenic loop as they become more aware of its offerings. As the plan moves into the implementation phase, continued public participation is essential to maintain momentum and community support.

1.7 Challenges and Opportunities
Just as there are many challenges associated with the realization of success for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, there are also a number of opportunities already in place that will prove instrumental in achieving the vision and goals of the project. These challenges and opportunities can be organized into three main categories:

- Getting There
- Extending the Stay
- Coming Back Again
GETTING THERE

The seasonal and topographic limitations of the access roads leading to Mount St. Helens make it a challenge to plan and execute an extended travel experience throughout the Monument and the surrounding communities. Advance trip planning information is available on the Internet, but it is somewhat difficult to find. Existing trip planning information does not provide enough information to know whether a visitor attraction or recreational site is open, what type of uses are allowed, how much it might cost and what is nearby to support the travel experience. This information is especially needed for visitors to the Monument, as rules and regulations at Mount St. Helens differ from what visitors expect at other USFS sites.

Each agency or organization maintains its own website, does its own marketing, and maintains its own database, making it very difficult—from a traveler’s perspective—to get consistent and reliable information when planning a visit to the region.

Once a visitor is in the area, they are greeted by different types and styles of signs, making it difficult to follow a route or find a desired destination. Adding to the challenge, wayfinding signage is not only inconsistent in style, but inconsistent in placement.

**Trip Planning:** Several partner organizations have websites that provide detailed trip planning information.

- The Skamania Chamber of Commerce provides detailed information on suggested trips throughout the county with additional information on where to stay, eat and explore: www.Skamania.org
- In Clark County, Visit Vancouver USA has drop-down menus and an interactive map that allow a potential visitor to identify sites and attractions by interest area: http://www.visitvancouverusa.com/things-to-do/attractions/
- Cowlitz County Tourism has trip planning pages, including itineraries, events, downloadable route maps and an interactive map: http://www.visitmtsthelens.com/planyourtrip.html
- The White Pass Scenic Byway has a trip planning page: http://www.whitepassbyway.com/planyourtrip.html
- The Monument (USFS/GPNF) recently updated its website, now providing information about travel conditions, points of interest, and travel planning information that is clearer and easier to find: http://www.fs.usda.gov/mountsthelens

The Mount St. Helens Institute’s website is a great resource to learn more about the Monument and available programs including guided hikes, volunteer opportunities, and ongoing research at the volcano: http://mshinstitute.org/

These websites are completely independent of each other at all levels, including websites sponsored by the State tourism office, county-level convention and visitor bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, and privately sponsored sites, such as http://www.lewisriver.com or http://www.msthelensinfo.com.

Wayfinding Signs and Systems
Wayfinding systems are designed to assist travelers in following a route or finding destinations. Systems include maps and guides (paper and digital) and several types of signs (route marking, community identification, site identification, and directional.) An effective wayfinding system establishes a distinct visual and graphic identity along the specific corridor and links together related travel experiences. There are four wayfinding systems already in place along the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop route: the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the White Pass Scenic Byway, and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Birding and Wildlife Trail. Each has a distinct visual and graphic identity.

Signs for visitor information centers along I-5 can be found in several locations, but are inconsistent, incomplete and hard to follow.

Existing and planned wayfinding systems:

- **White Pass Scenic Byway**: The White Pass Scenic Byway has a wayfinding sign project in progress. Traveler service and recreation opportunity wayfinding signs will be installed in communities along the byway to provide direction to recreational sites as well as support services, including gas, food, restroom facilities, and information. The byway is coordinating this effort with communities and businesses to create the most effective and appropriate signage for each area. http://www.whitepassbyway.com/bywayprojects.html

- **Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area**: A signage system is presently in place for the Gorge and updates to this system are currently being planned. The Management Plan, addressing signage as it relates to scenic resource enhancement strategies, was updated in September 2011. Objectives include:
  - Encourage the removal or replacement of signs that do not conform to the guidelines for GMA and SMA
  - Remove unnecessary highway signs and consolidate necessary signs where possible
• Provide Forest Service cost-share funding, including recreation funds in order to encourage the placement of Scenic Area entry signs consistent with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Graphic Signing System. http://www.gorgecommission.org

• **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Auto Tour Route:** The National Park Service has installed signs for the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Auto Tour Route. Along these routes, Lewis and Clark are represented as brown silhouettes. The National Park Service released a study in 2013: *Effective Wayshowing for Enhanced Visitor Experience, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Auto Tour Route.* The study recommends simplifying signage for clarity and effectively getting people where they want to go. The plan recognizes that existing signs along the Auto Tour Route are in a state of physical decline, lack a consistent identity from state to state, and would be best situated as an assembly of signs or grouped with other roadway signage. A lack of signage along the route causes confusion in some areas for travelers on the Historic Trail and the Auto Tour Route.

• **U.S. Forest Service:** Forest Service signs are based on federal standards and are colored brown for recreation and blue for visitor services. Sites are marked with traditional stone bases, giving a distinctive identity to all USFS sites nationwide.

These sign systems are independent of each other and are designed to establish a distinct visual and graphic identity for specific touring routes or sponsoring organizations, but do not contribute to an established, coherent, regionally-scaled identity across all four counties included in the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop area.

The opportunity exists to adopt simple signage guidelines for destinations along the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop using some of the most common materials and shapes. In this way, existing investments in branding and identity can be maintained, while selecting certain common elements (such as materials, shapes or colors) to link the sites together as part of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop.

• **Skamania Lodge, Stevenson:** Incorporates similar materials (stone and wood), but adapted the sign shape to meet their own individual needs

• **White Pass Scenic Byway:** Adopts some of the same forms as the USFS style, but adapts them to their distinct identity
EXTENDING THE STAY

The inventory of intrinsic qualities (Chapter 4) identifies the types of sites and attractions that are currently ready for visitors or provide expanded recreational opportunities within a mountain, forest, lake, river, or community setting. What makes this particular region unique is its relationship to the volcano and its proximity to other major regional attractions—the Columbia River Gorge, White Pass, and Mount Rainier.

Extending the Season
In the region surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, including the White Pass Scenic Byway and Columbia River Gorge, the summer season is a busy one, but there is a need to extend the season into late fall, winter, and early spring. The primary challenge for extending the season is the lack of winter access along FS 25, FS 90, and SR 504. According to USFS staff, the existing winter recreational facilities on the south and east side of the mountain are at or beyond capacity on weekends. One way to increase access and use would be to expand winter plowing. The USFS, however, does not generally plow its roads in the winter. Transferring some of the roads to the adjacent counties or to the State may increase the likelihood that the roads would get plowed. Local and state governments are constrained, though, by current economic conditions and are reluctant to acquire any additional burdens. Off-season uses of closed roads may be an option for more winter activities in years with little snow. The flexibility to open and close roads according to weather conditions is another option.

Access and Safety
Increasing safety for all of the users of existing roads (especially bicyclists and those driving slow moving vehicles) is an ongoing challenge. Safety measures should be designed and installed in a manner that maintains an appealing travel experience. Further complicating travel and visitor safety is the jurisdictional complexity of providing emergency services to the areas surrounding the Monument. Portions of the Monument area are serviced by Skamania County, yet to reach those areas emergency vehicles would need to drive a long distance through other jurisdictions. There is a strong tradition of multi-jurisdictional collaboration on emergency service issues, but additional planning is needed when expanding the number of visitors to ensure that provisions are made for a similarly scaled increase in emergency services.

Recreational Opportunities for a Range of Skills and Abilities
Trail linkages and connections are needed to expand the range of opportunities for all types of trail users, including those with limited skills. For example, shorter loop walking trails could be developed. The Monument is limited in its ability to fund trail construction. Other landowners, public and private agencies, power companies, and local trail groups have stepped up to provide volunteers to build trails.
Additional opportunities for guide services (horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling, winter trekking, fishing, etc.) would increase the range of activities available, especially for novice users and families; however, the process for obtaining USFS special use permits can be daunting for a small business and is limited by annual renewals. The USFS is in the process of studying the permit process with the goal of identifying the types of activities where permits can be expanded by increasing the number of permits or by allowing more flexibility to existing permit holders.

**Interpretation and Educational Opportunities**

While interpretive exhibits and educational opportunities associated with the Monument at the five visitor centers along SR 504 and at the Columbia River Gorge are of high quality and are well-managed and maintained, interpretation at museums within the communities themselves and at roadside exhibits present a missed opportunity. Coordination among small museums would augment the volunteer efforts of dedicated individuals and organizations.

The Lelooska Foundation's living history programs in Ariel and the Cedar Creek Grist Mill in northern Clark County are tremendous resources, but are limited by the capacity of their dedicated staffs. A National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) sponsored Museum Assessment Program would help them to address their collection needs and plan for future expanded programming and exhibits. Other organizations, such as local historical societies, face similar challenges and would benefit from working together to bring in outside resources for museum management, programming, and organizational capacity building.

Roadside pull-offs are another significant opportunity. There are a number of exhibits at roadside areas. Some tell the story of Mount St Helens. Some address natural heritage themes associated with river recreational sites or within the Columbia River Gorge. Others interpret historical themes associated with the communities and settled places. The bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was a great source for the development of interpretive and educational exhibits all along the Columbia River. The National Wildlife Refuge system continues to provide interpretive and educational opportunities at its facilities along the Columbia River.

Many of the interpretive signs and educational exhibits are now dated and need to be refreshed. Some need to be replaced, while others would benefit from more recent technologies in exhibit design.

Within the Monument, signs at roadside pull-offs inform visitors of the sensitivity of the natural areas, but are not friendly to visitors. Refreshing these signs and having them deliver messages in positive terms would be a good opportunity to capture visitor support in maintaining the fragile lands and ecosystems.
**Visitor Support Services**

There is a general lack of support facilities surrounding the Monument to serve the needs of existing visitors or to provide for any future increase in the number of visitors or increased lengths of stay (i.e. food, lodging of all types, restrooms, etc.).

One way to significantly increase visitor stays is to provide overnight lodging closer to the Monument and associate that lodging with the Monument’s expanded educational activities, winter recreation, and river-oriented activities. Providing federally operated campground facilities on federal lands is complicated, as these facilities should not compete with private businesses. To that end, USFS campground facilities and hostel-like facilities planned for Coldwater are likely to be limited to those that serve its educational, research, and volunteer programs.

The recent transfer of ownership of the USFS electric line along SR 504 to the Cowlitz Public Utility District now provides additional opportunities for private businesses to serve the need for more overnight beds on private land close to the Monument. Before the transfer, the inability of private businesses to tap into the USFS line made the ability to provide lodging along SR 504 a challenge. Additional constraints imposed by topography and limited ingress/egress to the SR 504 right of way make this goal more challenging. Coordination and cooperation between public and private organizations seeking to expand capacity for tourism along this route will assist in working through these challenges.

Expansion of dining opportunities is constrained by seasonal limitations and a steady decline in visitation since a peak following the eruption of Mount St. Helens. More aggressive educational and event programming may have a positive effect on increasing visitation. An increase in visitation may spur more interest by private enterprises. Temporary and portable food-related business opportunities, such as food carts, should be encouraged.

Another challenge is that of culinary expertise and workforce development. Capturing the market associated with such a diverse array of visitors (ranging from hunting and fishing enthusiasts to mountain bicyclists and rock climbers) requires a restaurant operation that can cater to the broad range of tastes and expectations. Keeping a hospitality-oriented business in operation for the whole year with only three months of income is a daunting challenge that requires a stronger regional network of related enterprises. A longer season would help to mitigate this challenge.

Efforts have been made to implement hospitality training programs as part of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial and along the White Pass Scenic Byway. These types of programs are also needed for hotel, restaurant and other tourism related businesses along the I-5 corridor communities.
COMING BACK AGAIN

Increasing economic activity related to nature-based or recreationally-based tourism requires that the region establish a strong base of return visitors. People return year after year for longer stays to communities that are welcoming to visitors, have new things to see and do, and continue to invest in the quality and appearance of their community.

First Impressions
Over the 250 miles of travel routes that comprise the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop road system, visitors are likely to encounter many different types of travel experiences—cities and towns, forests, river corridors and reservoirs, and mountain peaks. Road qualities range from Interstate to four-wheel drive-only roads. With such a diverse array of travel experiences, it can be difficult to manage visitor expectations and avoid over-promising with marketing materials.

The first impression for many travelers to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will be the cities and towns along I-5. First impressions coming into each of these towns vary greatly. Beautifying the gateway views into each of these communities would be an important first step in enhancing the scenic loop as a whole. Efforts have been made in nearly all of these communities to improve their entrances, but there is still more work to do to provide a more welcoming appearance.

As travelers head up to the mountain along each of the corridors, the transition between town and countryside also plays an important role in forming an impression about what they are about to experience. This is a particularly difficult challenge in that the edge of town is typically where there is the greatest pressure for new development.

Further up the corridors, much of the private and public land is managed with an emphasis on timber harvesting. Scenic overviews offer educational opportunities, as the area’s strong connection to the timber industry is readily apparent in some areas. Much of the land associated with the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is working forest land that is actively harvested. The USFS employs a range of multi-use tools to accomplish its objectives, balancing the needs of the forest products industry and those of recreational users.

Downtown Main Street as a Destination
Within some area communities there have been strong efforts to encourage redevelopment through the “Main Street” approach to
economic revitalization. This strategy was first developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and was widely adopted by state and local governments. It has been adopted by the State of Washington’s Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation as a means of preserving historic resources and encouraging redevelopment through good design and strong organizations. http://www.dahp.wa.gov/programs/mainstreet-program

Coordinated Programming for Events
Well-planned and coordinated events represent an important opportunity to attract new and returning visitors. A common events calendar for the region would provide event promoters with an opportunity to coordinate dates to assure a strong distribution of events throughout each of the seasons.

Each county currently maintains its own calendar. The Washington Tourism Alliance also maintains a robust event calendar; however, from a visitor’s point of view, it is currently very difficult to get information about events in any one place.
Chapter 2: Gateways, Communities and Destinations

Given the overall goal of finding ways to encourage visitors to get out of their cars and stay longer in the region, the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is uniquely poised to contribute to this objective through the establishment of a distinctive identity for the region in general and for each of the corridors that lead to the Monument in particular. In addition, the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will reassure visitors that they will have a high quality experience, that they will be able to find and follow the routes, and that they can visit destinations that will tell the stories of the region and its volcanic legacy.

Three broad designations are recommended to establish structure and organization within the large loop area and will provide a level of confidence to visitors to the region.

- Fire & Ice Gateways
- Fire & Ice Hub Communities
- Fire & Ice Destinations

Map

Gateways are located at the beginning of the main travel routes (503, 504, 505, 12, 14, Wind River Road, FS 25) to Mount St. Helens destinations. Gateways offer a full array of visitor amenities, including hotels, restaurants, tourist information, gas stations, and attractions. Hub communities are located between the gateways and the destinations (or near the destination) and offer a more limited array of the amenities available in gateways.

2.1 Fire & Ice Gateways

Establishing an official Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Gateway designation would provide some assurance to visitors that the community would meet a certain level of service. A Fire & Ice Gateway provides visitors with:

- Support services in a community that is located on an entry point to the loop, leading to one of the primary destinations and corridors
- A place that provides helpful information about visiting the area from a staffed location open on a daily basis (at least 300 days per year)
- A wide range of visitor services (food, lodging, restrooms, and supplies)
- A museum or interpreted attraction that provides a general overview of the history and significance of the region
- A welcoming and attractive appearance as evidenced by a community beautification program, community entrance and streetscape enhancements
- Tourism Ambassadors—People working in service industries who have knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm for the area to share
2.2 Fire & Ice Hub Communities

Fire & Ice hub communities are similar to gateways, but may offer a more limited range of services. They are located along one of the routes that make up the scenic loop, but may not be near an entry point. They may not have any specific interpreted attractions, but may have other attractions that can be used to build multi-day itineraries.

2.3 Regional and Local Destinations

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and the White Pass National Scenic Byway are three regionally scaled and nationally significant destinations that are the primary draw for visitors to Southwest Washington. They form the backbone of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. These regional destinations already have management entities in place that are responsible for planning, implementation, financing, and visitor management.

Three additional corridors have the potential for broadening the range of regional destinations in the area and expanding the audience for them:

- Lewis River Corridor: A destination for water-based recreational activities associated with PacifiCorp’s three reservoirs and the developed facilities associated with them.
- Kalama River Road: The Kalama River is a significant fishing and whitewater rafting destination with access from five boat ramps and nearly a dozen public access fishing spots along 17 miles of cool, deep, fish-filled water that delivers catches all year long.
- Wind River: This river provides many fishing opportunities to its main species of steelhead and salmon. It is also a white-water rafting destination. The Carson Hot Springs and Elk Ridge Golf Course is an added attraction for adventure sports enthusiasts and others looking for 18 holes of golf, a relaxing soak and nearby food and lodging.

Full Service Visitor Centers

Full service means that a site is professionally staffed; open at least 300 days per year (or daily during summer peak season); has interpreted exhibits; has programming and educational activities; has visitor comfort facilities; and has a management entity that is responsible for managing the site. Currently, Fire & Ice full-service visitor centers include:

- Mount St. Helens Visitor Center at Silver Lake
- Hofstadt Bluffs Visitor Center
- Mount St. Helens Forest Learning Center
- Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center
- Johnston Ridge Observatory

Limited Service Visitor Information Center

These centers are open during regular business hours during summer peak season and limited hours in the off-peak season. Their purpose is primarily to provide information and may have visitor restroom facilities (indicated with an *).
• Woodland Visitor Center
• Kelso/Longview Visitor Center
• Vancouver USA Visitor Center*
• Stevenson Visitor Center
• Camas-Washougal Chamber of Commerce
• Packwood Visitor Information Center
• Castle Rock Visitor Center (Anticipated opening—Late Summer, 2015)

**Full Service Museums with Visitor Services**
Open on a daily basis at least 300 days per year, their primary purpose is education and interpretation of the region’s natural and cultural heritage. Visitor information is also available, although staff may not be trained for providing visitor information.
• Forest Learning Center, Spirit Lake Memorial Highway
• Bonneville Dam, North Shore Visitor Center, SR 154
• Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum, Stevenson SR 14 (no staff trained to provide visitor information is available)
• Cowlitz County Historical Museum, 405 Allen St., Kelso

**Destination Types**
• Full service visitor centers
  (with orientation exhibits and interpretation)
• Limited service visitor information centers
• Full service museums with visitor services
• Interpretive museums and attractions
• Interpretive viewpoints
• Recreational sites
• Historic sites

**Interpreted Museums and Attractions**
These sites may be open less than 300 days per year; are staffed by volunteers or volunteer organizations; provide a self-guided tour or interpretive media as part of the experience; and offer interpreted features that are part of the travel experience.

**Interpreted Viewpoints**
These sites offer a safe place to pull off the road and get out of the car to view a site whose features are being interpreted as part of the travel experience. They are accessible to the public on a daily basis.

**Recreational Sites**
Recreational sites provide public access to natural areas, including: trailheads, boat ramps, and access points to waterfalls and streams. Recreational sites also include developed and undeveloped campgrounds, horse rentals, rock and technical climbing areas, winter sno-parks and related trails, whitewater rafting, and other adventures.
Historic Sites
An historic site is one listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the Washington Register. A list of designated historic sites in the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop area can be found in the appendix of this report.
Chapter 3: Visitor Experience

3.1 The Scenic Loop in Context

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE
Portions of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop include territory originally inhabited by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe prior to the presence of pioneer settlers. Their rich cultural history presents an opportunity to incorporate Native American heritage as a means of establishing a framework for interpretation.

The mission of the Cowlitz Tribe is:

*To protect, conserve, restore and promote culturally-relevant species and landscapes integral to the unique identity of the Cowlitz People. To further educate the community and inspire future leaders and participants in this vision.*

Much of traditional Cowlitz culture emerged from the natural landscape in the area surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Key habitats and locations include rivers, fisheries, prairies, oak woodlands, berry fields and sources of obsidian, chert and jasper. Plants such as red cedar, acorns, camas, wapato and huckleberries, as well as significant animal species including elk, deer, mountain goat, salmon, eulachon, sturgeon, and lamprey can all be found in the area. These natural components are fundamental to both the traditional and modern cultural identity of the Cowlitz People.

Tribal members still engage in cultural practices such as the Smelt, Salmon and River Ceremonies. They join coastal tribes in canoe journeys, drum and sing at ceremonies throughout the year and as called upon for funerals, naming ceremonies, healings and celebrations. The Cowlitz Pow-Wow is one of the largest tribal gatherings in southern Washington.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop can be framed within the context of this broader landscape, providing a strong opportunity to link the many layers of natural and cultural history together over time.

The Natural Resources Department of the Cowlitz Tribe has identified focal landscapes and species found in the area of the Scenic Loop. More information on these landscapes and species can be found at: http://www.cowlitz.org/index.php/focal-landscapes-and-species.

THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
The Columbia River Gorge forms the southern boundary of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop region. State Route 14 follows the Gorge on the Washington side of the river, while I-84 runs along the Oregon side.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission was established in 1987 to develop and implement, in coordination with the US Forest Service, policies and programs that protect and enhance the scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Gorge, while
encouraging growth within existing urban areas of the Gorge and allowing development outside urban areas consistent with resource protection. The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop includes lands within the Congressionally designated National Scenic Area. Any plans and programs developed as part of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will need to be reviewed by and coordinated with the Gorge Commission.

Several issues have been identified that require ongoing coordination work with the Commission:

- Signage and wayfinding programs directly related to the implementation of the management plan
- Development of a regional database in support of tourism and emergency management
- Bi-state coordination to include both sides of the river in Washington and Oregon

### 3.2 Following the Scenic Loop

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop explores over 345 miles through Southwest Washington offering many spectacular opportunities and experiences. The route is in the general shape of a figure eight. The figure eight can be divided into several segments or corridors. The corridors are I-5, the Lewis and Clark State Trail Scenic Byway (SR 14), The White Pass Scenic Byway (US 12), The Lakes Corridor (503), Discovery Corridor (504), and the Primitive Corridor (FS-25 & 90, Wind River Highway and Curly Creek Road). Each of these segments offers a unique perspective on culture, history, and natural setting of the Fire & Ice Loop.

There are many types of trips that visitors can take along the scenic loop. Individuals or families looking to “rough it” for a true wilderness experience should make sure to visit the eastern half of the loop along Wind River Highway, Curly Creek Road, and Forest Road 25. This section is also referred to as the Primitive Corridor. This section offers a wide variety of opportunities to pull off and explore the area either by hiking, biking, and even horseback. Much of this section is located in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest which provides ample amount of designated camping and parking facilities along the loop.

Visitors looking to explore the central attraction of Mount St. Helens and visit some of the area’s communities should check out the Discovery Corridor on 504. This corridor has several education and visitor centers that share the unique history of Mount St. Helens before and after the eruption. Visitors can see the regrowth of the area as they head east toward Johnston Ridge Observatory.

The Lakes Corridor is the central corridor connecting the eastern and western segments of the Loop. This route was named *The Lakes Corridor* because of the numerous lakes and reservoirs on or near the route. These lakes were created after the strategic damming of the Lewis River. This area has some of the best fishing
and boating areas within the Loop. Additionally, this area offers visitors the opportunity to visit local fish hatcheries and learn more about their management and role in the ecosystem.

The White Pass Scenic Byway and the Lewis and Clark State Trail Scenic Byway are some of the larger corridors along the loop. These two corridors mark the northern and southern extent of the loop. At the southern extent along the Lewis and Clark State Scenic Byway visitors have views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood. The White Pass Scenic Byway at the northern extent offers views of Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens, and several lakes. Numerous activities and events can be found in the communities that can be found along these corridors. Exploring museums, hiking to a waterfall, or simply enjoying a craft beer are just some of the activities that can be experienced along these corridors.

In order to promote the many intrinsic qualities found along the route, the Loop has adopted an online story-mapping technique developed by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). The online-map allows visitors to the area to explore the area and map out the sites and routes that they would like to explore during their visit. Having the Loop online puts direct access to information at the fingertips of visitors to the area. A visitor can explore the map, find a location they would like to visit, research the area and even make reservations, all from one site. The list of intrinsic qualities found with the online maps includes a wide variety of destinations from hiking trailheads to historic buildings.
Chapter 4: Intrinsic Qualities: Culture, History, and Recreation

Intrinsic qualities are the characteristics of a corridor that make it unique. They are distinctive features that cause the visitor to have a memorable experience and the local resident to be proud. These are the places and features that attract people and are the focus of conversations concerning enhancement, preservation, and promotion in this section.

Intrinsic qualities are not limited to points of interest to see and activities to do along the byway; they are special features that create an overall sense of the corridor’s character, history, and culture. These are the qualities that tell the story of the byway. The National Scenic Byways Program defines intrinsic qualities as the “features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area.”

The six primary categories of intrinsic qualities recognized by the FHWA are: scenic, natural, archaeological, historic, cultural, and recreational. The following section clearly defines each specific category and provides several examples of each. A more comprehensive list of intrinsic qualities can be found in the appendix of this report.

4.1 Scenic

A scenic quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and human-influenced or built elements of the visual environment. These are the characteristics of the landscape that are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and memorable experience. All elements of the landscape—natural landforms, water, vegetation, and even architectural features and development—contribute to the quality of the scenic loop’s visual environment. For a scenic quality to exist, everything present must be in harmony and contribute to a positive visual experience. Significant scenic qualities can be found along each of the corridors as outlined below.

Driving along the Lewis & Clark State Trail Scenic Byway through the communities of Camas, Washougal, Stevenson, and Carson, visitors have stunning views of Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. The Skamania Port Waterfront in Stevenson allows visitors to explore an old steamboat dock while offering spectacular views of the Columbia River. During certain times of the year wind-surfers, sailors, and kite-boarders can be seen enjoying the river and the stiff winds that make this area one of the best places in the world for water recreation.
Heading north along Wind River Road from Carson, the Primitive Corridor enters a forested setting. The Primitive Corridor traverses through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, with sightings of wildlife common along this part of the route. This corridor offers a more pristine environment for travelers because of its limited development. This section of the loop has an abundance of outdoor activities to explore such as the Falls Creek Falls Trailhead, located just off Wind River Road on FS Road 3062, which leads to the base of a thundering waterfall surrounded by Douglas fir trees.

Further north along the Primitive Corridor, via USFS Road 25, Mount St. Helens comes into view. The McClellan Overlook offers panoramic views of the center of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. These overviews offer both a scenic and educational opportunity. Landscape views, such as the ones offered by the McClellan Overlook, show the various stages of timber production and illustrate the ways in which the Forest Service strives to create a complex view shed through targeted harvesting techniques.

Arriving at the end of the Primitive Corridor visitors can head West on Highway 12 and explore the White Pass Scenic Byway. This Scenic Byway offers impressive views of Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams. The White Pass Scenic Byway extends along the northern extent of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop and passes through the towns of Mossyrock, Morton, Randle, and Packwood. In addition to the volcanic views offered along this route the existing byway provides plenty of opportunities to stop along the shores of Riffe Lake and Mayfield Lake. Both lakes were created after the construction of the Mossyrock Dam in 1968.

The Discovery Corridor follows State Route 504, and offers many learning experiences while enjoying beautiful landscapes. This corridor has several visitor centers that share this history of Mount St. Helens both before and after its eruption in 1980. As drivers continue heading east towards the volcano they drive alongside the North Fork of the Toutle River. After the eruption of Mount St. Helens this river became a 12-foot wall of water and debris destroying everything in its path. Visitors can stop for a short hike along the Sediment Retention Structure located on a five-acre day use area. The dam located here is not meant to stop water but instead to slow the progression of sediment to the Cowlitz River. Though the regrowth of the area has been slow and steady, evidence of the eruption is still quite noticeable. Ash deposits located along the road and riverbanks give a glimpse of the violence of the eruption and its aftermath.

Driving along the Lakes Corridor, State Route 503, allows visitors to explore the Lewis River Valley. The construction of several dams along the Lewis River resulted in the creation of Swift, Merwin and Yale Reservoirs. The road meanders along the banks of the waterbodies that generate hydroelectric power to serve the region’s residents. Many people use these lakes for outdoor recreation including fishing and boating.

Several miles northeast of the town of Cougar are the Ape Caves. The Ape Caves are underground tunnels created as molten lava formed tubes as it emptied and cooled. These caves provide a vivid example of the area’s volcanic history.
The I-5 Corridor along the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop offers a rich variety of scenic attributes. On clear days this section of the route offers spectacular views from almost any location: from views of Mount St. Helens and Mount Rainier, to the rolling hills through Castle Rock.

4.2 Natural
A natural quality applies to those features of the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geologic formations, fossils, landforms, mountains, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances.

Visitors looking to experience the natural beauty of the Loop have countless opportunities to explore the area. Getting out of the car and heading into the woods is a great way to explore the natural features around Mount St. Helens and the Columbia River Gorge. The wide geographic extent of the Loop includes caves, waterfalls, mountaintops, and high mountain meadows.

The area immediately surrounding Mount St. Helens includes spectacular natural settings where dramatic geologic events have shaped the area, often creating scenes of harsh contrast between old-growth forests and boulder-strewn ash fields. Volcanic activity has created truly remarkable, one-of-a-kind areas, such as the Ape Caves or Lava Canyon.

Specific to the Pacific Northwest are the annual salmon runs. During certain times of the year, visitors can watch as salmon fight against strong currents on their journey to lay eggs at their spawning grounds. In addition to attracting hopeful anglers, the salmon attracts local wildlife, including black bears and the legendary Bigfoot. There are many areas along the rivers such as the Lewis and Toutle where visitors can watch this annual occurrence.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest represents a large percentage of the area covered within in the Loop and offers many natural features throughout its borders. Covering more than 1,000,000 acres, the Forest offers a wide variation in geology and ecology. This variation offers unique hiking opportunities that explore mountaintops, boulder fields, and old growth forests along the same trail. A comprehensive list of natural features can be found on Forest Service website or at local outfitting enterprises. More of the outdoor opportunities available in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and surrounding area can be found in section 4.6.

4.3 Archaeological
Archaeological qualities involve those characteristics of the corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activities that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The corridor’s archeological points of interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence, have scientific significance that educate the
viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. There is a lack of prehistoric evidence in the Columbia River Gorge primarily due to glacial flooding that happened after the last ice age. However, there are many archaeological sites that can be found throughout the loop.

One specific site is Cathlapotle in Ridgefield, WA. Cathlapotle is the site of a large village that was originally home to the Quathlapotle People. Today, the village is an active archaeological research site that has helped students and scientists learn more about how former communities lived. For more information, visit: http://www.fws.gov/pacific/CRM/CRstatepgs/Washington/cathlapotle.html and http://ridgefieldfriends.org/plankhouse/history/.

Mount St. Helens has a history of cultural significance to the Cowlitz and Yakama tribes. Originally, named Lawetlat’la or “the smoker,” the mountain and 12,501 acres surrounding it were designated as a Traditional Cultural Property on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2011. For more information, see:

http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/13000748.htm
http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/giffordpinchot/news-events/?cid=STELPRDB5436549

4.4 Historic

Historic qualities are places or physical elements directly linked to the past, whether natural or human-made. These qualities are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and inspire an appreciation for the past. Historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The themes associated with the Monument, the Gorge and nearby communities tell a remarkable story of indigenous cultures, a young country’s westward expansion, and the contrasting concepts of control and lack of control over natural forces. This many-layered history and heritage is already interpreted in many of the communities in both the Gorge and the Lower Estuary of the Columbia River.

The history of eruptions of Mount St. Helens is a well-told story along the Discovery Corridor. The visitor centers at Silver Lake, Hoffstadt Bluffs, the Forest Learning Center, and the Johnston Ridge Observatory all document this drama in different ways.
Explorers can also learn a lot about the recent human history related to the eruption by stopping in local businesses and talking with the proprietors. The buried A-frame along SR 504 at the North Fork Survivors Gift Shop in Kid Valley is one of the more graphic reminders of the scale of the eruption and its effects on nearby communities.

Near Toledo, SR 505, a Prominent Branch of the Discovery Route, along with the Jackson Hwy offer a wealth of historic points of interest, including: the John R. Jackson House, the Jackson Prairie Courthouse, the St. Francis X Catholic Mission, and the Lewis & Clark State Park.

The Columbia River Gorge has had a long standing history of settlements and fishing areas used by many tribes including the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Round, Cowlitz Tribe, and the Siletz Tribe. Archaeological artifacts provide evidence that the Columbia River was settled as far back as 10,000 years ago. These communities differed depending on where along the river they were located, but primarily relied upon fishing, hunting, and collecting plants for sustenance.

The Columbia River Gorge Interpretive Center located in Stevenson provides visitors to the area the opportunity to learn more about the first people to live in this area of the gorge. The center has several exhibits on the Cascade Chinook that explore tradition in addition to everyday life. A centerpiece of the facility is the recreated image of ‘Tsagaglalal’ or ‘She Who Watches.’ The original “Tsagaglalal’ image is a petroglyph that can be found at Columbia Hills State Park.

During the early 1800s Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out to explore the newly purchased Louisiana Purchase Territory. Towards the end of their journey they traveled along the Columbia River and surrounding waterways. Lewis and Clark stopped and made camp along the banks of the Columbia River throughout their journey and thanks to meticulous journal entries, these locations are known today. Visitors can follow Lewis and Clark’s expedition route online and read their journal entries at the locations where they were penned. This information can be found online at the National Park Service website for the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. To learn more, visit:

Center For Columbia River History
http://www.ccrh.org/river/history.php and
http://www.nps.gov/lecl/index.htm

The Clark County Historical Museum in Vancouver, housed in the 1909 Carnegie Library building (listed on the National Register of Historic Places), is home to a collection that ranges in date from 1200 AD to 1980. The Fort Vancouver National Historic Site provides opportunities to explore the lands and structures at the center of the fur trade and military history in the Pacific
Northwest as well as the diverse cultures of the people who lived and worked there. Some of its more notable residents were General Ulysses S. Grant and General George C. Marshall.

The Cowlitz County Historical Museum located in Kelso is a fantastic resource to visitors wishing to learn about and explore the history of Cowlitz County. The museum currently offers educational exhibits on the history of the County during its transition through industrial uses. The ‘Badges, Bandits, & Booze’ exhibit is an exciting opportunity to explore the law and outlaws of the area from the turn of the century to around 1960. In addition to the exhibits and displays found at the museum visitors can stop in and talk with local historians to discover more about the community.

Many of the lakes found along the White Pass Scenic Byway and the Lakes Corridor were created after the construction of dams. The Mossyrock Dam, finished in 1968, created both Mayfield Lake and Riffe Lake. Riffe Lake, originally named Davison Lake, had its name changed to the town that the lake ultimately consumed. Swift, Yale and Merwin Reservoirs were also created from construction of dams along the Lewis River. The Swift Reservoir is held back by one of the world’s largest earthen dams at a height of 512 feet. All of these lakes and reservoirs have played an integral part in the development of Southwest Washington by providing hydroelectric power to the region as part of a national system.

Dams and the hydroelectric power generated from them have a long history in the Pacific Northwest, especially along the Columbia River. Woody Guthrie was hired by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) in 1941 to write folk songs that generated public support for the dam projects. Today, these songs highlight the amount of human effort exerted in developing these projects, but also serve as a reminder that the distinct geography and landscapes in this region made it possible.

The National Registry of Historic Places includes 31 properties in Cowlitz County, 34 in Lewis County and five in Skamania County. These areas consist of buildings, bridges, dams, and even Mount St. Helens. Although these sites may not be considered old enough to be “historic,” they were selected because of their significance to events, people, or culture of the area. Exploring these locations allows visitors to better understand the history of the communities along the scenic loop.

The Two Rivers Heritage Museum in Washougal contains over 6,000 photographs and 200 oral histories, including those of the pioneering families of East Clark County.

### 4.5 Cultural

Cultural qualities include the evidence and expression of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features include, but are not limited to: crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, and special events that are currently practiced or re-enacted. The cultural qualities of the corridor may highlight one or more significant communities or ethnic traditions.

In Ariel, the Lelooska Cultural Center houses a museum that holds an immense collection of artifacts from many regions across the US, including the Northwest, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest and the Arctic. The Lelooska Foundation uses this collection to share the great diversity of the Native Peoples of North America with the students and adults who attend their living
history program and visit the museum. The Center also offers workshops, summer events and a museum, featuring local and regional Native American artifacts. A life-sized display of a fur trader camp is among the exhibits.

Cooper Days, an annual event in Ariel, offers visitors a unique insight to the history of the area. Cooper Days remembers the only unsolved case of air piracy in the United States. D.B. Cooper look-a-like contests are held, as residents pay homage to the cultural character. It is rumored that the FBI sends an agent to the event each year, just in case the real D.B. Cooper decides to attend. The Pacific Northwest has had a long history of cryptozoological sightings such as Bigfoot. Many of the communities within the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop have created innovative ways to share this history with visitors and tourists. One example is that of North Bonneville’s Family of Bigfoot. Statues of both young and mature Bigfoot can be found throughout the town at locations including the local basketball courts or the Bigfoot Discovery Trail. Additionally in the spirit of protecting the mythical wildlife, Skamania County has formally designated its boundaries as a ‘Sasquatch Refuge’ under Ordinance 1984-2 stating that the Yeti, Sasquatch, or Bigfoot are endangered species of the county.

4.6 Outdoor Recreation
Recreational qualities involve outdoor recreational activities that may be directly associated with and dependent upon other qualities of the corridor. Recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive experiences, including: wildlife watching, hiking, biking, horseback riding, boating, fishing, rafting, and camping. Traveling the corridor itself also qualifies as a pleasurable recreational experience. Recreational experiences may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the experience as part of a seasonal activity must be well recognized.

Hiking and Backpacking
Hiking is an enormously popular activity in the areas surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. The wide variation in topography and vegetation offers hiking trails for all tastes and abilities around Mount St. Helens and the Columbia Gorge. Areas of the Columbia River Gorge may rise to heights of over 4,000 feet, offering hikes of varying difficulty. Some of the more popular hikes, such as Beacon Rock State Park and Hamilton Mountain, offer stunning views of the Columbia River Gorge. At the southern end of the scenic loop, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) crosses Highway 14 and Wind River Highway. The Washington section of the PCT starts at the Bridge of the Gods, continues north towards Mount Adams, and then on toward Canada. In addition to the PCT, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is a great option for visitors to explore the area on foot in a wilderness setting.

Hiking around Mount St. Helens is a great way to explore the National Monument and surrounding National Forest. While the majority of the trails are accessible with the Northwest Forest Pass, some trails require special permits and equipment before
ascending to the crater. The trails surrounding Mount St. Helens offer a unique view of the volcanic effects of the 1980 eruption and the areas slow but steady regrowth.

Further south, the Silver Star Scenic Area, part of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, offers some spectacular hikes. Ed’s Trail and the Silver Star Trail lead hikers up the northern slope of Silver Star Mountain. The trail ends at the summit which offers a complete panoramic of Mount Hood, Mount St. Helens, and the greater Portland area.

Mountain Biking
Mount St. Helens is a top destination for the mountain bicycling community, with over one hundred miles of suitable trails, providing access to the Monument and Ape Canyon, as well as other Gifford Pinchot National Forest lands. Although already popular with bicycling enthusiasts around the Pacific Northwest, Mount St. Helens has additional potential as a regional, multi-day bicycling destination. This can be accomplished by creating longer rides, adding more connectivity, appealing to a broader range of experience levels, and providing attractive, nearby camping facilities. Recently upgraded trails in the Coldwater Lake area provide a unique way to explore the Monument from the seat of a bicycle, while learning about its volcanic history and the subsequent rebirth of nature in the area.

Water Recreation
The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop and its surrounding areas provide a wealth of water recreation opportunities from whitewater rafting and kayaking to swimming and boating.

The SR 503 corridor follows the Lewis River and has several stops for water recreation opportunities along the way. The Eagles Island Boat Ramp on the Lewis River and the Merwin Reservoir launches at Speelyai Bay and Cresap Bay are among many water access sites on SR 503. PacifiCorp manages many of the launches here, as well as those at Island River, Johnson Creek, Cedar Creek, Lewis River Hatchery, and Merwin Hatchery. Picnic facilities, visitor information, and restrooms are available at all PacifiCorp parks and campgrounds, including Cougar Campground and Beaver Bay Campground, as well as at Merwin and Yale Park.

Swift Forest Campground and Eagle Cliff Park are among PacifiCorp managed recreational sites at Swift Reservoir. Activities at these sites include wildlife viewing, camping, fishing, boating and swimming. Mount St. Helens can be viewed from the Swift River Overlook.

The Wind River and the Kalama River are regionally recognized for their Class IV and V rapids with access supported by outfitters and guide services. Above Merwin Reservoir Canyon Creek provides outstanding whitewater opportunities. Flatwater boating, with outstanding access to natural beauty and wildlife viewing, is available at Coldwater Lake and the upper reaches of Lake Merwin, where it enters Canyon Creek.
Along the Lewis & Clark State Trail Scenic Byway, there are two water trails available for residents and visitors to the area. The Northwest Discovery Water Trail and the Lower Columbia Water Trail are designated routes along the Columbia River for paddling enthusiasts. Both trails offer online resources to paddlers addressing water safety, maps, and procedures for traversing the lock and dam system.

**Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Viewing**

Washington State’s Department of Fish and Wildlife provides access to fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing at sites throughout the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop area. Fish hatcheries function as a vital element to conserving fish populations in SW Washington. In Cowlitz County alone there are six fish hatcheries producing multiple species including Spring Chinook, coho, kokanee sockeye salmon, and rainbow trout. While the Cowlitz, Lewis, and Toutle Rivers offer excellent salmon fishing, the reservoirs and lakes give anglers the chance of catching tiger muskies, trout, and smallmouth bass. Many of these locations can be found directly next to the road. Fishing licenses are available online through Washington Fish and Wildlife. Bait and equipment can be found at local retailers.

Columbia Springs, located under the I-205 bridge in Vancouver, offers visitors the opportunity to participate in hatchery options and learn the importance of stewardship in the region. The Historic Vancouver Hatchery located at Columbia Springs was originally part of the Works Project Administration but now functions as an educational facility in addition to hatchery options.

Wildlife viewing is a popular pastime in the region surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. The area has an abundance of waterfowl and the elk in the Toutle Valley are always a draw for visitors.

**Horseback Riding**

The area surrounding Mount St. Helens provides several ways for visitors and residents to explore the outdoors on horseback. The Kalama, Green River, and Lewis River Horse Camps provide parking, corrals and trails for horseback riders. Continued maintenance and repairs often rely on volunteer efforts in addition to USFS staff. Many of these trails are also open to mountain bikes and a few are open to motorcycles.

**Camping**

Camping is a great way to explore the area within and surrounding the Loop. RV camp sites, primitive camp sites, cabins, and group camp sites are available throughout the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and along several of the main corridors. Many of the
designated camping grounds or cabins available in the National Forest require a reservation but reserving a spot can easily be done through Gifford Pinchot’s website or at: www.recreation.gov. The website also provides information on the campground facilities including water and restroom availability.

The Yacolt Burn State Forest, on the SW side of the National Forest between Yacolt and Stevenson also provides camping opportunities along Cold Creek. Visitors to “The Burn” as it is locally know allows campers to hike the two peaks of Silver Star and Three Corner Rock.

PacifiCorp also offer camping facilities located near Swift, Merwin, Riffe, and Yale Reservoirs. Most of the PacifiCorp facilities provide multi-lane boat ramp access and picnic facilities. Tacoma power provides camping facilities at Mayfield Lake Park and Mossyrock Park, both of which have boat launches and fishing opportunities. Lewis County PUD also provides campground amenities at the Cowlitz Falls Campground. Cowlitz Falls Campground provides over 100 campgrounds in addition to areas for soccer or baseball.

**Snow Sports**

Many of the areas surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop have limited accessibility during the winter months. Snow conditions close many of the forest service roads from December 1 to April 1. However, the snowy conditions also create new recreational opportunities at the higher elevations. Sno-parks can be found along many of the routes, offering winter sports such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. Areas such as Old Man Pass and the Wind River winter recreation area just north of Carson provide cross-country skiing enthusiasts an opportunity to explore some of the less visited areas within the loop.

**Visitor Use and Admission Fees**

In order to maintain operations, various entities including Washington State and the USFS have implemented a variety of fees and permits to access amenities in the region. These fees and costs are not always easily apparent to visitors. Seasonal passes may not cover fees for all agencies and locations. Creating a transparent fee and permit system plays an important role in facilitating visitor use and access to outdoor amenities. A summary of the fee structure for areas within the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop can be found in Appendix III.

**4.7 Making Opportunities Accessible**

In order to make residents and visitors aware of the many intrinsic qualities and outdoor recreational opportunities located along the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, the information needs to be centrally located and presented in a clear way. Creating a single online
location for providing information is vital for the facilitation of an enhanced visitor experience. There are several options that can be used, including mobile apps, interactive maps, and a user-friendly website.

A mobile app for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is one potential avenue for sharing opportunities with visitors to the region. Not only would a mobile app be attractive to age groups, it could show specific locations in relation to surrounding attractions or destinations. However, continuous cell phone coverage is limited along certain sections of the route, primarily the Primitive Corridor, but hard copies of maps and attractions could supplement this.

Interactive maps are a fantastic tool for sharing large amounts of data easily in an understandable fashion. Current free software such as the Environmental Systems Research Institute or ESRI’s ‘Storymapping’ program is one potential method for sharing cultural, historic, or recreational opportunities. This type of interactive map allows visitors to explore the various routes before visiting and find attractions they would like to visit before embarking on their journey.

Creating a single location where people can get information on attractions and destinations along the route also allows for the opportunity to share important data such as policies on fees or permits. The permitting process for the National Forest can be confusing and often has different rules depending on one’s location. If people are able to see their exact location in relation to the boundaries of permit applicability, it may help people avoid ticketing.
Chapter 5: Protecting and Preserving Intrinsic Qualities

5.1 Preservation of Area Character

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop covers a large geographic extent which encompasses many distinct economic and natural elements. The juxtaposition of urban areas, rural communities, and wilderness settings provides a unique experience for residents and visitors to Southwest Washington. Ensuring that these elements are not only protected, but enhanced, is vital to the ongoing success of the Fire & Ice Loop.

No one anticipates that the area surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will remain static, as if frozen in time. Communities, even rural communities, evolve according to population demands, the market, and other unforeseen circumstances. It is hoped that the area’s character, its innate qualities, the things that make it unique, will remain intact. Special attention should be paid to the intrinsic qualities identified in this corridor management plan. These have been identified by stakeholders in the region as being the parts integral to the character of the region as a whole.

The rich and varied natural resources of the region are the foundation of the intrinsic qualities identified in this plan. They provide the setting of the area’s communities, scenic views, and recreational opportunities. Forests and riparian areas provide high-quality wildlife habitats integral to the experience of residents, travelers, and nature-based recreational users. The area’s forests, streams and scenery deserve careful attention. The addition of interpretive and recreational enhancements will increase opportunities to enjoy and learn from the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop region.

Aside from lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, private property owners have been largely responsible for caring for the beauty and character of the area. It is expected that the landscape will change and evolve as the economics of the region change. Policy initiatives that enable and encourage private enterprise and investment in existing residential and commercial properties should be given the highest priority. Supporting the ability of property owners to sustain and profit from their land is preferable to providing support through public assistance programs. Farm tax credits, conservation easements and land trusts are some of the ways in which land can be maintained to a standard of scenic quality desired in the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop region. Private forest certification programs such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) can be leveraged to protect the scenic qualities found throughout the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop.
Conservation programs related to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop should be undertaken only with the approval of landowners in the region who wish to participate. Properties that should be given a high priority include:

- Farmland adjacent to the scenic loop
- Land that features historic sites and intrinsic qualities identified in this plan
- Visually prominent lands as seen from the routes along the scenic loop
- Lands adjacent to waterways

It is hoped that, with the successful implementation of this plan, more visitors from outside of the region will help to support private business in the area, providing business owners the means to enhance their properties in ways that will benefit the Scenic Loop area.

Each local jurisdiction will remain responsible for continuing land use policies already contained in their comprehensive and open space plans with oversight from the State through environmental review, shoreline regulations, and critical area standards. The continued planning and implementation of this corridor management plan, through partnerships between its governing body and related committees and stakeholders, is intended to build upon the ongoing planning and preservation efforts of local jurisdictions for open space conservation, agricultural land preservation, and watershed management. Regional partners should strive to create and maintain the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop as an area greater than the sum of its many distinct locales.

Regional strategies are needed to encourage development in urbanized areas, ensuring the successful conservation of wilderness, open space and agricultural uses so that they may continue to function as an economic driver for tourism.

Backcountry forest environments are a major destination in the region. The centerpiece of the loop, Mount St. Helens, is probably the largest driver of visitors and outdoor enthusiasts. As road development and access increase, the risk to these forested lands also increases.

Suggested strategies are listed below:

- Generate public interest in focusing development to existing urbanized areas. This is an important first step in developing a sustainable conservation plan. At present, the eastern portion of the Scenic Loop, the Primitive Corridor, has only limited development. The focus of development projects toward urban areas would not only promote economic opportunities in established communities, but help protect pristine environmental areas.
- Promote public interest and participation in conserving natural resources in the area, maintain and enhance existing facilities and develop additional opportunities for visitors to explore the area. Increased capacity for access and enhanced facilities may encourage those who had been non-users to participate in new activities. Development of additional facilities should take into account the four elements of recreational capacity:
  - Ecological: impact on the environment
  - Physical: number of people who can use the resource
• Facility: number of visitors the facilities can accommodate
• Social: number of people the site can sustain, while maintaining a quality experience
• Develop new routes and facilitate alternate means of transportation, such as bicycling or kayaking to encourage visitors and residents to explore the area and stay longer. New hiking, biking, and water trails could create an entirely new network of transportation and recreation routes. With an increase in alternate transportation options, an increase in visitors who are interested in outdoor recreation would be drawn to the area. Two examples are that of the Northwest Discovery Water Trail and the Lower Columbia Water Trail which currently provide information on water safety, navigation, and paddling resources.

Roads
The character defining features of the roads that make up the Scenic Loop are also an important consideration for conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the area. The features that contribute to roadway character include:
• Road widths
• Shoulder type
• Surface materials and conditions
• Drainage type
• Bridge type
• Access management
• Overhead and underground utilities
• Lighting
• Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
• Adjacent landscape design

An interdisciplinary approach involving all stakeholders should be taken to employ context sensitive solutions when expanding and enhancing the roads of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. This approach can lead to an enhancement of the scenic, environmental, and recreational qualities of the Scenic Loop while improving accessibility and safety of the corridor. More detail concerning roadway enhancement along the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop can be found in Chapter 7 of this plan.

5.2 Outdoor Advertising
The presence of outdoor advertising along the routes of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop warrants special consideration. Only advertising that blends with the natural landscape and does not distract from it should be allowed in and around the Scenic Loop. Outdoor advertising regulation and design guidelines may be drafted and administered by a committee formed for such a purpose by the oversight agency. Local governments with jurisdiction in the Scenic Loop area will have a hand in this process as they will review and adopt the design guidelines, ultimately incorporating them into their comprehensive land use plans. The creation of design guidelines for outdoor advertising along the Scenic Loop shall consider the following:
• The regulation of outdoor advertising along the Scenic Loop shall conform to applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to 23 U.S.C. Section 131(s)
• Provisions for removal of dilapidated, nonfunctional and non-applicable signs
• WSDOT signage requirements on state routes
• MUTCD design standards (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices)
Chapter 6: Tourism, Marketing and Economic Development

6.1 Tourism and Visitor Management
Perhaps the main benefit of establishing the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is the economic development possible through increased tourism. This can be achieved through partnerships with other tourism and marketing organizations in the region to tackle shared priorities. One priority would be to identify tourism opportunities to increase the number of visitors and encourage longer stays in area hotels, motels, and campgrounds.

The creation and marketing of an identifiable brand would be an important step in accomplishing this goal. The design of logos, signage and marketing materials must be eye-catching, distinctive, coordinated with the designs found in the surrounding area, and targeted to specific audiences.

A stand-alone website for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop providing one-stop shopping for potential visitors would be ideal. Visitors to the site could learn about the unique history of the area and explore the activities that would be of interest to them. They could plan their route based on their preferences and make reservations in advance for tours and accommodations. An online shopping cart approach, where individuals would choose the features that interest them and drop them into a cart for an itinerary made to order, would be a strong tool for potential visitors to navigate the site and make plans tailored to their needs. There are, though, existing channels for marketing online that may be more feasible when considering cost and the associated time commitment. These online channels may involve a county website or those of established tourism organizations, chambers of commerce, or economic development commissions.

Facebook, Twitter, mobile phone apps, and other social media avenues are also important ways in which the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop can be marketed. These tools have the added benefit of drawing a younger and more diverse population to the area.

More traditional marketing channels such as newsletters, tour booklets, paper maps and brochures are still an effective and important means of reaching travelers and keeping them up to date with area events and attractions.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop technical team expressed support for the creation of a program for certified tour ambassadors. A local curriculum could be created and delivered to service workers in
the area so that they could be better informed about its history as well as the attractions, events and facilities available to people traveling along the Scenic Loop. A program such as this could be done on a volunteer basis, with structural support from a governance agency, and would be a great way to involve the local community in the promotion of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop.

Travel marketing in recent years has moved significantly toward focusing on specific people and groups of people with common interests. With so many travel choices in a highly competitive field, people want an experience specific to their own interests. The region surrounding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is already in possession of the attributes that would contribute to these types of traveler experiences. Marketing efforts for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop should target these categories of travelers as well as niche groups such as: motorcycle riders, geocachers, horseback riders, skiers, and snowmobilers.

The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop can gain attention worldwide through designation as a Global Geopark. A Geopark is a unified area with a geological heritage of international significance, as identified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO). Many Geoparks promote awareness of geological hazards, including volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis and many help to prepare disaster mitigation strategies among local communities. Geoparks inform communities and visitors about the need for and sustainable use of natural resources, whether they are mined, quarried or harnessed from the surrounding environment, while at the same time promoting respect for the environment and the integrity of the landscape. A Geopark is not a legislative designation, though the key heritage sites within a Geopark should be protected under local, regional or national legislation as appropriate. If the region around Mount St. Helens were to become a designated Geopark, it would be the first in the United States and it would certainly draw national and international attention.

For more information on Geoparks, visit: http://www.globalgeopark.org/

6.2 Stakeholder Involvement
Local businesses have much to gain from the creation of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop and much to contribute. Area business owners should be involved in every step of the planning and implementation of this corridor management plan.

Each attraction and business entity on the corridor can make a connection to the next place. Local businesses can be engaged in promotion of the Scenic Loop by providing information to visitors describing the opportunities in the area. Development of a tour ambassador program would cement the promotional function among the workforce in businesses all along the loop.

6.3 Economic Development along the Scenic Loop
A primary goal of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is an increase in economic development for the region based on the increase in visitors and the extension of their stays. More visitors equal more hotel stays, restaurant visits, and sales for local businesses. Since the passage of the Federal Scenic Byways Act in 1989, over thirty-three states have created byway programs. James L. Sipes et al, in a study for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, found that all of the states surveyed expressed a goal of economic growth to follow Scenic Byway designations in their states. Most of the states surveyed had not conducted a formal analysis of economic impact caused by the Scenic Byway, but most report increased revenues based on surveys of local chambers of commerce and other informal means. Some have reported as much as a thirty percent increase in tourist related revenues.
Commonalities of economic impacts:

- Marketing plays a crucial role in the economic success of the byway
- Signage also plays a significant role
- For a positive economic benefit to occur, tourism-related industry must be ready to receive and support traffic growth
- Scenic byway programs have largely been met with overwhelming approval
- Positive economic benefits have largely been perceived, if not formally measured
- The experience of the byway must be of high quality to gain a favorable response from travelers
Chapter 7: Roadway Safety, Wayfinding, and Enhancement

7.1 Transportation Overview

The six corridors that make up the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop are partly defined by the attributes of the transportation system. Each corridor poses its own unique transportation challenges and opportunities. In order to effectively plan for a strong interconnected transportation system throughout the entire Scenic Loop, we must first understand the intricacies of the six corridors, and identify improvements which are context-appropriate and realistic for that particular section of roadway.

7.2 Discovery Corridor
Incorporating SR 504 and the SR 505 branch

Corridor Overview
Washington State Routes (SR) 504 and 505 make up the Discovery Corridor, which encompasses multiple opportunities to explore recreational areas and learn about the region’s geology, wildlife, and cultural heritage. The 52-mile east/west corridor along SR 504 connects Interstate 5 with the Johnston Ridge Observatory, immediately north of Mount St. Helens. Because of its beautiful views, recreational amenities, and several educational opportunities, the state has designated SR 504 as a Scenic and Recreational Highway. SR 504 was heavily damaged after the 1980 eruption, and several sections of the road had to be reconstructed or altogether abandoned. In 1982, the Washington State Legislature named SR 504 the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway in honor of Spirit Lake and the 57 people killed by the blast.

SR 504 is primarily a two-lane rural road with paved shoulders situated in an east-west orientation. The first six miles traveling east are characterized by suburban and rural residential land with intermittent swaths of forest framing the roadway. Around six miles from Castle Rock, travelers can start seeing glimpses of Silver Lake, which continues for about three miles. The highway passes through Toutle and reaches the Toutle River a half mile from the town. Views of the North Fork of the Toutle River are frequent for the next 12 miles to Hoffstadt Creek. Approximately 16 miles east of Toutle, the route passes by the Hoffstadt Bluffs Visitor Center. The northwest side of Mount St. Helens can be seen from the roadway at this location. SR 504 winds through
evergreens and provides intermittent views of Mount St. Helens from Hoffstadt to Johnston Ridge Observatory. It enters Gifford Pinchot National Forest about five miles from the Observatory, near the Cowlitz/Skamania county line. A portion of the highway (approximately the last 10 miles) is closed during the winter. The road terminates at the Johnston Ridge Observatory, just past Milepost 51.

**Corridor Communities**
The primary gateway community along this corridor is Castle Rock (population 2,136). Travelers can exit I-5 at Castle Rock and take a 50-minute scenic drive on Spirit Lake Memorial Highway through the Toutle River Valley. In and around Castle Rock, the corridor is very developed, exhibiting auto-oriented retail and commercial areas, and low-density single family housing. The Castle Rock community offers a visitor center at exit 49 and a limited array of hotels, restaurants, parks, and retail shops. The downtown shopping district has undergone extensive beautification and lies along the Cowlitz riverfront. About 20 miles north of Castle Rock lies another gateway community, Toledo (population 719), which links to the 504 corridor via 505 from points north. Toledo offers restaurants, shopping and fueling stations, as well as riverfront recreation along the Cowlitz River where a ferry once connected Toledo with Castle Rock. Other hub communities along this route include the unincorporated towns of Silver Lake and Toutle, which provide limited commercial services.

**Functional Classification and Traffic Conditions**
SR 504 is designated as a rural minor arterial highway within the Functional Classification System of the Federal Highway Administration. This route is also designated as a T-3 freight route to the Forest Learning Center, and a T-4 freight route beyond, classified by the Freight & Goods Transportation System. SR 504 starts from I-5 for its first third of a mile as a three-lane roadway carrying an average annual daily traffic (AADT) count of 12,000 vehicles. As the traffic volume lessens to 4,300 AADT over the next four miles, the road becomes a two-lane, 24-foot roadway with four-foot shoulders. Traffic volumes continue to drop approaching the turn-off for South Toutle Road, where the through traffic volume is 1,000 AADT. Proceeding past Kid Valley and Elk Creek along the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway, the traffic drops to 530 AADT. Posted speed limits are generally set at 55 mph, with reduced speeds of 35 mph posted in Toutle, 45 mph in Kid Valley, and 25 mph in the Coldwater area. Climbing lanes are available in 14 different places along the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway.

**Multi-modal Transportation**
The rural nature of SR 504 reduces the demand for fixed-route public transportation and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. However, the route has become popular for experienced cyclists, looking for a scenic, yet challenging ride. According to the Longview Rotary Club, their annual Tour de Blast event attracts around 1,600 cyclists each May. The bike ride starts in Toutle and ends at the Johnson Ridge Observatory, which is a 3,814 foot climb in elevation. Cyclists enjoy a nicely paved road surface, but are not provided with bike lanes, wide shoulders, or sidewalks. More information about biking and trails is provided in section 4.6—Outdoor Recreation.

Public transportation services along SR 504 are provided by Cowlitz Tribal Transit Services (CTTS) and Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP). CTTS provides dial-a-ride services within 20 miles of the I-5 corridor in Cowlitz County and southern Lewis
County. Their pick-up locations along SR 504 include Castle Rock, Silver Lake and Toutle. CTTS provides service Monday through Friday, between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. This service is available to all members of the public, including tourists. CAP provides service between Longview and Castle Rock with stops in Lexington. CAP’s route runs twice a day on weekdays. CAP vans are equipped with bike racks, and are wheelchair accessible.

A public park-and-ride facility is located immediately west of the I-5/SR-504 interchange in Castle Rock. The facility provides 76 parking spaces.

**Safety and Road Surface Conditions**
Overall, SR-504 has relatively few safety concerns. An abundance of logging truck traffic throughout the route, especially near intersections with limited sight-distance, poses some risk of accidents. Warning signage per Manual on Uniform Control Devices (MUTCD) is posted to help reduce this risk. Several cliffs along the roadway also create the potential for falling rocks. Replacing damaged guardrail is a regular maintenance activity along all state routes, including SR 504. Routine replacement of damaged guardrail will help ensure a safe roadway. SR-504’s road surface is in relatively good condition, with some subsidence issues primarily in the last (easternmost) 20 miles of the route.

**Prominent Branch Route—SR 505**
Visitors may also take SR 505 from I-5 at Winlock (population 1,339) through the community of Toledo (population 725), as an alternate route to SR 504. This 17.8 mile route typically has less traffic than SR 504 east of Castle Rock, and provides visitors with additional options for restaurants, shopping, and other services. Some sites of interest include the South Lewis County Park just southeast of Toledo. The park has a boat launch, fishing pier, and has access to the shore where visitors can fish for rainbow trout or blue gill. The Morgan Arts Centre is also located in this area and provides an opportunity for local artists and visitors to participate in art workshops, holiday art sales, or even an independent film festival.

### 7.3 The Lakes Corridor
**Incorporating SR 503 and the SR 503 Spur**

**Corridor Overview**
Washington State Route (SR) 503 and the SR 503 Spur make up the Lakes Corridor, which provides access to recreational areas at Horseshoe Lake, Lake Merwin, Merrill Lake, Yale Lake, and the Swift Reservoir. SR 503 is primarily a two-lane rural road situated in an east-west orientation. The corridor connects Interstate 5 with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest south of Mount St. Helens. The 20-mile route between Woodland and the SR 503 Spur intersection follows the Lewis River valley. Traveling east to west, the 20-mile stretch becomes increasingly rural and offers relatively few commercial services. Outside of Woodland, the corridor is initially characterized by large lot residential subdivisions, before reaching larger areas of farmland, intermittent forests, and then opens up to expansive views of Lake Merwin. Proceeding from SR 503 to the SR 503 Spur, travelers are provided access to Yale.
Lake, Merrill Lake (5.8 miles north of Cougar on NF 81) and the unincorporated community of Cougar. Crossing from Cowlitz County into Skamania County, the SR 503 Spur terminates, becoming National Forest (NF) Road 90 (part of the Primitive Corridor).

**Corridor Communities**
The city of Woodland (population of 5,556) serves as the primary gateway to the Lakes Corridor from Interstate 5. In and around Woodland, the corridor is very developed, offering a handful of hotels, restaurants, and retail shops. Just west of I-5 in Woodland, primary attractions include the Horseshoe Lake Park and the Hulda Klager Lilac Gardens. Further east on SR-503, travelers will drive through the unincorporated community of Ariel, which offers limited commercial services. The unincorporated community of Cougar is located 18 miles further east on the SR-503 Spur. Cougar offers some commercial services, including fueling stations, and a few options for restaurants and lodging.

**Functional Classification and Traffic Conditions**
SR 503 is designated as a rural minor arterial highway within the Functional Classification System of the Federal Highway Administration. The SR 503 Spur is classified as a rural major collector. The entire corridor is designated as a T-3 freight route by the Freight & Goods Transportation System. From Woodland’s visitor’s center, SR 503 is a two-lane, 24-foot roadway with 2-4 foot asphalt shoulders. The posted speed limit is between 30 and 35 mph west of I-5; 50 or 55 between I-5 and the Ross Creek Bridge; and returning to 35 mph for the next mile and half. East of McCracken Road (milepost 52), the posted speed limit increases to 50 mph on a 24-foot wide roadway with two- to four-foot shoulders. Around Merwin Village the shoulders widen to eight feet. Beyond Merwin Village the route narrows to two four-foot bituminous shoulders. Traffic volumes range from 12,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) at Gun Club Road east of I-5 to 4,500 AADT at the intersection of Little Kalama River Road and SR 503. Beyond Merwin Village, the traffic volumes range from 1,800 AADT to 1,500 AADT at the 503 Spur.

At Cougar, the 503 Spur continues eastward as a major collector with a 22-foot wide roadway surface and two- to four-foot shoulders. The posted speed is 50 mph dropping to 25 mph in Cougar. The traffic volume on the spur is 1,200 AADT approaching the unincorporated limits of Cougar and 690 AADT at the Cowlitz/Skamania county line where it becomes NF 90.

**Multi-modal Transportation**
SR 503 is not a highly traveled route for pedestrians and cyclists due to its rural nature, and limited bike/ped infrastructure. It has generally higher vehicle traffic volumes than other Fire & Ice routes, yet still has limited shoulders, sidewalks, and no bike lanes. More information about biking and trails is provided in section 4.6—Outdoor Recreation.

SR 503 is served by two public transportation providers, including Cowlitz Tribal Transit Services (CTTS) and Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP). CCTS provides dial-a-ride services within 20 miles of the I-5 corridor in Cowlitz County and southern Lewis County. Their pick-up locations along SR 503 include only Woodland. CTTS provides service Monday through Friday, between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Their busses are wheelchair accessible. Lower Columbia CAP also serves the community of Woodland, stopping six times daily, Monday through Friday. CAP’s Woodland service is part of a fixed-route service, also stopping in Longview, Kalama, and Vancouver. CAP vans are equipped with bike racks, and are wheelchair accessible. Both CTTS and CAP’s services are available to all members of the public, including tourists.

A public park-and-ride facility is located immediately west of the I-5/SR-503 interchange in Woodland. The facility provides 84 parking spaces.

Safety and Road Surface Conditions
Overall, SR-503 has relatively few safety concerns. Like SR-504, high levels of logging truck traffic are observed throughout the 503 route, especially near intersections with limited sight distance. Warning signage per MUTCD guidelines is posted to help reduce this risk. Several cliffs along the roadway also create the potential for falling rocks. Routine replacement of damaged guardrail will help ensure a safe roadway. The road surface of SR 503 in the Woodland area is in good condition; however, congestion issues do arise during peak travel times.

7.4 White Pass National Scenic Byway
Incorporating US Highway 12 from Interstate 5 to Randle

Corridor Overview
U.S. Highway 12 within the Fire & Ice planning area spans from I-5, south of Napavine, to the SR 131 intersection in the unincorporated community of Randle. This is the northernmost corridor within the scenic loop, serving as one of the three primary east/west routes included in the study area. This entire stretch of road is designated as the White Pass National Scenic Byway. The byway is organized and managed by a volunteer board, which oversees marketing, planning, and corridor improvement efforts. The White Pass Board has been
recognized as one of the most collaborative and successful byway groups in the state. The White Pass Byway completes the northern section of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop around Mount St. Helens, connecting travelers from I-5 to routes through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, leading into Skamania County via SR 131 and NF Road 25.

**Corridor Communities**

Traveling east from I-5, U.S. 12 crosses through the unincorporated community of Salkum, and the cities of Mossyrock (population 745) and Morton (population 1,117). This 30-mile stretch is fairly rural, yet offers a variety of commercial services and amenities in the more populated areas. It is characterized by large lot residential subdivisions, farmland, intermittent forest, and scenic views of Mayfield Lake (1,530 acres) and Riffe Lake (11,326 acres). Proceeding another 17 miles east on U.S. 12, the route passes through the unincorporated communities of Glenoma and Randle. The terrain becomes increasingly mountainous and rural, offering limited commercial services. In Randle, the route connects to SR 131, which travels south for approximately two miles before becoming NF 25 at the entrance to the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

**Functional Classification and Traffic Conditions**

U.S. 12 is a two-lane highway, with 12-foot travel lanes and eight-to-10 foot paved shoulders from I-5 until approximately MP 89 (east of Mossyrock). As the terrain shifts from level to rolling, the shoulders narrow to a width of between five and eight feet. Two climbing lanes are available for passing slow vehicles at milepost 79 and again just after milepost 93, heading east. The road is classified as a Rural Principal Arterial and has a posted speed limit of 55 mph, with slower speed limits posted in the Randle area. The route from I-5 to Randle is classified as a T-2 freight corridor.

Traffic volumes collected by WSDOT in 2013 indicate an approximate 7,400 AADT just east of I-5 on U.S. 12. Volumes decrease to 5,800 AADT approaching Mossyrock. Approximately 4,900 vehicles approach the intersection of SR 122 in Mossyrock and 4,200 continuing eastward on U.S. 12. Traffic volumes continue to range between 4,200-4,400 AADT east of Mossyrock to Randle.

**Multi-Modal Transportation**

US 12 is not a highly traveled route for pedestrians and cyclists due to its rural nature, and limited bike/ped infrastructure. It has generally higher vehicle traffic volumes, yet still has limited shoulders, sidewalks, and no bike lanes. More information about biking and trails is provided in section 4.6—Outdoor Recreation.

US 12 is served by two public transportation providers, including Cowlitz Tribal Transit Services (CTTS) and L.E.W.I.S. Mountain Highway Transit (LMHT). CTTS provides dial-a-ride services within 20 miles of the I-5 corridor in Cowlitz County and southern Lewis County. Their pick-up locations along US 12 include Onalaska, Salkum, Ethel, Mary’s Corner, and Mossyrock. CTTS provides service Monday through Friday, between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Their buses are wheelchair accessible.

LMHT provides rural, fixed route, commuter bus service to the general public residing in eastern/central Lewis County. LMHT’s 85-mile route from Packwood to Centralia/Chehalis via Hwy 12 provides bus stops in the communities of Randle, Glenoma, Morton, Mossyrock, Silver Creek, Salkum, and Onalaska. LMHT operates a fleet of 8 vehicles. All vehicles are accessible with wheelchair lifts.
and bike racks. Bus fare is $3 per person per boarding. Various reductions in per boarding fares are available through purchase of passes. Both CTTS and LMHT services are available to all members of the public, including tourists.

**Safety and Road Surface Conditions**
US 12 has relatively few safety concerns, and the road surface is in relatively good condition. Improvements could be made to improve safety, such as additional lighting, passing lanes, and the continued replacement of damaged guardrail. Severe winter weather is more common in the higher elevations, which can result in hazardous driving conditions during certain parts of the year.

### 7.5 Lewis and Clark Trail State Scenic Byway
Incorporating SR 14 from Vancouver to Carson

**Corridor Overview**
SR 14 within the Fire & Ice planning area spans from I-5 in downtown Vancouver, to the Wind River Highway intersection in Carson. This entire stretch of road is designated as the Lewis and Clark Trails State Scenic Byway. The byway is no longer organized by a board or management group, but still maintains its status as a State Byway, and is delineated by special roadway signage. SR 14 completes the southern section of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop around Mount St. Helens, connecting travelers from I-5 to forest service routes through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

**Corridor Communities**
Traveling east from I-5, SR 14 first crosses through the cities of Vancouver (population 167,405), Camas (population 20,907), and Washougal (population 14,750). This 20-mile stretch is very developed, offering an extensive variety of commercial services, hotels, and restaurants.

Immediately east of Washougal on SR 14, travelers cross into the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The topography becomes increasingly steep traveling east. Continuing another 30 miles through Stevenson (population 1,494) and the unincorporated community of Carson, the route becomes increasingly rural and scenic. This stretch of roadway is characterized by thick forestlands, with river and mountain views. Wind River Highway connects to SR 14 in Carson, bringing travelers north through the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to Curly Creek Road, NF 90, and NF 25.

**Functional Classification & Traffic Conditions**
The first fifteen miles of the route heading east from I-5 follow a four-lane divided highway with posted speed limits starting at 60 mph and lowering to 55 mph just before milepost 12. Traffic volumes range from 52,000-59,000 AADT between I-5 and I-205 (in both directions). East of I-205, the traffic volumes increase to 72,000 AADT until SE 164th Avenue. After SE 164th, the traffic volumes drop fairly quickly from 49,000 to 37,000 upon entering the City of Camas. From I-5 to Camas, the SR 14 is classified as a T-1 Freight Corridor. Traffic volumes drop from 24,000 east of Camas to 15,000 AADT where the four-lane divided highway becomes a two-lane undivided highway and the roadway classification shifts from an urban principal arterial to a rural principal arterial. Within Washougal, the route is classified as a T-2 Freight Corridor. It is considered a T-3 Freight Corridor east of Washougal to the Bridge of the Gods in Skamania County.

As SR 14 enters Skamania County, the roadway narrows to a 24- to 30-foot roadway with four- to six-foot shoulders. The shoulders widen in North Bonneville to eight- to 10-feet, then narrow again until entering Stevenson. Between Stevenson and Carson, the roadway returns to a 22- to 24-foot roadway with four-foot shoulders, and is classified as a T-2 Freight Route. The traffic volumes drop off from 4,000 AADT at the Skamania County line to 3,500 west of North Bonneville. Traffic volumes pick up between North Bonneville and Stevenson (from 4,500 AADT to 6,300 AADT) and then drop off again to 5,500 AADT at the turn off for Wind River Road. There are four climbing lanes between the Skamania County line and North Bonneville near mileposts 23, 27.4, 29.3, and 31.1.

**Multi-Modal Transportation**

SR-14 in Vancouver, Camas, and Washougal is not designed for bike or pedestrian traffic. East of Washougal, vehicle traffic diminishes, speeds reduce, and biking/walking on the shoulders becomes safer; however, the roadway does not feature bike lanes or sidewalks. Downtown Stevenson along SR-14 is very walkable, with tree-lined streets, street furniture, and pedestrian-oriented storefronts.

Clark County’s C-Tran public transportation service offers several fixed routes along SR-14 in Vancouver, and one route reaching as far east as Camas and Washougal. These routes are open seven days a week, are ADA accessible, and offer bike racks.

Skamania County provides a fixed public transit route from Carson to Vancouver, Monday through Friday. The County also offers Dial-a-Ride services available to the general public, but targeted to individuals who rely on the service for medical and human service needs. Skamania County Public Transit also provides seven-day-a-week bus service between May and October. The seasonal service adds public transit between recreational locations and towns in the Columbia Gorge and connects to Vancouver. The buses on the seasonal route are ADA accessible and have bike racks. Riders often use this service on weekends to access resorts, trailheads, city centers, and wilderness areas.

There are three park-and-ride lots along SR-14 in Clark County. The Columbia House lot provides 35 parking spaces, and the Fisher’s Landing Transit Center lot offers 560 spaces. Fisher’s Landing is also a major hub for C-Tran and Skamania County’s transit service. The third lot is in Camas, and provides 30 spaces. In Skamania County near Cape Horn, the Salmon Falls park-and-ride has 28 parking spaces.
Safety and Road Surface Conditions
SR 14 has a fair road surface condition. Safety concerns are present due to a variety of factors. Severe weather is more common in the gorge, which can result in hazardous driving conditions. An additional concern is driver attentiveness along windy and narrow roads. If drivers are distracted, speeding, or passing improperly, the likelihood of an accident along this route are greater because of the narrowness of the roadway and curves, which are present due to the natural topography of the gorge.

7.6 The Primitive Corridor
Incorporating Wind River Highway, Curly Creek Road, NF 90, NF 25, and SR 131

Corridor Overview
The Primitive Corridor primarily includes low-volume, low-maintenance National Forest Service roads within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The entire corridor can be characterized by dense forestlands, scenic views of Mount St. Helens, and very few commercial services or restroom facilities. Many of the roads along this corridor are closed during the winter season, including sections of NF 90 and NF 25.

The Wind River Highway is a National Forest road that runs north out of the unincorporated community of Carson. Passing through the rural gateway town of Carson, the roadway is characterized by rural residential and agricultural areas for approximately six miles, until reaching the Gifford Pinchot National Forest boundary. Traveling further north into the National Forest, the corridor becomes increasingly scenic and remote. Commercial services and restroom facilities are sparse. A two-lane bridge crossing the Wind River Gorge offers picturesque views to the east and west. Approximately 26 miles north of Carson, the Wind River Highway terminates at the intersection of Meadow Creek Road and Curly Creek Road.

Continuing northwest along the Primitive Corridor, travelers are offered more scenic views of remote forestland and Mount St. Helens on Curly Creek Road. A highlight of this five-mile section of roadway is the McEllan viewpoint overlooking the mountain. The viewpoint offers picnic areas, as well as the only restroom facilities along Curly Creek Road. As travelers continue driving north, Curly Creek Road terminates at its intersection with NF Road 90. The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop continues west on NF Road 90, toward the Pine Creek Information Center and NF
Road 25. To the west of the Information Center, NF Road 90 continues for another 15 miles before terminating into the SR 503 Spur, which connects to SR 503 and I-5, another 30 miles west at Woodland.

East of the Pine Creek Information Center, NF Road 90 intersects with NF Road 25, which takes travelers deeper into the heart of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Fewer commercial services and restroom facilities are offered along this 42-mile stretch of roadway, which closes in winter. Its secluded setting brings visitors into more pristine areas of wilderness. There are also many recreational opportunities for experienced outdoorsmen/women who enjoy a more rugged outdoor experience. Traveling north, NF Road 25 terminates into SR 131, which connects to the White Pass National Scenic Byway (US 12), less than three miles north at Randle.

Several recreational sites are located along NF Road 99, which is a 10.5 mile-stretch of roadway that intersects with NF Road 25 just 20 miles south of Randle. Some of the primary interpretive sites located on NF Road 99 include Bear Meadow, Meta Lake, Miners Car, Cedar Creek Viewpoint, Windy Ridge, Harmony Falls Viewpoint, and Ryan Lake. Visitors on this corridor can also enjoy opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, and picnicking at Smith Creek or exploring the Mount Margaret Backcountry on the Norway Pass Trail.

The National Forest Service released a Travel Analysis Plan for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in May 2015. The plan provides a more in depth analysis of the condition and needs of National Forest Service roads that are incorporated in the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop. The recommendations and findings listed in both plans should both be used to inform future decisions regarding the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop.

**Corridor Communities**
Very few populated areas are located along the Primitive Corridor. In the south, the unincorporated community of Carson offers some commercial services, including fueling stations, lodging, a golf course and spa resort. Packwood and Randle (both unincorporated) are the primary gateways for visitors heading south on NF 25 and seeking lodging, gas, and other services.

**Functional Classification & Traffic Conditions**
Wind River Road in Carson is classified as a minor arterial roadway, until it turns into a major collector, seven and a half miles north at Stabler. The major collector classification continues along Wind River, Curly Creek Road, and NF Road 90. NF Road 25 is classified as a minor collector, until becoming SR 131, which is classified as a major collector. Traffic counts are not available for Forest Service roads; however, very low volumes have been observed on all routes, especially in the more remote areas. On SR 131, WSDOT reported between 420 and 1,300 AADT in 2013.

Wind River Road from Carson to Hemlock Road is considered a T-3 Freight Route. The remainder of Wind River Road and Curly Creek Road is considered a T-4 Freight Route. All other Forest Service roads along the corridor are not classified freight routes. SR 131 through Randle is considered a T-3 Freight Route.
**Multi-modal Transportation**
The Primitive Corridor offers very little bike/pedestrian infrastructure on the primary roadways; however, numerous mountain biking and hiking trails are located just off the corridor. The low volume of roadway traffic improves cyclists’ experience along this corridor, though rugged terrain, variable pavement conditions, and windy roads are challenging to traverse on a bike. The corridor has limited shoulders, sidewalks, and no bike lanes. More information about biking and trails is provided in section 4.6—Outdoor Recreation. Public transportation services are not available along the corridor, with the exception of limited Dial-a-ride services provided by Skamania County Transit off Wind River Highway. Additionally, the community of Carson does have fixed-route transit service to communities along SR-14 to Vancouver.

**Safety and Road Surface Conditions**
Roads within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest exhibit a wide range in the quality of road surface conditions. Good pavement conditions can be found along many sections of Forest Service Roads; however, fair or poor conditions have also been observed. Low traffic volumes and limited funds prevent the Forest Service from providing the level of maintenance WSDOT provides along State Routes. Subsidence issues are also present in many areas throughout the corridor.

Safety concerns are present due to a variety of factors. Severe winter weather is more common in the higher elevations, which can result in hazardous driving conditions during certain parts of the year. The Forest Service closes many roads during the winter season, eliminating access to areas where icy/snowy driving conditions are of greatest concern. An additional concern is driver attentiveness along windy and narrow roads. If drivers are distracted, speeding, or passing improperly, the likelihood of an accident along this route are greater because of the narrowness of the roadway and curves, which are present due to the natural topography of the Cascades.

**7.7 Planned and Projected Changes to the Roadway**
Four-Year Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP) identify a number of projects planned which will improve the quality of the transportation system within the Scenic Loop. Noteworthy projects currently listed in area RTIPs include bike/pedestrian improvements along SR-504 in Castle Rock (2015-2016), I-5/SR-503 intersection improvements (2017-2018), numerous slope stabilization projects along SR 14, and region-wide guardrail replacement projects.

A number of long term plans and strategies for improving the transportation system have also been developed, which this Corridor Management Plan (CMP) aims to support and build upon. For instance, the transportation recommendations listed in this CMP were developed considering the framework, priorities, and guiding principles of area Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). These planning documents are used to guide short-range planning decisions in order to achieve long-term goals. Specific goals and priorities listed in area RTPs, which this CMP aims to achieve, include:

- **Safety**: Ensure safety and security of the transportation system.
- **Economy**: Support economic development and community vitality.
• Accessibility and Mobility: Provide reliable mobility for personal travel and freight movement by addressing congestion and transportation system bottlenecks. Also, provide access to locations throughout the region while protecting the integrity of neighborhoods by discouraging cut-through traffic.
• Management and Operations: Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system through transportation demand management and transportation system management strategies.
• Environment: Protect environmental quality and natural resources and promote energy efficiency.
• Vision and Values: Ensure the RTP reflects community values to help build and sustain a healthy, livable, and prosperous community.
  • Finance: Provide a financially-viable and sustainable transportation system.
  • Preservation/Stewardship: Maintain and preserve the regional transportation system to ensure system investments are protected.

**Recommendations for Context Sensitive Roadway Improvements**

The rural nature of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop area, and its expansive territory, can pose navigational challenges for visitors unfamiliar with the area. The Transportation Technical Team identified additional signage as one of the greatest needs. New and more effective signage should be installed on all scenic loop routes, especially at prominent intersections. A uniform wayfinding system, specific to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, would make it easier for visitors to find facilities and attractions.

An efficient wayfinding system should include identification signs, route markers, and directional signs. Identification signs should be placed near the entrances of key destinations and attractions. These locations may include recreational, interpretative, and educational sites and should include agency identifiers. Route markers should inform visitors that the road they are traveling on is a designated part of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Several roads in the loop extend beyond the Fire & Ice area; therefore, route markers are needed to prevent travelers from leaving the loop and getting lost. Finally, directional signage should inform visitors of the distance and travel times to key destinations, commercial services, and restroom facilities. These signs are greatly needed on all of the primary routes of the Scenic Loop, especially at prominent intersections.

In addition to providing directional assistance to visitors, wayfinding systems should also reflect the character of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. All signs should be uniform in design, include a Fire & Ice Scenic Loop insignia, and present an appearance that complements the loop’s natural resources and cultural heritage.
7.8 Roadway Design Guidelines

Branding the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop may be best accomplished by establishing a uniform design approach for buildings, signage and other infrastructure. Corridor design guidelines could shape a common appearance in building facades, signage, guardrails, retaining walls, street lighting, benches, trash receptacles, landscaping and other components of the built environment. Designs should be unique to the Fire & Ice area, using materials and colors that represent the region’s natural resources and cultural heritage. In order for such guidelines to be successfully implemented, local jurisdictions would have to encourage or mandate that developers adhere to them.

7.9 Enhancing the Scenic Loop’s Transportation System

User-Friendly Transportation System
In order to ensure the overall success of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop, visitors must be able to safely access key destinations with relative ease. A user-friendly transportation network offers an extensive wayfinding system, sufficient commercial services, restroom facilities, and multi-modal opportunities. Furthermore, user-friendly transportation networks must also provide visitors with the assurance that they can arrive at their destination safely and in reasonable time. In order to achieve a user-friendly transportation system, area jurisdictions and infrastructure owners must work in a coordinated effort to plan and implement such projects/recommendations outlined in this plan.

Inter-agency Coordination and Planning
Cities, counties, regional planning agencies, WSDOT, the National Forest Service, and the Federal Highway Administration, Tribes, and other stakeholders should work in a coordinated effort to improve the transportation system based on the underlying principles and recommendations outlined in this plan. These agencies should rely on this plan when developing their respective transportation improvement programs, long-range transportation plans, comprehensive plans, and other documents that guide planning and funding decisions. This may be accomplished through coordinating through the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), County Technical Advisory Committees, County Transportation Policy Boards, and potentially through developing a Scenic Loop Transportation Committee. If such a special committee were to be formed, it may be organized through the agency tasked with managing the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop, or through the RTPO.

Improvement Priorities
The Transportation Technical Team advises that funds should be prioritized in order to best preserve or enhance the Scenic Loop’s transportation network. This strategy was developed with consideration for the economic realities regarding current state and federal transportation funding levels. This strategy is listed below according to route:
National Forest Service Roads (25, 90, Curly Creek) and Wind River Highway
Transportation spending should be focused on maintenance, directional signage, and safety (i.e. guardrail replacement, erosion control, rumble strips), as major improvements to these roads are not likely in the near future. New public restroom facilities and commercial services should be built where appropriate, in a manner that limits the impacts to natural and cultural resources. Existing facilities at sites along these routes should be maintained.

SR 504, SR 503, U.S. 12
Funding should be focused on maintaining the existing condition of the roads, adding directional signage, and improving safety.

SR 14
Funding should be focused on improving the condition of the road surface, adding directional signage, and improving safety.

All Routes
Identify sources of funding to pay for road maintenance and enhancement projects such as the Federal Lands Access Program, the Tribal Transportation Program, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Surface Transportation Program (STP) as well as others. Consider FEMA Hazard Mitigation funds to help pay for projects that make the transportation system more resilient to natural disasters. All routes should dedicate more resources to bike/pedestrian infrastructure and public transportation services where appropriate.
Chapter 8: Governance and Sustainability

First among the top priority recommendations in the corridor management plan is the establishment of a Fire & Ice Scenic Loop governance organization. This entity would be responsible for the planning and implementation of activities in support of the scenic loop in coordination with the business associations, towns, counties, federal agencies, and others with an interest in the scenic loop. Each of these jurisdictions would retain its full authority to develop and implement policies within its own jurisdiction. The proposed governance organization is intended to be influential as the only inter-jurisdictional organization dedicated to the management and enhancement of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop.

The extent to which communities in the region benefit from the heritage, scenic resources, and recreational opportunities associated with the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop depends upon how well the local, state and federal agencies responsible for its stewardship manage the Scenic Loop over time. The conservation and enhancement of the Scenic Loop’s intrinsic qualities and the effective communication of the worth of those qualities to residents and visitors will assure the success of the Scenic Loop.

The success of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will depend on the sustained effort of a governance organization capable of serving the needs of a large and diverse group of stakeholders. The organization should be well structured, yet flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of the area, including those of its stakeholders, residents, and visitors.

8.1 Organizational Structure

Byway organizations are varied and diverse. A governance structure may be composed of a half dozen volunteers who meet occasionally to oversee the implementation of a handful of projects in its improvement plan. The structure may also be large and formal, coordinated by a staff from a public lands or regional governmental agency with a substantial operating and capital budget and a multitude of ongoing projects.

Scenic byway type organizations are governed by organizations that are public, private, or a mixture of both. Ultimately, the means of financial sustainability will dictate the structure of governance.

The main benefit of a public organization is its ability to access a substantial and varied pool of grant opportunities. An often cited drawback of public organizations is their comparatively rigid structure that requires public notice requirements that don’t allow for creative and timely processes.

The main benefits of a private organization are its legal ability to react quickly to changing circumstances and its ability to meet in private. Private organizations can be formal, incorporated as 501c3 or c4 organizations with bylaws and elected leadership, or they can be informal working groups with more fluid membership and leadership. Informal groups such as this tend to face more financial challenges.
One option for a byway organization is to incorporate as a business league, 501c6. This IRS designation is for groups not organized for profit with no one private shareholder or individual materially benefitting from the activities of the organization. A business league is an association of individuals having a common line of business, meaning an entire industry or the components of an industry within a geographical area. Many Chambers of Commerce are incorporated in this way. Organizations of this type are allowed to lobby for legislation or engage in political activities regarding a common business interest, with a few restrictions. They may not receive tax-deductible charitable contributions, but they can receive business-deductible contributions.

Most byway organizations start as an informal group of volunteers and then grow into larger and more structured organizations. Regardless of the type of lead agency, most byway organizations include a local volunteer byway group. Community support groups ensure that the byway is connected to community interests. Even if the byway is run by a dedicated professional staff, there is a continuous need for community volunteers and partnerships with a diverse group of public and private organizations in order to accomplish the objectives of the byway.

**Typical Roles & Responsibilities**

**LEAD ORGANIZATION**
- Crafts an implementation plan, identifying projects and recommending actions
- Plays a coordinating role and assists in the development and implementation of projects
- Assumes overall facilitation and implementation of the corridor management plan, including updates of the plan and upkeep of a resource library as needed
- Recommends operation and management standards for roads in the program
- Crafts strategies for maintaining or improving intrinsic qualities
- Recommends standards for corridor signs
- Recommends standards for maintaining road safety
- Recommends measures to safely accommodate a diverse group of users
- Recommends design review procedures for facilities, landscaping, etc.
- Identifies sources of funding to support the various needs and opportunities of the corridor
- Provides a central source of information related to the corridor
- Serves as the contact point for public involvement and participation
- Provides communications and participation with other byway organizations
- Partners with the Department of Transportation and other agencies to administer grants for the corridor
- Assists in coordinating and demonstrating public and private support

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**
- Roadway management
- Transportation planning and improvements
- Traffic control measures, including lane marking, signage and intersections
• Access (driveway) control measures
• Outdoor advertising management and control
• Roadside vegetation and litter control
• Official highway map, available online, including a clear definition of the Scenic Loop
• Partner with lead organization to administer grants for the corridor

U.S. FOREST SERVICE
• Roadway management & improvements
• Traffic control measures, including lane marking, signage and intersections
• Access control measures
• Outdoor advertising permitting and enforcement
• Land use planning within the Monument
• Continued implementation of USFS/Monument Strategic Plans
• Visitor management controls in accordance with the Monument Comprehensive Plan
• Wildlife and forest land management
• Interpretive and educational programs for the public
• Recreation
• Science and natural history information

CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS
• Land use planning around the corridor
• Transportation planning and improvements
• Zoning enforcement
• Traffic regulation and enforcement
• Outdoor advertising permitting and enforcement

LOCAL AND REGIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
• Provide interpretive and educational programs for the public

CONVENTION AND VISITOR BUREAUS AND TOURISM COMMISSIONS
• Market the corridor in locally-based promotional programs
• Assure that local hospitality providers are aware of and promote their relationship to the corridor
• Track visitor traffic and purpose for visit
• Monitor visitor satisfaction
**Grant sources relevant to a scenic loop organization include:**

- Historic Preservation Grants
  - National Trust for Historic Preservation
  - National Endowment for the Arts
  - National Endowment for the Humanities
- Privately-Funded Grants, Scholarships and Fellowships
  - American Express, Partners in Preservation grant program
  - American Heritage Preservation Grants
  - Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
  - Charles E. Peterson Fellowship
  - Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation
  - Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts
  - HABS-SAH Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship
  - The Kinsman Foundation
  - National Historical Publications and Records Commission
  - Save Our History Grant Program
  - Society of Architectural Historians’ Study Tour Fellowships

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**COMMITTEE**

- Provide region-wide coordination around functional areas
- Communications and marketing
- Interpretive landmarks
- Hospitality training
- Financial resources
- Context-sensitive design
- Event planning
- Volunteer coordination
- Others, as needed and desired

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### 8.2 Partnerships

**Organizational Capacity and Structure**

The four counties surrounding the Monument are in two different state tourism districts, are engaged with multiple regional planning organizations and transportation planning districts, as well as several state and federal agencies with management and review authority. In addition, area tribal interests must be represented.

Options for how to govern the four-county area of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will be based upon the recommended strategies and priorities. It does not appear that any one existing organization could manage the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop as part of its ongoing regional responsibilities, due to the overlapping and inconsistent coverage among those existing organizations and agencies. Options for a new entity may include the potential for establishing a new membership organization, creating a partnership established by a common memorandum of understanding among local governments and state agencies or partnering with an existing organization whose mission is consistent with the goals of the management plan.

### 8.3 Funding Sources

A steady source of funding is integral to the success of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Adequate funding is needed to provide for the maintenance of the scenic loop and for the planning and implementation of projects along the route. State and local tax monies are sometimes accessible by corridor organizations, especially if a locality has a dedicated lodging tax. Private money is also available through the sale of advertising in a newsletter and the sale of scenic loop products such as maps, guide books, t-shirts, and postcards. Most byway organizations rely primarily on grant funding to accomplish their objectives.

### 8.4 Potential Threats

Scenic byways such as the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop face a variety of threats to their resources and their organizations. The corridor management organization can be negatively impacted by reductions in operational funding,
leadership turnover, and volunteer burnout. Resources along the corridor may also be threatened by natural disturbances such as fire, disease, and invasive species. Another common threat is associated with land development that does not fit the context of the Scenic Loop. Unmanaged development can have a negative effect on scenic and natural resources. It can also impact negatively on historic and cultural resources. As the plan moves into the implementation stage, these threats should be considered so they may be avoided or mitigated.

8.5 Measures of Success
Two important measures of success for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will prove to be the sustainability of the organization and its ability to make improvements over time. Typical benchmarks used to measure success are planning activity, grants awarded and projects implemented.

A successful byway organization is focused on the future as evidenced by an active and energetic staff and volunteers continuously engaged in planning for the byway. Grants are identified, applied for, and awarded for projects designed to enhance the area surrounding the byway to attract more visitors.

Characteristics of a successful corridor management organization include:
- Resources sufficient to consistently implement corridor improvements over time
- Paid staff, employed by the corridor organization or by partner agencies
- The production of tangible products, such as brochures, to demonstrate a sense of forward progress
- The creation and maintenance of long-term partnerships
- The balancing of long-term vision with short-term opportunities, such as funding sources or new partnerships
Chapter 9: Recommendations

The primary, overarching recommendation for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop is:

_The establishment of a governance structure for the scenic loop that is public and private and that represents the entire region._

The recommendations listed below in Sections 9.1 through 9.3 resulted from input from each of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop technical teams: Tourism and Marketing; and Culture, History and Outdoor Recreation.

9.1 Tourism and Marketing Recommendations

1. Create awareness of what is available in the towns around the scenic loop through well-placed kiosks, signage and other methods.
2. Develop a low or no-cost map of the Scenic Loop, identifying public lands, open roads, and other key areas and attractions.
3. Collaborate on a marketing formula to create excitement and provide a consistent message.
4. Target marketing to local, regional, national, and international visitors as appropriate for each category.
5. Use existing marketing resources such as websites and brochures of established tourism organizations to the extent appropriate, or link Fire & Ice marketing to these established products.
6. Partner with commercial bus companies by providing them with ready-made itineraries and “piggybacking” on their marketing resources.
7. Encourage potential vendors in the Forest Service areas by providing assistance in navigating the permitting process.
8. Encourage the establishment of new restaurants, lodging, and stores to promote extended stays by visitors in corridors that can accommodate development.
9. Improve on existing camping facilities and create new facilities and other overnight options where few currently exist.
10. Encourage area businesses to participate in training front-line service workers in the area so that they may become cultural ambassadors to visitors. Establish a program of continued education and involvement so that these workers will remain engaged and to allow new workers to access training.
11. Develop winter recreation opportunities to stabilize visitor stays throughout the year.
12. Coordinate with other tourism entities in the region to acquire funding for projects along the route.
13. Consider a small increase in the sales tax in the loop region to fund loop activities.
14. Extend partnerships to the state level and work with agencies such as the Washington State Departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, and Fish and Wildlife to protect and enhance the natural resources of the region.
15. Secure stable funding sources to sustain management and promotion of the scenic loop.
16. Explore the possibility for recipients receiving tourism-related dollars from the cities, counties, and other agencies in the region including a logo or other reference to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop in their marketing materials.
9.2 Transportation Recommendations

National Forest Service roads 25, 90, Curly Creek Road, and Wind River Highway
1. Transportation spending should be focused on maintenance, directional signage, and safety improvements, as major improvements to these roads is not likely in the near future.
2. Forest Service roads should be marketed to tourists as a Primitive Corridor in order to attract a specific kind of visitor who either desires a more natural and secluded setting, or a setting that offers thrill-seeking, outdoor recreational activities.
3. Visitors should be advised that the primitive corridor has low-maintenance roads, few restroom facilities, gas stations, restaurants, or other services.
4. New development should be discouraged on Forest Service roads in order to protect the natural and secluded setting. The only exception should be new public restroom facilities, which should be sited, constructed, and function in a manner that does not distract from the scenic/cultural/recreational values of the area.

SR 503
5. Funding should be focused on maintaining the existing condition of the road, adding directional signage, and safety improvements.
6. SR 503 should be marketed as “The Lakes Corridor” to attract tourists who are looking to enjoy recreational areas for fishing, watersports, swimming, camping, and other outdoor activities.
7. Visitors should be advised that this corridor is suitable for families and all generations, has well-maintained roads, restroom facilities, gas stations, restaurants, and other services.
8. Encourage the development of more amenities along this route, including lodging. New development should be sited in a manner that does not distract from the scenic/cultural/recreational values of the area, using context-sensitive principles.

SR 504
5. Funding should be focused on maintaining the existing condition of the road, adding directional signage, and safety improvements.
6. SR 504 should be marketed as The Discovery Corridor to attract tourists who are looking for exploring recreational sites and learning about the area’s geology, wildlife, cultural history, and volcanic history.
7. Visitors should be advised that this corridor is suitable for families and all generations, has well-maintained roads, restroom facilities, gas stations, restaurants, and other services.
8. Encourage the development of more amenities along this route, including lodging. New development should be sited in a manner that does not distract from the scenic/cultural/recreational values of the area, using context-sensitive principles.

SR 14
9. Funding should be focused on improving the quality of the road surface, adding directional signage, and making safety improvements.
10. Continue to market SR 14 as the Lewis and Clark Trails State Scenic Byway and clearly illustrate its relationship to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Advise visitors that this scenic route has exquisite views of the Columbia Gorge and connects I-5 to the Primitive Corridor (Forest Service roads 25, 90, Curly Creek Road, and Wind River).

**U.S. 12**

11. Funding should be focused on maintaining the existing condition of the road, adding directional signage, and making safety improvements when and where they are appropriate.

12. Continue to market US Highway 12 as the White Pass National Scenic Byway and clearly illustrate its relationship to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Advise visitors that this scenic route offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation and connects I-5 to the Primitive Corridor (Forest Service roads: 25, 99, 90, Curly Creek, and Wind River).

**All routes**

13. Develop new and more effective roadway signage for all routes and at prominent intersections to provide information regarding direction, distance and travel time to key locations, as well as to provide warning for limited services and facilities, seasonal challenges, and safety warnings.

14. Explore the possibility of a standardized rustic design for roadway signage and guardrails to help establish the identity and character specific to the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop. Ideally, designs for the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop will be coordinated with existing byways.

15. Explore the possibility of establishing a connection between Coldwater Lake (SR 504) and Riffe Lake (US 12) to better determine its feasibility, as well as to gauge potential economic and environmental impacts.

16. Identify sources of funding to pay for road maintenance and enhancement projects such as the Federal Lands Access Program, the Tribal Transportation Program, the Surface Transportation Program, as well as others.

17. Consider FEMA Hazard Mitigation funds to help pay for projects that will protect roads and bridges from the effects of mudslides and make them more resistant to washouts.

18. All routes should provide more multi-modal infrastructure, allowing for bicycle and pedestrian use, where safe and appropriate.

**9.3 Culture, History, and Outdoor Recreation Recommendations**

1. Increase access to routes with potential for recreational opportunities.

2. Improve the recreational permitting process to make it more coordinated and user-friendly so that visitors can plan trips knowing about all permits needed beforehand.

3. Promote better access to land ownership data along the loop routes.

4. Incorporate improvements that will accommodate alternate modes of transportation along the route to provide additional opportunities for outdoor recreation.
   - Expand bike infrastructure, including lanes and off-road trails, to enhance the existing transportation network and encourage visitors to explore the area.
9.4 Best Practices: Moving Forward
In 2001, The America’s Byways Resource Center held an awards program for the best practices of scenic byways and, as part of this program, the Center studied over 40 programs and identified the lessons learned. The following is a list of their recommended best practices:

- Construct a compelling story and vision from the resource inventory
- Create an inclusive framework early in the planning process
- Develop incentives for being at the table
- Exercise creativity in marketing and visualization
- Maintain a strong focus on enhancements and interpretation
- Balance competing goals of promotion and preservation
- Give equal attention to big-picture and design details
- Enlist partners who are motivated by a passion for the resources

Looking back over the five-year process of the Fire & Ice Scenic Loop Corridor Management Plan, it is evident that these points have been followed in a significant way. It is envisioned that Fire & Ice Scenic Loop partners and stakeholders will continue to adhere to these points as the Corridor Management Plan makes the transition between the planning phase and implementation.
APPENDIX I: FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

1. A map identifying the corridor boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, and land uses in the corridor.
2. An assessment of the byway’s intrinsic qualities and their context (the area surrounding them). The end product is typically a catalogue of the byway’s scenic, historic, natural, archaeological, cultural, and recreational qualities.
3. A strategy for maintaining and enhancing each of the byway’s intrinsic qualities. What should the byway corridor look like in 10-15 years? What goals and strategies should be developed to achieve this vision?
4. A list of the agencies, groups, and individuals who are part of the team that will carry out the plan. Include a description of each individual’s responsibilities and a schedule of how and when the progress will be reviewed.
5. A strategy for how existing development along the corridor might be enhanced and how to accommodate new development while preserving the byway’s intrinsic qualities. Adapt the long-term plans of communities in the region.
6. A plan for on-going public participation. This might include forming a CMP steering committee made up of local citizens, a schedule of regular public meetings, or a byway management-planning forum.
7. A general review of the road’s safety record to locate hazards and poor design. Identify possible corrections. Identify ways to balance safety with context-sensitive highway design practices that accommodate safety needs while preserving the road’s character.
8. A plan to accommodate commercial traffic while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists, joggers, and pedestrians. Plans to apply for Federal Transportation Enhancement funds to pay for the installation of special bicycle lanes along the byway or the creation of hiking trails might be incorporated into the corridor management plan.
9. A listing and discussion of efforts to minimize anomalous intrusions on the visitor’s experience of the byway. This might include landscaping to screen an industrial site, relocating utility wires and poles, or planning for the sensitive location of wireless telecommunications towers along the byway.
10. Documentation of compliance with all existing local, state, and federal laws about the control of outdoor advertising. Federal regulations prohibit all new billboards along designated scenic byways that are classified as federal-aid primary, national highway system, or interstate roads. States are free to impose stricter controls on billboards along scenic byways. The CMP should also address the continuous designation of the road to ensure that billboard companies will not be able to find a loophole in the byway designation that would allow them to erect billboards along the corridor.
11. A plan to make sure that the number and placement of highway signs will not get in the way of scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. This includes, where appropriate, signs for international tourists who may not speak English fluently. Two popular and effective ways of addressing this issue are logo signs and tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS). Logo signs are located on interstate highway rights-of-way and advertise gas, food, camping, and lodging at nearby exits. Highway-oriented businesses can advertise their company’s symbol, name, trademark, or a combination of these things on a logo sign. A few states, like Utah and Maine, provide TODS primarily on non-interstate rural highways to help motorists find local businesses. TODS indicate only the name of local attractions, mileage to the establishment, and direction.
12. Plans for how to market and publicize the byway. Most marketing plans highlight the area’s intrinsic qualities and promote interest in the byway that is consistent with resource protection efforts and maintenance of the byway’s desired character.
13. Any proposals for modifying the roadway, including an evaluation of design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway’s intrinsic qualities. Byway groups should work with their state department of transportation to adopt context-sensitive highway design standards for the byway. Context-sensitive design takes into account the area’s built and natural environment; the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and preservation impacts of a road project; and provides access for other modes of transportation.

14. A description of plans to explain and interpret the byway’s significant resources to visitors. Interpretation can include visitor centers, leaflets, audio tours, information panels, and special events.
# APPENDIX II: MAPS

<table>
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<th>Map Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Primitive Corridor</td>
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APPENDIX III: VISITOR SERVICES AND FEES

1. Visitor Centers
   - SR 504 and the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway
     - Mount St. Helens Visitor Center: Ten minutes east of Castle Rock, across from Seaquest State Park. This visitor center is operated by the State of Washington. Fees are charged for the exhibit center.
     - Hoffstadt Bluffs Visitor Center: East of the Mount St. Helens Visitor Center. This visitor center is owned by Cowlitz County. It is a lodge-like structure, offering restaurant, gift shop, exhibits, meeting rooms, and event space.
     - The Forest Learning Center: Mile post 33. This visitor center is owned and operated by Weyerhaeuser. It offers a life-like forest experience in the Eruption Chamber, free of charge. Visitors can learn about forest recovery, reforestation and conservation of forest resources. The mountain, replanted forests and elk can be seen from a scenic viewpoint at the Forest Learning Center.
     - The Forest Service’s Science Learning Center: At Coldwater, the second to last stop along this corridor. This was previously a visitor center and now primarily offers opportunities for research and education. Reservations are required to use the facility, but visitors are welcome to pick up information, picnic, and access trails.
     - Johnston Ridge Observatory: This visitor center is operated by the U.S. Forest Service. For a fee of $8.00, this visitor facility offers displays, ranger talks, hiking trails, incredible views, and screenings of award-winning films.
   - Columbia River Gorge Interpretive Center and Museum (Stevenson)

2. Passes and Fees
   - Annual Northwest Forest Pass: $30 annual. Honored at all Forest Service operated recreation sites in Washington and Oregon where a day-use fee is required. Allows the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle use of the recreation facility. Allows the pass holder use of recreation facilities at per-person sites. Other members in the party must pay the per-person fee.
   - National Forest Day Pass: $5 per day, generally. Honored at all Forest Service operated recreation sites in Washington and Oregon, where a day-use fee is required. Allows the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private vehicle the use of the recreation facilities. Allows the pass holder use of recreation facilities at per-person sites. Other members in the party must pay the per-person fee. The self-validation feature of the day pass allows visitors to buy in advance and keep a supply in the vehicle for use whenever they wish.
   - Monument Pass: $8 adult pass, 15 and under are free. A Monument Pass is a per-person pass, good for one day at Coldwater Lake Recreation Area and Johnston Ridge Observatory. Interagency Annual, Senior and Access Passes (Golden Age/ Access Passes) and Annual Northwest Forest Passes are also accepted at Monument Pass Sites.
   - Discover Pass: $10 day-use, $30 annual pass. The Discover Pass is motor vehicle only permit that can be purchased for day use or annual use. The Discover Pass offers access to Washington State recreation lands. Some facilities are equipped with
automated pay stations but a full list of vendors can be found online at the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife’s website.

- **Sno-Park Permits:** There are several types of permits required to park in non-motorized Sno-Parks. Pricing varies depending on purchasing from a vendor or from State Parks.
  - 1– Day: $20; A one-day permit is honored until midnight of the date written on the permit for parking at all Sno-Parks, including the designated special groomed trails permit areas.
  - Seasonal Permit: $40; A seasonal permit is non-transferable between vehicles. Purchasing a one-day permit for a second vehicle is an option. Some Sno-Parks require only a seasonal permit for season parking. Others require both the seasonal permit and the special groomed trail permit in order to use the designated Sno-Park.
  - Special Groomed Trial Permit: $40; This permit, in conjunction with the seasonal permit, is required at eight sno-parks: Cabin Creek, Chiwawa, Crystal Springs, Hyak, Lake Easton, Lake Wenatchee, Mount Spokane, and Nason Ridge. Snowmobile seasonal permit holders must purchase this permit when using these Sno-Parks for non-motorized activities. Funds from its sale pay for more frequent trail grooming at these Sno-Parks and the maintenance and replacement of snow grooming equipment owned by Washington State Parks.

- **Gifford Pinchot National Forest Specific Recreation Passes:**
  - Mount Adams Climbing Pass: $15 per person for Weekend Pass; $10 per person for Weekday pass; $30 per person for Annual Pass; free under 16
  - Mount St. Helens Climbing Permit: $22 per complete climbing permit. Available online by advance purchase only.
  - Mount Margaret Backcountry Permit: Must carry a valid Recreation Pass, such as a Northwest Forest Pass or Interagency Annual Pass, and camping permit, which are free of charge and by advance reservations only.
  - Wilderness Regulations/Permits: No charge. Used to monitor use, self-issued permits, available at trailheads that lead into wilderness.

**Day use Fees:** Day use fees are charged at Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

**Free Days:** Fees are waived at Forest Service-managed day use sites on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, National Trails Day, National Get Outdoors Day, National Public Lands Day, and Veterans Day.

**Washington State Hunting and Fishing Regulations:**

Fishing & Shellfishing regulations: http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/

Hunting (Big Game, Waterfowl, and Turkey): http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/
APPENDIX IV: SUPPORTING LOCAL LAND USE POLICIES

Area Comprehensive Plans:

**Counties**
Cowlitz County Comprehensive Plan
http://wa-cowlitzcounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/3160

Lewis County Comprehensive Plan
http://lewiscountywa.gov/communitydevelopment/comprehensive-plan

Skamania County Comprehensive Plan
http://www.skamaniacounty.org/community-development/homepage/planning-division/long-range-planning/

Clark County Comprehensive Plan
http://www.clark.wa.gov/Planning/comp_plan/docs.html

**Gateways**
Stevenson
http://ci.stevenson.wa.us/government/planning-department/library-of-plans/

Vancouver
http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/comprehensive-plan

Woodland
http://www.ci.woodland.wa.us/departments/planning/comprehensive.php

Kalama
http://www.cityofkalama.com/city-government/public-works/planning

Kelso

Longview
Castle Rock  
http://ci.castle-rock.wa.us/CPtext.htm

**Hub Communities**  
Camas  
http://www.cityofcamas.us/index.php/planning/planningRange

Washougal  

Stevenson  

North Bonneville  

Yacolt  

Battle Ground  
APPENDIX V: CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Discover Your Northwest
Northwest Trail Alliance
Evergreen Bike Club
Mountain Bike Mutts
Washington Trails Association
Backcountry Horsemen
Friends of Coldwater
Northwest Excursions
Cascadia Outdoor Adventure School
OMSI
Mountain Shop
Conservation Corps
Mount St. Helens Institute

Notes:
The Fire & Ice Scenic Loop was identified by the Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee as a key opportunity to expand the tourism opportunities in their July 2009, Recommendations to the Washington Congressional Delegation regarding future opportunities for expansion of Mount St. Helens tourism, marketing, and development activities. This plan is in direct response to their efforts, building upon existing activities while providing a focused approach to the most viable alternatives.