



# City of Stevenson

## Planning Department

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**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Ben Shumaker  
**DATE:** March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Iman Cemetery Road Vacation

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This memo provides a short analysis from the Planning Department of the proposed No Name Road Vacation. Planning staff analysis is limited to the plat's background and identification of potential evaluation factor's related to the vacation. The memo also conveys the Planning Commission's analysis/recommendation on the request.

### **Background**

The following timeline is relevant to the plat wherein the proposed vacation is located.

- **1963** – The "Iman Rock Creek Tracts" is approved by the Skamania County Board of Commissioners. A 50' wide right-of-way extends to the center of the creek, separating lots 9 and 10.
- **2020** – The owners of lots 9 & 10 petition the City of Stevenson for vacation of the 50' wide right-of-way.

### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission reviewed this proposal in conjunction with the petition to vacate the unnamed road providing access to Iman Cemetery at their March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Special Meeting. As a result to that meeting, the Commission characterized the situation as an attractive nuisance while making the following recommendation:

"The Planning Commission does not support the vacation of these rights-of-way at this time."

In making this recommendation, the Planning Commission discussed and avoided a recommendation of denial and recommended the following to address issues related to the requested vacation:

- The City must acknowledge its responsibility bears responsibility for addressing this issue.
- The City should—in the very short-term—take actions to reduce neighborhood burdens (e.g., trash, trespass, traffic, etc.) in the right-of-way.
- The City should—in the intermediate-term—develop and adopt the alternate access plan necessary under RCW 35.79.035. In the course of developing this plan, the property owners adjacent to these vacation requests should be brought together to find workable solutions.

### **Evaluation Factors**

The following factors may assist the City Council's discussion:

- **Developed Nature of Street** – See public works memo.
- **Connection to Lots** –Both lots 9 & 10 currently have access to the remainder of Iman Cemetery Road and/or the unnamed road east of the vacation is subject to a separate petition for vacation. The decision on that petition will impact the potential connection of each lot to a public right-of-way. The decision on that vacation will also involve decisions on Lot 11. As a contingency of the vacation the Council could

consider 1) requiring a lot line elimination, 2) recording an easement across Lot 10 for the benefit of Lot 11, or 3) recording a covenant requiring an easement prior to sale of Lot 11.

- **Circulation System** – The existing right-of-way provides options for improved circulation. Improved circulation would require a bridge.
- **Utilities System** – The existing right-of-way provides options to extend utilities to unserved areas. Extension of utilities would require a bridge or underwater boring.
- **Recreational Resource** – The right-of-way does not provide direct viewing opportunities for the waterfalls on Rock Creek. These waterfalls are identified in the 2013 Stevenson Comprehensive Plan as a Category IV Potential Sacred Place in the City's recreation system, however no specific improvements are identified to realize this potential. The use of the right-of-way for this purpose has not been evaluated.
- **Ownership of Vacated Territory** – The territory of the vacated streets typically is divided between adjacent owners. This proposal is fairly typical, no special considerations are necessary.

Attachments:

- 1- 2013 Stevenson Comprehensive Plan Appendix D-Parks & Recreation Report (15 pages)



## APPENDIX D–PARKS & RECREATION REPORT

Recreation: “Refreshment of body or mind, as after work, by some form of play, amusement, relaxation, or agreeable exercise.”

### Introduction

Stevenson is the county seat of a county historically dependent on natural resource extraction activities like logging and mining. It is one of thirteen Urban Areas within a National Scenic Area celebrating the natural resource amenity activities of hiking, biking, and pleasure driving. Equal parts urban and rural, recreation in Stevenson offers an intriguing menu of activities and ideas. It is the site of the county’s premier public library and museum, the only high school, and two of the county’s seven lower level schools. Popular festivals and fairs fill the long summer days. Hunting, skiing and trips to more urban destinations in Hood River, Portland and Vancouver help fill out the winter schedules.

As residents and visitors to the city undoubtedly know, these rural and urban courses have not always paired well together, but the internal conflicts only serve to further transmit and reinforce Stevenson’s unique recreational culture. Ultimately, when viewed as a whole, this broad recreational menu contains many of the key components that make Stevenson, Stevenson.

This appendix, which is in part intended to satisfy the planning requirements of the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, describes many of the forms of play, amusement, relaxation, and agreeable exercise that contribute to Stevenson’s quality of life. It does not go into detail on many of the socially-based recreational activities that tend to vary over time depending on the success and energy of the proprietor or promoter. This lack of detail, however, should not diminish the importance of these institutions and activities: the commercial gathering places like coffee shops, restaurants, pubs, and retail stores; the many churches and faith-based institutions; the public places along our streets, at the post office, and at the garbage transfer station; the music festivals, agricultural fairs, parades and other community events.

The remainder of this appendix separately inventories the demand and ideas for the institutions and parks that contribute to the recreational options in Stevenson: schools, libraries, museums, performance and public art, parks, and the “sacred places” that mean a great deal to the community.

### Institutional Inventory

#### Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center

The Skamania County Historical Society is inspired by the spirit of “Tsagaglala” or “She Who Watches” to be good stewards of the history of Skamania County and the Gorge. To fulfill this charge, the Historical Society owns and operates the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center at its Rock Cove location. The Interpretive Center’s 11,000 interior square feet is filled by permanent and rotating exhibits that blend together various ingredients of the area’s history to better allow visitors to contemplate the area’s future. These indoor exhibits include information on the Cascade Chinook, Lewis and Clark, early military and pioneer settlement, the technological utilization of the Columbia

River, and a large collection of rosaries. The space often also feature a gallery devoted to outstanding local artists. Outdoors, the Interpretive Center “watches” over logging equipment, railroad cars, and the majority of Rock Cove. Through its indoor and outdoor attractions, this popular recreational asset spreads the message that “the Columbia Gorge lives, evolves and continues”.



With its beautiful new facility in place, the Interpretive Center’s primary concerns are to improve public access and visibility and to maintain and increase its membership and visitor numbers so that it may continue to assemble, collect, preserve, and exhibit the artifacts and stories of Skamania County and the Columbia Gorge to share it with future generations.

### Interpretive Signage

The City and its partners have actively worked to install at least 13 interpretive signs at key locations around the city. From the area’s geologic beginnings to the drastic river changes wrought by the Missoula Floods and Bonneville Dam to the wildlife now common to the area; from prehistoric trade patterns to Lewis & Clark to steamboat-based commerce to the recent recreational boom; these signs provide readers with a depth of knowledge about Stevenson that is otherwise hard to observe.

The City has developed a set of design standards to ensure all these signs share a similar look. Potential topics for future interpretive signs include transportation-related interpretation of the highway and railroad, ecologically-related interpretations of streams and wetlands, and historically-related interpretations of the old barbershop, the Courthouse, Kanaka Creek, and Whiskey Row.

### Public Art

Though not as robust as the interpretive signage program, the City and its partners have worked to ensure that art is a visible component of public space. Petroglyphs and petrified wood adorn the County’s downtown facilities. Modern sculptures grace Rock Cove’s shoreline. Kinetic art pieces make the invisible visible as they dance in the area’s abundant winds.



The City continues to seek opportunities to provide new public art in other areas of town, but the types and locations have not yet been determined.

### Skamania Performing Arts Foundation

The Skamania Performing Arts Foundation (SPAF) has provided a welcome spice to Stevenson’s recreational mix since 2001. The Foundation hosts all genres of visiting musical artists, plays starring local casts, seasonal feasts, and other special events at various locations in Skamania County, including Stevenson High School and the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center. Primarily a labor of love, most of SPAF’s



operations are performed on a volunteer basis with limited paid staff. The near-future goal for SPAF is to establish a bricks-and-mortar center for their administrative and performance activities.

### **Stevenson-Carson School District Number 303**

The Stevenson-Carson School District (SCSD) provides one of Stevenson's most important recreational ingredients. The school district currently operates four schools, each of which focuses on different age groups. Students begin their schooling at Stevenson Elementary School where they attend kindergarten, first, and second grade. Students then transfer to Carson Elementary School for grades three through six, then return to Stevenson where Wind River Middle School and Stevenson High School share a campus. Additionally, the SCSD's administrative office and bus garage are centrally located in Stevenson.

The beautiful Stevenson Elementary School underwent a substantial remodel in 2001 and the new facility houses classrooms, special education facilities, a gym/auditorium available for community use, office space for the elementary school's thirty-four (34) member staff, and parks and recreational spaces as discussed below. The school's current goals focus on student achievement, curriculum and instruction, programmatic resources and support, and community communications. While the school was designed to easily expand, there is no current need identified that would require expansion.

The Stevenson High School has undergone periodic, small-scale facility upgrades/remodels since it was first constructed. The facility houses classrooms, office spaces for the school's large staff, science and computer labs, industrial shop space, and the facilities for athletics and recreation discussed below. The current goals of the high school focus on school pride and student achievement. Despite the recent addition of Wind River Middle School, there is no current need identified that would require school expansion.

### **Stevenson Library**

A library has been on Stevenson's recreational menu since the early 1920's when the Stevenson Woman's Association established the "Rest Room Club" to provide reading material at Stevenson's bus station on Second Street. The early library grew in popularity and by 1938 had constructed the town's first stand-alone library building at 25 NW Russell Street. A bookmobile service soon began traveling between the libraries in Clark and Skamania counties, and in 1953 administrative functions were consolidated under the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRL).

The FVRL continues to operate the Stevenson Library, which now graces the southwest corner of Columbia Street and Vancouver Avenue. This outstanding building was built in 1967 and reportedly used only wood and stone from the Columbia Gorge. Through the FVRL system, there are more than 700,000 books available through the Stevenson Library as well as books on tape, DVD films, and an archive of *Skamania County Pioneer* newspapers dating back to 1901.

The Library also offers technological and artistic forms of recreation through its selection of public computers offering essential internet and word processing capabilities for populations unable to afford home computers or are underserved by high speed internet services. While using these services, patrons are greeted by the library's diverse display of paintings, photos, quilts, sculptures



and student artwork. Each year since 1980, the Stevenson Library has also held an “Artists of the Gorge” exhibit and juried competition. This event offers one of Stevenson’s finest venues for local artists to transmit their work to the Stevenson community.

## **Parks Inventory**

Stevenson’s parks are provided by the City, the Port of Skamania County, Skamania County, Stevenson-Carson School District, and private entities. As detailed in the Parks Map in Chapter 4, these facilities are spread throughout town, with concentrations near downtown and on Stevenson’s west side.

A common method of measuring parks and recreational opportunities is to classify parks based on their 1) Size, 2) Characteristics, 3) General Use, and 4) Service Area. In Stevenson these measuring tools result in a typology of four park categories.

- Class I:** Pocket Park
- Class II:** Passive Green or Blue Space Park
- Class III:** Neighborhood/Community Park
- Class IV:** Sacred Places

The following section discusses each class of facility and briefly details the individual parks that fall into each class. It should be noted that individual parks often overlap services and service areas. For instance, the facilities on the Stevenson Elementary School grounds contain elements of park classes II and III. These facilities must then be recognized as not only serving as part of the neighborhood park system, but also as part passive green space system. This is the case for many of the larger facilities in the city, and individual parks are only discussed in detail under the largest classification they fall into.

### **Pocket Park (Class I)**

- Size:** One Acre or Less
- Characteristics:** Pedestrian-oriented, bike racks, benches, tables, landscaping, public art, interpretive signage, small open areas for play or relaxation, small play structures, and similar amenities
- General Use:** Gregarious, active recreation for youth, passive recreation for adults, aesthetic amenity for all
- Service Area:** Two to three blocks or one thousand feet from the park perimeter
- Existing Examples:** Gateway Park, Gropper Loop Park, Rock Creek Terrace Play Area, Walnut Park
- Potential Examples:** Cascade Village Play Area, Chinidere Central Open Space, Cloverdale School Site





## Gateway Park



Photo Credit: Ben Shumaker

**Description:** A 0.12 acre site located to the northeast of the intersection of Second Street and Rock Creek Drive in Downtown Stevenson, this park was constructed in 2000 to beautify and soften the western entrance to Downtown Stevenson. The park includes landscaping, irrigation lines, benches, bike racks, a bus shelter, rock walls and pillars, an informational kiosk, and seasonal decorations.

**Management Issues:** The park is owned by the City and maintained by a groundskeeper on contract with the Public Works Department. When adding improvements to the park, its extensive irrigation system must be avoided.

**Potential Enhancements:** A gateway/monument sign for directional and informational purposes has been contemplated for inclusion within this park, as has an interpretive sign describing the highway's history.



Figure Credit: Pat Hood

## Gropper Loop Park



Photo Credit: Ben Shumaker

**Description:** A 0.54 acre site located on the south side of Gropper Road between its two intersections with Gropper Loop Road. The tree and grass open space is apparently the result of a historic realignment of Gropper Road. Other than a series of decorative trees encircling the area, the site has never been developed or maintained for active park purposes.

**Management Issues:** The park is owned by the City and maintained periodically by the Public Works Department. The eastern portion of the park apparently lies on School District property, and complaints are occasionally received regarding the vegetative growth and parking issues near the park.

**Potential Enhancements:** No improvements are planned at this time. A dog park has been suggested by at least one community member.

### Rock Creek Terrace Play Area



**Description:** A 0.14 acre portion of the apartment complex located on the north side of Rock Creek Drive between Lotz Road and Vancouver Avenue, the area was set aside to serve the residents of the apartment complex. Included within this park are a play structure for small children, open space, walkways, and landscaping.

**Management Issues:** The open space and play area is owned and maintained by the owner/property manager of the apartment complex and has no formal agreement allowing use by the general public.



**Potential Enhancements:** No planned improvements are known at this time.

### Walnut Park



**Description:** A 0.19 acre property located on the south side of Second Street between Russell Avenue and Leavens Street, this park adds pleasant greenery to Downtown Stevenson's urban fabric. As part of 2004's Second Street improvement project, this park was rehabilitated and now includes landscaping, tables, benches, bike racks, trash cans, rock retaining walls, interpretive signage, a directional kiosk, an in-pavement dance tutorial, and pavers purchased through community donations.

**Management Issues:** The park is owned by the City and maintained by the Public Works Department. Ensuring the health of and cleaning up the leaf litter from the park's legacy walnut and flowering cherry trees are the top concerns for this park.

**Potential Enhancements:** The number one priority for Walnut Park is to maintain its current attractiveness. Potential improvements include adding a permanent chess board to one of the tables and developing policies to allow its lease by neighboring property owners or use as a music venue. A public bathroom has also been contemplated for this site.





### Cascade Village Play Area (Potential)



**Description:** A 0.29 acre site located on the north side of Viewpoint Road between Impala Drive and Willard Street, this site was developed to serve as an amenity for residents of the apartment complex. At one point, the park contained a small asphalt area with basketball hoops, a play structure, and a large undisturbed, treed open space. More recently, the basketball area has been converted to storage and parking to facilitate maintenance of the apartment complex. .



**Management Issues:** The open space and play area is owned and maintained by the owner/property manager of the apartment complex, and no formal agreement exists allowing use of this area by the general public.

**Potential Enhancements:** No planned improvements are known at this time.

### Chinidere Central Open Space (Potential)



**Description:** A 0.38 acre site located on the south side of "Hemmingway Drive" between Lutheran Road and "Lower Basso Circle Road", this open space is part of the as-yet-uncompleted "Chinidere Mountain Estates Subdivision" as an amenity for the future residents of that community.

**Management Issues:** Upon final plat approval of the subdivision's first phase, the open space will be owned and maintained by the subdivision's home owner's association.



**Potential Enhancements:** As a condition of final plat approval, the City will be granted a 30' x 25' easement within the open space for "works of civic art and/or beautification, provided that such works are considerate of the views of neighboring properties". No private improvements are known at this time.

Photo Credit: Ben Shumaker

### Cloverdale School Site (Potential)



**Description:** A 0.80 acre open space located at the upper intersection of Loop and Kanaka Creek roads. An open space, small benches and a plaque commemorate this area as the historic site of a small community school. The primarily wooded acreage lies in the uppermost portion of the Stevenson Urban Area.

**Management Issues:** The property is owned and periodically maintained by the Skamania County Historical Society and receives occasional short-term recreational use.



**Potential Enhancements:** No planned improvements are known at this time.

### Passive Green or Blue Space Park (Class II)

- Size:** May range from less than one Acre to more than one hundred acres
- Characteristics:** Pedestrian- and vehicle-oriented, bathrooms, shelters or recreational buildings, picnic areas, bike racks, benches, tables, landscaping, interpretive signage, open areas for play or relaxation, play structures, and similar amenities
- General Use:** Solitary, passive recreation for all ages
- Service Area:** One quarter to two miles from the park perimeter
- Existing Examples:** Angel Heights Park
- Potential Examples:** Chinidere Stream Habitat Area, Chinidere Oak Habitat Area



## Angel Heights Park

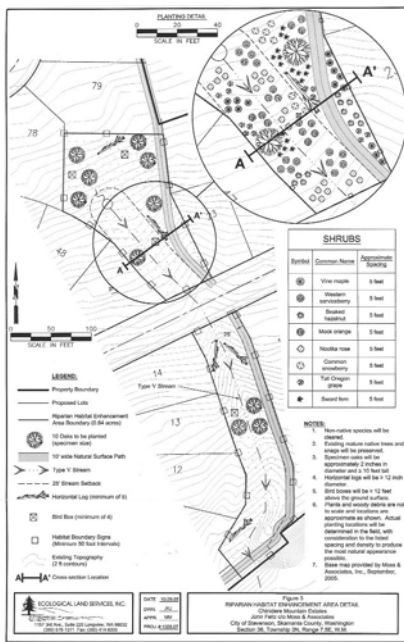


**Description:** A 3.05 acre open space located along a portion of the multi-use trail connecting Angel Heights Road with Rock Creek Drive. Situated atop the Rock Creek canyon wall this park does not have direct physical or legal access to the creek. Other than the publicly maintained trail, there are no existing improvements within the park. The acreage is primarily wooded. The park was set aside as an amenity for the residents of the Angel Heights residential subdivision.

**Management Issues:** Management of this area is less clear than any other park in this inventory. The City maintains the easement and multi-use trail. The land underlying that easement was never transferred to the subdivision's homeowner's association and is still owned by the original developer.

**Potential Enhancements:** No planned improvements are known at this time.

## Chinidere Stream Habitat Area (Potential)



**Description:** A 0.97 acre site extending along a riparian corridor beginning on the north side of "Brady Lane" and extending southward to State Route 14. The habitat area was set aside as part of the as-yet-uncompleted "Chinidere Mountain Estates" residential subdivision for habitat protection and incorporates a multi-use trail for the community.

**Management Issues:** Upon final plat approval for the subdivision's first phase, the open space will be owned and maintained by the subdivision's homeowner's association.

**Potential Enhancements:** As a condition of final plat approval, the City will be granted an 5'x5' easement within this open space for interpretive signage. Other than the trail and interpretive signage, no other improvements will be permitted in this habitat area.



### Chinidere Oak Habitat Area (Potential)



**Description:** An approximately 0.40 acre site located on the northwest of the intersection of Lutheran Church Road and “Anderson Heights Road”, this wooded habitat area is to be set aside as part of the as-yet-uncompleted “Chinidere Mountain Estates” residential subdivision for habitat protection.

**Management Issues:** Upon final plat approval of the subdivision’s third phase, habitat area will be owned and maintained by the subdivision’s home owner’s association.

**Potential Enhancements:** Upon final plat approval of the subdivision’s third phase, the site will include a small number of off-street parking spaces and a multi-use trail open to the general public. No other planned improvements are known at this time.

### Neighborhood/Community Park (Class III)

- Size:** One to ten acres, depends also upon the focus of the park and the size requirements of the activities
- Characteristics:** Pedestrian- and/or vehicle- oriented, Natural wooded areas for hiking, nature study, etc. A lake or river shoreline for swimming, fishing, and boat launch facilities, sports/pool complexes, multi-purpose community center, golf course, arboretum, camping facilities, amphitheater, picnic areas with shelters and parking, bathrooms, bike racks, benches, tables, landscaping, public art, interpretive signage, and similar amenities.
- General Use:** Gregarious, active recreation for all ages
- Service Area:** Five to ten blocks, one mile or less from the park perimeter, or regional dependent on the focus of the park
- Existing Examples:** Skamania Lodge, Stevenson Elementary School, Stevenson High School
- Potential Examples:** New parks in undeveloped areas





## Skamania Lodge



**Description:** A 161 acre site occupying much of western Stevenson between Rock Creek Drive, Foster Creek Road, and Ryan Allen Road, this destination resort offers a range of services open to paying guests and others for the general public. For guest enjoyment, its indoor spa, fitness center, and pool complement its outdoor basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts. The breathtaking and tranquil views of the challenging par-70 golf course wow guests and tournaments organizers and have them returning again and again. Under the terms of the Lodge’s original development, the property’s four miles of pathways are open to use by the general public.

**Management Issues:** Developed through a public/private partnership on the County’s old garbage dump and transfer site, the bulk of the Lodge is now under private ownership and managed by a professional resort management company. Skamania County still maintains ownership and responsibility for two small parcels containing capped landfills.

**Potential Enhancements:** As a private business, the Skamania Lodge continues to seek new recreational activities for guest enjoyment. Recently, a height allowance was granted to permit the installation of a series of zip lines for customer enjoyment. No other planned improvements are known at this time.

## Stevenson Elementary School



**Description:** More than two thirds of Stevenson Elementary School’s 9.5 acre site located to the northeast of the Vancouver Avenue and School Street intersection is devoted to open space and recreation. The facility offers a covered play area, multiple swings and play structures for all ages, grass and asphalt play areas, basketball hoops, benches, landscaping, public art, an undisturbed wooded area, and an indoor gym and auditorium.

**Management Issues:** The open space and recreational facilities are owned and maintained by the Stevenson-Carson School District. Mowing and controlling invasive species are constant concerns for exterior grounds. Community use of the interior facilities is in high demand and controlled by an efficient facilities use procedure controlled through the Elementary School’s administrative office.

**Potential Enhancements:** No planned improvements are known at this time.







## Stevenson High School



**Description:** An approximately 26.25 acre site located between Willard Street, Bulldog Drive, and Gropper Road, the Stevenson High School is part of the heart of the Stevenson community. The School facility has an indoor gym, auditorium, weight room, and library and meeting rooms. Outdoors, the School offers a stadium for football, soccer, and track, practice fields, and tennis courts. An indoor pool is also a key component of the Stevenson High School campus.



**Management Issues:** The property is owned and maintained by the Stevenson-Carson School District. Mowing practice and game fields is a constant concern for exterior grounds. Community use of the facilities is in high demand and controlled by an efficient facilities use procedure controlled through the High School's administrative office. The pool facility had been operated by Skamania County Facilities and Recreation until budget concerns forced its closure in late 2011.

**Potential Enhancements:** The School District is considering privatization options for the pool facility which could include a facility expansion to create a new fitness center to increase its overall viability. New lights have been discussed for the stadium. No other planned improvements are known at this time.



## Sacred Places (Class IV)

- Size:** Sacred places come in all sizes
- Characteristics:** Though they may include the same characteristics as any other class of parks, the primary characteristic of sacred places are their psychological impact on the community as a whole. These places are often in highly visible locations and come to define, reinforce, and transmit what is important to a community's inhabitants. The term "sacred" conjures up mental images of the importance of cathedrals, shrines, and temples in highly religions societies, but applies equally to highly commercial societies where harbors, malls, or skyscrapers represent a community's shared values. In highly secular societies they may come in the form of civic buildings, parks, and other public works. In all areas, Sacred Places contribute heavily to the sense of community and community members desire a strong voice in the face of change
- General Use:** Gregarious or solitary, active or passive use for all ages
- Service Area:** Community-wide
- Existing Examples:** Downtown Waterfront, Rock Creek & Cove, Skamania County Courthouse Lawn
- Potential Examples:** Rock Creek Falls

### Downtown Waterfront



Photo Credit: Jaime Gammann



Photo Credit: Mike Myrland

**Description:** Nearly a mile of the Columbia River Waterfront is accessible from Downtown Stevenson with more than three quarters of it in public ownership. A windsurfing launch is provided at Bob's Beach, a Kiteboard and boat launch at East Point, a tour boat dock at Stevenson Landing. A riverfront trail connects them all with picnic areas, restrooms, vista parking areas, and informal swimming beaches to the east of town.

**Management Issues:** The majority of the waterfront is owned and maintained by the Port of Skamania County and devoted to recreational, commercial, and industrial purposes and the City owns two rights-of-way leading to the water's edge. The remainder is privately-owned and either vacant or used for single-family housing. A substantial portion of the riverfront trail was recently lost to bank-side erosion, and strong east winds and waves batter the Port's personal watercraft docks.

**Potential Enhancements:** The Port is seeking ways to redevelop some of its underdeveloped properties and actively working to secure funds to control the trail-destroying erosion problems. Other projects include renovating and upgrading Stevenson Landing, extending the trail system, improving the roadways of Cascade Avenue and Kanaka Creek Underpass, adding gathering places, and reinforcing the personal watercraft docks.



## Rock Creek & Rock Cove



Photo Credit: Ben Shumaker



Photo Credit: Washington Department of Ecology

**Description:** The waters and lands adjacent to Rock Creek and Rock Cove provide a recreational jewel occupying approximately 150 acres of west central Stevenson between Rock Creek Drive’s two intersections with State Route 14. County facilities in this area include the grassy areas, exhibit halls, and livestock and show arenas associated with the fairgrounds, playground equipment, skateboard park, and newly renovated Hegewald Center for County offices and recreational services. Separated pedestrian pathways connect these facilities with the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum and an assisted living facility. Mixed in with these amenities are vacant lands, single-family homes, commercial endeavors, and less attractive facilities like the State and County shops and the City’s wastewater treatment plant.

**Management Issues:** The major land owners of the Rock Creek & Rock Cove lands are the Interpretive Center (~85 acres) and Skamania County (~42 acres). Rock Creek went through a rapid accretion period after the Piper Road Landslide in 2007, though it has been dredged twice since that time, it is not yet known whether a steady-state has been reached in the area or if the accretion will continue.

**Potential Enhancements:** Additional dredging is possible for Rock Creek and Rock Cove. The County is considering the sale of its vacant lands on Rock Cove and shops on Rock Creek to alleviate its budget crisis. The community has called for improved landscaping conditions of the fairgrounds area and improvements to the skateboard park. No specific planned improvements are known for this area.



## Skamania County Courthouse Lawn



**Description:** This 1.07 acre site located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Russell and Second streets has a far greater function than as a Pocket Park or Passive Green Space. Home to the community's Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, first choice of political and free-speech demonstrations, a natural amphitheater for high school band performances, premier barrel rolling hills for the youngest area residents, and Armed Forces Memorial. The Courthouse Lawn is equipped with more memories than it is with amenities (a street-side benches and drinking fountain, a prominent flag pole, and small picnic area with a monumental petrified log).



**Management Issues:** The City and County share maintenance of the street-side plaza. The County maintains the lawn and plantings, in some case to the chagrin vocal, tree-loving residents.

**Potential Enhancements:** Older plans from the mid-1980's intending to terrace the area and install a large central plaza were shelved based on community pushback. Interpretive signage has been suggested to explain the Courthouse's cutting edge architecture. The area has been tested for use in a ground-based heat exchange system. During the County's budget crisis in 2011, elected officials considered selling off a part of the Courthouse Lawn for its commercial potential. The success of the Stevenson Farmer's Market has renewed calls for a better landscaping plan and a larger plaza to accommodate the increased weekend use.

## Rock Creek Falls (Potential)



**Description:** A hidden wonder, this 40 foot tall waterfall is a delight for intrepid visitors lucky enough to catch a glimpse. Located near the intersection of Iman Cemetery Road and First Falls View Road, no amenities have been developed on this site.

**Management Issues:** The majority of the falls is under County ownership, however portions of the creek at its bank in this area are held in private ownership. Rock Creek also forms the city limits boundary at this location. On the southern, City side of the creek, private ownership prevents direct public access, but Access is possible from the County property on the north side of the creek.

**Potential Enhancements:** Improved access to this area has been considered in the past but bypassed to preserve this area as a locals-only amenity. Should this decision be revisited, a viewpoint and picnic area would increase user enjoyment of this waterfall. However, no planned improvements are known at this time.