

# Coulee Area Park and Recreation District Comprehensive Plan

November 2013

Coulee Area Park and Recreation District

Board of Commissioners

Phil Hansen, Commissioner

Michael Bjorklund, Commissioner

Carla Marconi, Commissioner

Bob Valen, Commissioner

Clarice Kuehne, Commissioner

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.....	4
DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND.....	4
MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS, EXPANSION, AQUISITON AND DEVELOPMENT.....	6
RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES.....	6
EXISTING FACILITIES WITHIN CAPRD BOUNDRIES.....	7
EXISTING FACILITIES DESCRIPTIONS.....	8
ACTION PLAN.....	13
CAPRD MASTER PLAN.....	14
ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.....	14

## INTRODUCTION

Generally, the creation of a park and recreation district is a positive action that contributes to community health and improves the overall quality of life in the communities the district serves. Well-developed parks and recreation facilities also benefit tourism related businesses as they invite visitors to extend their stay and support events that attract visitors to an area. In a time when funding resources are becoming more limited, the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District (CAPRD) believes it is important to create a clear plan for the future. A clear and concise plan will enable the CAPRD to more efficiently move toward the realization of meeting the year round recreational and wellness needs of the community while working to spur economic growth through increased recreation and learning opportunities.

The Coulee Area Park and Recreation District (CAPRD) was created by public vote in November 2003 as authorized under Washington State RCW Chapter 36 Section 39. Establishment of the District was, in part, due to a public desire to address the need for a community pool while enhancing, or establishing, other community recreational resources.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to reflect an understanding of community needs and organize information into goals, policies and procedures for the development of park and recreation services within the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District (CAPRD). The plan also serves as a way to identify existing recreation and wellness resources that have previously been established within the district. Part of the process in developing a comprehensive plan is encouraging public input and providing a way for the community to communicate their park and recreation desires.

This plan establishes the foundation for encouraging continued coordinated approaches to natural resource preservation and the growth of recreation services along with the development of park and trail services throughout the CAPRD. This plan also recognizes the important relationship of recreation and tourism to communities within the CAPRD.

This plan is referred to as a “comprehensive plan” which establishes policies and provides the public with information concerning the short and long-term goals and objectives of the CAPRD.

The objectives of this plan are as follows:

1. To evaluate and establish policies by which the recreation services of the CAPRD may function effectively to carry out a park acquisition plan, recreation programs and services, operations and maintenance, and funding.
2. To assess recreation needs through the CAPRD by comparing all existing resources and estimating the future resources needed to meet future recreational needs and demands.
3. To develop a park, natural area, and open space plan which includes a program criteria for park and land acquisitions
4. To define organizational and operational requirements of the District in order to manage the overall improvement program.

This plan will provide an analysis of the population and geographic setting within the CAPRD, present the current mission, goals and objectives of the CAPRD, provide a description of the facilities that already exist within the boundaries of the CAPRD, discuss the immediate priorities of the CAPRD, present possibilities for development of new projects within the CAPRD, discuss additional uses of existing facilities, and present the CAPRD’s master plan for development over the next several years.

## DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The Coulee Area Park and Recreation District covers a geographically diverse and unique area. The district is situated at the intersection of the Okanogan Highlands and Columbia Basin geographic provinces. In general, the Columbia River forms the boundary between the two provinces and is one of the primary natural features found within the district. The Columbia is the largest river in the Pacific Northwest, flowing roughly 1,250 miles through British Columbia

and Washington State, and forming a major portion of the border between Washington and Oregon. The Grand Coulee is the other dominant natural feature found in the district. The

Coulee is an ancient river bed that was formed during the most recent ice age when an ice dam temporarily diverted water across the plateau. Erosion caused by this diversion eventually formed the Grand Coulee. Ages later, the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam mimicked the Ice Age conditions, impounding the Columbia River to provide reliable irrigation to the Columbia Basin.

The CAPRD encompasses five incorporated towns: Electric City, Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam, Elmer City and Nespalem, along with several unincorporated settlements. All are located along State Highways 155 and 174 within one to three miles of each other and fall within Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan or Douglas counties.

Three of the communities CAPRD serves—Coulee Dam, Elmer City and Nespalem—are located on the Colville Reservation within Okanogan County. Nespalem was incorporated on April 15, 1935 and the 2010 census recorded 236 residents. Elmer City was incorporated on April 17, 1947 with the 2010 census recording a population of 238 people. The town of Coulee Dam was incorporated on February 26, 1959. The recorded population of Coulee Dam during the 2010 census was 1,098 people.

The two remaining communities served by the CAPRD—Grand Coulee and Electric City—are located in Grant County. Grand Coulee was incorporated on November 6, 1935 and the 2010 census recorded a population of 988 residents. Electric City was incorporated on August 4, 1950 with the 2010 census reporting a population of 968 residents.

The small rural population of Northwest Lincoln County also uses services provided in Grand Coulee and Electric City. According to the 2000 census this rural area has an estimated population of 200 residents.

The Grand Coulee Dam, along with the Colville Confederated Tribe, Coulee Medical Center, Grand Coulee Dam School District, many small businesses and tourism, constitutes a large portion of the area's economic base.

## MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District is to provide the District with year around recreational and wellness facilities that will spur economic growth by providing recreation and learning opportunities to support a healthy and diverse community within the townships of Electric City, Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam, Elmer City, Nespalem, Desautel and unincorporated District areas (CAPRD).

The following goals provide the general operating guidelines to implement successful parks, recreation, natural areas and open space programs in the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District.

1. Form partnerships with any and all entities whose stated vision and goal is aligned with the CAPRD purpose and mission, such partnerships being determined by the CAPRD Board of Commissioners.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan for an aquatic and wellness center.
3. Work with the Wellness Center community partners to bring an aquatic and wellness center to the District within 5 years.
4. Capitalize on opportunities to provide and/or enhance recreation and wellness activities within the district.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS, EXPANSION, ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Develop an indoor swimming pool within a Community Wellness Center in our community for year-round aquatic opportunities to benefit all residents as well as visitors to our area.
2. Develop a community center to provide space for year-round recreational and sporting opportunities that benefit all full-time and summer residents, guests, visitors, and tourists.
3. Expand current District inventory by assuming publicly held properties within the District's boundaries as necessary and appropriate.
- 4.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES

In keeping with the spirit of cooperation, the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District feels it should accept the responsibilities for providing park and recreation services within the District boundaries as outlined below:

The CAPRD recognizes that there will be an overlapping of district, municipal, county, port, school, and state and national park and recreation facilities or services within our district. It is nevertheless desirable to define the District's responsibilities as clearly as possible. Since the role of the District should be to develop and maintain recreation facilities and programs that will serve the needs of communities and areas within the district, the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District should provide such facilities and programs, where there is no other unit of local government to provide them, by whatever method the Board may determine most appropriate.

In accomplishing this, the Board may utilize district, county, city, school and port services as well as other methods by which those benefitted will pay the cost. Entering into intergovernmental contracts or agreements with other local units of government for the joint use of resources and for park and recreation facilities and programs should be examined. Through partnering for community use of facilities paid for with public dollars, we avoid duplicity of efforts; we encourage efficient use of limited resources, and are able to expand our services, where appropriate.

## EXISTING FACILITIES WITHIN CAPRD BOUNDARIES

The following types of facilities are located within the boundaries of the CAPRD.

### Mini Parks

These are smaller parks that typically serve a concentrated or limited population such as preschool children or senior citizens. Mini parks are generally placed in close proximity to homes in higher density residential neighborhoods with little open space. Mini parks are of less value in lower density single-family residential areas characterized by larger lots and usable yards. A large number of scattered mini parks can create a maintenance burden and are not considered as essential in low-density residential areas. Mini parks are generally located within less than one-quarter mile of the population to be served and are most beneficial where neighborhoods are bisected by arterials. The recommended size for a mini park is 1 to 2 acres although smaller pocket parks may be created in those neighborhoods where the recommended acreage is not available.

### Neighborhood Parks

The neighborhood park is the essential core park for residential areas. These parks provide the most close-at-hand recreational facilities for intense recreational activities/facilities such as field games, court games, playground apparatus, and picnic tables. Neighborhood parks should be easily accessible to the neighborhood population, geographically centered and within safe walking distance. Normally, neighborhood parks serve a  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius and serve a population of 2,000 to 5,000, or a standard residential neighborhood. The desirable site size is 5-10 acres.

### Community Park

This type of park should be in an area of diverse environmental quality. Community parks include land with outstanding natural qualities for activities such as walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. A community park may include areas suited for intense recreational facilities as found in the neighborhood parks and/or athletic complexes and swimming pools, depending on the community needs. A community park typically serves several neighborhoods within a 1 to 2 mile radius. The desirable site size for this type of park is 10 + acres.

### Regional Parks

These should be areas of outstanding natural beauty with wooded areas, bodies of water and interesting terrain. They are used for outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses. Regional parks normally serve several communities and are within a maximum of one-hour driving time. They should contain over 200 acres of land and should be developed on a basis of 5 to 10 acres per 1,000 people.

### School/Park Site

Planning schools and park sites adjacent to one another has historically proven to benefit a community.

### Open Space/Undeveloped Parkland

Open Space refers to areas that are generally maintained in a natural state and used as greenways, or greenbelts, or for natural resources management or protection. Open space parks may include waterways and flood channels through the urbanized community. Wherever possible, the greenways should act as a corridor for pedestrian and bicycle use, linking residential, schools, parks and commercial development.

### Linear Park

A linear park provides public access to trail-oriented activities, which may include walking, running, biking, skating, etc., and preserves open space. Linear parks may also provide neighborhood recreation facilities where adequate space is available.

### Sports Park

This type of park has competitive sports facilities which include outdoor and indoor facilities.

### Community Recreation Facility

Indoor facility intended for recreational use.

### Natural Area Park

Area managed for both recreational use and natural values. This type of park provides opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, bicycling and nature photography.

## EXISTING FACILITIES DESCRIPTIONS

The facilities outlined below are all located within the District boundaries and are listed according by the agency/organization that is responsible for each asset.

### United States Bureau of Reclamation

- 1) Grand Coulee Dam Visitor Center: The Visitor Center at the Grand Coulee Dam is located just below the Dam in Grand Coulee. The Center is open year-round and offers visitors the opportunity to view exhibits on the history of the Grand Coulee Dam and view educational videos on the Ice Age formations that created the beautiful scenery in the Coulee. The Bureau also puts on a laser light show during the summer months which is free to the public.
- 2) Visitors Center Park: The Visitors Center Park is a special use recreation area located below the Grand Coulee Dam at the Visitors Center. The area contains several picnic tables and an open grassy area along the banks of the Columbia River.
- 3) Third Power Plant Tour: The Bureau offers guided tours of the Third Power Plant on a daily basis, but visitors are encouraged to call ahead and confirm scheduled tours. The tours are free to the public and last approximately 45 minutes each.

- 4) Downriver Trail: The Downriver Trail is a linear park that the Bureau maintains. The trail originates near Mason City Park in Coulee Dam and continues approximately 6 miles downriver where the trail ends in a loop below Seaton's Grove.
- 5) North Marina: North Marina is a natural area park located in the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. This area provides access to a public boat launch.
- 6) Washington Flats: Washington Flats is a natural area park located downstream of the Grand Coulee Dam along the west bank of the Columbia River.

6) FDR Bust Park

The FDR Bust Park is a mini park located just above the dam. This public park has two picnic tables and one water fountain along with a gazebo and access to interpretive facilities.

- 7) Pole Park: Pole Park is a mini park located between the dam and the town of Grand Coulee. This public park has limited facilities, but offers open space and include information about the Grand Coulee Dam area.

State and National Parks

The following sites are part of the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area:

- 8) Crescent Bay Lake: Crescent Bay Lake is a natural area park located above the Grand Coulee Dam. This area offers public access to fishing and other water recreation and provides access to public parking.
- 9) Spring Canyon: Spring Canyon is a regional park located long SR 174 in the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. This public park is open seasonally and includes a public beach, several sand volleyball areas, covered picnic shelters, public restrooms, a dedicated play area, and a concession stand.
- 10) National Park Service Headquarters Park: The NPS Headquarters Park is a mini park located on Crest Drive in Coulee Dam. This park includes dedicated BBQ areas, picnic tables and public parking.

The following sites are part of Steamboat Rock State Park:

- 11) Osborne Bay: Osborne Bay is a natural park area located on Banks Lake. The amenities located at Osborne Bay include a public boat launch, twenty-four picnic tables, two restrooms, and trails for off-road vehicles. This area is open to the public during most of the year.

Coulee Area Park and Recreation District

- 12) North Dam Park and Event Center: North Dam Park and Event Center is a community park located along SR 155 between the towns of Grand Coulee and Electric City. This park includes two baseball fields, one Skate Park, two tennis courts, BBQ facilities and limited parking.

#### Grand Coulee Dam Area School District

The Grand Coulee Area School District has begun construction of a new K-12 school facility in the Town of Coulee Dam. This facility will replace the existing facilities listed below in 2014. The following existing facilities belong to the Grand Coulee Dam School District.

- 13) Center Elementary School: Center Elementary School is a school/park site located in Grand Coulee. This public elementary school includes one baseball field, one outdoor basketball court, four dedicated play structures, and ample public parking.
- 14) Grand Coulee Dam Middle School: GCDMS is a school/park site located in Grand Coulee. This public middle school includes a baseball field, an indoor basketball court, one football field, and an outdoor track.
- 15) Lake Roosevelt High School: Lake Roosevelt High School is located in Coulee Dam. This public high school includes one baseball field, one indoor basketball court, one outdoor basketball court, one football field, four tennis courts, four picnic tables and ample parking space.

#### Nespelem School District

The following facility belongs to the Nespelem School District.

- 16) Nespelem Elementary School: The Nespelem Elementary School is a school/park site located in Nespelem. This facility includes one outdoor basketball court, a football field, 5 play structures, swings, public parking and access to a bike rack.

#### Town of Electric City

The following sites are located in the vicinity of Electric City. Currently there are no established neighborhood parks in Electric City.

- 17) Banks Lake Golf Course (see description under “Golf Course”)
- 18) Osborne Bay (see description under “State and National Parks”)

#### City of Grand Coulee

The following sites are located in the vicinity of Grand Coulee.

- 19) Grand Coulee City Park: The Grand Coulee City Park is a neighborhood park located along State Highway 174. This park includes one outdoor basketball court, 3 established play structures, swings, picnic tables, BBQ Facilities and access to public restrooms.
- 20) Seiler Park: Seiler Park is a mini park located east of Grand Coulee Avenue/SR 174. This park has a dedicated play structure and public parking.
- 21) Bill Allen Park: The Bill Allen Park is an open space park located on Spokane Way south of Center Elementary School.
- 22) City Hall Park: The City Hall Park is an open space park located along the Grand Coulee Highway/SR 155.
- 23) Entrance Park: The Entrance Park is an open space park located along Grand Coulee Avenue/SR 174. Public parking is available.
- 24) Hospital Park: The Hospital Park is an open space park located near Coulee Medical Center. Senior Gardens Park
- 25) Bowen Park: Bowen Park is an open space park located in Grand Coulee on Spokane Way between Bill Allen Park and Entrance Park.

### Town of Coulee Dam

The following sites are located in the vicinity of Coulee Dam.

- 26) Candy Point Trail: Candy Point Trail is a linear park located past the Credit Union in Coulee Dam. This park provides hikers access to the Candy Point trail, which offers a challenging hiking experience across a hand laid stone trail that includes stairs carved into the rock face.
- 27) Crown Point:  
Crown Point is a special use recreation area located off SR 174 on the bluffs overlooking the Columbia River. A covered meeting area provides shelter for individuals and group gatherings.
- 28) Douglas Park: Douglas Park is a mini park located along Columbia Avenue/SR 155 in Coulee Dam. This park boasts a river front location and picturesque landscaping. Students at Lake Roosevelt High School often utilize this park as a backdrop for their senior pictures.
- 29) Cole Park: Cole Park is a neighborhood park located along Columbia Avenue just above the Credit Union. This public park contains one outdoor basketball court, two tennis courts, BBQ facilities, a horseshoe pit, sand volleyball court and bike racks along with several picnic tables. Ample street-side parking is available.

- 30) Mason City Park: The Mason City Park is a neighborhood park located on Central Avenue across the street from the Coulee Dam Post Office. This public park boasts a newer play structure along with several swings and spring rides. The park also has several picnic tables and access to public restrooms and a water fountain. Ample street-side parking is available in front of the park.

#### Town of Elmer City

The following sites are located in the vicinity of Elmer City.

- 31) Elmer City Park and Elmer City Hall: The Elmer City Park is a neighborhood park. This park includes one tennis court, two picnic tables, one play structure, swings, and established parking. The Elmer City Hall is an open space park located on Seaton Avenue in Elmer City.

#### Town of Nespelem

The following sites are located in the vicinity of Nespelem.

- 32) Colville Agency Ball Field Park: The Colville Agency Ball Field is a neighborhood park located on the Colville Agency Campus along SR 155. This facility includes two baseball fields, one outdoor basketball court, several picnic tables, bleachers and public parking.
- 33) Nespelem City Park: The Nespelem City Park is a neighborhood park located near the Nespelem Post Office. This park includes one outdoor basketball court, four dedicated play structures, several spring rides, swings, picnic tables, and public parking.
- 34) Colville Agency Quadrangle: The Colville Agency Quadrangle is an open space park located on the Colville Agency campus.

#### Community Center

- 35) Nespelem Community Center: The Nespelem Community Center is a community recreation facility located along SR 155 near the Colville Indian Agency. This facility includes one indoor basketball court, a fitness center, several classrooms, a pool table/lounge area, and public parking.

#### Golf Courses

- 36) Banks Lake Golf Club: The Banks Lake Golf Club is an 18-hole golf course located just outside of Electric City on the edge of Banks Lake. This privately owned course provides a challenging and exciting experience for any golfer and is open to the public during the spring, summer, and fall.

## ACTION PLAN

The action plan for the Coulee Area Park & Recreation District presented here is aimed at satisfying the needs and demands of the community that are apparent from reviewing the information presented to the Board. This action plan is only a guideline based on current information and is not intended to act as a rigid and unchangeable commitment. As new information becomes available, and unforeseen events occur, the CAPRD should review this action plan and make any alterations necessary to respond to new circumstances.

The population of the counties within the CAPRD has continued to increase over the past ten years. Since 2000, the population of Okanogan County has increased 2.5%; Lincoln County's population has increased .6%, Douglas County by 15.2%, and Grant County by almost 18%. While the population of the area continued to grow there was little increase in public access to recreation areas between 2000 and 2009.

The Coulee Area Park and Recreation District is aware that the priorities of area residents include a public swimming pool, a community center, and the development of more outdoor recreation areas. Therefore, the CAPRD intends to use this comprehensive plan as a spring board to developing a detailed improvement plan for the District.

### Priorities

Changing situations can dictate development project priorities. Therefore, the CAPRD Board has established the following priorities:

1. Maintaining and improving North Dam Park
2. Construction of a public swimming pool to serve the CAPRD
3. Construction and development of a sustainable Community Wellness Center
4. Developing a trail system in partnership with State and National Park entities
5. Developing partnerships with existing recreational facilities

### District Development and Additional Uses

- North Dam Park - CAPRD assumed responsibility for operation and maintenance of North Dam Park in 2011. CAPRD entered into a ten-year Management Agreement for the Park with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. North Dam Park is heavily used for community events and activities such as the annual Colorama Festival, Little League T-Ball and softball, as well as for Summer Softball. The CAPRD achieved this by enlisting the support of Electric City, Grand Coulee and Coulee Dam. The city councils of all three towns have reached an agreement to assist the CAPRD with maintenance costs.
- Swimming Pool - The CAPRD was formed by General Election in November of 2003 with one of the main goals focusing on the construction of a community pool. A 2007 needs survey conducted by the Coulee Area Park and Recreation District indicated that an indoor swimming pool was the most highly desired facility of those surveyed in the five communities within the CAPRD. CAPRD is working with partners within the community, including the Coulee Medical Center, the Grand Coulee Chamber

Commerce, the School District, and entities within the Colville Confederated Tribes, to include the aquatic facility as part of the Community Wellness Center.

- Community Wellness Center- The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Survey indicated that four of the five surveyed communities ranked the construction of an indoor recreation center in the top three most important CAPRD projects. Since that time the CAPRD has continued to pursue the possibility of developing a community wellness center that would provide indoor recreation opportunities, serve as a hub for community groups and programs, and contribute to the overall health and wellness of the greater community. In working towards this goal the CAPRD partnered with another local group, the Wellness Action Group, which recently secured a Horizons grant through the Washington State University Extension Program. The Board also obtained a Grant County Strategic Infrastructure Grant in the spring of 2011. The money, along with other grants, was used to obtain a feasibility study for a Community Wellness Center. The Wellness Center Committee continues to seek funding for this project.
- Trail Development- Activities such as walking, hiking, running, and equestrian activities are very popular within the CAPRD. The Board intends to support the development of a dedicated trail system in partnership with both State and National Park Service entities.
- Soccer Fields- The local youth soccer program would benefit greatly from the construction of several permanent soccer fields. These fields would include fencing around the fields, team benches, dedicated spectator seating, and parking.
- Baseball Fields- Little League teams, the Community Softball League, and school athletics would benefit greatly from the addition of permanent dugouts at all baseball fields where dugouts are not currently available as well as renovation of existing dugouts.
- Improved Lighting- Many parks within the CAPRD would benefit from the installation of better lighting. Improved lighting conditions would extend hours of possible use for all parks and increase the level of safety for all park patrons.

#### CAPRD MASTER PLAN

The CAPRD, through a partnership with Eastern Washington University, is currently developing a Master Plan for North Dam Park. As more assets are acquired and more partnerships are built, future Master Plans will be developed as appropriate.

#### ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

CAPRD will continue to capitalize on opportunities to develop and enhance park and recreation infrastructure that becomes available.