

**SKYKOMISH  
SCENIC  
RIVER**

RECREATIONAL  
ACCESS  
STUDY

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A Public Involvement  
Process and Plan

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Prepared by

**Washington State Parks  
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for

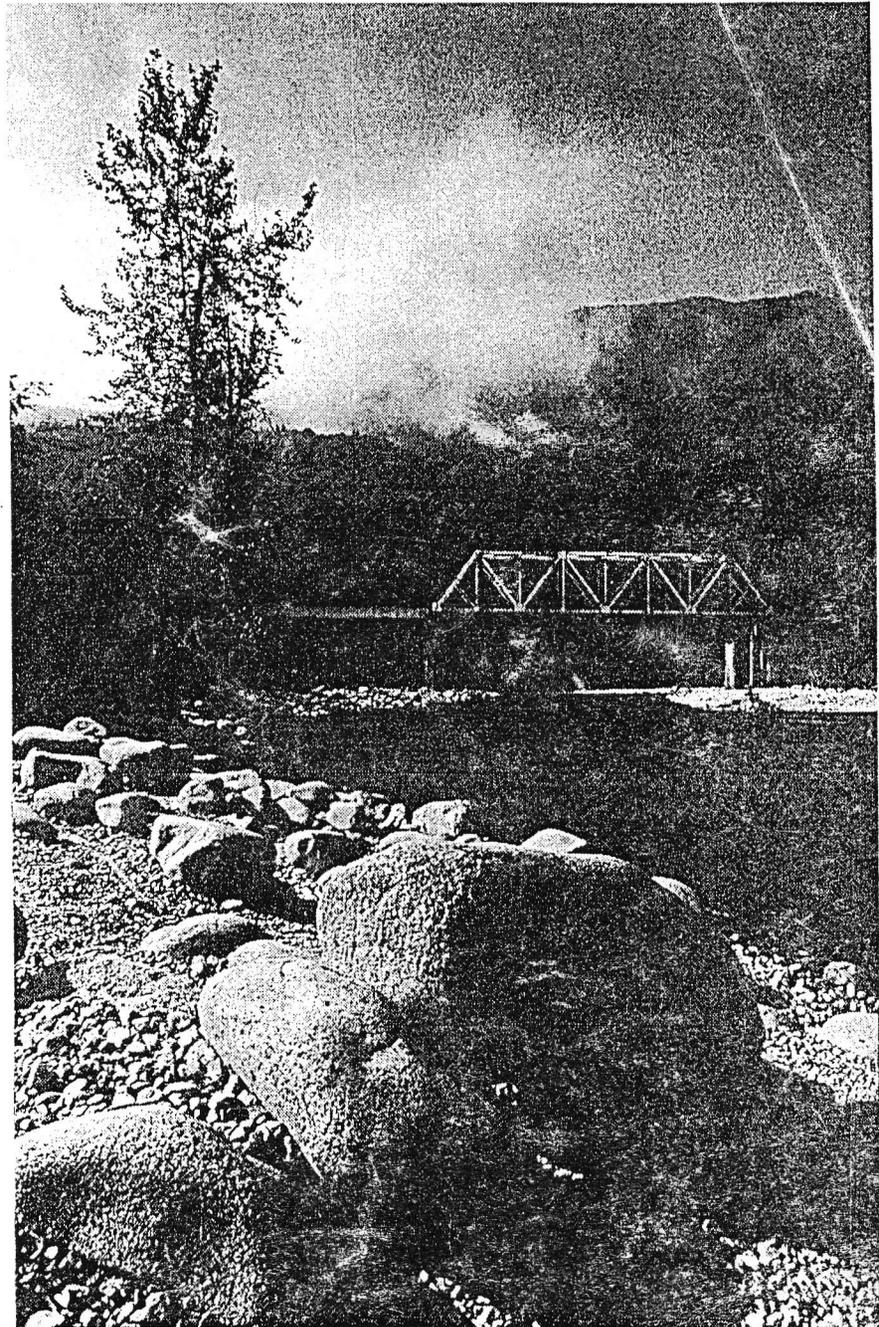
**Washington State Parks  
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State Scenic River Program**

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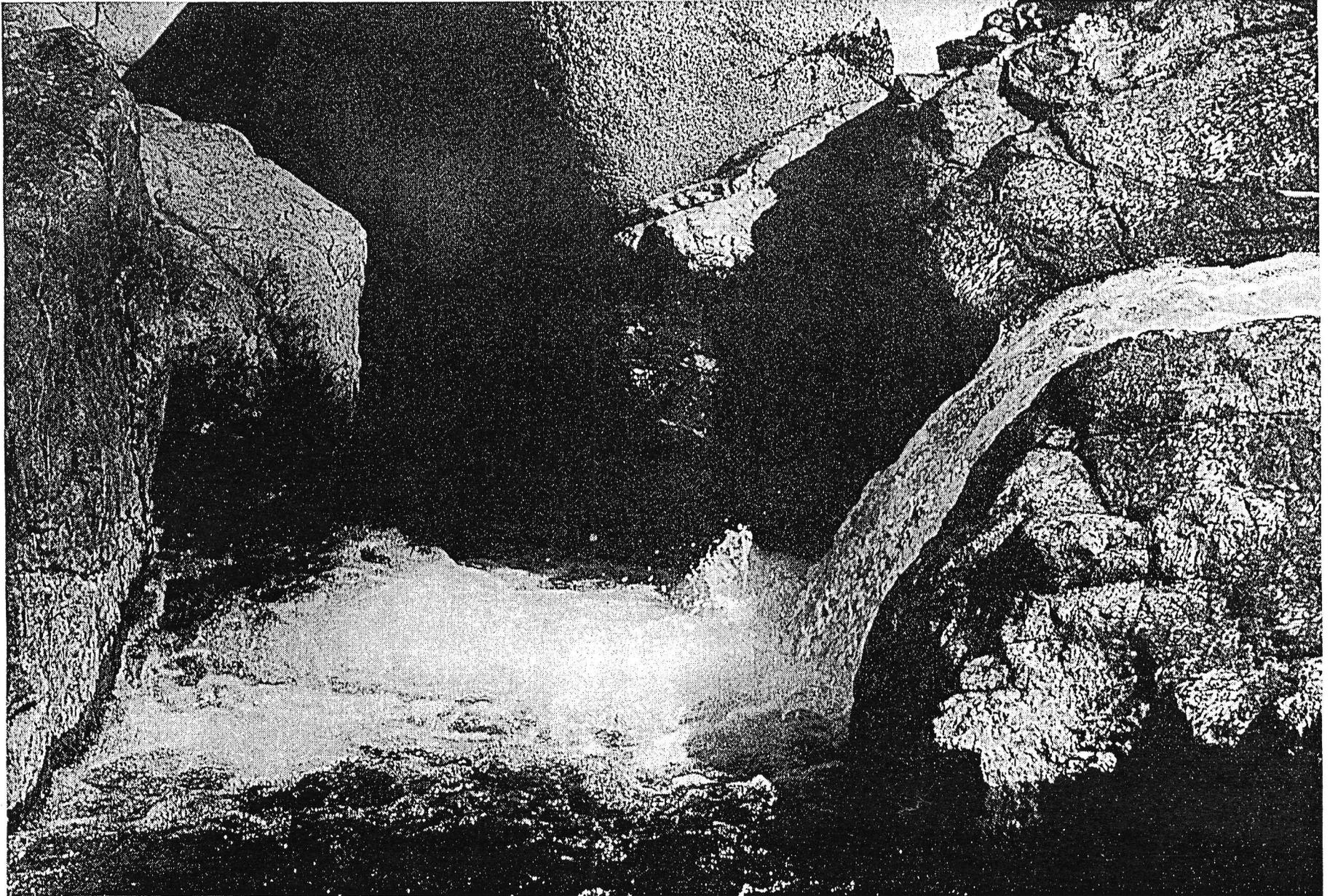
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## SKYKOMISH SCENIC RIVER RECREATIONAL ACCESS STUDY

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This study is an effort to begin to resolve uncontrolled public access to the Skykomish River. Local citizens and other river interests directed the State Parks Scenic Rivers Program to study the problem of private property trespass and high concentrations of public use along the Skykomish Scenic River System. The Skykomish Scenic River Citizen Advisory Board and State Parks Scenic River staff have conducted public workshops throughout the valley to gather recommendations to solve these river problems. This study is the result of those workshops and other expert advice.

The Advisory Board and State Parks want as many interested individuals as possible to review this study and its findings and help determine the best short term and long range solutions for managing public use of this outstanding river and protecting private property.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

## History and Goals of the Scenic Rivers Program

The Washington State Scenic Rivers Program began in 1977 with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79.72 which provides an opportunity for rivers of exceptional quality to be protected and preserved. Rivers possessing outstanding natural, scenic, historic, ecological, and recreational value are eligible for designation. The Skykomish River and several tributaries were recognized for these qualities in 1977, and as a result, became the first State Scenic River in the system.

In 1986 the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission initiated active management of the State Scenic Rivers Program. Consistent with the legislation, the Scenic Rivers Program works to: 1) coordinate the activities of federal and state agencies and local governments whose policies affect the river corridor; 2) protect the rights of private property owners within the designated area. Also within the goals of the Program is the job of facilitating use of the river by the public for water related activities.

Overseeing the Program management process is the Committee of Participating Agencies. Represented on the committee are the state departments of Ecology, Fisheries, Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Transportation. Also represented are the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, the Washington Association of Counties, the Association of Washington Cities, and the private sector. In addition, representatives of all local jurisdictions associated with a designated river participate as members of an expanded Committee. This group, called the River Council, oversees the development of actions to be implemented locally.

To date, the Skykomish River System is the only Washington State Scenic River. The river segments included in the Skykomish System, and shown in Figure 1, are: the main stem from the town of Sultan to the confluence of the North and South Forks below Index (14 miles); the South Fork and its major tributary the Tye River from Tye Lake (34 miles); the Beckler River from its junction with the Rapid River to the confluence with the South Fork (8 miles); and the North Fork to the junction with Bear Creek (11 miles).

## The Skykomish Management Process

Central to Scenic River management is the involvement of local citizens and interest groups. The Program acknowledges and functions according to the idea that no public action can replace the wise use of a river by those living along it. Furthermore, effective river management cannot succeed without local consensus and support. To formalize the active citizen involvement that was occurring along the Skykomish, a Citizen Advisory Board was created in September 1988. The Board, representing a full spectrum of river users, land owners, forest managers, and concerned citizens, serves as a focal point for the direction of the Program. The Advisory Board defined as its role: being leaders in management of the Skykomish River; drafting goals and objectives for scenic river management; performing primary review of action plans; and, helping further community involvement in conservation of the Skykomish Scenic River. Of the goals and objectives the Board presented to the River Council for acceptance, a priority item was river access. (For a complete copy of the Goals and Objectives, see Appendix A.)

## INTRODUCTION

Figure 1 Skykomish Scenic River Locator Map

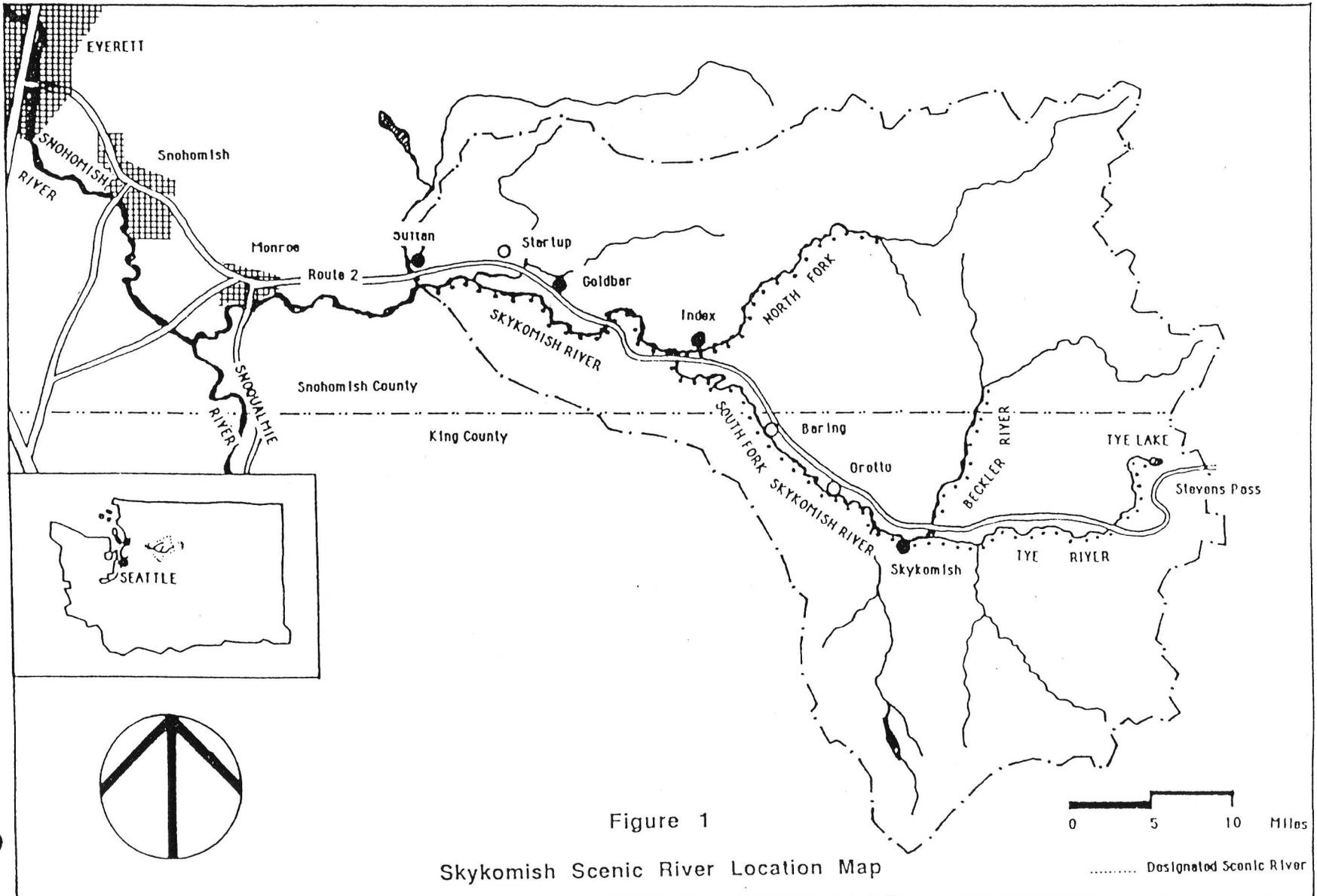


Figure 1

Skykomish Scenic River Location Map

0 5 10 Miles

..... Designated Scenic River

## SKYKOMISH SCENIC RIVER RECREATIONAL ACCESS STUDY

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Implementation of the goals and objectives compiled by the Board is being accomplished through a series of Action Plans. Focusing on one Action Plan at a time, the first to be tackled is a recreational access study. The goal is to formulate a plan to manage public access to the river. The major objectives are:

- to get the public dispersed away from State Highway 2
- to provide adequate facilities for boating put-in and take-out
- to deter trespass

The plan also involves developing a network of contact people for the access study and other recreation and conservation objectives. The information has been compiled in the Skykomish Scenic River Conservation and Recreation Directory.

### The Access Problem

Inadequate public access to the Skykomish River has been a problem for a number of years. In the 1980 Skykomish Valley Area Comprehensive Plan prepared by Snohomish County Planning Department, the public expressed concern about insufficient access. More recently, the concern for access has been documented in all public meetings held by the Scenic

River Program along the Skykomish. These citizen concerns are reflected in the Goals and Objectives outlined by the Advisory Board.

The Skykomish River is one of the most popular recreational rivers in Washington. In the last ten years recreational use of the river has increased dramatically, as has the diversity of use. The largest single source of increased use is in the commercial rafting business. The Skykomish River is the second most boated river in the State, with estimates of 10,000 to 15,000 people boating per year. Other increased recreational activities include inner tubing, private rafting, private and commercial kayaking, sightseeing, picnicking, shoreline and drift boat fishing, and miscellaneous activities such as sun bathing and swimming. Users of the river include local residents, Puget Sound urbanites, as well as in-state and out-of-state visitors driving through on Scenic Highway 2.

The availability of public land access to the river has not been sufficient to accommodate the increased usage and has resulted in problems of:

- trespassing on private property
- parking congestion on shoulders of main roads and highways

- sanitation problems
- wide-spread littering
- safety concerns

This study will identify alternatives for dispersed access along the Skykomish River to provide for day-use visitation, white water rafting and kayaking, and drift boat and bank fishing. The study will formulate a plan for an appropriate level of facilities so as not to attract more use of the river and further encumber local towns.

### Limitations of This Report

This access plan is limited to provision of day-use sites. Access can include a range of activities from day-use swimming or boating, to overnight camping and trails. While camping and trails require attention, the greatest access pressures and conflicts on the Skykomish River at present are from daytime recreation. Providing day-use public access sites is the first priority given the problems of trespassing, highway parking congestion, and sanitation. It is recommended that future planning by the Advisory Board and the Scenic River Program include an evaluation of overnight camping and trail needs.

## A Community Involvement Process

The foundation of the approach used here is the input received from recreational users and citizens along the Skykomish River. The Skykomish River Citizen Advisory Board is the catalyst for this public involvement process. The Board initiated the access study and sponsored workshops to collect public opinion and concerns regarding access. The Board was consulted monthly throughout the study and reviewed the plan as it evolved. Board members also provided vital information about river access areas and problems, as well as an overall context for understanding the issue.

Initial input from citizens came from workshops in 1988 addressing the Program as a whole. When asked what issues were of most concern, access repeatedly surfaced. To assess specific concerns regarding access, public workshops were held in Index, Skykomish, and Sultan during the Spring of 1989. At the meetings, small groups, or "Listening Posts" were formed to record the ideas and concerns of the participants. This information formed the groundwork for the study since priority problems and problem sites were identified.

In addition to the public workshops, recreational user groups and individuals were contacted. Local sportsmen's clubs, bank fishermen, drift boaters, kayakers, rafters, and locals contributed to the input process, expressing concerns as well as information about preferred sites and priority needs.

Property owners were another target group contacted. Private individuals, local businesses, and large land holders such as Burlington Northern Railroad, Weyerhaeuser, and Plum Creek Timber were reached for input regarding trespass and access issues. Federal, state, county, and local governments offered similar input.

Additional information was obtained from previous reports, field observations, and consultation with the Committee of Participating Agencies and the Skykomish River Council.

The inventory provided criteria for evaluating sites capable of providing public access and solving access problems. These criteria, or "program elements" were: recreational needs, local community needs, type of property ownership, safety concerns, and whether sites minimized use of Highway 2.

Sites capable of providing access were then identified via:

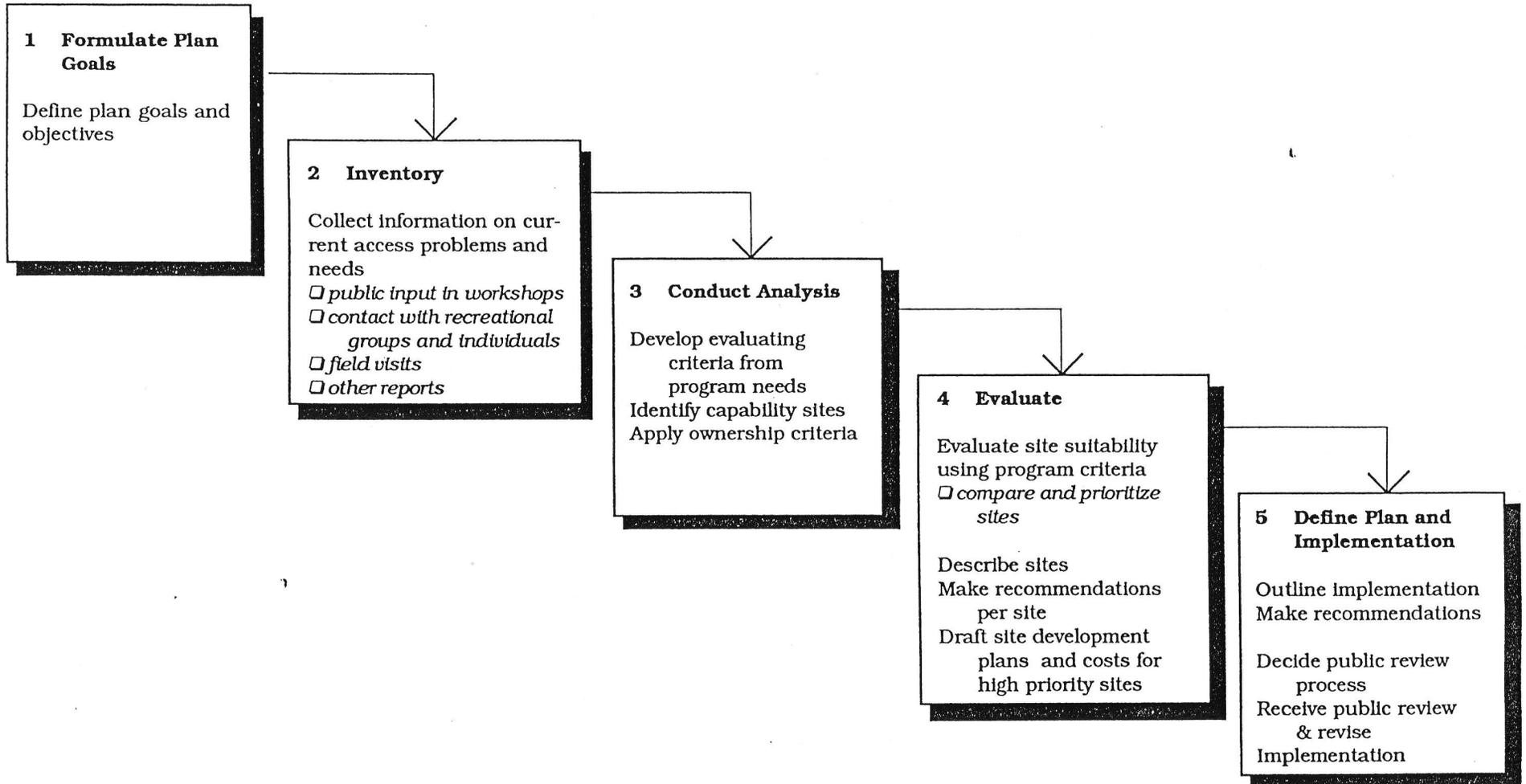
- field visits
- a preliminary site inventory (Appendix B)
- public comments during workshops
- personal contact from area residents
- identification of public lands adjacent to the river

The majority of sites identified were areas with a history of unmanaged public use, often at the expense of the environment and private property rights.

Next, sites were evaluated as to their suitability for public access based on the program elements.

## METHODOLOGY

**PLANNING PROCESS**



## Overview

Information about access problems and possibilities was collected through a variety of methods as described in the Methodology chapter. For the purpose of summarizing the input received by residents and recreationists of the Skykomish, the Skykomish Scenic River System is divided into segments. The segments referred to in this discussion are as follows: the main stem, from Sultan eastward to the confluence of the North and South Forks; the North Fork from the confluence to Bear Creek; the South Fork from the confluence to Tye Lake and including the Beckler River up to Rapid River.

## Skykomish Main Stem

A public workshop sponsored by the Advisory Board was held in the town of Sultan, located at the western boundary of the Scenic corridor, to hear citizen concerns regarding public access to the Skykomish River. The main points brought up in the meeting were:

### General

- Sultan experiences high levels of diverse recreational use.
- Drift boating is popular and Sultan's Sportsman's Park (site 1) provides a launch site. This site, owned by Sultan and the Department of Wildlife, has problems with litter, parking congestion, and general destruction of the environment. Recent renovations by the Club and Sultan residents have improved the site markedly.
- Bank fishermen use the Sultan area heavily and cause congestion by parking along Mann Road despite a public access and parking site less than a quarter mile down the road (site 4).
- Additional sites which unofficially provide parking and non-boater access were identified. On the map, these sites are 2, 3, and 5.

- Trespassing and litter are concerns throughout the area.
- Sultan does not experience much impact from commercial rafting given the calmer quality of the lower Skykomish.
- A need was expressed for development of overnight camping facilities near Sultan and exploration of trail development along the river.

### Recreational Use

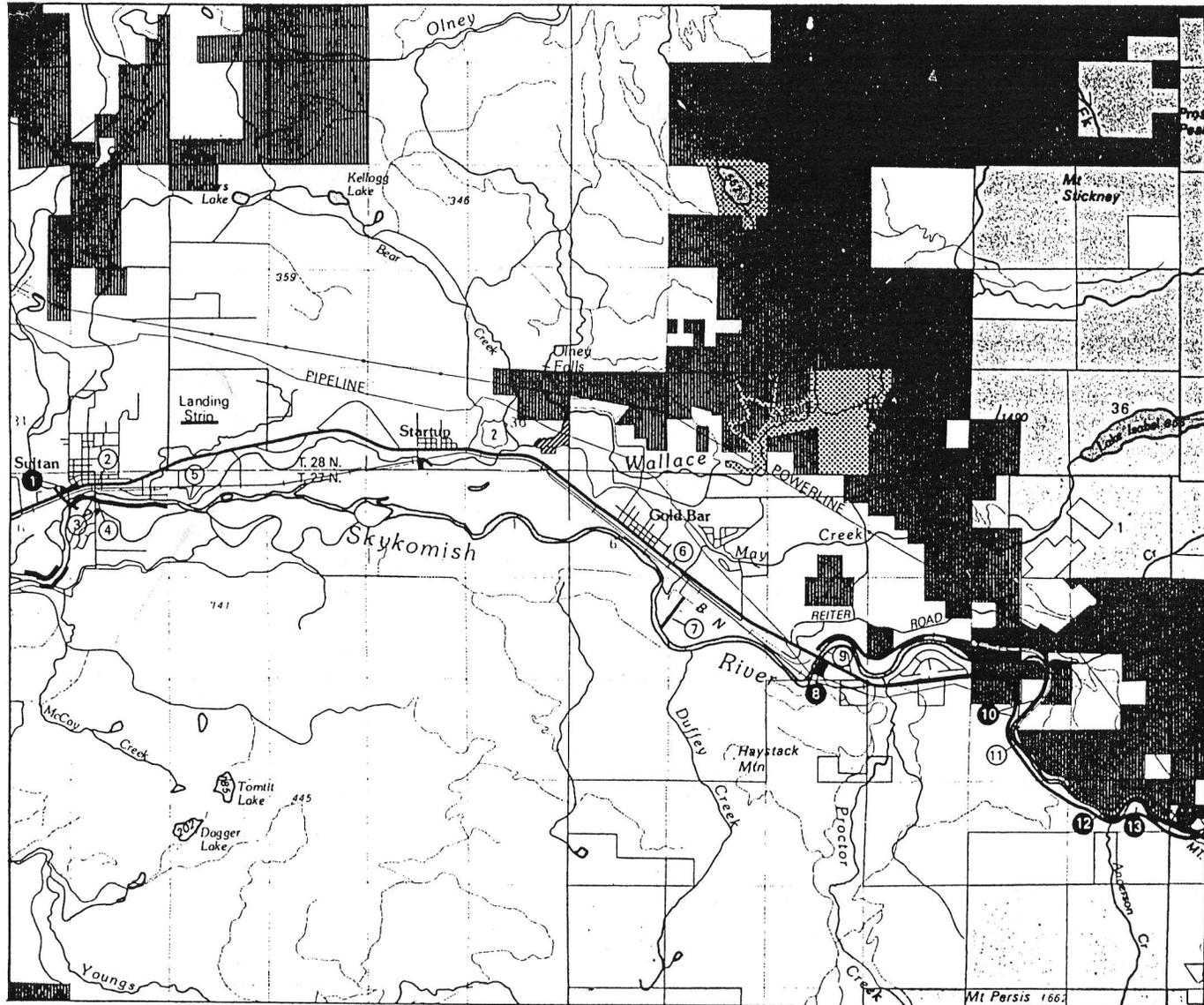
- Non-boater use of the main stem, such as picnicking, swimming, sunbathing, and watching boaters, is dispersed throughout the corridor. A majority of locations involve trespassing on private property. Of the sites used, one of the more popular is High Bridge (site 8) which is owned by the Department of Wildlife.

Boat watching is especially popular adjacent to "Boulder Drop" (just west of Anderson Creek), a Class V rapid at high water. Here (site 12), on the south bank, concern and frustration about trespassing has been openly expressed by the land owner.

The main stem offers little by way of publicly owned access to the river for picnicking, swimming, sunbathing, or sightseeing.

## INVENTORY

Figure 2 Main Stem Map



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□ Fishing use of the Skykomish is dispersed along the main stem, and needs vary for the two main types of fishing: bank fishing and drift boating. Bank fishermen access the river through a myriad of locations, some of the primary sites are numbers 6, 7, 8, 10, and 14. Several fishermen have expressed their concern over the impact of rafting on fish during spawning and low water.

Drift boat fishermen are more limited in where they access the river given the need for a launch ramp and avoidance of major rapids. High Bridge (site 8) is the most popular site for drift boaters who then float to Sultan or Monroe. The High Bridge and Sultan launch sites provide the key access needs for the drift boaters; however, misuse and overcrowding of the sites create problems for all users.

□ Rafters generally put-in on either fork of the Skykomish and take-out at High Bridge after having run Boulder Drop. Commercial rafting groups, with anywhere from eight to 50 people per company, and usually two or more companies running the same day, deliver large numbers of people, vehicles, and equipment to the site. High Bridge is ideal for rafting use (as it is for drift boating) since it is located downstream from all major rapids and provides plenty of open space for take-out activities. Life

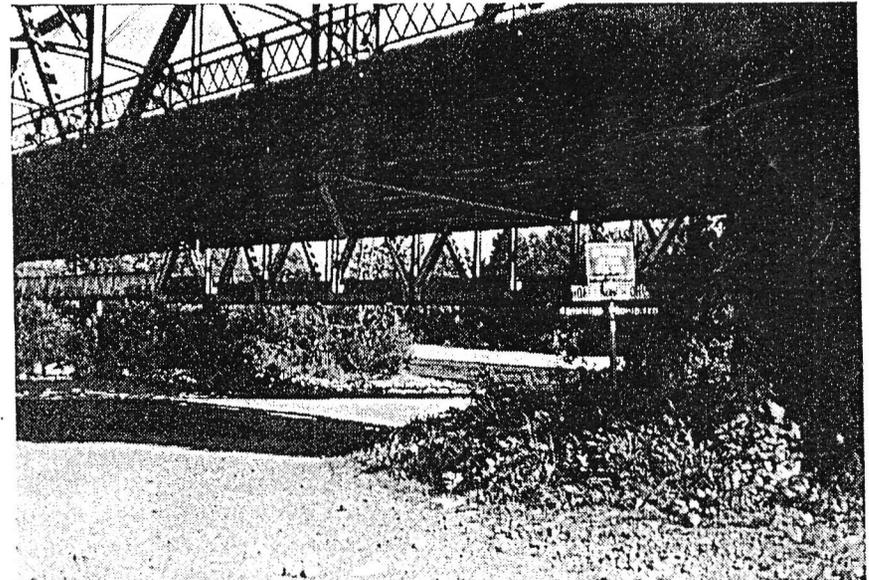
jackets and helmets are required on the Skykomish River.

In order to minimize rafting impact as much as possible, the majority of rafting companies are meticulous about not leaving any litter on the river or the sites. Some make a point of educating their passengers about river care.

Non-commercial rafting site use is basically the same as commercial, with the exception that group size is usually smaller. Given the individual nature of private use, proper disposal of litter is less controlled.

□ Kayaking is popular along the main stem. The most common runs are: from Sultan Sportsman's Park to Monroe; from High Bridge to Sultan Sportsman's Park; from sites 10 & 11 to High Bridge, called Big Eddy Stretch; from sites 12 & 14 to Big Eddy or High Bridge, called Boulder Stretch; from Sunset Falls to High Bridge.

The Big Eddy Stretch is a favorite for novices and is often used by kayaking classes. The run from Sunset Falls (on the South Fork) to High Bridge is considered the second best major run for kayakers in Washington. None of the put-in sites on the main stem upstream from High Bridge are on public property, and parking on small highway pullouts creates hazardous congestion.



## North Fork

The main points brought up at the meeting sponsored by the Advisory Board in Index with regard to public river access were:

### General

- Weekend rafting is the biggest access issue for the town of Index (site 16). Large numbers of rafting companies and individuals put in at Index to float down to High Bridge. Insufficient parking and road congestion are problems. Accompanying the influx of visitors is a problem with litter and the need for better sanitation facilities, as well as facilities for changing clothes and picnicking.
- The economic benefits brought to the local community by visitors is noticed, thereby highlighting the need to accommodate river use while protecting the integrity of both river and town.
- Residents are concerned about trespassing and destruction of property, as well as general deterioration of the stream bank environment.
- Small groups, such as fishermen and kayakers, pose relatively little problem.

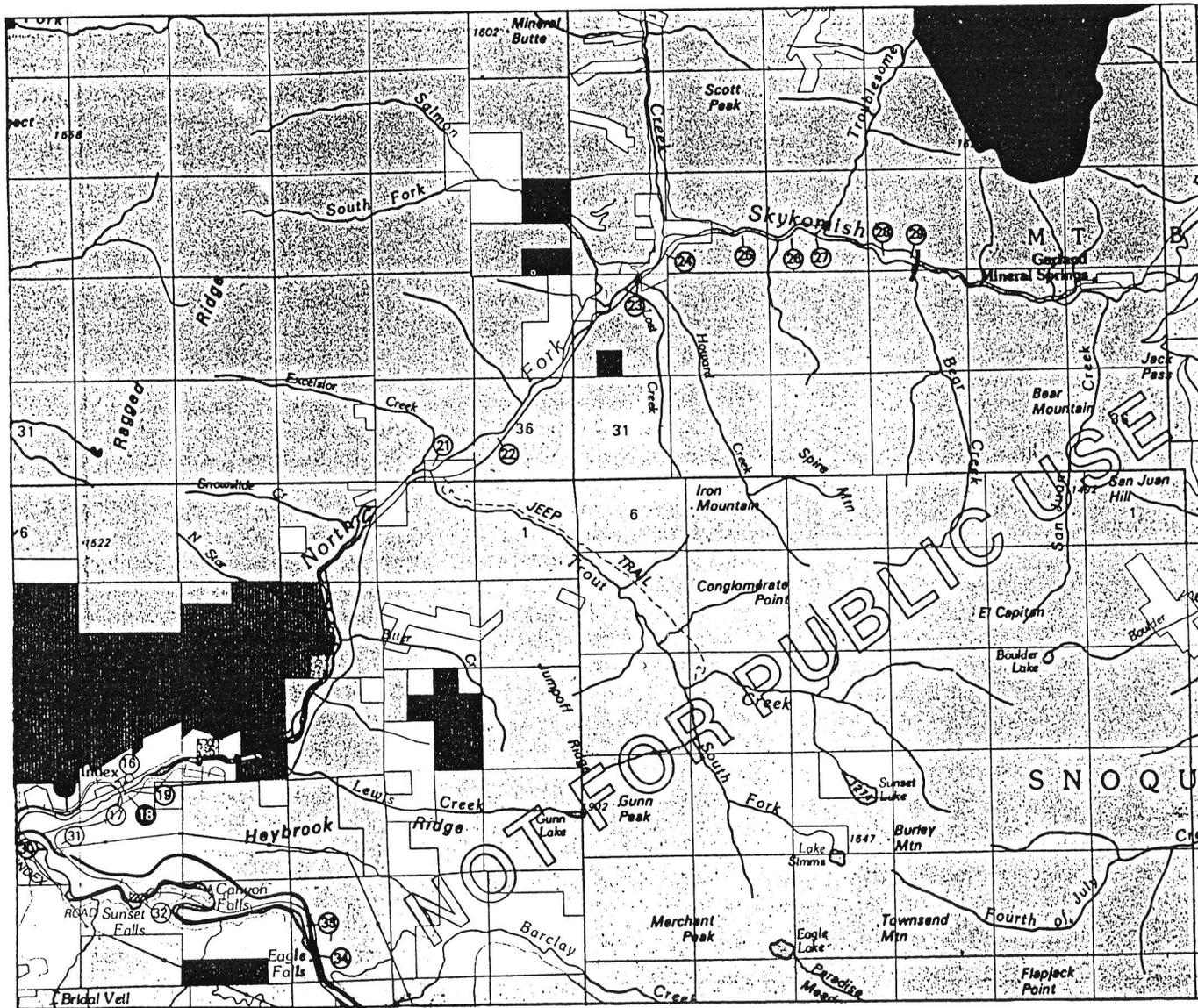
### Recreational Use

- Upstream from Index, use of the river is diverse. Many informal sites support kayaking, picnicking, camping, and fishing. Relatively little use is made of the upper North Fork by rafters. The boating season on the North Fork is shorter than the South Fork and is generally over by early July.
- Much of the land along the North Fork is owned by the U.S. Forest Service. Their policy of dispersed use allows river access for kayaking, picnicking, camping, and fishing. As use increases in the area, greater protection of the land and water from misuse seems necessary. Already at several sites, such as site 25, people commonly drive vehicles along the stream bank and through the water. This destroys the bank environment and disrupts the riverbed, an important fish habitat.
- The U.S. Forest Service operates two campgrounds on the North Fork. Troublesome Creek Campground is within the Scenic System, San Juan Campground is not.
- Three sites commonly used by non-boaters and kayakers on the North Fork are on private property (sites 21, 23, 24). Site 21 at Trout Creek is a popular put-in and take-out location for kayakers. Kayaking group size in this area is

typically three to eight people with one or two cars at each end of the run.

- Rafters will sometimes use site 15, west of Index, for put-in and safety classes. Other sites in and around Index that are used are 17 and 19. These involve trespassing and/or crowding the road with parked cars.

Figure 3 North Fork Map



## South Fork

The following highlights the key points expressed at a public workshop held in the town of Skykomish and at a meeting with a local community organization.

### General

- The primary access problems around Skykomish are litter, trespassing, and parking, all as a response to a lack of public access.
- The Skykomish area experiences a greater diversity of use compared to the town of Index, where rafting is a predominant issue. Use around Skykomish is a mix of innertubing, fishing, picnicking, swimming, camping, rafting, and kayaking.
- The Beckler River gravel bar is the most popular access site in the area (site 42). The site is privately owned. Use is seasonal. The bulk of rafting and kayaking is between April and early July. The area is sandy and cars regularly need towing assistance. Safety concerns for innertubers on the Beckler River were expressed.
- Recreationists commonly park along Highway 2 where the road crosses the Skykomish River (site 47), causing congestion and safety concerns.
- An access point used primarily by locals is site 41 on property owned by the adjacent Deli store owner who has also made a picnic table available for public use.
- Citizens of Skykomish wish to reserve the community ballpark and facilities for community use. As recreational pressures increase in the area, residents are concerned the town site will be misused.
- Fisherman use of the river is high around Skykomish, but their impact is considered low.
- Trespassing is a major concern of a local residential community on the South Fork, given the potential for liability claims, since they own property adjacent to two of the three large waterfalls on the Skykomish. Safety information is seen as crucial given the dangerous river conditions. A high priority for the community is keeping the natural environment clean and protected.

### Recreational Use

- The South Fork features three large waterfalls, Eagle Falls (furthest upstream), Canyon Falls, and Sunset Falls. The scenic beauty of the falls draws visitors and recreationists alike, and consequently, poses a serious safety issue. The river can look deceptively tame, and fatal accidents have occurred for

people unaware of the falls or their power. Safety and public education about the river have been repeatedly mentioned in discussions regarding river access. Trespassing is also a problem since Canyon and Sunset Falls are flanked by private property on both sides of the river.

- Commercial rafting on the South Fork is most heavy downstream of the falls. A popular run is from below Sunset Falls (site 32) to High Bridge. This preferred location poses conflicts since there is no public access. The Forest Service is currently planning to develop an access site along Mt. Index Road, site 30. Rafting also occurs further upstream, from the Beckler River (site 42) to U.S. Forest Service Money Creek Campground (site 40) and on other stretches of the upper South Fork. Use in these areas is primarily non-commercial.

- Like rafters, kayakers favor the Sunset Falls to High Bridge run, and in fact, it is considered the second best major kayak run in Washington. Kayakers unofficially use Department of Fisheries property from which to launch, and the Washington Kayak Club has permission of an adjacent land owner for crossing his property.

Kayakers also paddle from the Beckler River to Money Creek Campground (site 40) or Baring

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(site 36). Near the Beckler River, boaters put in at the gravel bar (site 42), or off Highway 2 (site 47), or at the Skykomish community ball-park. (Citizen concern about public use of this site is discussed above.) State Patrol discourages use of site 47 due to the highway shoulder congestion and safety hazards.

Expert kayakers put-in at the confluence of the Rapid River with the Beckler River (site 46) and run down to the confluence with the Skykomish, utilizing sites 42, 47, or the ballpark. (Problems with each of these is discussed above.)

□ Non-boater use of the South Fork is dispersed along the river, with a major danger area being near the three falls. Non-boater use includes innertubing, swimming, sunbathing, and picnicking.

□ Bank fishing occurs throughout the South Fork and Beckler. Fishermen make use of roadside pullouts for parking wherever possible.

### Figure 4 South Fork Map

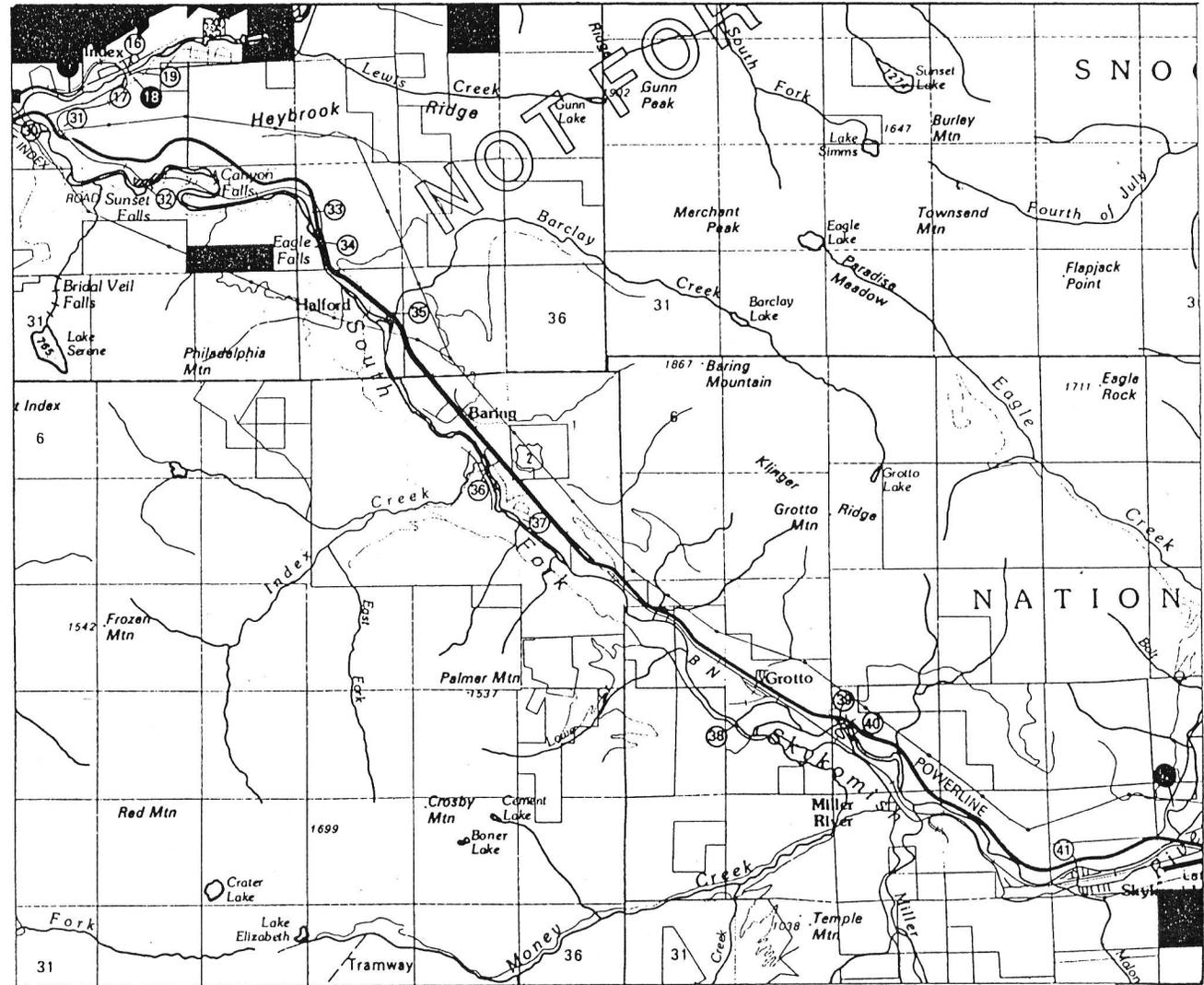
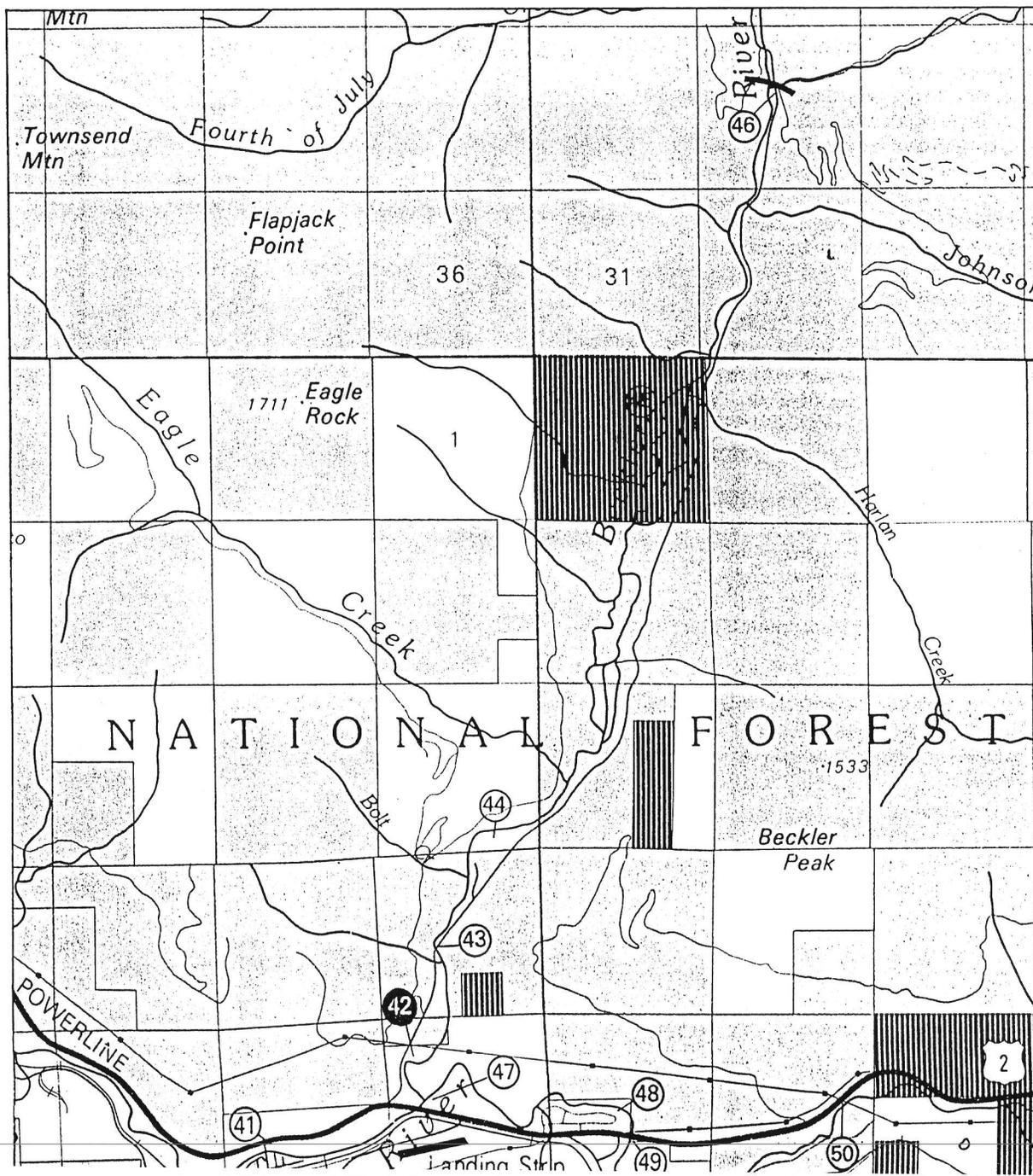


Figure 5 Beckler River Map



## Program Elements

From the needs and concerns of citizens and recreationists collected during the inventory, a list of program elements emerged. The elements were used as criteria to evaluate access opportunities along the Skykomish River.

### Criteria for Evaluating Access Sites

**A) Recreational needs:** requirements for various river-user groups.

**1) Rafters.** North Fork put-in, South Fork put-in, take-out on main stem, eddies, parking for 20 to 30 cars, sanitation and changing facilities, staging areas;

**2) Drift boaters.** Put-in and take-out on lower stretch, launch site, parking, sanitation;

**3) Bank fishermen.** Access along length of river, parking;

**4) Kayakers.** North Fork put-in, South Fork put-in and take-out, put-in and take-out below rapids, parking, sanitation;

**5) Picnickers and sightseers.** Scenic viewpoints, parking, sanitation facilities;

**6) Locals and other non-specific groups.** Locations for inner tubing, swimming, sunbathing, camping, sanitation facilities.

**B) Community needs:** reducing recreational user impact on local communities by dispersing access, reducing congestion, limiting traffic flow through neighborhoods, and diverting tourist use away from local recreational parks and facilities.

**C) Ownership:** publicly owned, or willing sellers of privately owned property. Sites on public land require willingness on part of owning agency to collaborate in providing improved access. Sites on private property require a willing seller.

**D) Safety:** hazards, both natural and man-made, which may affect use, such as unsafe terrain or proximity to railroad lines; ability of site location to reduce Highway 2 congestion.

**E) Environmental impact:** potential harm to an area as a result of developing site; potential benefit to an area as a result of managing use and reducing adverse effects from current use patterns.

**F) Dispersing use away from Highway 2:** sites that direct traffic away from Hwy 2 in order to reduce safety hazards and shoulder parking.

## Site Capability

The next step in the analysis involved considering all sites that could possibly alleviate the access problems described during workshops and observed along the river. Fifteen sites were identified as having this capability. (see Methodology for elaboration of process.)

Because the Scenic Rivers Program can only acquire land from willing sellers or work cooperatively with public agency owners, a 'first cut' was made on the list of sites. Four sites were eliminated on this basis:

Site 2, Main stem. This site is owned by Burlington Northern and is not for sale, nor is an easement an option. (This site was considered for its capability to provide public parking.)

Callahan property, South Fork near Sunset Falls. This site was offered as a cooperative-use site, but lies within a private residential community and is not available for public use.

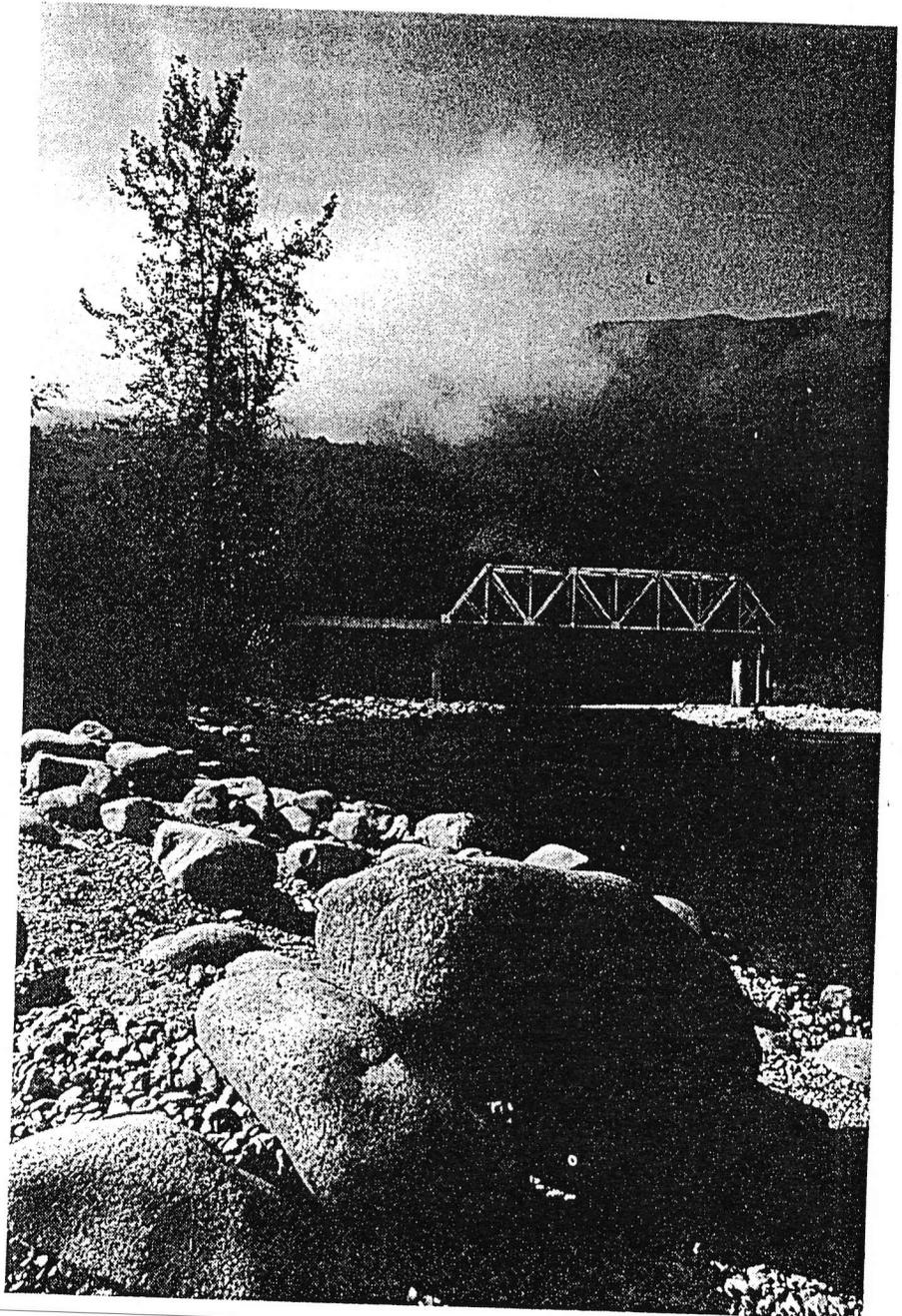
Garland property, South Fork near Sunset Falls. This site lies within a private residential community and is not available for public use.

## ANALYSIS

- Five acres, South Fork near Sunset Falls. Same as above.

The eleven sites that remained for evaluation were:

- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| Site 1  | Sultan Sportsman's Club  |
| Site 8  | High Bridge              |
| Site 10 | Big Eddy                 |
| Site 12 | Barber property          |
| Site 13 | Mega Resort              |
| Site 15 | Index USFS               |
| Site 18 | Index-Galena Road        |
| Site 20 | Snohomish Co. near Index |
| Site 30 | Cable Drop               |
| Site 32 | Sunset Falls             |
| Site 42 | Beckler River            |



## Site Suitability

Eleven sites remained after considering ownership. These sites were arranged in a matrix (Figure 6) to help assess the suitability of each location for meeting program criteria. River sections were also included to insure that the various access needs and issues in a given river section were addressed.

After considering the suitability of each site for public access, the sites were compared and prioritized. Access locations fell into high, medium, and low priority groups according to: 1) their potential for meeting access needs in a given river section, and 2) the feasibility of acquisition and development compared to other sites in the area.

## Site Descriptions and Recommendations

### Low priority sites

**Site 1:** The Sultan site is owned by the Department of Wildlife. The local Sportsman's Club leases the site to provide drift boat access, picnicking, and parking. Currently, the city and the club both help maintain the area, and have recently made improvements on the site. The site meets the needs of drift boaters and others who utilize a put-in and take-out on the lower stretch of the designated river. Since the site is fairly well looked after under current arrangements, it is a low priority site.

**Recommendations:** Should the site at some time in the future require additional assistance maintaining the site, then the Scenic Rivers Program should consider such assistance.

**Site 18:** The Index-Galena Road site consists of a privately owned lot across the bridge from the town of Index. The site would provide parking and sanitation facilities for the kayakers and rafting groups that put-in at Index. The site is not adjacent to the river, therefore public use of this site would increase pedestrian traffic across the road and bridge and potentially create more congestion and safety problems than exist currently.

Actual riverbank access is not provided by this site. Other sites in the area have greater potential for providing better access (sites 15 and 20). At this point in time, the site is available on a rental basis only, and unless this changes, the site has low priority for the State River Program.

**Recommendations:** Site 18 should be considered only if other more preferred sites in the area prove to be unavailable for development and if acquisition is possible.

## EVALUATION

**Figure 6  
Site Capability Matrix**

	Sultan Club Park 1	High Bridge 8	Big Eddy DNR side 10	Barber property 12	Mega Resort 13	Index USFS 15	Index Galena Road 18	Snoh. Co. parks land 20	Sunset Falls DOF 32	Beckler River gravel bar 42	Cable Drop 30
North Fork near Index						✓	✓	✓			
South Fork below falls											✓
South Fork near Beckler River										✓	
Main stem				✓	✓						
Main stem below rapids	✓	✓	✓								
Main stem western boundary	✓										
Rafters		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Kayakers		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fisherman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Driftboaters	✓	✓	✓								
Picnickers & sightseers	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Local use/misc.		✓						✓		✓	
Reduces community congestion and conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Owned publicly or by willing seller	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	^1	✓	✓	✓	✓
No safety hazards	*1	✓	✓	*2	*3	✓	*4	not known	*5	✓	
Minimum environmental impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	^2	✓	✓
Located on other than Hwy 2			✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Priority rank	L	H	M	M	H	H	L	M	H	H	H

- \*1 Undertow
- \*2 Steep terrain, directly off Hwy 2. Upstream from Boulder Drop. Hazard for swimmers and novice boaters.
- \*3 Directly upstream from Boulder Drop. Hazard for swimmers and novice boaters.
- \*4 Bridge traffic safety concerns
- \*5 Proximity to falls
- \*6 Steep terrain
- ^1 Rental basis
- ^2 Fish operations impact

### Medium priority sites

**Site 10:** The Big Eddy site on the west bank of the river (the river flows north at this point) is used heavily by individual kayakers and classes of novice boaters who need to avoid Boulder Drop rapid. The location is also popular with fishermen. Cars pull off Hwy 2 from a fast section of the highway creating a dangerous situation. To reach the river, people trespass Burlington Northern Railroad right of way and are in dangerous proximity to the track and/or crossing the busy track. Because of these dangers, developing access on the west side of the river is not being considered by the Program.

The option is to consider access to this point in the river from the opposite bank, the east side. Road access would be off Reiter Road through either Department of Natural Resources property or Burlington Resources property. A road would have to be constructed from Reiter Rd. to the access site on the river.

Such a site could reduce Hwy 2 traffic and avoid rail lines. (The railbed is abandoned on the east side.)

**Recommendations:** Future consideration of the east-side site is warranted given the high use in the

area by kayakers and fishermen and the safety concerns when accessing from Hwy 2. Whether or not access from Hwy 2 could be prevented since the eastern access would be less direct, needs to be determined. Discussion with DNR and Burlington Resources is needed to consider the feasibility of access from this (east) side.

A further option to consider is working with the Department of Transportation and the private landowner of site 11 to provide a large pull-out and left-turn lane. Site 11 avoids the railroad track danger while providing direct access off Hwy 2, and is still downstream of Boulder Drop.

**Site 12:** Site 12 is owned by an individual willing to consider selling. The property runs adjacent to and upstream from Boulder Drop, and is trespassed by kayakers and sightseers wishing to experience or witness others experiencing the rapids. Access is from Hwy 2 and as such presents safety concerns similar to site 10.

**Recommendations:** This site warrants consideration given the popularity of Boulder Drop and current trespass problems. Consideration must be given to river safety concerns for providing public boating access adjacent to Class V rapids.

**Site 20:** Snohomish County Parks owns this property approximately 3/4 of a mile east of Index, adjacent to the North Fork. The site is undeveloped and would require road construction and easements through private property to reach the site. Snohomish County is willing to consider land use options. The town of Index has suggested the parcel for town park use in their comprehensive plan. Compared to the relative ease of developing site 15, site 20 ranks as a lesser priority.

**Recommendations:** Should site 15 prove unfeasible, then site 20 is a reasonable option to consider. Additionally, as river use and access needs increase, this site may increase in priority.

### High priority sites

Following is a description of high priority sites being considered by the Scenic Rivers Program for providing public access to the Skykomish. The sketches accompanying four of the descriptions offer ideas for site design and are in no way final.

## High Priority Site

### Site Information

#### Gravel Pit - unnumbered

Across the Skykomish River from Site 1 in Sultan  
Approx. 24 acres

Since the initial publication of the Access Study, this site has become available for acquisition by the Scenic Rivers Program from willing sellers. The site offers an opportunity to provide day-use non-boating access to the Skykomish River.

The site is located across the Skykomish River from the confluence of the Sultan and Skykomish Rivers. Current owners operate a gravel excavation business on the site which is mostly a floodplain zone. Of the 24 acres, approximately five are cleared, and there are approximately 1500 feet of waterfront.

### Intent

To acquire the property from the willing sellers to provide day-use non-boating access to the Skykomish River in Sultan. To relieve recreational access pressures on Dept. of Wildlife property on the opposite shore which is leased by the Sportsman's Club specifically for drift boat launching. To provide picnicking and fishing

opportunities. To provide sanitation facilities, parking, and interpretive signing. To develop the site in a manner appropriate for a natural flood zone area. To restore and protect a natural floodplain.

### Recommendations

Begin appraisal of property and contact the Trust for Public Lands to consider land holding options until Parks acquisition potential is determined. Conduct preliminary planning survey, including conceptual plan and cost estimates for restoring and developing the site for public use. Determine maintenance and operations options.



## High Priority Site

### Site Information

#### Sunset Falls - Site 32

This site is on Department of Fisheries land on the north side of the South Fork adjacent to Sunset Falls. Public use of the site for river access has been closed since the early 1980's. Prior to closing access, the site was used heavily by fishermen, rafters, and kayakers. Congestion increased to the point of impeding Fisheries operations on the site. In 1985 steelhead fishing was banned within 600 feet of Sunset Falls to protect the fish run. The site continues to be used unofficially by kayakers.

As stated in Inventory, the kayaking and rafting run from Sunset Falls to High Bridge is considered one of the best in the State. The falls is also of scenic significance. The need for public viewing access around Sunset Falls is high. The south side of the river adjacent to the falls is inaccessible to the public due to a private community of landowners.

### Intent

To provide public viewing on a walk-in basis to Sunset Falls given its highly valued scenic beauty. To protect private property rights adjacent to the pathway to the falls and across the river from the potential access area. To protect fisheries operations.

### Recommendations

Because of its scenic value, the site should be considered on a walk-in viewing basis. Cooperation between the Scenic River Program and the departments of Fisheries and Transportation is essential for highway exit safety, parking, and management options. Management options for public access need to include protecting the private property through which WDF has an easement and reducing the safety hazards that exist next to the falls. Fisheries operations need to be protected as well.

Because of congestion problems, liability hazards, and fisheries interests, boating access at Sunset Falls is not being recommended.

## High Priority Site

### Site Information

#### U.S. Forest Service - Cable Drop Site 30

Cable Drop is on USFS property off of USFS road, Mt. Index. This location is utilized by fishermen and white water boaters. It is the most feasible public boating access point on the South Fork below Sunset Falls. Because the kayaking and rafting run from the falls is one Washington's best, access within this stretch of river is a high priority. The Scenic Rivers Program supports plans by the USFS to develop Cable Drop for boating access.

### Intent

The USFS intends to provide for private and commercial boating use at Cable Drop. Current plans call for screening the site from the road, putting in parking for vans and trailers, building a trail to the water from the off-load area, providing sanitation, and putting up an information board.

### Status

Currently, funding is being sought by the USFS for providing private and commercial boating access at Cable Drop. Planning for the site has been completed.

### Recommendations

Given the potential of Cable Drop to provide a much needed boating access point on the lower South Fork and to reduce rafting impact on the North Fork near Index, the Scenic Rivers Program supports plans by the USFS to develop Cable Drop for boating access.

## High Priority Site

### Site Information

**Beckler River Gravel Bar - Site 42**  
Approx. 5 acres

The area is reached from US Forest Service Road #280, and is on land owned by Plum Creek Timber Co.. It is a high use area by locals and others for swimming, innertubing, camping, picnicking, kayak put-in and take-out, and fishing. Litter and a lack of sanitation facilities detract from the site. On the upper South Fork and the Beckler River, this site receives highest use and consequently is considered high priority for public acquisition.

### Intent

To renovate a heavily used access area for day use, picnicking, and kayaking on the upper South Fork and Beckler River. To draw use away from Hwy 2 onto a non-highway road. To relieve pressure from the Skykomish community ballpark. To address river safety concerns with interpretive information. To provide sanitation services. To provide access for approximately 30 people at any one time.

### Acquisition

Discuss acquisition with Plum Creek Timber Co.. Work on the site requires a permit from the Bonneville Power Authority because of power lines.

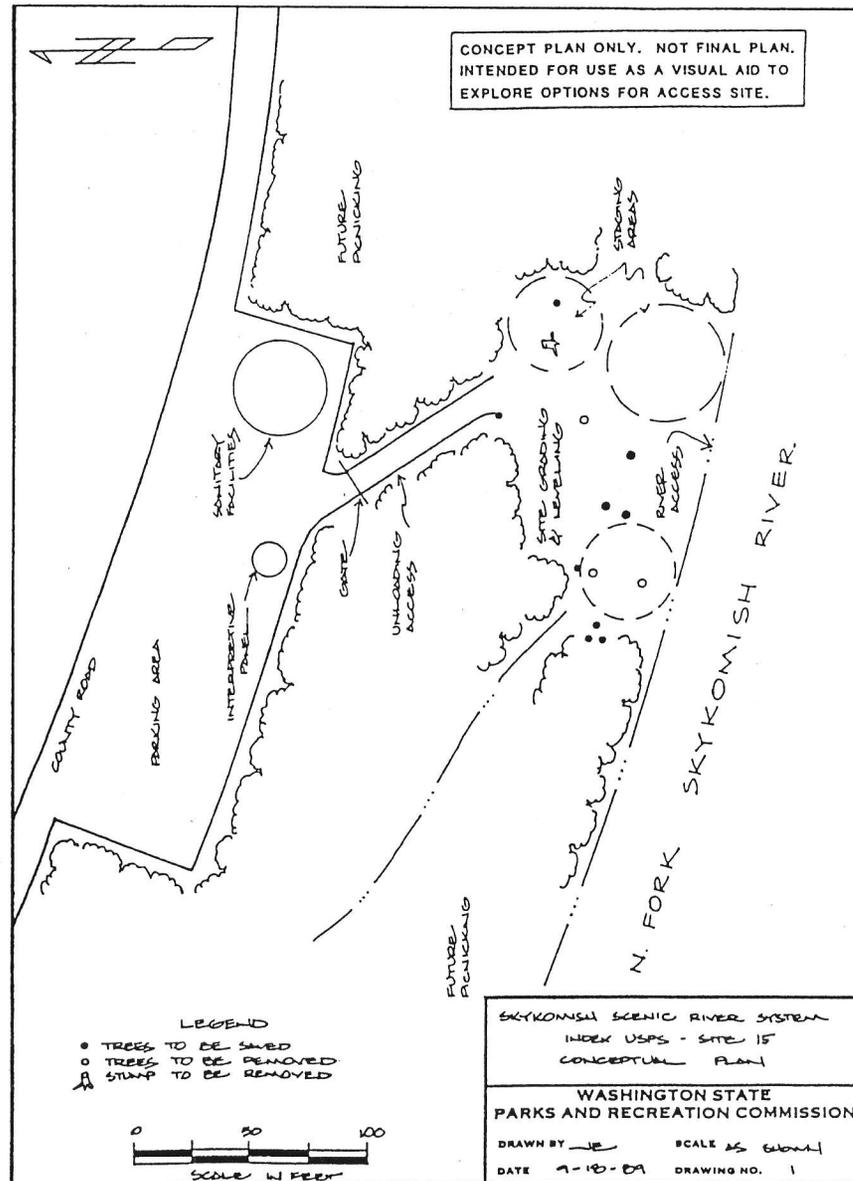
### Preliminary Cost Estimate

Road construction:	10,000
Grading/Site rehabilitation:	30,000
Parking:	30,000
Sanitation facilities:	2,500
Picnic facilities:	5,000
Signing and interpretation:	<u>5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$82,500</b>

### Recommendations

Determine maintenance and operations responsibility. Review and consider flood patterns in the area which would determine the type of development and facilities appropriate.

Figure 7 Beckler River Site Plan



## High Priority Site

### Site Information

#### Index USFS - Site 15

West of Index on Snohomish County Road on North Fork  
Approx. 3 acres

On USFS property downstream from Index, this location shows heavy use and misuse. The site was originally used by fishermen and continues to be. It is used for boating access, camping, and river rescue classes. Inadequate sanitation, uncontrolled vehicular use, and vandalism have degraded the site.

### Intent

To work with the USFS to provide day use of this site for rafting access. The acquisition would provide a much needed put-in for rafters and kayakers on the North Fork and alleviate Index town congestion and tension by drawing boaters away from the main streets in town. The site would provide parking for approximately 30 cars, a staging area, a loading area for boating equipment, and sanitation facilities. Interpretive and river safety signs would be installed. (An optional phase of development could provide local residents with a picnic area.)

### Acquisition

The Scenic Rivers Program is interested in a co-management arrangement of site 15 with the USFS.

The Index Sportsman's Club currently leases a northern piece of the parcel from the USFS and would like to protect their trap shoot facility. Any site development plans should consider potential cooperative arrangements between State Parks, the USFS, and the Sportsman's Club.

### Preliminary Cost Estimates

Parking:	\$ 10,000
Sanitation facilities:	2,500
Site levelling and grading:	30,000
Vehicle access improvement:	2,500
Signing and interpretation:	<u>5,000</u>

**TOTAL** \$ 50,000

### Recommendations

Concern has been expressed about uncontrolled use increasing at the Index site accompanied by high noise levels and overnight camping. To prevent misuse and misconduct, the area will need to be actively managed by staff. Joint agreements with State Parks and other agencies should be investigated for management and acquisition options.

Additionally, given the number of boaters on any summer weekend, it is necessary that several sites around the Index area be available for access in order to minimize impact at any one location. Additional properties that could provide access should continuously be considered.

Providing alternate sites will also help address potential traffic problems created in Index as a result of using site 15. Traffic and routing patterns will need to be discussed with town representatives and rafting companies to evaluate the feasibility of the site given these concerns.

*\* The Scenic Rivers Program and Advisory Board support community interests of managing current levels of day-use at site 15. Restricting overnight camping, providing garbage and sanitation services, and restricting vehicles on the site are essential. To reduce the impacts of high use on the town of Index and nearby residents, the number and size of commercial trips launched from the site can potentially be limited by working with the USFS who uses a permitting system.*

\* Sections printed in italics denote additions to the Access Plan in response to input during public hearings.

*Cooperative efforts with rafting companies to develop a code of ethics for limiting noise and litter are encouraged, not only for put-in locations, but for down-river stops as well. Compatible use with the Sportsman's Club can be developed, with parking facilities at site 15 being available to the Club during large events. The Club has offered to assist with maintaining the area.*

*Additionally, the Scenic Rivers Program recommends: co-management of site 15 between the USFS and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission; considering development of boating access points further up the North Fork, as well as encouraging commercial use of the South Fork as soon as legal access is developed (at Cable Drop, for example); and continuing to work with the town of Index to avoid overuse and abuse of town facilities and sites.*

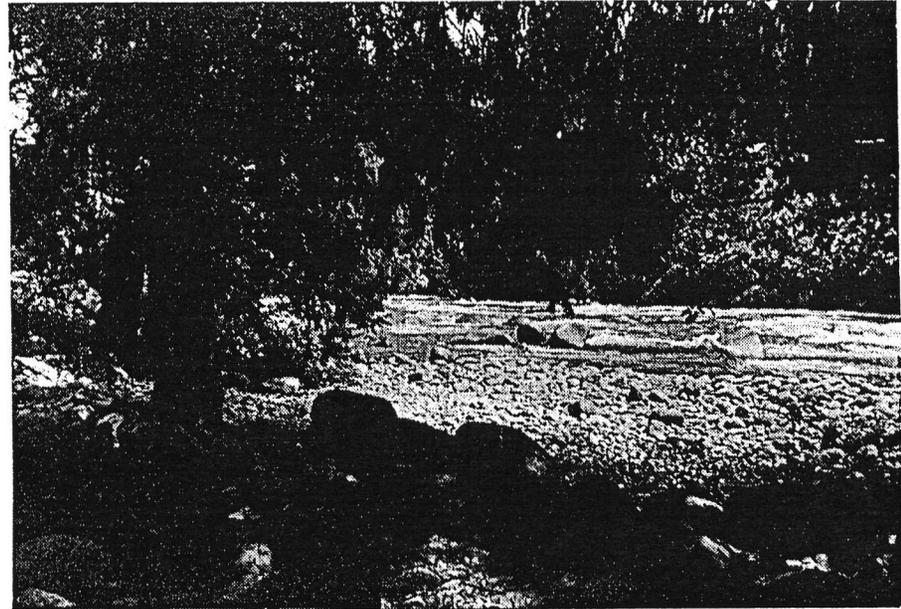
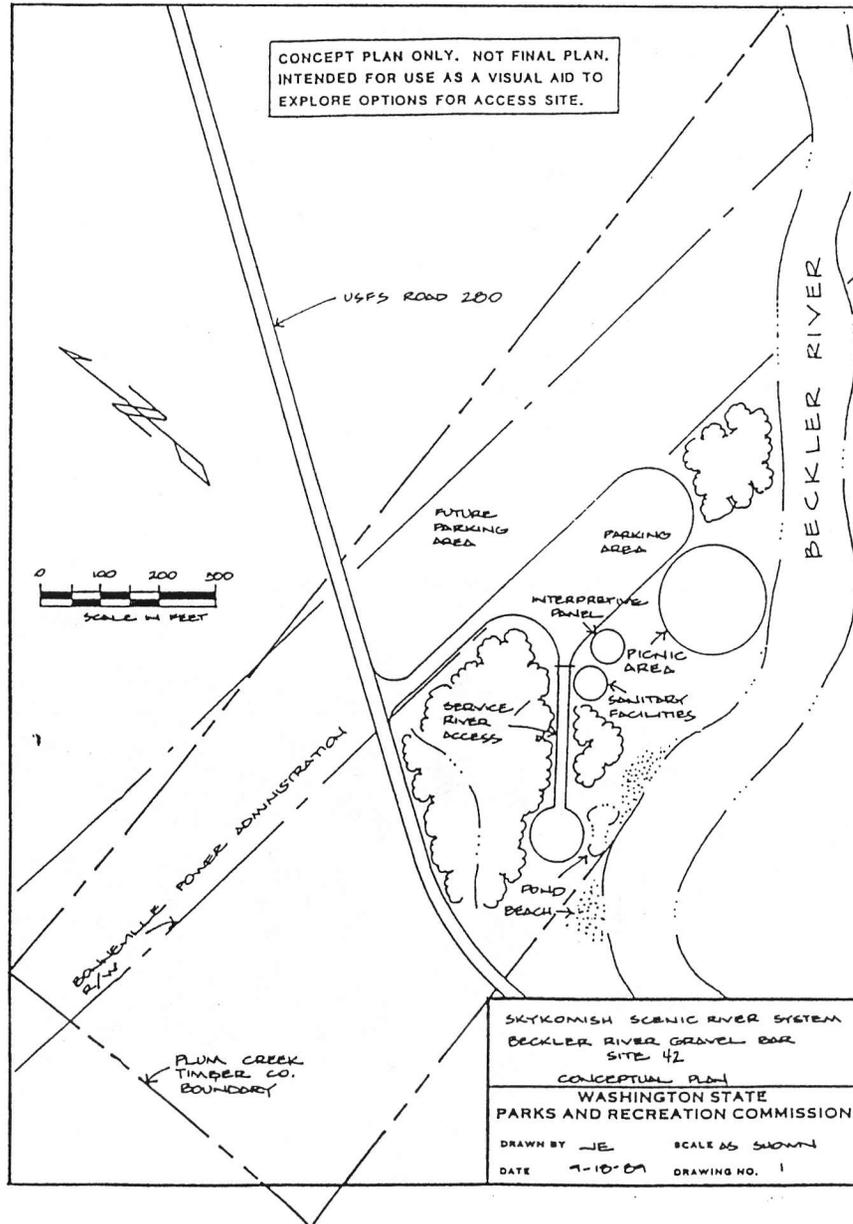


Figure 8 Index Site Plan



## High Priority Site

### Site Information

#### High Bridge - Site 8

Dept. of Wildlife property east of Gold Bar on Main stem of Skykomish River  
Approx. 10 acres

High Bridge is designated by the Dept. of Wildlife for use as a fishing access site. The area, however, is also used by rafters, kayakers, picnickers, and swimmers. The site is the primary take-out point for rafters and kayakers running one of Washington's most popular boating reaches. It is also the primary put-in point for drift boaters. The site suffers from a lack of sanitation facilities, uncontrolled parking, bank erosion, and inappropriate vehicular use.

A public planning workshop was sponsored by the Advisory Board in Spring of 1989, and site plans were drawn. Funding is being sought to implement improvements. A grant proposal has been submitted to the Aquatic Land Enhancement Account for \$74,000.

### Intent

To protect the riparian habitat and enhance the recreational access at High Bridge. To reduce Hwy 2 danger at access entrance. To

protect launch site needs of various users. To enhance the aesthetic quality of the site. To provide interpretive signing and safety information. To provide sanitary facilities. To direct vehicular movement and parking of the approximately 60 to 100 vehicles present on a typical summer weekend.

### Acquisition

The Dept. of Wildlife is supportive of the Scenic Rivers Program plans to improve the site.

### Preliminary Cost Estimate

Parking:	\$ 30,000
Revegetation:	8,000
Sanitation:	11,000
Site rehabilitation:	18,000
Signing and interpretation:	7,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 74,000</b>

### Recommendations

Work with WDW to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on operations and maintenance and funding for same. Assure continued quality fishing access. Line up resources and equipment for work on the site. Begin developing interpretive and safety information.



Figure 9 High Bridge Site Plan

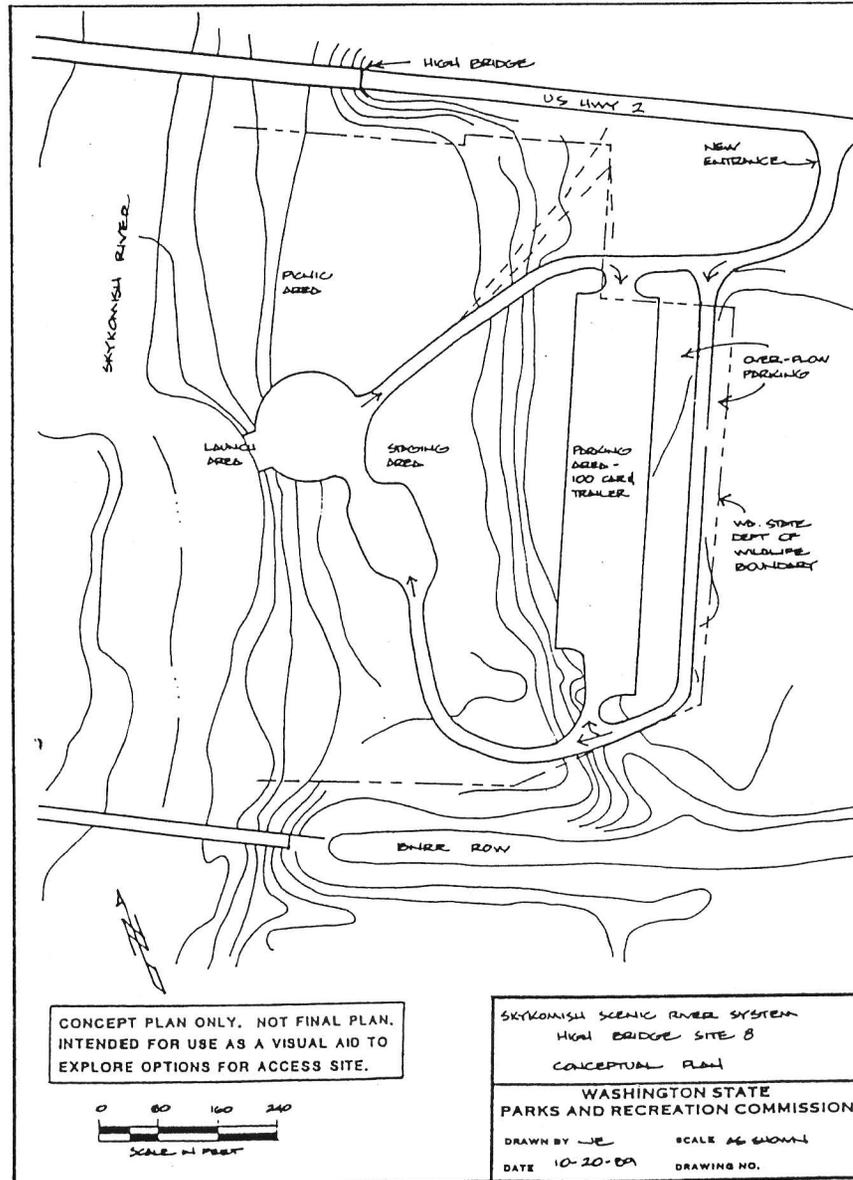
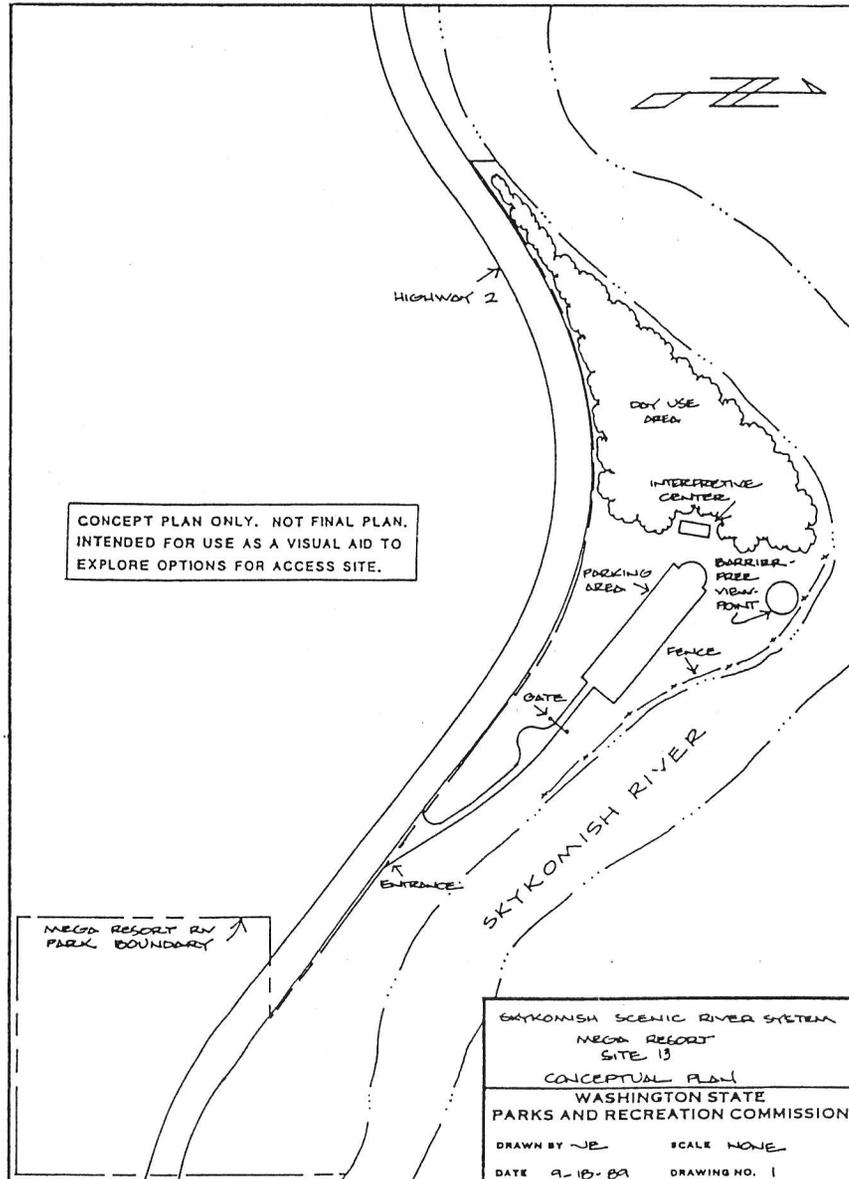




Figure 10 Mega Resort Site Plan





In February 1990, two public hearings (with legal public notice) were held in Index and Sultan, Washington. Copies of the Access Study were available prior to the hearings and written comments to be sent to the Scenic River office were encouraged.

Following is a summary of comments made during the review process and how management is responding. Other comments and changes have been integrated throughout the text of the Study, and are highlighted in italicized print.

The hearings had a **problem-solving tone**, with interested parties considering cooperative efforts for conserving and providing for the aesthetic, ecological, and recreational values of the Skykomish River.

**Safety** emerged repeatedly as a concern and echoed the Goals and Objectives of the Citizen Advisory Board. Safety signs are being developed for marking hazardous areas on the River, in particular above and around major waterfalls and rapids.

Besides a need for safety information, participants at hearings expressed concerns for **protecting fish and wildlife habitats** in the corridor. To help address these issues, **environmental education**

and **interpretation** are being planned to determine where and what type of outreach is needed and how groups and agencies can work together to increase awareness and proper treatment of the river environment.

Furthermore, concerns were expressed about irresponsible behaviors on the part of recreationists and visitors to the river. Every user group poses potential misuse problems. The Scenic Rivers Program endorses working with user groups to assess how use can be managed and impacts minimized.

Public use of private land is an issue on the River not only at boating put-in and take-out points, but when accessing from the river, as well. For example, rafting groups often stop for lunch on **private property**. At these locations, sanitation becomes a potential problem. To address these needs, additional study needs to be done to identify public lands accessible from the river and ways for reducing visitor impact at these sites.

The Skykomish Recreational Study focussed on potential public access sites according to the criteria discussed in the methods section of the report. Public comment on the report indicated that key locations were covered. To supplement the report, several additional locations

were mentioned in the hearings. The sites and explanations people gave for considering them, as well as Scenic River Program response, follow:

**Canyon Falls** was mentioned as an area of exceptional scenic value and worthy of public access. Except for a corner of USFS property which touches the river below the falls, however, private property surrounds the area. Property owners expressed concern over impact of increased use and possible community liability (due to likelihood of trespass) if access through this corner were made possible.

Given the scenic value of the falls and the expressed interest and concerns in the area, the Scenic River Program will look into the site more specifically and determine the feasibility of access.

**Eagle Falls.** The large amount of uncontrolled use at Eagle Falls and the dangerous parking situation are concerns. A suggestion was made to put up warning signs of congestion ahead for approaching traffic.

Eagle Falls is surrounded by USFS property. Dept. of Transportation manages the highway. The Scenic Rivers Program recommends working with these agencies to alleviate the current dangers at the site and to plan for appropriate use.

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS



Related to safety at the falls, the need for safety signs near Baring was mentioned to warn private boaters about the approaching river hazards.

Suggestions were made to consider **Alpine Falls** for public access to the upper reaches of the Skykomish Scenic River System, on the Tye River. The Program will look into the feasibility of this site.

The **north side of Boulder Drop** was mentioned as a place to provide access for people wanting to watch the action at the rapid. The Program did look into this area, but the railroad track negates any public access potential at this time.

It was suggested that the Program work with the USFS to keep Forest Service campgrounds on the North Fork and the Beckler River open year round in order to make better use of **existing sites**. The Program will consider the degree to which this action could relieve public access pressures on the Skykomish River System and discuss feasibility with the USFS.

Perhaps the topic of concern heard most during the hearing process was the **recreation and visitor increases** in the Skykomish River valley. A variety of suggestions and comments were made for addressing the issue. A shuttle service and/or use of the Sultan Park and Ride were suggested as means to reduce road congestion. Permitting and limiting the number of commercial rafting trips allowed on the Skykomish were recommended, as well.

With regard to all types of recreation in the Skykomish valley, it is recommended that the Scenic Rivers Program assess the carrying capacity of the Skykomish Scenic River System to help determine appropriate management strategies. The Program does not want to encourage or promote more use of the area without sufficient **long-term management and funding**. Clarification is needed of the role of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission in this arena.

At present, safety and interpretive signs and maps are recommended for directing users to public access points. A **river ranger** is needed to enforce safety programs, discourage trespass and patrol public access areas.

High priority sites are recommended for Phase I access acquisition and development within the next two to five years. Phase II involves medium priority sites, their acquisition and development to be considered over the next 15 years. Low priority sites are offered as alternatives to higher priority sites that prove unfeasible in a given river section.

## Procedural Steps

The following is a simplified list of steps leading to implementation of the access plan.

### 1. Environmental Impact Statement.

An impact assessment is in process for the study as a whole. As sites are approved for acquisition and development, an environmental impact assessment will have to be made for each.

### 2. Public Review.

The process will involve:

- a. Public notice and plans being available.
- b. Open houses along the river corridor for "Listening Post" workshops to discuss and receive feedback.
- c. Consideration by the Citizen Advisory Board of comments and changes to the access plan.
- d. Submitting a representation of comments and changes in the plan

to the River Council.

### 3. Adoption

Adoption of the plan by the Skykomish Scenic River Council and approval from the Advisory Board for proceeding with Phase I.

### 4. Coordinating With Government Agencies

Integrate the sites into DOT highway planning and USFS access planning. Involve other agencies and governments as appropriate. Procure permits where necessary.

### 5. Funding

Outline alternatives for acquisition and site development for Phase I projects. Funding resources include:

- Aquatic Land Enhancement Account--DNR
- Nonhighway Road Account (NHR)--IAC
- Northwest Marine Trade Association
- Referendum 215--IAC

### 6. Acquisition

On a per site basis, detail options for purchasing, leasing, or jointly managing the Phase I sites, with input from each agency involved.

### 7. Detailed Site Planning

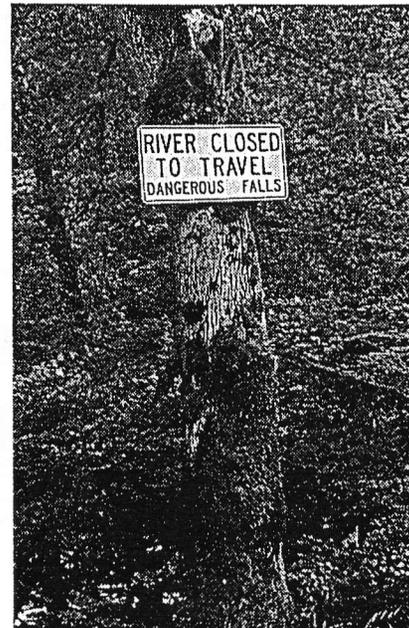
For Phase I sites that are approved, detailed design work should proceed with the involvement of all

necessary agencies. Details should include cost estimates. Hold planning workshops to ensure public involvement.

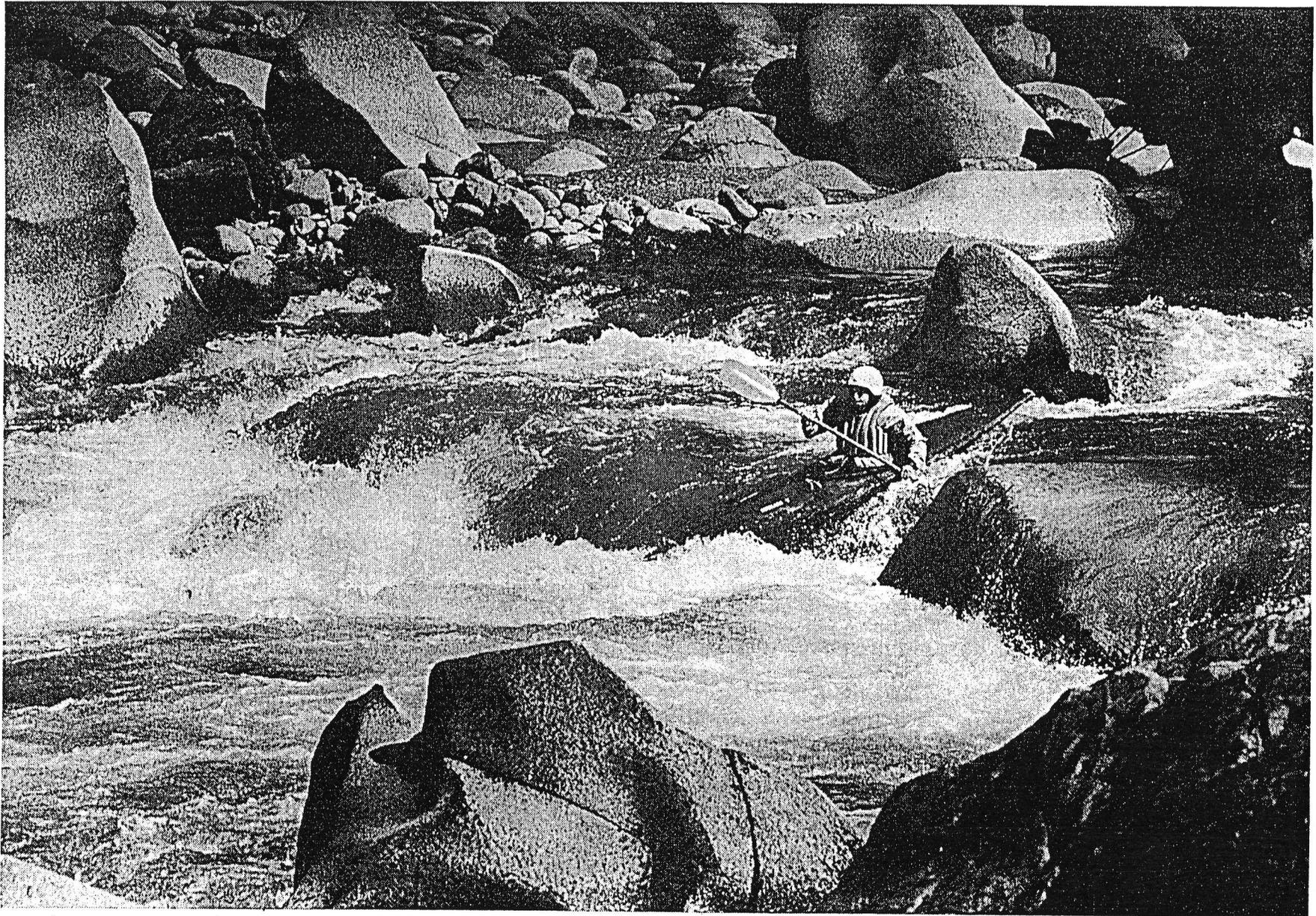
### 8. Maintenance and Operations

Determine management for each site. Potential managing bodies include:

- Local towns
- Counties
- U.S. Forest Service
- State Parks, as satellite parks
- Private concessionaires



# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



**Development Standards**

Determine standards for Scenic River access sites for consistency along corridor, including signing design.

**Education and Interpretation**

Develop opportunities along the corridor for riparian ecology education, safety information, and other relevant topics to be identified. Such planning and implementation supports the Skykomish Scenic River Goals and Objectives.

**Multi-Agency Participation**

Encourage multi-agency involvement throughout site acquisition and development processes to assist with:

- materials and equipment supply
- planning expertise
- permitting and regulatory approval
- multi-agency coordination
- operations and maintenance

**Volunteer Assistance**

Utilize volunteer groups for river clean-up activities and site work, where appropriate. Groups to consider are:

- Washington Kayak Club
- Professional River Outfitters of Washington
- Sportsman's Clubs

- Northwest Rivers Council
- Volunteers for Outdoor Washington

**Signing**

Provide private property owners with signing to reduce trespass and unwanted parking. Mark safety hazard areas around Eagle Canyon, and Sunset Falls.

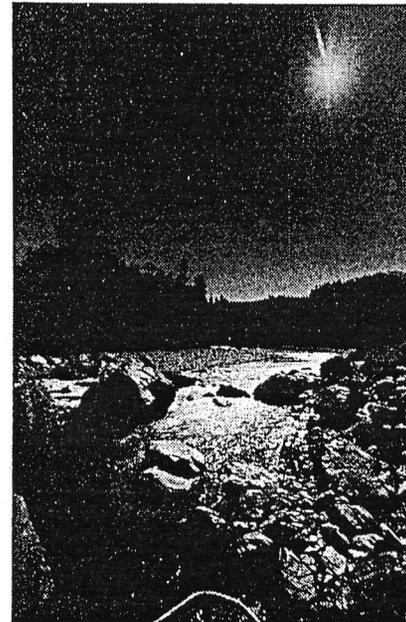
**Flooding**

Collect flood data for proposed sites and evaluate impact on acquisition and design.

**Disabled Access**

Provide facilities for disabled use at non-boating access sites. Determine disabled needs at boating launch sites.

**ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR SKYKOMISH SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT

- A.** To identify existing regulations for resource protection and coordinate agencies to enforce the policies and provide necessary funding.
1. Identify resource agency local representatives and their management authority, and produce a river conservation directory for the Skykomish.
    - a. Develop a color coded map of the Skykomish Scenic River identifying public lands along the river.
    - b. Plot currently used access points which are safe and do not trespass on private property.
    - c. Publish a list of use rules for the public lands, fee access points, and where any private easements may exist.
  2. To obtain agreements with the towns, the counties, state agencies, and the US Forest Service on management policy and for assistance in collecting resource information.
    - a. Tour identified access areas, and note current problems and identify type of access possible at the site.
    - b. Study potential for access by and purchase of privately held land.
  3. Develop an "Interagency liaison" to coordinate enforcement to develop and fund projects as necessary, and to be available for communication with citizens and users.
- B.** To identify the needs for River access and suitable locations and provide necessary facilities based future long range planning.
1. Promote safe use of the river through safety programs including: signage, information materials and on river surveillance.
  2. Collect information on use, existing use areas, and potential use areas that is usable for river access planning and design decisions.
    - a. Study river use to determine if there is a critical number of users, beyond which the resource or the experience might be compromised.
    - b. Study how users fee program for maintenance and operation of access facilities could be developed.
    - c. Study other river programs for approaches to solving problems related to access.
  3. Contact user groups and invite them to contribute to the planning process on the Skykomish Scenic River.
  4. Develop and implement a public access plan for the river.
    - a. Based on information collected, groups contacted, and these goals and objectives, work with the River Council to improve access.
    - b. Provide sanitation, garbage removal, and other necessary facilities supporting river access.
  5. Create a "Friends of the River" or "Adopt a River" group interested in physically working on improvements to access areas.

## APPENDIX A

- a. Solicit sportsmens associations, civic groups, schools, etc. for assistance in improving access sites and education in the river.

**C.** To maintain water quality at current level or better, and to assure this by monitoring (including litter and sanitation).

- 1. To identify existing monitoring, regulations, and needs related to water quality (USGS, DOE Water Quality Guide, Aquatic Resources Protection Program, Sky Valley amended comprehensive plan, Snohomish Stream Protection Guidelines).
- 2. Provide for sanitation facilities along the river as needed.
- 3. To encourage towns to use zoning based on the ability of soils to handle septic discharges.

**D.** To maintain wildlife populations (aquatic and terrestrial)

- 1. Identify existing public agency plans to protect the riparian zone.
- 2. Encourage private land owners to protect riparian zone.
- 3. Request Department of Transportation to use biotechnical methods of bank protection and erosion control.

**E.** To promote a public education program on the importance of protection for the river.

- 1. Develop events which celebrate the river and/or connect with other appropriate events.
- 2. Involve local schools and libraries in developing awareness of the scenic river.

- 3. Work with the Superintendent of Public schools to develop education materials about river conservation.

4. Organize river conservation workshops around specific river issues.

**F.** Restrict hydropower development, in accordance with existing and future statutes.

**G.** To sign and identify the river as a State Scenic River System.

- 1. Develop an information desk with access and safety information.

2. Communicate goals and objectives for conservation to local, state, and federal government.

3. Develop slide show programs, and posters to promote understanding of the Skykomish River.

## PRELIMINARY ACCESS STUDY

ABRIDGED

January 1989

Prepared for: Steve Starlund, Manager  
State Scenic Rivers Program  
Washington State Parks &  
Recreation Commission

Prepared by: Paul W. Lander  
M.L.A. Program  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
University of Washington

### Summary

These 40 sites represent the kind of access points presently being used within the Skykomish Scenic River System. Many are small, hardly noticeable paths and trails. A few places are currently being used by large numbers of people and could continue to handle those large numbers, if a proper design and management plan is implemented that specifically addresses the many issues surrounding access. Again, an important sub-issue of this access report is the question of ownership. At present, a tremendous amount of trespassing activity accompanies the use of the river. The conservation plan needs to address this facet of the problem as soon as possible both to allay the fears of private property owners and

to encourage governmental agencies to cooperate in creating legal facilities for the use of their constituents. Creating a directory that identifies each access point for public use would help reduce the trespassing problem.

People of the valley, and people from without the valley share a respect and admiration for the resource that is the Skykomish River. As the Scenic River Advisory Board and Scenic River Council address conservation of the river, it will become increasingly important to ensure appropriate access points for all users so that the river can continue to provide the diversity of pleasurable activities it currently does so well.

## APPENDIX B

**The Main Stem of the Skykomish River**

**Site/Map # Legal Desc./Ownership**

- 6 SE Sec.6 T27N,R9E Private - BN**  
 Dirt road off of Hwy 2 - 1/4 mile SE of Gold Bar. Cross RR tracks go through gates to several bank access spots. This area receives a lot of use from locals and area drift boat fishermen. One of the closest access points from a town on the Main stem of the river. Parking available at the Gold Bar roadside park.
- 7 NW Sec.8T27N,R9E Easemen thru Private Land**  
 Hwy. 2, go south, then east on Dorman Road. On the south side of the road is a path labelled "Fisherman's Access" that runs 1/2 mile between fence rows. It can be over grown and you must hike several hundred yards beyond the end of the fence rows through several creek beds to reach the main channel. Beautiful, wide gravelly channel area of the river. Good fishing spot, popular with drift boat fishermen. Trail needs basic signage, like the reflective diamonds used on ski trails.
- 8 S Sec.9 T27N,R9E State Dept.of Wildlife**  
 South off Hwy.2, Sign "Public Fishing". Known as the "High Bridge" area. Pass huge area of denuded understory (from ORV use) to large, dusty, uninviting parking area for 50-60 cars. River - 20 yards from the closest parking spots, down a rock covered slope. This area is heavily used as a "take-out" spot by boaters and gets a tremendous amount of other recreation use too, often forcing cars to park along both sides of busy Highway 2. (A dangerous proposition at best!) No support facilities are current available - water, toilets, etc. A Snohomish County warning sign, a sign encouraging trash pickup, and a Department of Wildlife Conservation License Area designation sign are all posted in clear view yet this area is continually subjected to overuse and illegal abuse. This area desperately needs HELPI
- 10 N. Sec. 14 T27N,R9E Private-BN**  
 Hwy. 2 - road Mile 32.5 by RR tracks. River is north of the road. Gravel road down to the river along the RR tracks, 300 yards or so, ending in steep climb down loose-dirt slope and then big rocks to

waters edge. Sno. County warning sign and BN No Trespassing sign posted. Used as a put-in for kayakers wishing to avoid the "Boulder Drop" section of rapids. A nice view of the river but very rugged hiking to the rivers edge. There are many other fisherman's trails in this vicinity most of which cross the RR tracks to get to the river.

**11 S Sec. 14, T27N,R9E, Private- Individual**

Hwy 2 - Road Mile 33.25, river is north of the road. "The Stump". Pullout on N side of the road for 7-8 cars next to a big tree stump. Heavily wooded area right off of pullout that has had substantial clearing of a large path (boat size) and underbrush. Lots of trash and evidence of overuse. Easy slope to the water coming out onto a big eddy just behind Split Rock. Split Rock and its companion House Rock are popular rest/play stops for boaters making their way down the river. Beautiful view of the river, including the RR bridge-a nice picnic spot, if the appropriate arrangements were made.

**12 NW Sec. 24, T27N,R9E, Private- Individual**

Hwy. 2, .1 Mile West of Anderson Creek. The river is ~ 25 yards North of this pullout for 4+ cars. Fairly steep, vegetated slope to river, primarily for boat access. Often used as a "put-in" spot to avoid "Boulder Drop" which is directly across from this access point. Overuse is causing some riverbank erosion problems. Snohomish County warning sign posted.

**13 NE Sec. 24, T27N,R9E, Private**

Hwy. 2, .4 Miles East of Anderson Creek. The Mega Resort. No public access to river, fee or otherwise. Members regularly use their access for fishing.

**14 SW Sec. 19, T27N,R10E**

Hwy. 2, just West of the bridge over the confluence of the North and South Forks. Pullout on the north side of the road, river to the north of the road. Parking for ~ 10 cars. Small trail to river, most likely for kayaks or fishing. Snohomish County warning sign posted.

**The North Fork of The Skykomish River**

- 15 N Sec. 19, T27N, R10E, State-Federal (USFS)**  
 Road going southwest out of Index on the north side of the river. This road is paved and quiet, essentially no development right on the road. ~ .8 Miles SW of the town limits there is both state and federal land that borders the river. One of these areas could be developed as an access site for the Index area,so desperately in need of a designed, controlled, access point. The potential availability of governmental land for use as an access site deserves further attention.
- 16 N Sec. 20, T27N, R10E Private**  
 The Index Tavern, on the north side of the river adjacent to the bridge in the Town of Index. Launch permits available for \$5.00, put in right in front of the tavern. Pretty gentle, open slope for carrying boats. Parking available down the street by the park.
- 17 N Sec. 20, T27N, R10E, Private-BN**  
 Railroad bridge at the Town of Index, south side of the river. Cars park underneath the bridge, use paths to river. Very limited use potential.
- 18 N Sec. 20, T27N, R10E, Private-Individual**  
 Across from the Town of Index, south side of the river, between the two bridges. On the south side of the road is a huge clearing not apparently used at present. Could possibly be purchased and developed as a parking/information/access site, if the landowner were willing.
- 19 N Sec. 20, T27N, R10E, Private-Individual**  
 Across from the Town of Index, south side of the river, immediately north of the auto bridge. Pullout on the north side of the road is heavily used as a "put-in" spot for boaters. On late spring and summer weekends this area is a major traffic hazard, blocking the paved road and spreading people all over the immediate area. This area is an accident waiting to happen until a controlled, designed facility is established somewhere else in the vicinity of the Town of Index.

**SKYKOMISH SCENIC RIVER RECREATIONAL ACCESS STUDY**

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- 20 SW Sec. 16 T27N, R10E, County-Snohomish Parks & Recreation**  
County land, ~ 3/4 Mile Northeast of the Town of Index off of Avenue A. Driving NE on Avenue A you travel through a quiet, residential neighborhood for about 2 blocks only to arrive at a "Private Property" sign. Thus an easement may be necessary to access this parcel. Another factor for consideration is the appropriateness of encouraging high traffic volumes through such low density area. This may be a parcel to consider for some type of land trade.
- 21 SE Sec. 35, T28N, R10E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 6.1, just east of Trout Creek Bridge. Dirt road off the north side of the paved road leading to several clearings capable of handling 4-5 cars. Fire rings and litter suggest regular usage. River within 20 yards down a gentle slope.
- 22 SW Sec. 36, T28N, R10E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 6.8. Large gravel pullout on the north side of the road. The river is to the north, ~ 30 yards, accessible by walking up a side channel to the main channel of the North Fork. Beautiful views of the riverside and a long stretch of river.
- 23 NE Sec. 30, T28N, R11E, NA**  
North Fork Road, intersection with Forest Service Road #282. The bridge here provides a small access point with parking for a few cars.
- 24 SE Sec. 19, T28N, R11E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 9.3. Several pulloffs on the north side of the road, each capable of handling 2-3 cars. River within 10 yards down a steep bank.
- 25 S Sec. 20, T28N, R11E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 10.3. Large gravel pullout on south side of the road, just north of Bridge #499. Nice, open view of a big bend in the river, easy access point.
- 26 W. Sec. 21, T28N, R11E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 10.8 - 11.0. Large gravel pullout on south side of road. Beautiful, open view of another big bend in the river. River very close, gently sloping bank.

- 27 S Sec. 21, T28N, R11E, Federal-USFS**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 11.2. Troublesome Creek Campground.  
Access points throughout campground area.
- 28 SW Sec. 22, T28N, R11E**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 11.7. Several pull-offs in this area on the south side of the road, each capable of handling 6+ cars. The river is within 20 yards and in view. Many well worn paths to the river down fairly steep banks. An extremely beautiful spot on the river with deep pools, waterfall, huge rocks, very nice for picnicking or just watching the river.
- 29 S Sec. 22, T28N, R11E, NA**  
North Fork Road, ~ Mile 12.0. Rock path to the confluence with Bear Creek. Parking for 5+ cars. Paths ~ 100 yards to the river, over downed logs and underbrush-no perceived trail. Pretty spot in the river, small pools and rapids.

### The South Fork of the Skykomish River

- 30 SE Sec. 19, T27N, R10E, Federal-USFS**  
Hwy. 2. The dirt road going south just before the bridge over the confluence of the North Fork and the South Fork. This road leads to the Mt. Index Riversites and eventually to the Bridal Veil Falls and Lake Serene trailheads. Many access points come off of this road including several private commercial-boater access sites within the Mt. Index Riversites. One site known as "Cable Drop" can be reached by going along the dirt road to Mt. Index Riversites. At low water the river edge is composed of huge boulders. A popular area for boaters that apparently is under consideration for further access development by the USFS.
- 31 SE Sec. 19, T27N, R10E**  
Hwy. 2, ~ 100 yards east of the road to the Town of Index. Pull-off with an obvious roadway leading downward. Steep, steep, 100+ foot slope to the river. Powerline overhead running SW/NE.

- 33 W Sec. 27, T27N, R10E, Federal-USFS**  
Hwy. 2, ~ Road Mile 38.9. Pull-off on the south side of the highway with a vehicle path leading back west, and a trail straight down to the water. (Less than 20 yards) Parking for 5-6 cars maximum, access for fishing or kayak only. Red warning sign.
- 34 SW Sec. 27, T27N, R10E, Federal-USFS**  
Hwy. 2, ~ Road Mile 39.0. Eagle Falls. River within 30 yards down well worn paths. An extremely beautiful spot-big pools, falls, rocks. Currently parking on both sides of the road. This area very popular but easily over used given existing road/parking conditions. Serious planning effort needed to address weekend traffic congestion/road safety problems.
- 35 NE Sec. 34T27N, R10E, Private-Individuals**  
Hwy. 2, at Barclay Creek. Pullouts for a few cars with nice views of the river but no public lands access.
- 36 SE Sec. 2, T26N, R10E, County-Pub. Wks. Rt. of Way**  
East of Baring, off Hwy. 2, the Index Creek Road and Bridge. On the south side of the bridge there is some room for limited parking and access in the road right-of-way. Nice river-view and old wood suspension bridge.
- 37 NW Sec. 12, T26N,R10E, Private-Individuals**  
East of Baring, ~ 1 Mile, Riverwood Park. Private waterfront lots with no apparent public access.
- 38 S Sec. 20,T26N,R11E, Federal-USFS**  
Lowe Creek Road (DNR Map Road #2612). Heading west off the Money Creek Campground Road. A very good gravel road gets within 25 yards of the river in many places. The slope to the river is often very gentle but there are no clear pathways existing. No easy access at this point as the thick underbrush and strewn logs make the going pretty tough.

- 39 NW Sec. 21, T26N,R11E, Federal-USFS**  
 Hwy. 2, immediately before the turnoff to Money Creek Campground. On the south side of the road is a dirt "loop" road that follows the river and has many car parking areas along it. This area receives lots of use and can accommodate lots of cars and people. There is good, clear, close access to the river all along this loop. The river here has deep pools, rock flats and nice views.
- 40 NW Sec. 21, T26N,R11E, Federal-USFS**  
 Off Hwy. 2, Money Creek Campground. Hand carried boats and fishing access from many spots within the campground. Nice stretch of the river-good views, wide gravel bar.
- 41 S Sec. 26,T26N,R11E, Private-Corporation**  
 Off Hwy. 2, Skykomish Deli Parking Lot, Town of Skykomish. Picnic table with very nice view of the river and the town. There is a dirt path off of this parking area that leads down the steep bank to a sand bar.

**The Beckler River**

- 42 NW Sec. 25, T26N,R11E, Private- Corporation**  
 Beckler River Road Mile ~ .5. On the east side of the road is a dirt road that leads to a huge, level gravel bar with a multitude of access points to the river. There is room for lots of people and vehicles. Some informal camping taking place at present. Powerlines overhead. This area has tremendous development potential as an access site, if the landowner were willing to sell or grant an easement.
- 43 S Sec. 24, T26N,R11E, Federal-USFS**  
 B.R. Rd. Mile ~ 1.1. New bridge being installed in 1988 that should leave lots of pull-offs for parking. Primarily an area for kayak or fishing access.
- 44 N. Sec. 24, T26N,R11E, NA**  
 B.R. Rd. Mile ~ 1.5 Campground with river front picnic/access sites. Very gentle slope to the river with parking nearby.

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- 45    Sec. 6, T26N,R12E, State-(DNR?)**  
B.R. Rd. Mile ~ 5.0. Whole Section of state lands with potential for access sites.
  
- 46    W Sec. 29, T27N,R12E, Federal-USFS**  
B.R. Rd. just before junction with Rapid Creek. On the west side of the road is a large flat area with "campsites." Good river access, gentle slope, with plenty of parking. The last 1/4 mile of road all has good access with the river and road being close together, separated by a gently sloping bank.

Monroe Monitor  
February 21, 1990

## Scenic river meetings scheduled

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Skykomish Scenic River Citizen Advisory Board and the Scenic River Committee of Participating Agencies will hold public meetings this month to discuss the newly completed Skykomish Scenic River Recreational Access Study. Copies of the study are available in advance of the meetings at the town halls of Sultan, Gold Bar and Skykomish and at the Index General Store in Index.

Meetings will be held on Feb. 27 at the Index Sportsman Club in Index, and on Feb. 28 at the Sultan Town Hall in Sultan. Both meetings are scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to review this study and its findings.

This will help determine the best

short term and long range solutions for managing public use of the Skykomish River as well as protect private property.

The January 1990 Skykomish Scenic River Recreational Access Study is an effort to begin to resolve uncontrolled public access to the Skykomish River.

The study was initiated when local citizens and other river interest groups directed the State Parks Scenic Rivers Program to study the problems of private property trespassing and high concentrations of public use along the Skykomish Scenic River System.

The Skykomish River Citizen Advisory Board and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission staff conducted public workshops throughout the valley to gather recommendations to solve

these river problems. This study is the result of those workshops, as well as other expert advice.

The main objectives of the study were to:

- 1) deter trespassing on private property;
- 2) disperse public access to the Skykomish River away from State Highway 2; and
- 3) provide adequate facilities for boating put-in and take-out.

The study identifies alternatives to the current high concentrations of public use by establishing specific access areas for day-use visitation, white water rafting, kayaking, drift boating and bank fishing. The study also formulates a plan to develop these types of facilities. This will not encourage additional use of the area, but will alleviate the current access problems.

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May 10, 1989  
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## Sky River board to meet in Index

The Skykomish Scenic River Advisory Board will meet in Index from 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, to discuss rafting access issues on the North Fork Skykomish River.

Steve Starlund, manager of the state's Scenic Rivers Program, said the public workshop is being held in Index to gather local residents' concerns about the impacts of river rafters accessing the Skykomish, and also to assess what the board is doing.

Starlund said the advisory board is not studying sites for possible access areas, but is studying an access plan for the whole Skykomish River corridor. The board may study access sites later this summer.

"The intent of the meeting is to look at the whole problem of access," Starlund said. "We want as many people as possible to attend."

The meeting will take place in Index Church at the corner of Seventh Street and Avenue A.

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July 12, 1989  
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## River board to meet July 19

The Skykomish Scenic River Advisory Board will meet in Gold Bar at 7 p.m., Wednesday, July 19, for their regular monthly meeting.

On the agenda are officials from the state Department of Fisheries, the Puget Sound Water Quality

Authority, and drift boat fisherman Gary Smith.

The public is welcome to attend the meeting. Gold Bar Town Hall is located at the corner of Fifth Street and Orchard Avenue.

# SKYKOMISH SCENIC RIVER RECREATIONAL ACCESS STUDY

Index Eagle,  
July 1989 Vol. VI - Issue 6

## SCENIC RIVERS MEETING

The Scenic River's Advisory Board was developed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Department to study use and access problems of state rivers. The Skykomish is the first and only river being studied at this time. It was chosen as Washington's most outstanding river because of its scenic beauty, wildlife, recreational uses, high water quality, free flow and current compatible land use.

The job of the board is to protect and enhance the whole river's corridor as well as to protect private property rights and to keep the river from being dammed. They have mitigating facilitators, grant access and the cooperation and advice of many state agencies, including the departments of Natural Resources, Wildlife, Ecology, Transportation and Fisheries, among others.

On May 17th the Skykomish Scenic River Advisory Board met with area residents to discuss river access problems within the town of Index. Several other similar meetings will be held up and down the valley.

Steven Starlund, manager of the State Scenic Rivers Program, described the purpose of the Scenic River Designation [to solve river problems through collaborative management by citizens, local government, and state agencies] and then presented a slide show of the Skykomish River, highlighting the town of Index and its access to the River.

Following this, Lisa Bryce Lewis, hired through a Non Off Road Vehicle Account (NOVA) grant, handled through the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), to do an access study for the Skykomish River, discussed the listening post meeting style; what the objective was; and how it was going to run. A listening post involves hand on participation by local citizens. A problem is addressed by gathering in small groups and allowing participants to voice their concerns openly. All problems are listed and then discussed within a larger group. The objective was to identify the problems seen with present access to the Skykomish River. Once a group finished listing problems, they were told to pick the three they felt were the most significant. Each person was given three votes, then the top three problems were tallied. Here follows a combined summary of the concerns of the two groups from Index. (19 area residents were in attendance)

1. Impact of rafting -
  - traffic - no parking
  - litter - no place for garbage
  - lack of public facilities to change clothes
2. Why not purchase good access points?
  - across from Sportsmen's Park
  - across bridge from Index
3. Small groups [fishermen, kyakers, etc] are little problem.
4. Public access to river:
  - where is it?
  - is it suitable?
5. Rafting companies
  - could they provide facilities
  - should they be permitted?
  - should they be licensed?
6. Destruction of property
  - public and private
7. Flood Control
  - log jam removal
  - dam
  - rip rap reconstruction
8. Squatters/Recreation Development Controls
9. Civil Safety - the ability to get help / people using the river being responsible in preventing accidents / river danger info.

The largest problems picked were:

1. Lack of river access
2. User Misuse
3. Parking / Traffic - finances
4. Sanitation Facilities / Garbage

Many good points were voiced during the listening post activity and many citizens from Index attended the meeting and gave direct input into the problem of river rafting, and the impact it has upon a small town such as Index.

The next Skykomish Scenic River Advisory Board meeting is June 21, 1989. If you have any questions on anything to do with the program, feel free to contact Steve Starlund at the Washington State Parks Commission at 753-1810, or Rolf Nieuwejaar, a member of the Advisory Board at 793-2018.

Karen Sample



## APPENDIX D