



I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PLANNING CONTEXT

AND INTEGRATED PLANNING EFFORTS



A. THE BLUEPRINT FOR PARKS, RECREATION, & CULTURAL SERVICES IN MOSES LAKE

The vision for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is to provide a five-year guiding document that the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services can use as a comprehensive tool to plan, develop, and maintain safe recreational facilities and programs for the health, pleasure, and educational use of the community and its visitors.

The master plan includes achievable strategies and implementation approaches that directly impact resident's quality of life over a 5-year term and beyond. The master planning process includes a review by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), allowing the City to apply for and receive state and national funding.

This master plan is intended to be an update to the 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan, that identified many goals, objectives, and action items, some that are carried forward in this master plan. This document is intended to be sustainable and practical, with goals, objectives and action items that are possible to implement as prioritized into ongoing, short-term, mid-term, and long-term action items.

To serve as the best possible planning tool, parks and recreation master planning should include a process that:

- Provides a framework for orderly and consistent planning
- Provides a framework for acquisition, development, and capital planning
- Recommends efficiencies and improvements for administration of the Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services Department
- Recommends resources, programs, and facilities that can best contribute to a positive and healthy quality of life for Moses Lake residents

At the outset of the process in April 2021, the Department identified four critical success factors used to both guide the planning process and to serve as an objective and evaluative tool.

1. Adopt a 5-year master plan that builds on City planning documents to include the City of Moses Lake Comprehensive Plan, the 2016 Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan, the Shoreline Master Program, and the 2005 Moses Lake Activity Trails Master Plan.
2. Complete a comprehensive needs analysis to identify current and future recreation and facility needs through public engagement, surveys, demographics, and trends analysis and ensure an inclusive process that affords all community members adequate opportunity to provide input.
3. Identify current conditions at City parks and with recreation programs and services, and determine a phased and prioritized capital improvement program and best management practices for operations.
4. Develop a funding strategy for capital and operational needs.

An important master planning task was to facilitate Department staff to identify new mission and vision statements as well as core values that serve as Department hallmarks.

The new 30,000 square foot Larson Recreation Center is expected to open in late 2022 and a feasibility and programming study was also completed simultaneously with the master plan. Some of the key take-ways from that study are included in this master plan.

B. MOSES LAKE HISTORY – UNDERSTANDING AND PERSPECTIVE

The 20.9 square mile city is the largest city in Grant County, 177 miles east of the Seattle-Tacoma metro area and 104 miles to the west of Spokane.

Early History Of Moses Lake

The City of Moses Lake celebrates a long history of acknowledgment and respect for the Native Americans who were the original inhabitants of the area. The City of Moses Lake, Moses Lake, and Moses Coulee were named for Columbia-Sinkiuse tribal leader Chief Moses (1829-1899).

Moses Lake, originally platted as Neppel in 1911, gave birth to a highly profitable lakeside orchard industry. However, growth of the tiny town was limited by battles over water rights and the withering effects of the Great Depression.

By 1913, legal entanglements over the distribution of lake water had effectively choked community growth. Land sales in Neppel went largely unrealized until water rights were reassigned to the Moses Lake Irrigation District in 1929. The district's newly won water rights allowed them to build a dam impounding 50,000-acre feet of irrigation water.

The City was incorporated as Moses Lake in 1938 and became the fastest growing community in Washington State with the arrival of the Moses Lake Army Air Base (later renamed the Larson Air Force Base), a new tourism industry, and abundant irrigation water fueled an agricultural boomtown as Moses Lake morphed into the population and service center of the Columbia Basin.

History Of The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department

In 1947, the City created a Park and Playground Fund, for the purpose of building, constructing, and supplying the municipal park and playground. In 1950 the City Park Fund, later referred to as Parks and Recreational Facilities fund, was funded for \$600 in the 1950 budget to pay for salaries and wages for the operation of City parks.

Shortly after, a Board of Park Commissioners was established in 1953 and in 1958 was changed to the Park and Recreation Commission. Later that year, the first dedicated full-time Supervisor and Superintendent positions were hired.

Around this same time in the early 1950's, the Moses Lake Museum was beginning to evolve. The original collection was donated to the City by Adam East in 1956 who's collection of 35,000 – 40,000 objects was found in the Columbia Basin from Wenatchee to Moses Lake. A museum opened in 1958. In the early 1960's, the Park and Recreation Commission was involved in many foundational projects

such as building the Swedberg Pool at McCosh Park, building little league fields, purchasing of Cascade Park, completing park improvements, and even having discussions on algae treatment for Moses Lake.

In 1962, the board, now referred to as the Moses Lake Recreation Council was completely reorganized and acting in an advisory capacity and would report to the Parks and Recreation Department's seasonal director, who was a liaison to the Moses Lake City Council. In 1965, the council's name was changed to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. Later that year, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission appointed its first Park and Recreation Department Director.

From 1970 to 2021, Moses Lake's population grew from 10,000 to its current 24,666 and in those decades, the park and recreation system grew to support the new residents.

Between 1958-89 the Adam East collection had been housed in a locally built museum on the Civic Campus. In 1989 the collection became threatened to be divided and potentially lost forever. Following a series of letters from dedicated Friends of the Museum and local community members, a final push was made for the city to continue its stewardship of the collection and in 1990, the city decided to continue housing the collection as the Adam East Museum & Art Center in a downtown location. A new permanent building was built in 2011 to house the facility.

In 1989, under ordinance #1368, a Tourism Commission was established made up of seven members with five year terms. In 2017, under ordinance #2855, the Tourism Commission was repealed completely.

In the early 1990's the department was busy with programming, starting new events like a free Summer Concert Series, performing updates to current facilities like the Larson Playfield, and beginning conversations of building new facilities like a Japanese Garden, an RC Race Track, Ice Rink, Skate Board Park, an aquatic complex and an additional ball-field complex. One of the new additions in the early 1990's was the Centennial Amphitheater at McCosh Park, where the community could hold music concerts and festivals.

Between 2002 and 2016, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee added and reduced the number of commission members until settling on seven members and two that reside within the Urban Growth Area.

In 2019 with support and approval from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and City Council, the department moved forward with rebuilding the Larson Recreation Center which had been closed since 2014. The new 30,000 square foot building would cost the city approximately \$11.5 million and would include locker rooms for hockey teams, an indoor walking track, concessions, skate rentals, a warming area, a multi-purpose gym, multi-purpose classrooms, and department office spaces. The project broke ground in April 2021 and is anticipated to be complete in 2022.

In January of 2021, the Museum helped start the process of obtaining a Creative District certification through Arts Washington. The certification will help fund and provide an urban, walkable area of artistic and creative activities and businesses for downtown Moses Lake. By then, the Parks & Recreation Department changed their name to Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department to provide a better representation of what they provide for the community.

C. DEPARTMENT MISSION AND GOALS

The consultants facilitated a series of workshops with staff to develop new mission and vision statements and hallmarks that best describes their core values. The Mission/Vision and Hallmarks document is in **Appendix A**.

MISSION

We provide safe, welcoming parks, healthy recreation, cultural programs, and extraordinary services for all.

VISION

We aspire to be our community's leaders in connecting people to people, parks, trails, and programs, while creating a legacy for future generations, and honoring the culture and history of Moses Lake.

HALLMARKS

- Extraordinary customer service
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice are at the forefront of all we do
- A safe, healthy, and fun place to work and play
- A high functioning innovative team that constantly displays integrity, teamwork, and accountability

D. PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The City has an estimated population of 24,666 residents and manages over 395 acres of public park space made up of 13 special use parks, 10 community parks, 7 neighborhood parks, 2 linear parks, 3 natural areas, 2 regional parks, and 7 mini parks. The Department manages 2 indoor facilities that include the Larson Recreation Center and the Moses Lake Museum & Art Center. The Department also manages a large outdoor ice rink and the Surf n' Slide Water Park.

The Department offers many recreation activities and events that help to build a sense of community. Recreation services include special events, aquatics activities, senior programs, youth programs, preschool and camps, adult and youth sports programs, health and wellness activities, and enrichment classes. Cultural, arts, and heritage programs are administered by the Museum & Art Center staff. The Department employs 23 full-time, year-round permanent and 10 part-time permanent staff members, supplemented by 4 seasonal full-time equivalents (FTE) that work in three divisions – Parks, Recreation, and the Museum & Art Center. The 2021-2022 budget includes expenditures of \$6.9 Million of which \$1.4 million or 20 percent is recovered by revenues from fees and charges. The total cost recovery was somewhat affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic but is typically around 25 percent and is fueled by the Surf n' Slide Water Park. Operating funds come from the City's general fund.

E. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The City has grown in population from 16,323 in 2000 to a current population of 24,666. The population is expected to grow modestly to 26,198 by 2026.

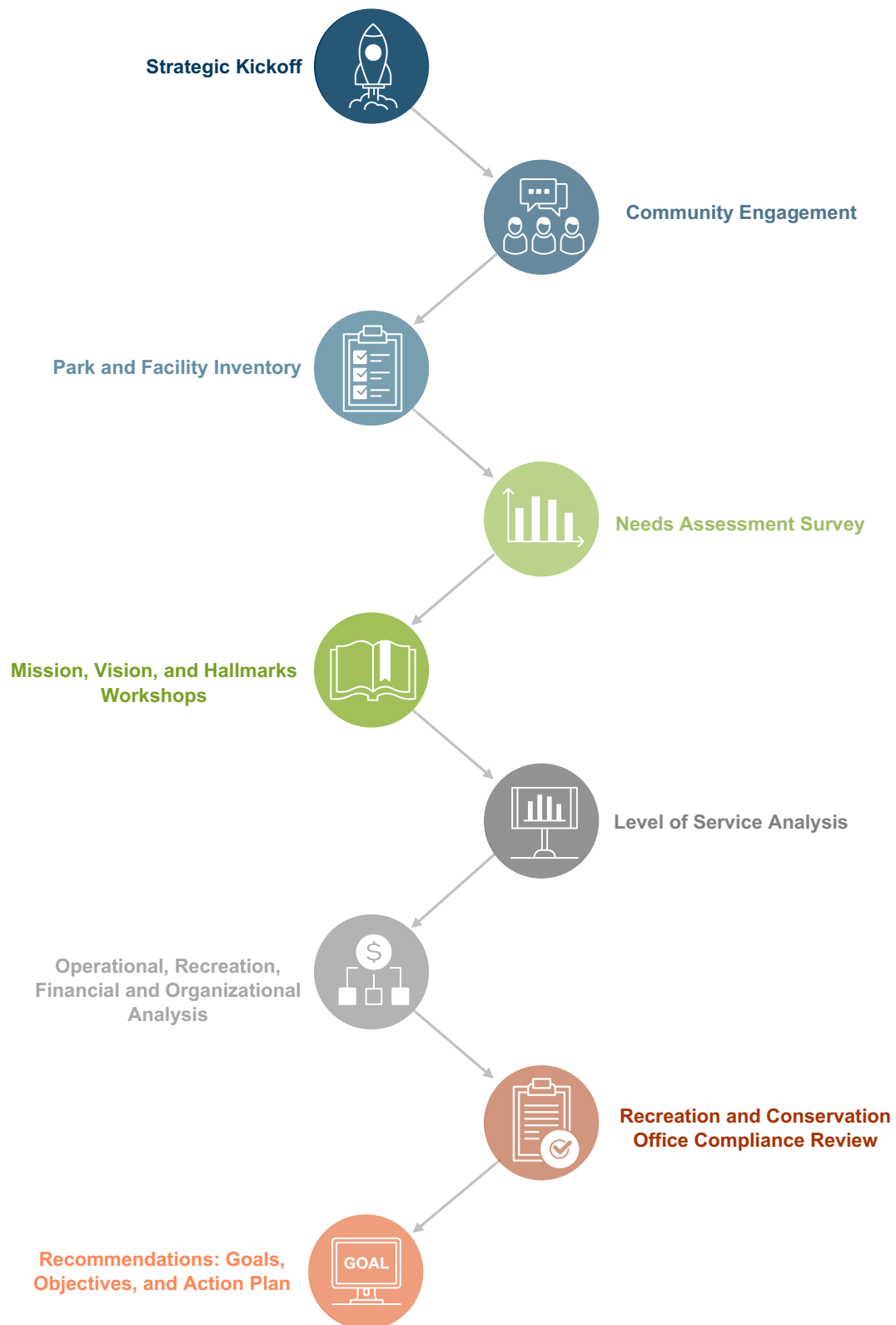
In addition to significant population growth, the ethnic character of the City continues to evolve, reflecting growth among the Hispanic populations. Based on historical data, the City is increasingly becoming more diverse over time. In 2010, 30.04 percent of the population identified as Hispanic. This percentage increased to 34.33 percent in 2021– compared to 13.5 percent in the State of Washington, and 18.92 percent in the United States.

F. METHODOLOGY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Engagement was central to the planning process that included stakeholder and focus group interviews, staff interviews, SWOT analyses, and public meetings. As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, engagement was completed using the Zoom digital platform.

The planning process included a strategic kickoff meeting on April 20, 2021, where expectations and critical success factors were discussed with Department leadership. The consultants worked both virtually as well as visited the City to tour facilities and inventory and assess parks, park components, and amenities. The consultants also visited the Department October 11-14, 2021, to present findings to the community and staff and conduct a visioning workshop with staff. During this visit, the consultants completed staff training and a series of workshops to envision new mission and vision statements and define hallmarks.

Figure 2: The Planning Framework



G. WASHINGTON STATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE (RCO) GUIDELINES FOR MASTER PLANS

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office administers grants for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board which requires an adopted master plan, self-certified and reviewed by the RCO to be eligible for state grant funding. Once an adopted master plan is approved by the RCO, the agency is eligible to apply for grant funding for six years.

Required Elements for Master Plan Approval by RCO

1. **Goals and objectives:** The master plan must support projects with broad statements of intent (goals) and measures that describe when these intents will be attained (objectives). Goals may include a higher level of service.
2. **Inventory:** The plan must include a description of the service area's facilities, lands, programs, and their condition in a quantitative format or in a qualitative/narrative format.
3. **Public involvement:** The planning process must give the public ample opportunity to be involved in plan development and adoption.
- 4(a). **Demand and need analysis.** The plan must:
 - Provide an analysis that defines priorities, as appropriate, for acquisition, development, preservation, enhancement, management, etc., and explain why these actions are needed.
 - Include an assessment of community desires for parks, recreation, open space, and/or habitat, as appropriate, in a manner appropriate for the service area (personal observation, informal talks, formal survey(s), workshops, etc.).
- 4 (b). **Level of Service assessment** (optional): An assessment of the criterion appropriate to the community. Possibly establish a higher level of service as a plan goal (above).
5. **Capital Improvement Program:** The plan must include a capital improvement/facility program that lists land acquisition, development, and renovation projects by year of anticipated implementation; include funding source. The program includes any capital projects submitted to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for funding.
6. **Adoption:** The plan and process must receive formal governing body approval. A copy of the signed resolution, letter, or other adoption instrument must be forwarded to the RCO with the self-certification form and final adopted copy of the master plan.

H. RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS AND INTEGRATION

The Department provided numerous planning documents that were important to integrate into the master plan. These documents were thoroughly reviewed, summarized, and referenced in the master plan.

2020/2021 Update to the Moses Lake Comprehensive Plan

In September 2020, the City began an update to the elements of the comprehensive plan beginning with a community visioning process.

Related to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, the following comments were recorded during the Community Engagement portion of that planning process:

- Several participants noted the need for more and better options for recreation, arts, and healthy activities for youth, especially in cold weather
- Some neighborhoods, especially in the north part of city, lack good access to parks
- Recreation on the Lake and dunes should be a bigger regional draw. Birdwatching is also an opportunity for growth
- Completion of rail bypass line would open major waterfront recreation opportunities and improve water quality near McCosh Park by removing rail line near the lake
- Lack of maintenance of boulevard medians landscaping is sometimes an issue
- Shade trees are a good investment for parks
- Homeless encampments in waterfront Neppel park discourage many from visiting
- School playfields do not appear to be fully utilized, may be an opportunity for partnerships
- City relies on aquifer wells for water, which are threatened by overuse
- Some concern that there are more parks than the City can maintain



The comprehensive plan defined park standards for Level of Service for mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks as well as overall for the system in a 2014 update, adopting additional standards from future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plans by reference. See **Table 2**.

Table 2: Park Standards for Level of Service

Category	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs	1/4-mile radius in residential setting	Between 2500 sq. ft and one acre
Neighborhood Park	Remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation	1/2-mile radius and uninterrupted by non-residential streets or other physical barriers	5 acres minimum size; 5-10 acres optimal
Community Park	Serves a broader purpose than a neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and 1-to-3-mile distance	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 to 50 acres

Two elements of the comprehensive plan are most applicable to the master plan update:

Capital Facilities Element (completed in 2021)

This element mandated, to the maximum extent that fiscal considerations permit, that the City should consider development and regular update of functional area plans for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space. Some strategies were identified that could be used to address deficiencies and meet future needs:

- Specify criteria for acquiring park lands
- Acquire new park lands and develop additional recreation facilities in new and developing neighborhoods
- Establish LOS standards reflective of the community's needs and financial resources
- Consider park facility locations and adopt a service area LOS standard in line with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines
- Establish policies to address park and recreation facilities and open space deficiencies as a result of annexations and heavy regional use
- Consider continued park and recreation facilities and open space enhancements to serve commercial areas and the Central Business District
- An update to the capital facilities element incorporated parkland standards from the 2016 Parks and Recreation Master plan in November 2021

Table 3: Moses Lake 2016 parks and recreation adopted LOS standards

Parkland	2015 Ratio	Adopted LOS	2015 Inventory	2015 Acres	2015 Need	2025 Need
Mini Parks	0.49 ac/1000	0.25–0.5 ac/1000	9 sites	10.75 ac	0 ac	12.4–24.8 ac
Neighborhood Parks	1.52 ac/1000	1.0–2.0 ac/1000	8 sites	33.62 ac	0 ac	49.6–65.6 ac
Community Parks	6.4 ac/1000	5.0–8.0 ac/1000	6 sites	141.7 ac	0 ac	248.2–397.1 ac
Regional/Urban Parks	6.4 ac/1000	5.0–10.0 ac/1000	2 sites	141.11 ac	0 ac	248.2–496.4 ac
Special Use Areas	1.7 ac/1000	1.07 ac/1000	9 sites	37.67 ac	0 ac	90.8 ac
Natural Open Space	0.94 ac/1000	1.20 ac/1000	3 sites	20.81 ac	5.69 ac	59.6 ac

Parkland	2015 Ratio	Adopted LOS	2015 Inventory	2015 Acres	2015 Need	2025 Need
Total Parkland LOS	17.4 ac/1000	13.5–22.8 ac/1000	37 sites	395.09 ac ¹	5.69 ac	460.06–1134.3
Linear Parks	0.42 ac/1000	n/a	2 sites	9.43 ac ¹	n/a	n/a
Total Parkland Acreage	—	—	—	380.0 ac ¹	—	—
Pathways & Trails	2.8 mi/1000	.86 mi/1000	62.98 mi	n/a	0 mi	139 mi

Parkland	2015 Ratio	Adopted LOS	2015	2015 Acres	2015 Need	2025 Need
Soccer Fields [Full size]	1 field/11040	1 field/4000	2	2	2.52	12.41
Soccer Fields [Modified]	1 field/2007	1 field/4000	11	11	1.41	12.41
Tennis Courts	1 court/7360	1 court/2000	3	3	8	24.8
Playgrounds	1 set /1299	1 set/2000	17	17	8	24.8
Museum	1/22080	n/a	13,000 ft ²	1	0	TBD
Skate Park	1/22080	n/a	1	0.5	0	2.24

The Land Use Element (September, 2021)

In this element, Goal 3.6 addresses the preservation and use of parks and open spaces. This goal focused on the preservation of open spaces, which contribute to community character, protection of resources and environmentally sensitive areas, and enhanced recreational, educational, and aesthetic opportunities.

Policies

Policy 3.6.1 Use a variety of tools to preserve and integrate open space such as: conservation easements, mitigation measures, critical area regulations, clustering, density bonuses, incentives for private preservation, and acquisition.

Policy 3.6.2 Preserve land where development would result in environmental damage as natural, undeveloped open space including lands with:

- Unique natural features or resources
- Exemplary ecosystems
- Critical areas
- Exceptional scenic values

Policy 3.6.3 Preserve and integrate open space as passive or active recreation open space when lands would:

- Buffer resource lands or provide separation between urban and rural areas or incompatible land uses
- Contribute to the continuity of an overall trail or open space system
- Serve recreational and open space needs associated with new residential development
- Provide recreation activities related to natural resources

Policy 3.6.4 Consider public acquisition of open space when:

- The area is needed to link together key parts of the open space system
- Public access or recreational use is desirable
- The value is aesthetic
- Other methods do not promise permanent protection

Policy 3.6.5 Allow and enhance public access to city-owned shorelines and critical areas when both public safety and the health of the resource can be protected.

Policy 3.6.6 Pursue State and Federal financing, including grants and loans, available for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of environmentally sensitive open space.

2016 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

The 2016 update to the 2009 master plan outlined seven goals accompanied by 66 action items. The action items can be seen in **Appendix B**.





Moses Lake Shoreline Master Program

The City of Moses Lake is responsible for management of shorelines within its jurisdiction. Moses Lake's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) was adopted by the City Council on October 14, 2014 and was approved by the Department of Ecology effective January 17, 2017. An update is underway in 2022.

Active Trails Master Plan

Adopted in 2005, the City's current trails master plan is in need of updating. Even so, it outlines opportunities for walking and biking and makes the case for active transportation opportunities in Moses Lake. An up-to-date Trails Map is in **Appendix C**.



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