

LAKE FOREST PARK LAKEFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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Prepared for:

CITY OF LAKE FOREST PARK

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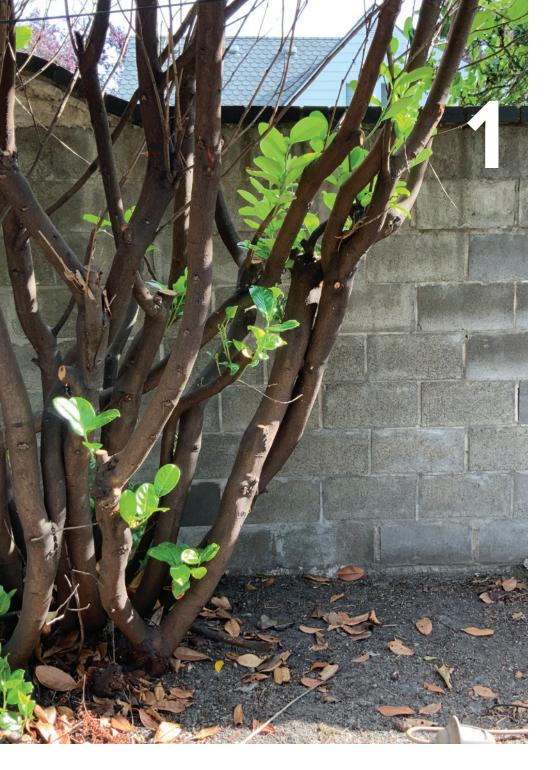
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BACKGROUND

INTERPRETING THE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY OF LAKE FOREST PARK'S COMMUNITY LAKEFRONT.

PROJECT & SITE CONTEXT

Lake Forest Park's new lakefront properties sit on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples. Lyon Creek, its mouth, and shoreline were of particular significance to early inhabitants. The shoreline was developed in the early 1900s, and the houses and cabins that remain on this park site serve as tangible remnants of Lake Forest Park's historic residential character. Neighboring Lyon Creek Preserve manages the restoration of Lyon Creek, making space for floodplains, wetlands, and riparian habitat with the goal of someday returning kokanee runs to the creek. The new park aims to build off these restoration goals and enhance habitats associated with both the creek and local shoreline in addition to preserving the substantial existing tree canopy.

The establishment of the new park is particularly exciting for residents as it addresses a historical lack of waterfront access within Lake Forest Park. The project aligns with the City of Lake Forest Park's commitment to improving public waterfront access, identified as a high priority in their Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails plan and will provide a space for users of all ages and abilities.

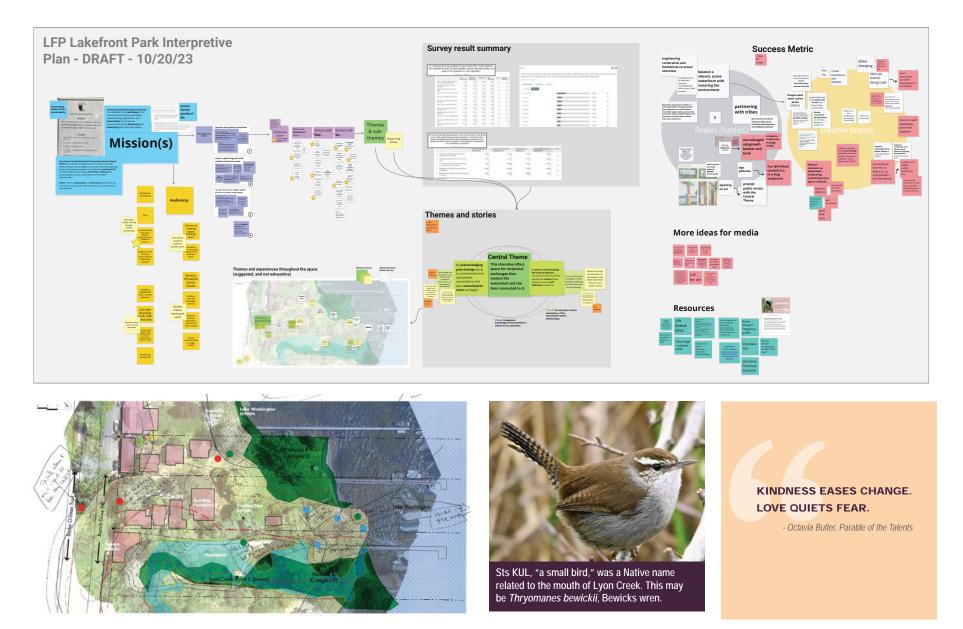


INTERPRETIVE PLANNING PROCESS

An interpretive plan is a strategic document—developed through converstion, iterative design, and other methods of gathering community and stakeholder input—that outlines the goals and methods for communicating information about a particular site, object, or topic to a specific audience. The primary purpose of an interpretive plan is to enhance the visitor experience by providing engaging opportunities for learning and connection, while serving the site's mission and broader goals.

An online survey was developed and distributed to support the interpretive planning process for Lake Forest Park, and better understand community members' interests and ideas about the property. A focused working session was then held to develop the major components of an interpretive plan. This included the site's mission, audiences, management goals, interpretive design goals, parameters, and ideas for media.

A summer camping party at Lake Forest Park, c. 1910. Image by Asahel Curtis, courtesy of the Shoreline Historical Museum.



PLANNING SESSION

Products of the interpretive planning session included a diagrammatic map of stories, content, and themes, defined success metrics and criteria, and sketched maps to inform interpretive placemaking and implementation.



INTERPRETIVE PLAN IDENTITY. STORYTELLING.



MISSION

RELEVANT MISSION STATEMENTS

- City of Lake Forest Park: To be careful stewards of the community's resources, to provide outstanding services in a responsive manner, and to enhance the quality of life for the community.
- Lake Forest Park Stewardship Foundation: To contribute to the well- being of our community by fostering awareness, understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of our natural environment; and by preserving and enhancing parks and open spaces.
- City of Lake Forest Park Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: To cultivate an appreciation for nature, encourage healthy lifestyle, and strengthen community bonds through park areas and recreation programs. To enhance the quality of life for City residents by providing, preserving, restoring and promoting parks, trails, natural areas and recreation opportunities.
- From the City's 2012 Charter for Compassion: "...a compassionate city promotes values of justice, equity, and respect for all peoples... a compassionate city deepens our quality of life."

THIS PARK'S MISSION

To create and maintain a space for reciprocal exchanges that restore the whole watershed and the lives connected to it.



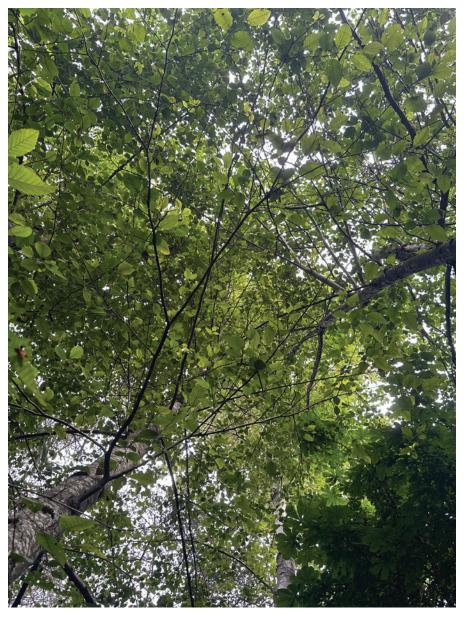
GOALS

Interpretation should serve an organization's broader management goals. These may relate to financial sustainability, diversity and inclusion, environmental restoration, increasing the volunteer or donor base, or other efforts and aspirations.

Additionally, an interpretive plan includes goals for what interpretive designs and programs should achieve. These include emotional goals (how will they feel?), learning goals (what will visitors consider or better understand upon engaging with interpretation?), and behavioral goals (what actions will they take?). By resonating with visitors' emotions, inspiring them to question and learn, and invoking them to take specific actions, the organization's broader management goals will, ideally, be served.

On the following page, Table 1 provides a summary of the city of Lake Forest Park's specific management goals for this new public park, alongside interpretive strategies for achieving these goals.
 Table 1: Management Goals and Interpretive Strategies

Management Goals	Interpretive Strategies	
The city's overarching goals for this park	Ways in which interpretation can help achieve the city's management goals	
Improve and protect local ecosystems through:	Interpretation can address this goal by:	
 Maintaining natural drainage. 	Encouraging park visitors to appreciate and contribute to healthy ecosystems.	
Improve stream and lake water flow and quality; restore natural hydrologic	Inspire hope and appreciation of the City's and tribes' efforts by highlighting	
functions.	"success stories" of habitat and hydrology improvements.	
 Creating and enhancing habitat. 	Placing emphasis on stories around salmon ecology to help visitors connect	
Create and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife; protect sensitive areas.	salmon health with cultural heritage and watershed-wide resilience.	
 Restore salmon populations. 		
Work toward the return of a healthy kokanee run in Lyon Creek.		
Create a gathering place with unified waterfront access by:	Interpretation can address this goal by:	
Promoting the park as a gathering place for the LFP community.	Using language and design that invites people to gather in the park, including	
 Unifying waterfront access across three city-owned lots in a way that balances 	in off-site media such as a website.	
the needs of people and nature.	Integrating placemaking with cultural and environmental education through	
 Planning for year-round use. 	public art and other unique designs, programs, and events. Using design to	
	create a sense of unity across the waterfront.	
	 Developing a suite of interpretive opportunities to be enjoyed year-round. 	
Connect this park to a larger system of trails, recreational	Interpretation can address this goal by:	
areas, and urban spaces by:	Implementing consistent design language throughout educational and	
 Considering this park's connection to the Burke Gilman Trail. 	instructional/wayfinding media, to help park visitors navigate to and through	
 Updating access to the site using ramps, signs, and thoughtful entrance 	the park.	
design. Consider trail access to and through the park.	Integrate interpretation and placemaking with a thoughtful, welcoming	
 Considering this park's connection to City Hall and Town Center. 	entry experience.	
Provide equitable access to the waterfront, land, and related	Interpretation can address this goal by:	
cultural heritage.	 Incorporating messaging about equity. 	
-	 Encouraging responsible stewardship and helping to define areas of active vs. 	
	passive interaction with the land and water.	



Mature trees at the park and neighboring preserve provide shade and buffer city views and sounds from outside the park.

INTERPRETIVE GOALS

The following interpretive goals were developed through conversations with community members, city staff and representatives, stakeholders, and other parties. These goals form the basis for themes, stories, and design solutions.

By engaging with interpretation, audiences will...

LEARNING/COGNITIVE GOALS

- Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past.
- Learn about salmon ecology and how it is related to cultural heritage and the health of the whole watershed.
- Contemplate the fact that this whole site was once underwater. Water flow and human interactions with it have had major impacts on this site.
- Understand how development and related alterations to natural systems impacted human and wildlife communities.

EMOTIONAL GOALS

- Feel like they belong. Feel unified with the water, land, and each other.
- Feel a sense of peace and relaxation, in areas. In other spots or at certain times, feel splashes of excitement and thrill.
- Feel awe and amazement at site features like giant trees.

BEHAVIORAL GOALS

- Explore the waterfont as a unified site that is free of hard boundaries or barriers.
- Engage in nature-based play, inspired by creative site designs.
- "Use" and recreate in the site, while taking actions to contribute to restoration.
- Find places to sit still and be at peace.



AUDIENCE

Understanding key audiences' interests in relation to a site and to areas of subject matter is critical to developing an effective interpretive plan. Interpretive messaging and designs must be developed with audiences' learning styles, motivations for visiting, age, group dynamics, and other factors in mind. Developing a better understanding of key audiences can be done through informal or formal audience evaluation practices, such as gathering responses to surveys, conducting focus groups, and observing visitors on-site. Ideally, interpretive planning components and design concepts will be tested with visitors throughout the planning process to ensure that the overarching goals are being met.

We identified key audience groups and understood their interests and needs through analyzing the online survey we created and engaging in discussions during our in-person interpretive planning session. Additional prototyping and audience evaluation may be done in future phases of the larger park design effort.

On the following page, Table 2 provides a summary of the audience analysis.

Table 2: Audience Analysis

Characteristic	Obstacle or Opportunity	Implications
Intergenerational groups: Families with young kids, environmental education groups such as Salmon in the Schools.	Opportunities: Serve all ages; make interpretive opportunities equitable. Foster stewardship from a young age. Obstacle: Important to keep reading level at around 5th grade.	 Write and design for conversation between generations. Use language and design that is accessible to kids.
Recreationalists and "active activity" advocates: Kayakers, bikers, kids.	Opportunity: Integrate placemaking and learning opportunities with active-use spaces. Make learning fun and exploratory. Obstacle: Keep interpretation from interfering with recreation and activity.	Test out ideas for engagement with these groups, since they may not be visiting primarily to learn or to get involved in stewardship. Consider ways to connect stewardship and learning with the activities they're already doing.
Use-driven visitors (could be active or passive): i.e., patrons of a future meeting space.	Opportunity: This audience is visiting for specific reasons. Learn more about how they want to use the facilities and plan to adapt interpretive opportunities to their needs.	
Passive nature-based park users: Seniors, birding groups, readers, patrons of Town Center, casual recreationalists like yogis.	Opportunity: This audience is primed to relax and engage with surroundings in thoughtful ways. Meet them where they're at with stewardship opportunities and placemaking designs that both tell a story and encourage relaxation.	

Every interpretive planning project includes parameters. These can include budget constraints, environmental considerations such as common flooding or fire risk, community concerns such as fear of "sign pollution," and even the need to navigate challenging stakeholders! Parameters, or design constraints, present opportunities to identify creative solutions. During our in-person interpretive planning session, we brainstormed parameters and identified possible ways to address them. Additional parameters were brought up and summarized in other meetings associated with the larger park design project, such as the community charette. Major and frequently-mentioned parameters are summarized below.

Project Parameters and Design Constraints	Approaches
Seek to balance a vibrant, active waterfront with environmental restoration.	 Integrate opportunities for both active and passive engagement and learning into the overall park design as it develops. Leverage interpretive media to reinforce this balance and clarify its importance to park visitors.
Interpreting Native American cultural interactions and ongoing management of this site requires partnering with representatives of tribes from the beginning of the project.	 Our consultant team, and stakeholders with the City, will continue to share in extending offers to engage with representatives of tribes. At the time of this writing, DCG/Watershed has already kept partners in the Snoqualmie Tribe informed of project details as they unfold.
Stakeholders have expressed concern about losing important aspects of history by tearing down buildings on-site.	Salvage remnants of historical structures, such as brick and old-growth lumber, and incorporate them into interpretive designs. Identify creative ways to interpret the varied histories of construction, human development, and dwelling places in and around this site.
Avoid too many different styles of signage across city parks.	 Integrate elements of the City's style guide into interpretive designs. Consider replacing or updating signage at Lyon Creek Preserve.

 Table 3: Project Parameters and Design Approaches

All interpretive messaging and media within a site must be founded in a central theme. The central theme is an anchor point that helps visitors make clear connections between all supporting themes and stories. Central themes also keep everyone who is developing interpretive media on the same page. Without a clear central theme—containing a subject, action, and consequence or "so what?" factor—an unstructured collection of facts with more takeaways than anyone can take away is likely to unfold. Subthemes reinforce this central theme and enable visitors to explore it through different lenses. Stories are specific, illustrative narratives that connect people with these themes in memorable ways.

THEMES, SUB-THEMES, AND SUPPORTING STORIES

Central Theme:

This shoreline offers space for reciprocal exchanges that restore the whole watershed and the lives connected to it.

THEME 1:

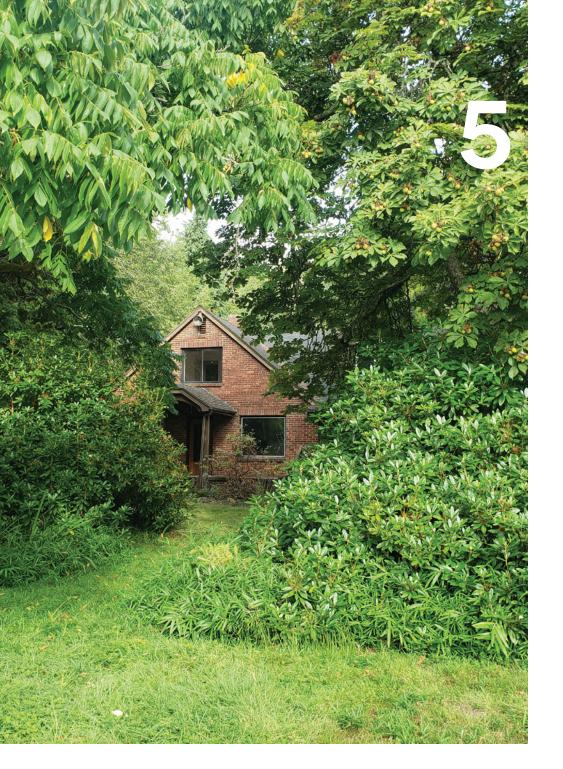
Reconciliation work begins by acknowledging past damage done to communities and ecosystems connected to this site.

- Sub-theme 1.1: Indigenous knowledge of this place is critical to the resilience of the watershed.
 - Story 1.1.1: Interpret Indigenous People's specific technologies and systems of living with forests, streams, marshes, wetlands.
- Sub-theme 1.2: Lake lowering and development displaced communities and damaged the environment.
- Sub-theme 1.3: All people who visit this park can make movements toward peace and restored relationships with each other and with the earth. (To be reinforced through various prompts toward peace-promoting actions.)

THEME 2:

By better understanding the natural systems connected to this shoreline, people can restore those systems to more self-sufficient conditions. Current restoration strategies, including shoreline buffering and enhancements for fish passage, are bringing back the wildlife community.

- Story 2.1.1: Highlight kokanee recovery as a particularly important species restoration success story with benefits for the whole watershed. Integrate Indigenous species name(s) and tribes' connection to kokanee.
- Story 2.1.2: Highlight additional species restoration successes. Integrate Indigenous species name(s) and tribes' relationships with species.



MEDIA PLAN

A media plan, or media prescription, is a suggestion for a suite of designs that engages key audiences with the identified themes and stories in association with specific site features. Media can include digital designs such as websites, public artworks, artistic landscape features, exhibits, interpretive benches, and of course, interpretive signs. Media can also include public programs and outlines for educators to use and adapt.

For this interpretive plan, ideas for media were developed through our in-person interpretive planning session. Many ideas arose out of the discussion about parameters. Concepts were further developed by DCG/Watershed's internal team as we continued to refine the plan post-session.



Strategic placement of interpretive media can improve the efficacy and resonance of interpretive messages.

Table 4: Media Summary

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
A	Intro and Welcome An introductory design, located near the entrance, welcomes visitors to the park and orients them to the main messaging that is echoed throughout the site. The thematic emphasis is on the relationship between this site's significance to Native American communities, and the recent/ ongoing success in restoring the park's natural systems by observing and designing around those systems. We suggest developing a design that shows the original lake level—which nearly reached the site entrance—and that visually conveys the extent of pre-development biodiversity and human interactions with this place. <i>Note: there has also been discussion about a mural on a wall near the entrance.</i>	All themes, with an emphasis on: 2.0: By better understanding the natural systems connected to this shoreline, people can restore those systems to more self-sufficient conditions. Current restoration strategies, including shoreline buffering and enhancements for fish passage, are bringing back the wildlife community. 1.1: Indigenous knowledge of this place is critical to the resilience of the watershed. 1.2: Lake lowering and development displaced communities and damaged the environment.	 Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past. Contemplate the fact that this whole site was once underwater. Water flow and human interactions with water have had major impacts on the landscape you're interacting with today. Understand how development and related alterations to natural systems impacted human and wildlife communities. Feel a sense of belonging. Feel a mixture of excitement, awe, and relaxation upon entering. Begin to explore the waterfont as a unified site that is free of hard boundaries or barriers. 	All

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
В	A Safe Space for Reconciliation An indoor exhibit or exhibit space inspires visitors to participate in acts of reconciliation. This is a safe environment for acknowledging past damage done to communities and ecosystems, and for engaging in dialogue, whether written, conversational, or in the form of visuals or other media. A framework can be established so that rotating artists can contribute temporary works that support this concept and related visitor goals.	 1.0: Reconciliation work begins by acknowledging past damage done to communities and ecosystems connected to this site. 1.2: Lake lowering and development displaced communities and damaged the environment. 1.3: All people who visit this park can make movements toward peace and restored relationships. 	 Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past. Further connect how salmon ecology is related to cultural heritage and the health of the entire watershed. Understand how development and related alterations to natural systems impacted human and wildlife communities. Feel like they belong. Feel unified with the water, land, and each other. Sit still and be at peace. 	All, with a focus on Use-driven visitors (could be active or passive): i.e., patrons of a future meeting space

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
C1-C4	Highlight Natural Systems and Restoration Efforts A design or series of designs will emphasize the natural systems (i.e. hydrological, ecological) and indicate how creative restoration is restoring the resilience of those systems, leading to the health of the whole watershed. There is potential to make an aesthetic connection to the intro design that shows where the original lake level was, i.e. with the use of "ripple effect" pattern or other visual similarities.	 2.0: By better understanding the natural systems connected to this shoreline, people can restore those systems to more self-sufficient conditions. Current restoration strategies, including shoreline buffering and enhancements for fish passage, are bringing back the wildlife community. 2.1.1: Highlight kokanee recovery as a particularly important species restoration success story with benefits for the whole watershed. Integrate Indigenous species name(s) and tribes' connection to kokanee. 	 Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past. Learn about salmon ecology and how it is related to cultural heritage and the health of the whole watershed. Engage in nature-based play, inspired by creative site designs. Recreate and play in the site, while taking actions to contribute to restoration. 	All, with a focus on Intergenerational groups: Families with young kids, environmental education groups such as Salmon in the Schools; and Passive nature- based park users: Seniors, birding groups, readers, patrons of Town Center, casual recreationalists like yogis

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
D1-D9	Celebrate Local Species A series of plant and animal sculptures—in bronze or another material that conveys permanence—are located throughout the park and even outside of it, inviting curious passersby to enter the park. The sculptures will include Indigenous species names, English species names, and a QR code leading to a digital platform where ongoing restoration goals and efforts are documented. Kokanee salmon will be featured as a prominent component of this series, either through size, repetition, or inclusion of various phases of the animal's life cycle, to convey how central kokanee are to broader ecosystem health.	2.1.1 – 2.1.2: Highlight different species restoration success stories. Integrate Indigenous species name and tribes' relationship with each species.	 Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past. Feel thrilled. Explore the waterfont as a unified site that is free of hard boundaries or barriers. Engage in nature-based play, inspired by creative site designs. 	All

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
E1-E2	Celebrate Rest(oration) Some or all of the sculptures of animals can be replicated on and around benches. The benches can be made with salvaged materials (wood, bricks) and appear to be "taken over" with lively critters. A discreet plaque will note the origins of the building materials, subtly reinforcing the theme of impacts of development. The bench design may include text prompting actions toward peace and reconciliation.	 1.3: All people who visit this park can make movements toward peace and restored relationships. 2.1.1 – 2.1.2: Highlight different species restoration success stories. 	 Feel like they belong. Feel unified with the water, land, and each other. Feel a sense of peace and relaxation, in areas. Find places to sit still. Understand how development and related alterations to natural systems impacted human and wildlife communities. 	All

Media code	Media	Themes, sub-themes, stories	Interpretive Goals	Audience(s)
F	Nature Play An area of the park will be reserved for nature play. Natural features like logs, gravel, sand, and giant tree stumps will reinforce a sense of place, allude to the site's history, and encourage intergenerational audiences to have fun being good stewards. Ideas for specific interactive features include a water-play area that lets users create log jams and observe effects on hydrology, bouncy salmon-roe "seats" positioned in shade and gravel, giant cut tree stumps (or models) with questions that adults can pose to kids about the impacts of development, and a play structure inspired by the weirs that Indigenous People used to fish at this site. Bollards or other structures positioned around this area can outline the original height of the lake.	2: By better understanding the natural systems connected to this shoreline, people can restore those systems to more self-sufficient conditions. Current restoration strategies, including shoreline buffering and enhancements for fish passage, are bringing back the wildlife community.	 Learn more about the heritage of the area and Indigenous cultures that have not been well-represented in the past. Learn about salmon ecology and how it is related to cultural heritage and the health of the whole watershed. Contemplate the fact that this whole site was once underwater. Water flow and human interactions with it have had major impacts on the shape of the site today. Understand how development and related alterations to natural systems impacted human and wildlife communities. Feel like they belong. Feel unified with the water, land, and each other. Feel a sense of peace and relaxation, in areas. In other spots or at certain times, feel splashes of excitement and thrill. Feel awe and amazement at site features like giant trees. Engage in nature-based play, inspired by creative site designs. "Use" and recreate in the site, while taking actions to contribute to restoration. 	All, with a focus on Intergenerational groups: Families with young kids, environmental education groups such as Salmon in the Schools



REFERENCES

This interpretive plan was developed using content and input generated in the interpretive planning session, as well as in other design charrettes and public meetings facilitated by our company throughout the larger park design initiative. Additionally, information was sourced from various City government documents.

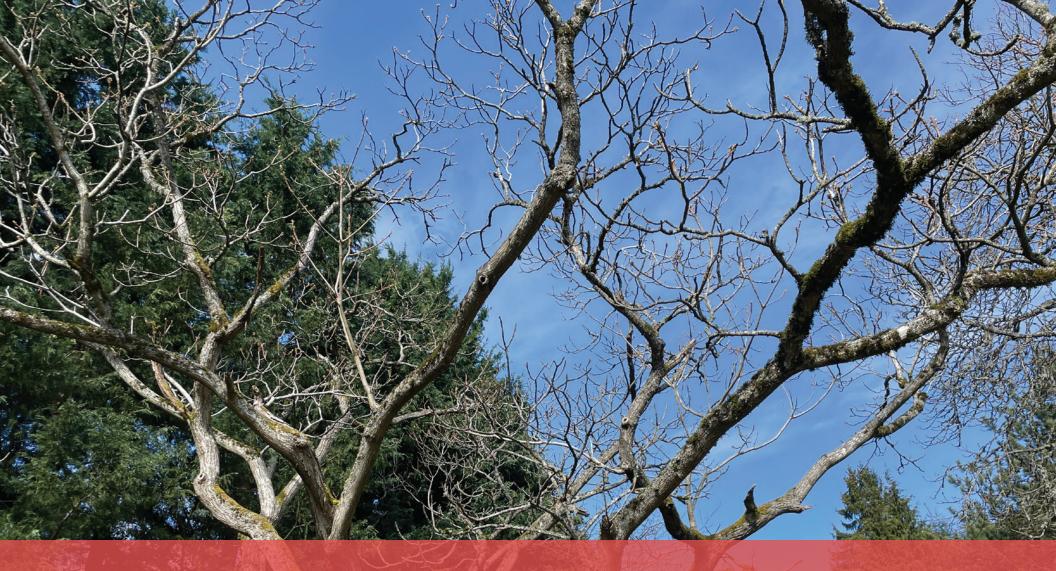
REFERENCES USED:

- Lake Forest Park's 100-Year Vision Final Report
- Lake Forest Park's 2015 Comprehensive Plan
- Lake Forest Park's 2012 Charter for Compassion
- Notes from Lakefront Park Planning Pre-Design Meeting, 2023

The following table provides an analysis of resources that can be used for futher development of interpretive content and designs.

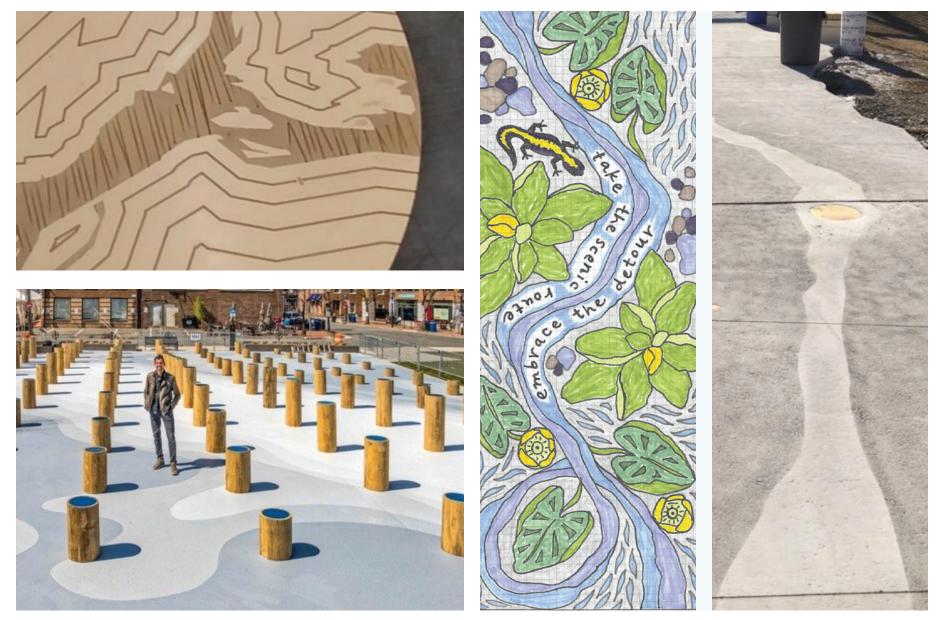
Table 5: Resource Analysis

Resource	Notes
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL INSPIRATION	
UW Bothell EERC	
Book: "Growing Up in Lake Forest Park" by Barbara Bender	
Robert Lee, Legacy co-chair, LFP Planning Commission. PhD in Geography and	
Ed. Retired UW web designer and editor for Houghton Mifflin.	
Shoreline Historical Museum	
Bone structure/artwork at Volunteer Park	
Burke Museum – Indigenous Guides	
SUPPORT FOR ART AND DESIGN	
Tony Angel – resident artist	
Shorelake Arts	
Homestream Park, Winthrop, WA	Good example of a site that celebrates Native American heritage



DESIGN PRECEDENT DETAILS. PLACEMAKING.

ZNA



A) Intro and Welcome. Introduce the site's natural systems, original lake level, and biodiversity. Introduce Indigenous communities' connections to this place.



B) A Safe Space for Reconciliation. Examples of artworks; listenting stations. Specific concepts to be developed by resident artists, in collaboration with community members.



C1-C4) Highlight Natural Systems and Restoration Efforts. Interpretation of the site's hydrologic, ecological, and other natural systems—and what is being done to restore them—might best be implemented through classic interpretive panels. These could be temporary and changed out as restoration projects progress, or more permanent, with QR codes linking to online information about current efforts.



D1-D9) Celebrate Local Species. Small sculptures throughout the site and beyond invite visitors in and connect them with local species, Indigenous names for wildlife, and digital content about habitat restoration efforts.



E1-E2) Celebrate Rest(oration). Etchings or sculptures of wildlife can be integrated with benches made from salvaged materials, echoing themes of development and celebrating the site's historic residential architecture.



F) Nature Play. Natural features and materials create a sense of place and inspire young stewardship. Design ideas include a water play station for connections with hydrology and salmon restoration, interactive structures that interpret historic fishing weir technology, and giant tree stumps with text or imagery that allude to logging history and the impressive size of forests pre-development.