Resource Significance

Natural Resources

Both the Hansen Creek Watershed and the NSRA contain a diverse array of natural resources. Upland landcover on NSRA includes forested areas, pasture, and some existing developed areas and buildings. Aquatic habitats include stream channels of Hansen Creek and numerous tributaries. There are also beaver pond complexes and wetlands associated with the streams on the site. Both resident and anadromous fish salmonids (trout and salmon) utilize these habitats. Reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds also inhabit the upland, wetland, and aquatic habitats throughout the site.

Beaver pond & associated wetlands, tributary of Hansen Creek

Wetlands

A wetlands delineation of the southern half of the site was completed in the summer of 2000. The northern portion of the site has not been delineated but preliminary survey work indicates areas where wetlands are probable. Overall, roughly 500 acres of Northern State are designated as wetlands and are considered as being prohibited to development (see Map 2 – Wetlands Delineation Map).

Hansen Creek Restoration

The Hansen Creek Management Plan was developed to decrease flooding and improve fish habitat associated with Hansen Creek and its tributaries. The Management Plan proposes to restore and improve existing delineated wetlands as well as restore Hansen Creek's historic alluvial fan that allowed sedimentation and floodwater to diffuse over a large area (rather than the current man-made channelized creek). The management plan recommends four alternatives for the alluvial fan restoration including a heavily engineered (the smallest fan and requiring constant maintenance), and small, medium, and large sized fans. In theory, the larger the fan, the more effective in flood reduction as well as providing fish and wildlife habitat. (See Map 3 – Hansen Creek Restoration Alternatives).

Red Creek Alternatives

A tributary of Red Creek has been redirected to drain into a ditch that follows Helmick Road and then eventually cuts under the road via a culvert and into Red Creek. This ditch has been classified as a type 3 (fish bearing) stream despite the poor habitat it provides. The Hansen Creek Management Plan recommends one of three alternatives. They include a 'do nothing' alternative, an alternative to reroute the tributaries to Hansen Creek (which would further reduce the amount of buildable land on the site), or a proposal to reroute the tributary to follow its historical course into Red Creek.

Native in a canoe, on the Skagit River.

Photograph Courtesy of: Darius Kinsey

Cultural Resources

Four Native American tribes of the Skagit River were known to inhabit the areas around Sedro-Woolley, however no known Indian sites of cultural or historical significance have been found at NSRA. More recently, NSRA was the working farm associated with the Northern State Hospital that closed in the early 1970's. The remaining structures of the farm represent important cultural resources. The farm buildings were constructed as early as 1909 and display some unique, well-detailed, architectural characteristics. Some of the buildings are structurally sound while others are unfit for use and need to be either demolished or reconstructed. Many of these buildings represent opportunities for cultural/historic preservation, interpretation and adaptive re-use.

Stump Pile

Source: Chechacos All, The Pioneering of Skagit

At the bottom of the stump pile there is a little girl riding a horse, which gives a very good gage on the size of this stump pile.