

Natural and historical conservation

Objective N-1: Characterize, conserve, protect, and manage natural and historical land; foster an understanding of historical uses

The Carbon River Corridor is home to one of the last inland old-growth rainforests in Western Washington, supporting Douglas fir, Western hemlock, and Western red cedar forest ecosystems. Diverse habitats throughout the valley are home to threatened and endangered species including Chinook salmon, Sockeye salmon, Steelhead salmon, Bull trout, Northern spotted owl, and the Marbled murrelet.

Important not only for its natural resources, the Carbon River Corridor also has a rich cultural and economic legacy. An integral part of the Puyallup, Nisqually, Muckleshoot, and Squaxin Tribes ancestral homelands, this river valley supported hunting, fishing, seasonal villages, and places to commune for personal and spiritual insight. Small towns emerged with the displacement of native populations and the advent of logging and mining. Still present are remnants of coke ovens, rail beds and sandstone walls which recall long abandoned townsites such as Fairfax and Manley Moore. While resource extraction has decreased as an economic driver, remaining small towns such as Wilkeson and Carbonado are working to adjust to a new tourism-based economy. Forest management activities in the area, including timber harvesting and forest management activities, continue to play an important role in the local economy, reducing fire risk and creating jobs.

Attempts to balance the recreation needs and interests of visitors with efforts to conserve the corridor's natural, historic, and cultural areas during this shift to a tourism-based economy have had mixed results. While more people are beginning to take notice of and value this area, population growth, urbanization, and a drastic rise in visitors have taken their toll on the natural environment and on historic and cultural sites. Dumping, vandalism, and looting of historical and cultural artifacts represent the most common concerns of residents, landowners, and visitors. Dispersed and unpermitted camping, trespassing, unauthorized shooting, and off-road vehicle use in unauthorized areas also negatively impact the natural, historic, and cultural resources of this area.

Mapping

There is a lack of publicly accessible information regarding where the public is permitted to recreate, which kinds of recreation are allowed on each jurisdictions' properties, and where it is not safe or appropriate for the public to visit. There is growing demand for access to this area which must be balanced with conservation of natural, historic, and cultural areas.

We heard you!

Public and stakeholder input included:

- Expanding visitor services and information.
- Enhancing infrastructure:
 - Signage.
- Desire to conserve natural and historic resources.

The following actions will be undertaken to improve public awareness of the natural, historic, and cultural value of this area:

Action	Lead Organization	Partners
<p>N-1-1 Develop a go/no-go map of the Carbon River corridor for public use, showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation opportunities • Areas accessible with a paid permit • Public vs. private property • Resource protection zones • Hazards 	Pierce County Parks	Forterra, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, WA Department of Natural Resources, Puyallup Watershed Council, Tribes, US Geological Survey

Conservation

Rising pressure to develop this area for recreation must be balanced with conservation of its natural, historic, and cultural resources. All actions involving historical and cultural significance should center and engage local tribal groups.

The following actions will be taken to manage and protect these resources in the present and for future generations:

Action	Lead Organization	Partners
<p>N-1-2 Engage local tribal groups regarding natural, historic, and cultural resources concerns.</p>	Pierce County Parks	Tribes
<p>N-1-3 Identify and survey historic sites to determine land ownership for appropriate management and conservation.</p>	Pierce County Parks	Private landowners
<p>N-1-4 Develop interpretive signage to educate the public about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal sites • Historic sites • Endangered species habitats • Forest management practices <p>(Also see I-1-12).</p>	Individual property owners where sites are located.	Foothills Historic Society, Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition, Tribes
<p>N-1-5</p>	Pierce County Parks	Forterra, other public and private land trust agencies

Acquire additional properties through conservation easements and land donations to protect wildlife migration zones and endangered species habitats.		
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In order to move actions for this topic forward, the following will be needed:

- Strong, collaborative partnership between landowners to identify and survey sites.
- Funding for interpretive signage.
- Funding for acquiring additional properties.]