

Legislative Report on Naselle Youth Camp

Evaluating the Opportunities for Future Uses

Prepared by
Washington State Department
of Natural Resources

Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz
Clare Sobetski, Outdoor Education & Training Program Manager and Jacob Delbridge, Policy Advisor
December 23, 2022



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Table of Contents..... | 2 |
| A. Executive Summary..... | 3 |
| B. Background..... | 4 |
| C. Suitability of the Current Facilities | 6 |
| D. Potential Uses for the Naselle Youth Camp..... | 9 |
| E. Budget Needs & Estimated Costs for the 2023-2025 Biennium | 13 |
| F. Potential Long-Term Capital Costs, Projected for the 2025-2027 Biennium..... | 15 |
| G. Transfers of Land Ownership & Management..... | 17 |
| H. Partnership Opportunities..... | 18 |
| I. Challenges & Proposed Solutions | 21 |

A. Executive Summary

Naselle Youth Camp (NYC), a medium security youth detention facility in Pacific County, closed in 2022. The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is preparing to hand over the maintenance and operation of facilities at Naselle to the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) in the 2023-2025 Biennium.

The camp property is 22.77 acres and contains 34 structures comprising approximately 125,000 square feet. In its current state of warm closure, NYC is a security risk and a draw on state resources without providing any value to the local community.

Accordingly, there is an urgent need to evaluate the quality of the location and condition of the buildings, engage stakeholders in planning processes for the future of the site, and develop a plan for converting the facilities to serve community needs.

While the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is producing this report, other state agencies may be recommended to serve as the official steward or responsible party in delivering a particular service or task. DNR recommends that DES manage NYC in its current state of warm closure. Concurrently, DES, or another state agency, may take the lead in the convening of a task force to direct the planning process for the conversion of the site. This planning work will require coordination with other agencies including the Departments of Natural Resources, Commerce, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, and State Parks as well as partnership with local Tribes, Education Service District 112, the Naselle-Grays Valley School District, the 19th District legislative delegation, and other Naselle community leaders.

During the 2023-2025 Biennium, funding is necessary for the maintenance and operation of NYC in a state of warm closure, leadership of a task force, completion of facilities assessment and environmental site assessment, architectural planning and engineering for the proposed conversion of the facilities, and application for the required permits for construction in the 2025-2027 Biennium.

B. Background

Naselle Youth Camp (NYC) housed male offenders ages 16-25 in a medium security facility from 1966-2022. During its operation, Naselle, in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), offered a forestry work program and, in collaboration with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), an aquaculture program, which included a trout hatchery on site. At its peak, NYC housed upwards of 150 detainees.

On March 9, 2022, the Washington State House and Senate released the 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget, which included direction for the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to discontinue youth placements at Naselle Youth Camp, with the intent to close the facility by June 30, 2023. Governor Inslee signed the budget without vetoing Subsection 228, Section 20, citing concerns over the remoteness of the facility, which limited access to services for incarcerated youth, and enrollment that had fallen to less than a quarter of what it was 20 years prior. The closure of NYC is also aligned to efforts by the Governor and DCYF to expand options for youth offenders other than incarceration. The last youth detainee left NYC in September, 2022, and the camp is now vacant.

DCYF provided the following additional information about the closure of NYC and transitioning processes:

1. Summary

The Legislature directed DCYF to stop youth placements at Naselle Youth Camp in March 2022 and transfer control of the property in July 2023. The closure process has four elements: 1) transitioning of youth (30 residents); transitioning of staff (100 employees); removal of assets from the property; and maintaining the property.

2. Transitioning of Youth

DCYF evaluated each youth's individual circumstances to determine planned release date and best fit for ongoing services in other Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) facilities. DCYF determined the last youth would depart in early September 2022. DCYF also altered its future placement criteria for youth coming into the JR system. Additional supports were put in place at the other facilities to accommodate the new placement criteria.

3. Transitioning of Staff

DCYF leadership met with all staff in March 2022 to provide information about the closure and answer questions. DCYF set up a weekly communication to staff and a dedicated intranet page. HR presented information to staff about the layoff process, movement and layoff lists, and job search tips. DCYF bargained layoff impacts with Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) and offered staff incentives to relocate to another DCYF position or increase their commute to another JR position. Staff were also offered up to \$25,000 to voluntarily separate or retire through the state's Voluntary Separation and Retirement Incentive (VSRI) program.

Of the original 100 employees, approximately 20 staff accept other appointments within DCYF. The other employees found other employment, retired, accepted the VSRI, or

separated. Nine employees continued employment at NYC past September 16, 2022 to continue the closure process.

Employees were allowed to stay in staff housing through September 30, 2022.

4. Asset Removal

DCYF set up a system to move equipment to other DCYF facilities. Remaining equipment continues to be delivered to Department of Enterprise Services (DES) State Surplus.

5. Property Maintenance

DCYF continues to clean and monitor structures for system failures, such as flooding, rodents, etc. Beginning in spring 2023, DCYF will perform basic landscaping functions.

DCYF has cleaned the onsite waste water plant, with approval by Department of Ecology (ECY). Ongoing maintenance will include periodic testing to be performed in conjunction with storm water discharge under the supervision of a waste water operator 2. The permit will remain in good standing and the waste water plant can be fully operational within six weeks. The plant is designed to support 225 people.

As explained above, the DCYF is currently operating NYC in a state of warm closure. Language from the 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget included direction for DCYF to transition the Juvenile Rehabilitation facility to DNR during the 2023-25 Biennium. The Governor requested that DNR study and make recommendations for the development of an outdoor school on NYC campus.

This report outlines potential options for Naselle facility use, projected costs, and opportunities for partnership or co-management of the facility. Given the complexity of this issue, the conversion project requires funding for the 2023-25 Biennium for multiple agencies to develop a strategy for conversion and ready the facility for use. Instead of DNR—as originally indicated in the 2022 Supplemental Operating Budget—DES will manage NYC in a state of warm closure for the 2023-2025 Biennium. DES, or another state agency indicated by the Governor’s office, will allocate funds for a complete facilities assessment, assemble and convene a task force for the planning process, develop working agreements between different agencies and organizations, and generate a plan for facilities improvement in the next biennium. Long-term maintenance and operations of NYC will require long-term, continued state investment for future biennia.

C. Suitability of the Current Facilities

The location and facilities at NYC present unique assets, including the proximity to the coast and ecological areas of interest, and challenges, including the current configuration as a detention facility. Regardless of the proposed plan for the conversion of NYC facilities, significant capital investment will be required to receive necessary permits for the change in use of the property, refurbish outdated and degraded buildings, and remodel structures to meet the needs of new programs.

1. Location overview

Naselle is a census-designated place in Pacific County, Washington, United States located about 23 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River. The population was 585 at the 2020 census. NYC is 5 minutes out of the town of Naselle, a 30-minute drive from Long Beach, and a 40-minute drive from Raymond, the largest city in the county. When it was fully operational, the Naselle Youth Camp was the largest employer in the county.

The remoteness of the facility can be viewed as a benefit or a challenge, depending on its proposed use. The distance to Interstate 5 limits its potential as a location for seasonal housing, as does the fact that firefighter seasonal housing is largely needed in drier parts of the state.

If converted to an outdoor school, the remoteness of the site could make it a less attractive location for schools outside of the surrounding counties to visit, but it may also meet the desire to introduce students to new ecosystems away from urban centers. HB 2078: Outdoor School for All provides grant funding for schools to pay for transportation to outdoor school.

Naselle is located near Willapa Bay, and the location is heavily wooded. Naselle, Washington gets 100 inches of rain and 2 inches of snow on average per year. On average, there are 126 sunny days per year in Naselle. Given that most sunny days are in July, August and September—when school is typically not in session—students attending outdoor school programming at NYC would need to be prepared for heavy rain. Flood risk would also need to be evaluated in the planning process for the conversion of the site.

The closest hospital is located in Ilwaco, and is approximately 30-minutes away by car.

2. Overview of existing facilities

NYC contains 34 structures comprising roughly 125,000 square feet. The property as a whole is 22.77 acres—5.3 acres of housing units that were previously occupied by NYC staff, including one house, two duplex apartments and six 4-unit apartments, and 17.47 acres that comprise the youth facility area, including housing for the detainees, school buildings, and utility structures. A visit to the site by DNR staff along with analysis from DCYF has pointed to the likelihood of needing to demolish ten or more of the structures on site, given their current lack of habitability. Upgrades to the remaining buildings would be significant in order to ensure compliance with building code and appropriate habitability. Security is currently reported as a significant concern - primarily vandalism, theft, and squatting.

An Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) would be required at the site, and it would be extensive, costing at least \$50,000. Plans for demolition and refurbishment of the structures would require environmental review.

Notably, NYC is only on public power for utilities. The camp operated its own water and sewage. Furthermore, oil heat is used for heating buildings.

3. Condition of existing facilities

The old age and condition of the facilities at NYC are a primary concern for conversion. Of the 34 Structures, 17 were constructed between 1950 and 1959, one in the 60's, six in 70's, two in the 80's, four in the 90's, and one in 2000. The buildings were given the following condition scores, in accordance with OFM assessment, pursuant to [RCW 43.82.150](#):

| Condition | Number of Buildings |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Emergent Use Only | 4 |
| Limited Use Only | 18 |
| Fair | 6 |
| Adequate | 3 |
| Superior | 3 |

These three “superior” buildings include the sewer treatment building, a lodge building, and a commissary-style kitchen.

In the staff housing area, there are 29 rental units found in six 4-unit apartment buildings, two duplex apartment buildings, and one 3-bedroom house. Units in the apartment buildings are all 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom.

On the main campus, there are 5 residential buildings that housed detainees. Three of these buildings (called Mariner’s Lodge, Cougar and Moolock) would be best suited for conversion for outdoor school lodging, rental facilities, or housing. Outdoor schools are typically rustic, but the facilities will still need major renovations to make the spaces welcoming for visiting youth.

There are more buildings on the main campus than would be necessary for use as an outdoor school or Skills Center. Many of these buildings are graded for limited use and would require significant capital investment to remodel. Demolition of a significant portion of the structures is likely advised regardless of the proposed use for the site.

3a. Sewer

In October of 2022, NYC shut down its wastewater facility given the low quantity of wastewater on site; keeping the system in working order requires a number of flushes per day to feed the living organisms digesting the waste. Getting this system back up and running will require a re-seeding process, in which 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of activated sludge will need to be hauled

from a nearby wastewater treatment facility to NYC. The process will take approximately six weeks. In the state of warm closure, there are several portapotties on site.

3b. Water

Continuing any sort of operation at NYC will also require working with ECY to maintain the permit that allows for storm water discharge into the Naselle River. The storm water is discharged from the cleaned and disinfected basins so that inflow from high groundwater into the collection system will not overtop the existing basins and cause localized flooding.

The continuation of this permit requires quarterly testing for water quality, and costs \$6032 for fiscal year 2023. A price increase is expected in July 2023. There are no good alternatives, given that there are no vendors in the area that will take storm water from the holding tanks, which would have to be emptied once a week.

3c. Other utilities

NYC uses the public power grid for electricity. NYC has historically experienced some inconsistencies in power supply due to the limitations of the grid. Alternative uses of the site may require funding for public utilities to expand the electrical grid.

D. Potential Uses for the Naselle Youth Camp

The facilities at NYC are well-suited for conversion to a variety of different purposes that maximize public service functions. However, all future uses of the site will require a capital investment to change the current configuration as a detention center. The site may be best utilized in a combination of different functions. In particular, there is interest in separating the site into two projects: one on the main campus of the former detention facility and one that refurbishes the homes and apartment buildings that previously housed NYC staff. The two sides of the facility are connected by a path, but have separate entrances.

1. Outdoor school

The term “outdoor school” can refer to a number of different arrangements. Some outdoor schools in Washington State have a complete, dedicated staff that provide for all needs of visiting student groups, including education. Other outdoor schools are rental properties that are maintained by a partner organization but rely on the visiting group to provide its own staff for education, cooking and cleaning. The majority adopt a model of shared responsibility where both site and school provide some staff to meet program requirements. Investments in the facility and the ongoing cost of programming will ultimately be determined by the myriad of configurations for developing and maintaining an outdoor school.

If NYC is used as an environmental education center or outdoor school, it is advised that schools bring their own teaching staff and develop their own plan for cooking and serving meals. The associated costs with running a “for rent” facility would include the continued employment of onsite staff to operate the sewer and water, administrative staff to manage reservations, and teaching staff to run training sessions for educators on how to use the facility and leverage its value as a location for outdoor education.

Under House Bill 2078, enrolled into law in June 2022, Washington is allocating funding to meet the goal that all students receive outdoor education in all grade levels and have access to a three to five-day outdoor program in 5th or 6th grade. The Washington State Outdoor School Study (September, 2021) evaluated outdoor school capacity across the state by comparing the outdoor education capacity reported by programs to the regional population. Potential capacity shortages were identified in the Southwest Workforce Development area comprised of Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Clark Counties. Establishing Naselle as an outdoor school location will fill a regional need, and aid the state in meeting the goals of HB 2078 by expanding outdoor education facilities.

Turning NYC into an outdoor school is also aligned with the equity and access goals of HB 2078. Small, rural school districts are often unable to afford to send their students to outdoor schools that are far away because of the high cost of transportation. According to data from the Office of Financial Management, per capita income in Pacific County in 2020 was \$43,749, one of only 5 Washington counties with per capita income below \$44,000.

NYC is also located near the coast, which may make it an attractive property for other schools around the state who want their students to visit the Pacific Ocean and learn about coastal ecosystems during their outdoor school experience. The proximity to the mouth of the Columbia River, the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and associated wetlands, and the Long Beach Peninsula make this a property with a wealth of educational opportunities in environmental and sustainability education. Visiting students can also learn about local natural resource economies including clamming, cranberry cultivation, fish hatchery management, forestry management and timber harvesting.

Aquaculture and forestry programs were foundational to NYC's model as a detention facility. The site's assets for environmental education, natural resource career exposure, and workforce development have always been evident.

Managing NYC as an outdoor school will require a robust working relationship between several agencies and organizations. Assigning responsible parties for the ongoing management of NYC as an educational facility is a primary goal of the proposed 2023-2025 Biennium planning processes. Opportunities for partnership or co-management of the site are outlined later in this report (see section H).

2. Rental facility

Washington State Parks maintains a number of retreat centers that are available for rent. These facilities utilize an online booking system and are often rented for family reunions, church group retreats, community events, weddings and educational programming. Because of the proximity of NYC to the Ilwaco and Long Beach area, this location would be attractive as a rental property. Renovated buildings on the main NYC campus that serve as outdoor school facilities during the school year could be available for rent by the public during the summer months, and can aid in offsetting operational costs.

3. Affordable housing

Naselle is a remote community with limited available housing. Recruiting employees for local jobs, including at the nearby K-12 school, can be difficult given the lack of affordable options and the conversion of many single family homes to short-term rental properties for tourists visiting the beach.

The 2015 Housing Needs Assessment identified a gap of 83 affordable and available housing units per 100 households earning 0-30% of median family income in Pacific County. This gap only decreases to 62 affordable and available housing units per 100 households for families earning up to 50% of median family income in Pacific County. The Housing Needs Assessment also identified that in 2015, there were only 30 available subsidized housing units per 100 households earning 0-30% of the median family income. Given the low per capita income in Pacific County—\$43,749 in 2020 according to OFM data—rising housing costs and the loss of rental units presents a challenge for Naselle and the surrounding community.

Accordingly, the conversion of part or all of NYC into affordable housing could meet an immediate community need. There is some concern over the population this property could

house because the town of Naselle has limited social services. However, using some portion of the property to house community members employed locally could benefit Naselle's economy.

There is potential to divide NYC into two separate projects given the layout and function of the facilities. The former staff housing area, which includes six 4-unit apartment buildings, two duplex apartments and one 3-bedroom house could be converted to affordable housing to meet community needs. The 3-bedroom house is in fair condition and all other rental units are currently evaluated in limited condition.

Renovating this 34,041 square feet of property would require a minimum capital investment of \$9,287,146 including engineering and design costs. Personnel costs for construction management would also be required with this potential "divided" approach; however, depending upon the specific positions and FTE required, those associated costs would be notably less than the \$2.58 million costs estimated for the full 34-building approach, as outlined in Section F.

The Housing Trust Fund, operated through the Department of Commerce (COM), could be a source of funding for the capital investment necessary to convert NYC facilities into affordable housing. The portion of the facility that previously housed staff, and is comprised of apartment buildings and houses (described in detail in section C3), is particularly well-suited for an affordable housing project. There is also potential to sell this part of the property for conversion into housing for the community by a private entity.

4. Seasonal housing

For the same reasons outlined above—a lack of rental units, a gap in subsidized housing, and the high cost of rent in Pacific County—seasonal staff employed by the DFW and DNR in Pacific County and the surrounding counties often struggle to find housing. This can present challenges in hiring and retaining staff. Some portion of the long-term housing on site at NYC could be shared by these agencies for seasonal needs. Washington Conservation Corps crews could also make use of the site on a seasonal basis for work in the area.

5. Skills Center

There are no Skills Centers in Pacific County or the surrounding counties to provide Career and Technical Education (CTE) half-day programs for high school students. The closest comprehensive Skills Center is a branch of New Market operated out of Aberdeen, over an hour away by car from Naselle and an hour and a half from Long Beach and functionally inaccessible by public transit for Pacific County students. This New Market branch offers 5 programs, but nothing in the natural resources sector. Given the history of aquaculture and forestry programs at NYC, the site could be considered for an area Skills Center. Woodshop and welding materials that were purchased for NYC and are currently located at the K-12 school could be returned to the location to support a manufacturing course as well.

Converting NYC to a Skills Center is aligned to workforce development goals for the state and the region, including language in HB 1168 that calls for forestry education for Washington youth. In order to meet the demands of HB 2078, and improve access for multi-day outdoor school programming for 5th and 6th grade students, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), and the Pacific

Education Institute (PEI) are developing an outdoor education course. The course will be taught in Skills Centers and train high school students to assist in the facilitation of outdoor school for 5th and 6th classes. If NYC is used as both an outdoor school and a Skills Center, high school students enrolled in an outdoor education CTE course on campus could also help lead programming for visiting school groups on site.

6. Relocation of McNeil Island Correctional Facility

The Governor's office has expressed some interest in relocating the McNeil Island Correctional facility to NYC.

E. Budget Needs & Estimated Costs for the 2023-2025 Biennium

Given the complexity of converting the function of NYC, DNR proposes that the 2023-2025 Biennium be used to engage with community stakeholders, generate working agreements, and formulate a plan for the conversion of the facilities. During this biennium, NYC will continue to operate in a state of warm closure.

1. Maintenance & Operations in Warm Closure

Continuing to operate NYC in a state of warm closure requires ongoing funding for the maintenance of the site.

In 2022, the CBRE/Whitestone operation cost index established the following operating costs for facilities:

- Office building: \$8.82 per square foot
- Conditioned warehouse: \$6.18 per square foot
- Unconditioned warehouse space: \$3.20 per square foot.

At an aggregate level, the 34 structures on the Naselle site amount to 125,000 square feet in total. The CBRE/Whitestone operation cost indexing system also establishes building classification types. The breakdown by building type of the facilities at Naselle are as follows:

- 22 office buildings
- 6 conditioned warehouses
- 6 unconditioned warehouses

Accordingly, the total for building operations is approximately \$1,024,000 per year (excluding maintenance personnel costs). This figure does not include the cost of necessary and appropriate repairs.

It is estimated that a staff of three permanent employees would be required to maintain the facilities in a state of warm closure. This includes two Maintenance Mechanics and one Facility Services Coordinator. These personnel costs are estimated at \$539,700 for FY 2024 and \$418,100 for FY 2025.

Therefore, the total maintenance and operating costs are approximately \$1.56 million for FY 2024 and \$1.44 million for FY 2025, or \$3 million for the 2023-2025 Biennium.

DNR recommends that the Department of Enterprise Services manage the warm closure for the 2023-2025 Biennium while working with DNR, OSPI, Parks, DFW, COM, ECY, Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, and other Naselle community leaders to develop plans for the conversion of the site.

2. Task Force Convening & Planning Processes

While operating NYC in a state of warm closure, a planning process for how to convert the facilities for alternative uses must take place during the 2023-2025 Biennium.

These planning processes will require the assembly and convening of a task force comprised of representatives from different state agencies, legislators from the 19th delegation, staff from local educational institutions, including the Naselle-Grays Valley School District and ESD 112, and Naselle civic leaders. This task force will evaluate the best use of the capital facilities to maximize public service functions and develop models for shared management of NYC.

Hiring a consultant or a project manager within a state agency to manage the planning process will be necessary. This new hire will be responsible for leading stakeholder engagement, developing working agreements between agencies and organizations, designating the responsible parties for project tasks, coordinating the redesign of facilities, managing permitting processes, and assisting community organizations in standing up new programming on the site. Using DNR fiscal worksheets for an Environmental Planner 2, supervised by an Environmental Planner 5, approximate staffing costs for the 2023-2025 Biennium, community compensation for participation in planning processes, and travel to Naselle are \$297,824.

3. Construction Planning, Environmental Assessment and Permitting

During the 2023-2025 Biennium, it is recommended that technical planning for conversion of NYC facilities run concurrently with the planning efforts of the task force. The associated costs include a complete facilities assessment, environmental site assessment, applications for change of use permits, and the development of architectural and construction plans.

The costs associated with internal personnel needed for construction project coordination, architectural analysis, facilities planning, environmental engineering, and administrative support are estimated at \$2,580,400. An additional \$50,000 for Environmental Site Assessment, and funding for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review and application for change of use permits will also be required for the 2023-2025 Biennium. This figure is predicated on the assumption that all 34 buildings are to be utilized, which will need to be reevaluated following site assessments and community agreements on the proposed uses of the facilities.

These construction planning and assessment processes will generate jobs in the area as they will require skilled laborers and local contractors.

F. Potential Long-Term Capital Costs, Projected for the 2025-2027 Biennium

The following capital costs are an estimate based on information available before a full and comprehensive building and enhancement strategy can be developed and should be viewed as the minimum funding level required. A full investigation of the site to determine a precise estimate would be time and cost intensive, and would likely require roughly 30-35 days on site, not counting archaeological and environmental investigation. The total capital construction costs are fully dependent upon how many buildings and facilities will be utilized in future years as well as the specific buildings and number of buildings that will be maintained, renovated, or demolished. It is important to note that the estimates below assume all 34 NYC buildings and facilities will be utilized in these future endeavors. Accordingly, engineering and design contracting costs (at 11.2% of construction costs) and personnel costs for construction management are dependent upon the size and scope of the capital project.

Capital costs associated with the long-term repair and maintenance of the site depend on the plan for the use of the facilities, as well as the number of structures that are demolished and those that are rebuilt to become habitable. These capital costs are not considered in the budget for the 2023-2025 Biennium, given the need to convene a task force, engage stakeholders, develop working agreements, generate facilities plans and seek permits prior to breaking ground on a renovation of NYC. These figures are therefore a projection of possible costs from the 2025-2027 Biennium.

If all buildings on site were renovated, the estimated renovation materials costs (excluding labor costs) for buildings per square foot are as follows:

- \$150 per square foot for buildings rated “fair” requiring a total of \$5,191,800 for the six buildings rated “fair.”
- \$250 per square foot for buildings rated “limited use,” requiring a total of \$11,769,750 for the 18 buildings rated “limited use.”
- \$350 per square foot for buildings rated “emergent use only,” requiring a total of \$3,985,800 for the six buildings rated “emergent.”

These figures do not account for the reorganization of structures for new purposes. These figures also do not account for furnishings or equipment.

Engineering and design contracting costs are 11.2% of the construction costs. Therefore, if all 34 buildings are to be utilized, based on the capital cost estimates, the engineering and design estimate is \$2,346,100.

The costs associated with internal personnel needed for construction project coordination, architectural analysis, facilities planning, environmental engineering, and administrative support

are estimated at \$2,580,400 and are also predicated on the assumption that all 34 buildings are to be utilized:

Accordingly, the final total of capital costs including all capital personnel costs is \$28,880,030.

There is a strong probability that a re-assessment of permit category will be required prior to receiving a certificate of occupancy (i.e. "change-of-use permit"). It has been reported that the current processing time for permitting is approximately four times longer than it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investment in a capital project to convert NYC facilities will generate short-term jobs in Pacific County. Hiring for the work on site will include local contractors and skilled laborers and will increase revenue to other local businesses.

G. Transfers of Land Ownership & Management

It is recommended that DES manages NYC in a state of warm closure while a concurrent planning process takes place.

It is prudent to note that DNR State Trust Lands are managed under a fiduciary responsibility, which means that they are managed to make productive revenue for trust beneficiaries. Management decisions are made according to what is in the best interest of the trust, with undivided loyalty. This model doesn't work well with managing this parcel as an outdoor school or similar such purpose, especially since trust assets cannot be used to support its operation. Accordingly, if transfer of ownership moves to DNR, it would not be appropriate to put it under State Trust Lands.

Responsibility for the long-term stewardship and management of the facility will be evaluated by the task force in the 2023-2025 planning process.

H. Partnership Opportunities

DNR’s Pacific Cascade Region, in which NYC is situated, currently manages 90,954 square feet of built facilities. The facilities on the Naselle site represent over 122,000 square feet. Accordingly, the Naselle site represents a square footage that is more than double the Region’s current built square footage. DNR staff have noted that—given the size, condition, and location of the site and its buildings—creating usable conditions and safely maintaining the large footprint would require significant personnel and material resources. Therefore, if DNR is to play a role in the continued operation of NYC facilities, a model of shared management with other state agencies and educational institutions is necessary in order to be sustainable.

Defining the responsibilities of each agency will be essential during the 2023-2025 planning process.

1. Department of Enterprise Services (DES)

It is recommended that DES manage NYC in a state of warm closure. DES will be able to leverage their staff expertise in facilities management not only to maintain the facilities in their current state, but also to evaluate the potential value of the buildings on site and develop plans for conversion of the site.

DES may be well suited to function as the continued owner of NYC. Future users of the facility, depending on its proposed use, could rent or lease the site from DES.

2. Department of Commerce (COM)

Like DES, COM may be well suited to function as the owner of NYC facilities and to rent or lease to other agencies or organizations that make use of the site. Additionally, as mentioned above, the Housing Trust Fund that is operated through COM could be a source of funding for the capital investment necessary to convert NYC facilities into affordable housing.

3. State Parks

DNR has not historically operated “for rent” facilities. However, Washington State Parks operates a number of rental properties, including 9 retreat centers for multi-day trips. The facilities that could serve as a rental facility for outdoor education or retreats of any kind—including the lodge and commissary as well as housing that was associated with the main youth camp campus—could be managed under the Parks portfolio and administered using the pre-established systems.

Partnering with Parks to convert NYC to an outdoor school is in line with the recommendations in the Washington State Outdoor School Report (September, 2021), which suggest that the state, “Fund at least one outdoor school program at a Washington State Parks and Recreation (Parks), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), or Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) facility in each Educational Service District (ESD).” This recommendation specifically names Parks as an administrator of rental facilities for outdoor education: “Initially, Parks may just provide facilities while the school or school district provides instruction, activities, and supervision; however, in the long term the goal would be to have Parks staff involved in curriculum design and implementation.”

4. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

OSPI has recently hired additional staff to coordinate the “Outdoor School for All” initiative under HB 2078. OSPI can advise on how best to leverage the educational value of NYC for outdoor and environmental learning and may be able to direct funding distributed under HB 2078 to the project of converting NYC.

Additionally, OSPI can evaluate the value of NYC as a possible Skills Center and advise on the process of developing new CTE programming on site.

OSPI is well positioned to connect community stakeholders in conversations around proposed uses of the site for student learning in the region.

5. Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

AWSP is a supporter of the Outdoor School for All initiative, operates the Cispus Learning Center, and is distributing grant funding from HB 2078 to school districts to attend outdoor school. If NYC is converted into an outdoor school, experts within AWSP can advise on how to develop the property for effective outdoor education, how to administer the site, and how to engage in meaningful partnership with community stakeholders.

AWSP also funds and provides educator professional development on how to conduct outdoor education. These development opportunities will be essential as local teachers and school administrators learn how to administer and facilitate an outdoor school.

6. Education Service District 112

ESD 112 provides support to 30 school districts in six counties of Southwest Washington. The ESD has significant resources, including its own facilities manager, administrative staff, and construction services group that helps school districts manage construction and renovation projects.

ESD 112 has expressed enthusiasm at the prospect of managing NYC as an outdoor school. They have indicated that they have the expertise and the motivation to tackle a large construction project and to manage this site as an asset for school districts in the Southwest Washington counties.

7. Naselle-Grays Valley School District

The Naselle-Grays Valley School District has also indicated interest in absorbing some of the facilities, in particular the fish hatchery that is located on site. During the operation of NYC, DFW worked with a teacher at the camp to procure fish eggs, maintain the hatchery, train students in the principles of aquaculture, and release salmon and trout into nearby waterways. Given the need for regular maintenance and upkeep, continued use of the NYC hatchery will require oversight by local residents. The School District would like to be granted ownership of the hatchery, so that students from the nearby K-12 school can visit with their science classes to learn about aquaculture. DFW will need to lead discussions with the School District to determine the outcome of the hatchery.

The school district was a contractual partner with DCYF during the operations of NYC, so there is precedent for this partnership. If given the opportunity, the school district may be interested in absorbing the entire facility.

8. Pacific Education Institute (PEI)

PEI runs a number of trainings for formal and non-formal educators across the state on how to leverage outdoor resources to engage students in experiential education, using their FieldSTEM model.

PEI could work in partnership with DNR, DFW, ECY, and Parks to facilitate teacher professional development on environmental education on site at NYC.

I. Challenges & Proposed Solutions

The closing of NYC has presented significant economic hardship to the town of Naselle and the surrounding community. It was the largest employer in Pacific County and enrollment at the school on campus provided funding for the small school district.

In its current state of warm closure, NYC is not offering any services to the surrounding community. Continuing to secure the location and keep the facilities from falling into a state of disrepair will be a significant burden on the state for this biennium and future biennia. The longer the facilities sit vacant, the more quickly they will deteriorate.

Converting the use of NYC facilities will create both short and long-term jobs in Naselle and Pacific County. Generating affordable housing would serve an urgent need for the local economy and reimagining what was formerly a detention facility for its value as a Skills Center or outdoor school is an investment in the education of Washington youth.

It is essential to develop a plan for the conversion of NYC site, but the facilities and community needs are complicated. Converting the facilities will require an investment into the utilities, including sewage, water and electricity, as well as two large capital projects to convert the former camp buildings from their configuration for detention and renovate what was previously staff housing.

DNR proposes that the DES operate NYC in a state of warm closure for the 2023-2025 Biennium while a task force convenes. This task force will be comprised of representatives from the DNR, COM, DFW, ECY, Department of Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, Parks, local Tribes, Education Service District 112, the Naselle-Grays Valley School District, the 19th district legislative delegation, and other Naselle community leaders. The task force will conduct more thorough research, develop a plan for the conversion of the site, and prepare a capital budget request for the 2025-2027 Biennium.

As such, DNR recommends the following for the 2023-2025 Biennium*:

- \$3,005,800 for DES staff and operation costs for warm closure
- \$297,824 for the convening and leadership of a task force and site conversion planning processes
- \$2,580,400 for construction project coordination, architectural analysis, facilities planning, environmental engineering, and administrative support, in anticipation of breaking ground in the 2025-2027 biennium
- \$13,000 for the storm water discharge permit through ECY
- \$50,000 for an Environmental Site Assessment

**All figures are approximate*