

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Sitka National Historical Park



# 1804 Battlefield Restoration— Problems and Solutions

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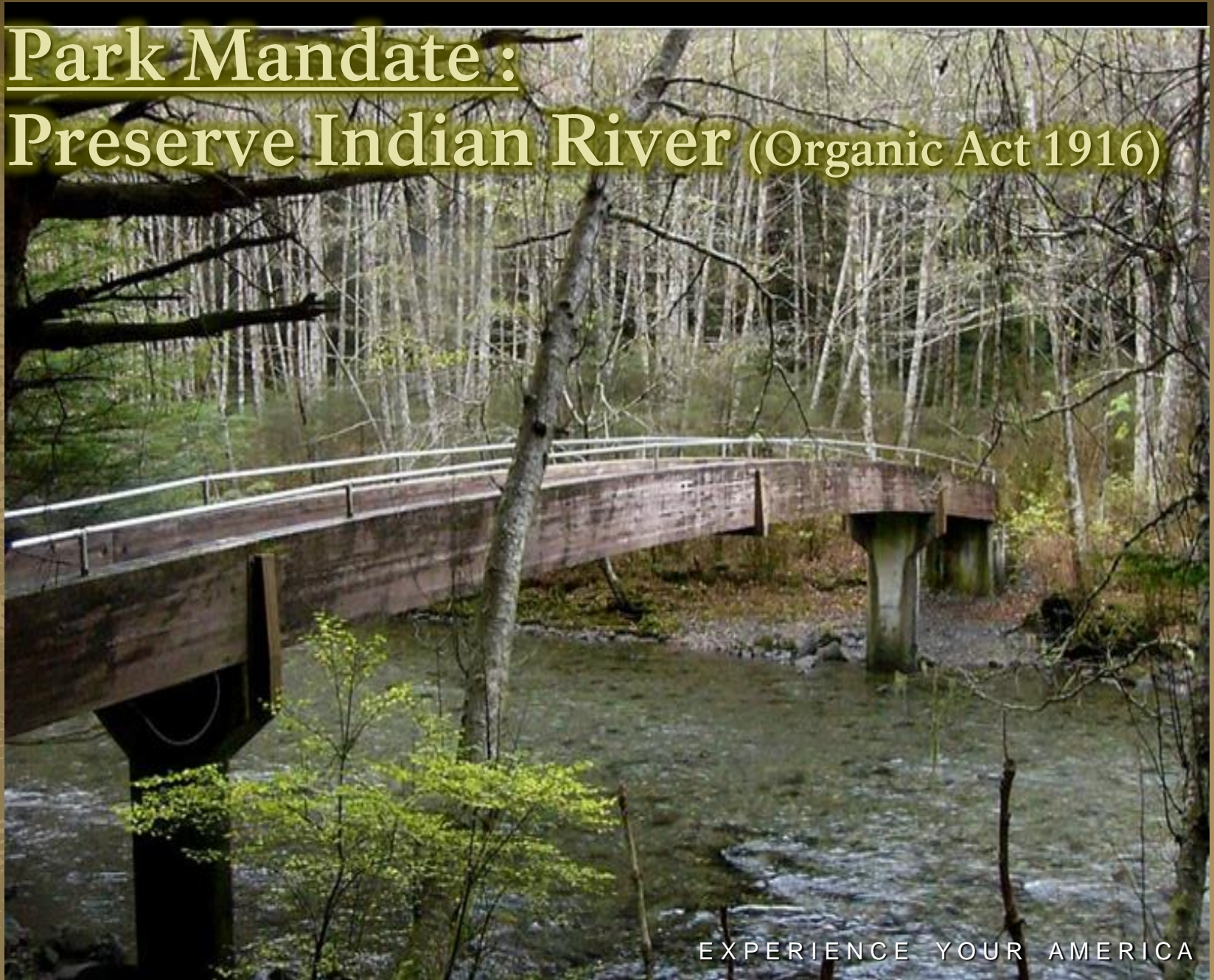
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# Presentation Objectives

- Describe park mandates and how they are interpreted for management
- Describe problem with battlefield management over the last 40 years
- Describe Battlefield Project to correct known problem
- Build public understanding of park efforts
- Gather feedback on Battlefield Project
- Open period of public comment on project



# Park Mandate : Preserve Indian River (Organic Act 1916)



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# Park Mandate : Preserve History of Russian America (with Russian Bishops House)



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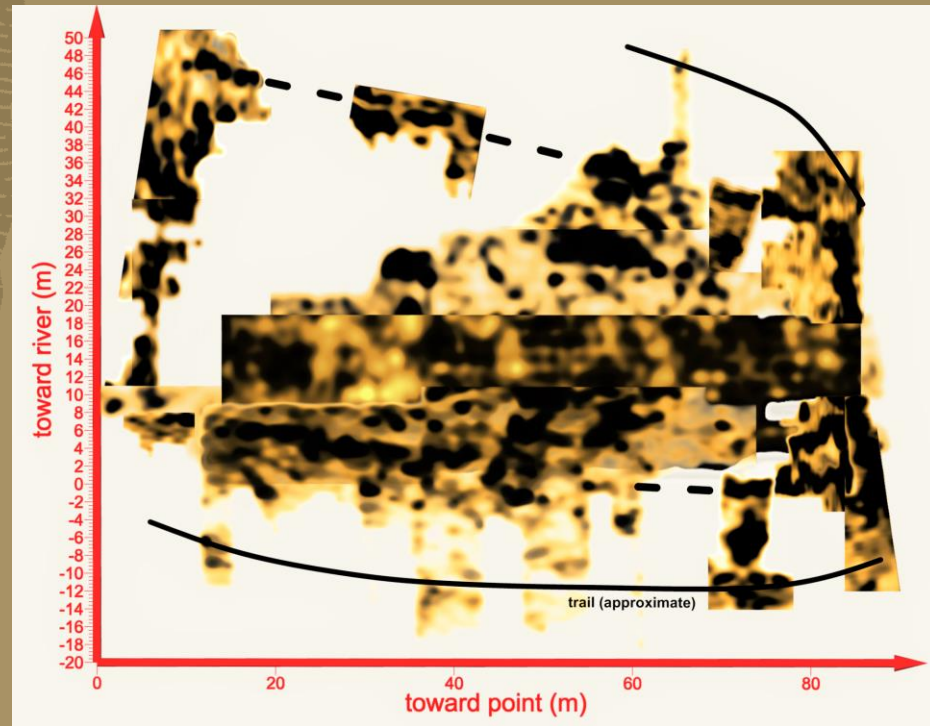
# Park Mandate : Preserve SE Alaska Arts and Culture



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# Park Mandate : Preserve and Interpret 1804 Battlefield and Battle History



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# Sitka National Historical Park





# Indian River Mouth

- Broad, tidal outlet
- 45 acres in the park (about 1/3 of park)
- Subject to erosion, wave action, accretion, isostatic rebound.





# Indian River Mouth through time

1929



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# Indian River Mouth through time

1948



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# Indian River Mouth through time

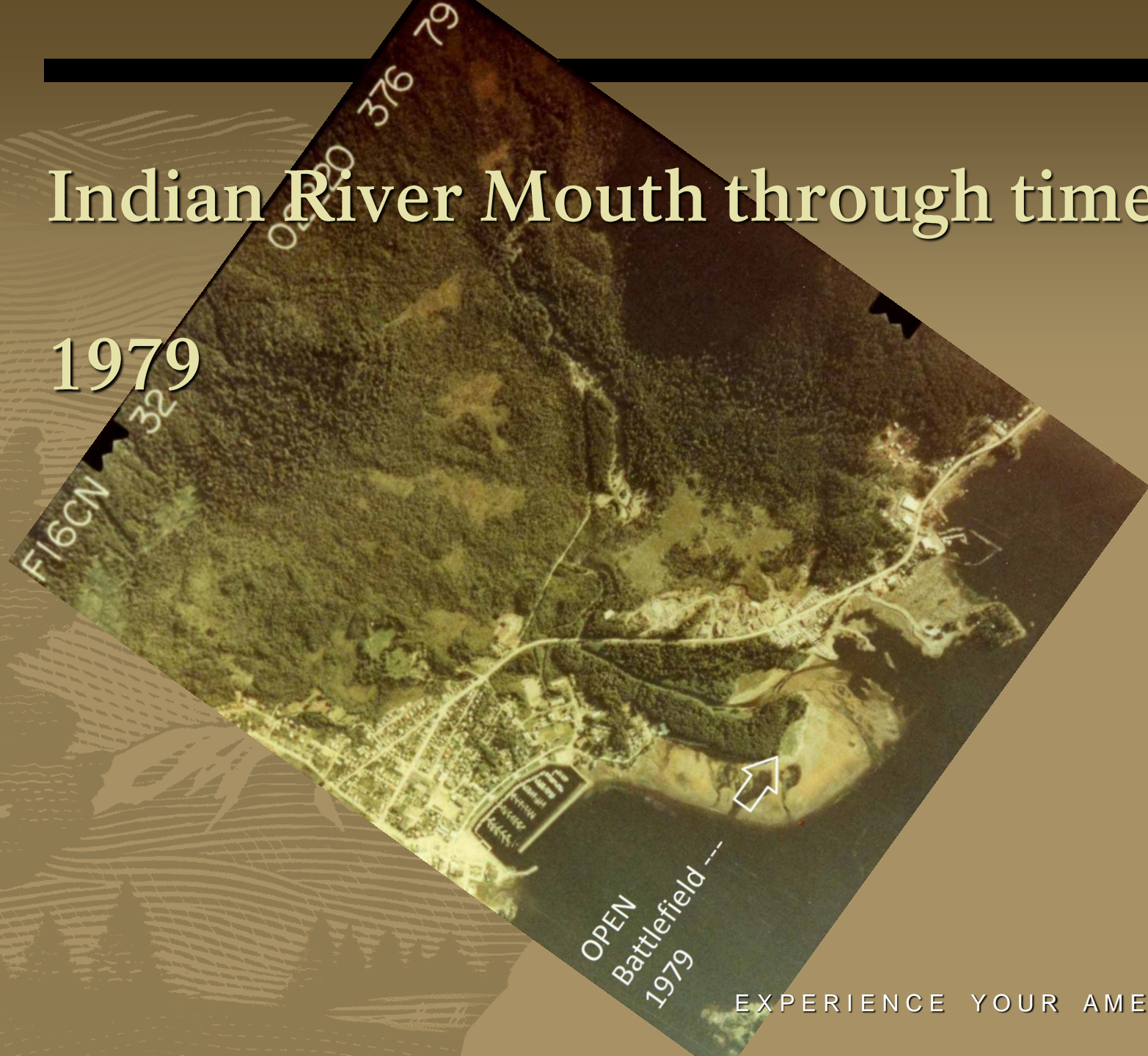
1958



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# Indian River Mouth through time

1979



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# Indian River Mouth through time

2016-2017

Eastern  
Anchorage

Indian River

Google

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An aerial photograph of a battlefield landscape, likely Gettysburg, showing a large, dark, forested area. A red line is drawn across the landscape, tracing a path or boundary. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

The Problem: The Battlefield has  
been lost--the landscape changed

--Much harder to interpret to the  
visiting public



An aerial photograph of a coastal area, possibly a wetland or marsh. A bright green line is drawn across the image, tracing a path that starts near the bottom left, moves towards the center, and then curves towards the top right. The landscape is a mix of dark, textured areas (likely vegetation) and lighter, more uniform areas (possibly water or bare ground). The overall tone of the image is dark and somewhat grainy.

## Contributing Factors:

- Stray logs (1959-1993)

- Lack of vegetation maintenance

- Isostatic Rebound

- Incomplete road removal (1984)

# Alternatives

- Continue to let primary resource go into succession (forest vs. field/tidelands)
- Partially restore battlefield
- Restore battlefield to pre-1958 appearance
- Restore battlefield/fort site to 1804 appearance
- Other options????
  - Considerations: Authenticity, Don't damage site, long-term maintenance, visitor experience



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- Partially restore battlefield
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NOT AS  
GOOD

BETTER

# From the 1999 Cultural Landscape Report

## **POLICIES AND TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES MANAGEMENT ZONE ONE: CONCENTRATED HISTORIC AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCE AREAS**

### **FORT SITE/BATTLEFIELD UNIT**

*Policy as outlined by General Management Plan, 1998:*

"The site of the Kiks.adi Tlingit fort from the 1804 battle of Sitka will be managed as a historic landscape where the natural resources and views from the area of the historic fort will demonstrate the strategic importance of the site."<sup>3</sup>

### **CLR MANAGEMENT GOAL**

To preserve the existing historic landscape features and to re-create a pattern of spatial organization for the landscape units that better reflect historic conditions during the period of significance and increase the interpretive potential of the site.

### **CLR MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

The four options presented below aim to preserve existing cultural resources, and to interpret the 1804 battle more effectively, while at the same time minimizing disturbance to the natural resources in the unit. They provide a range of inter-



# Cultural Landscape Management

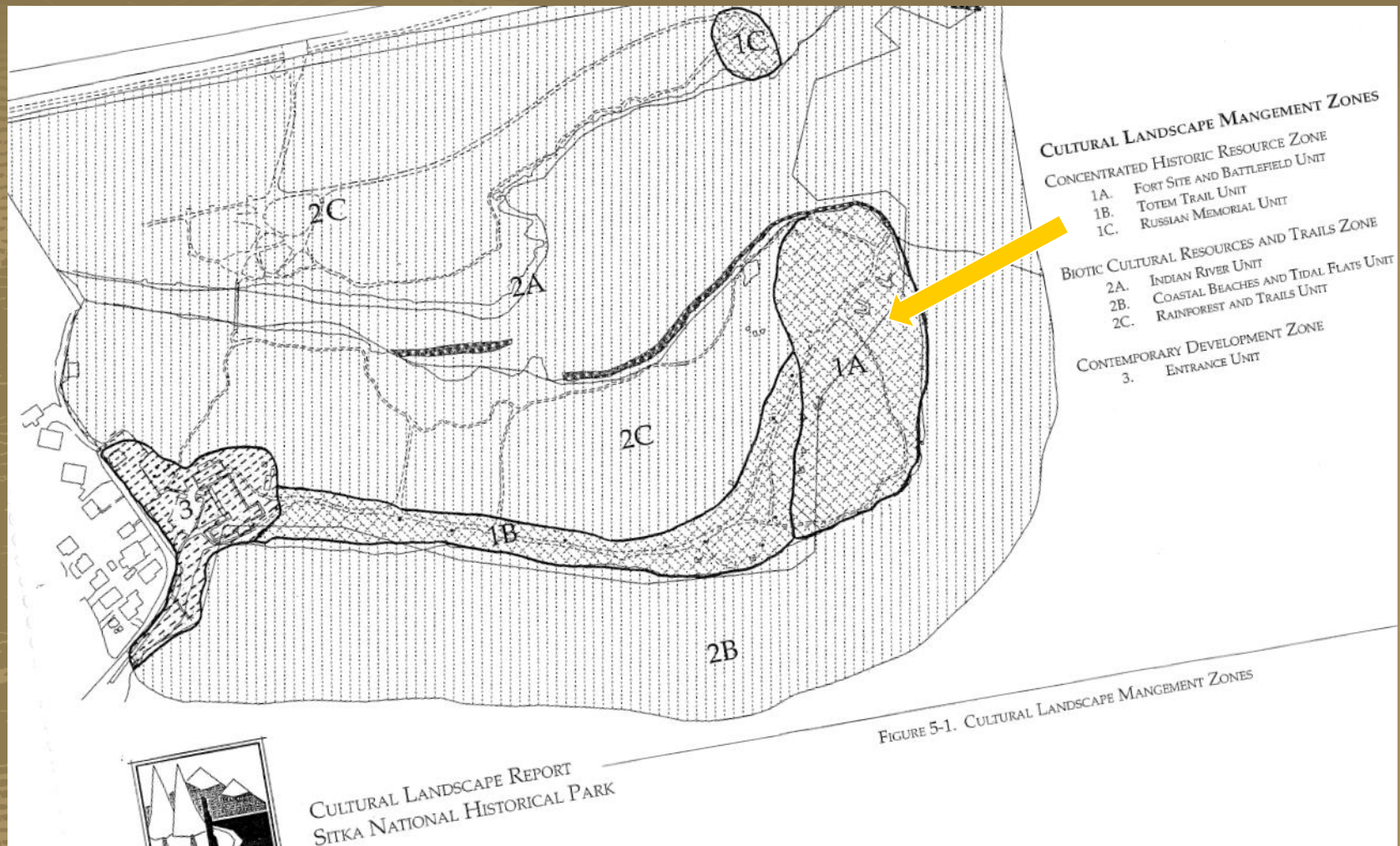
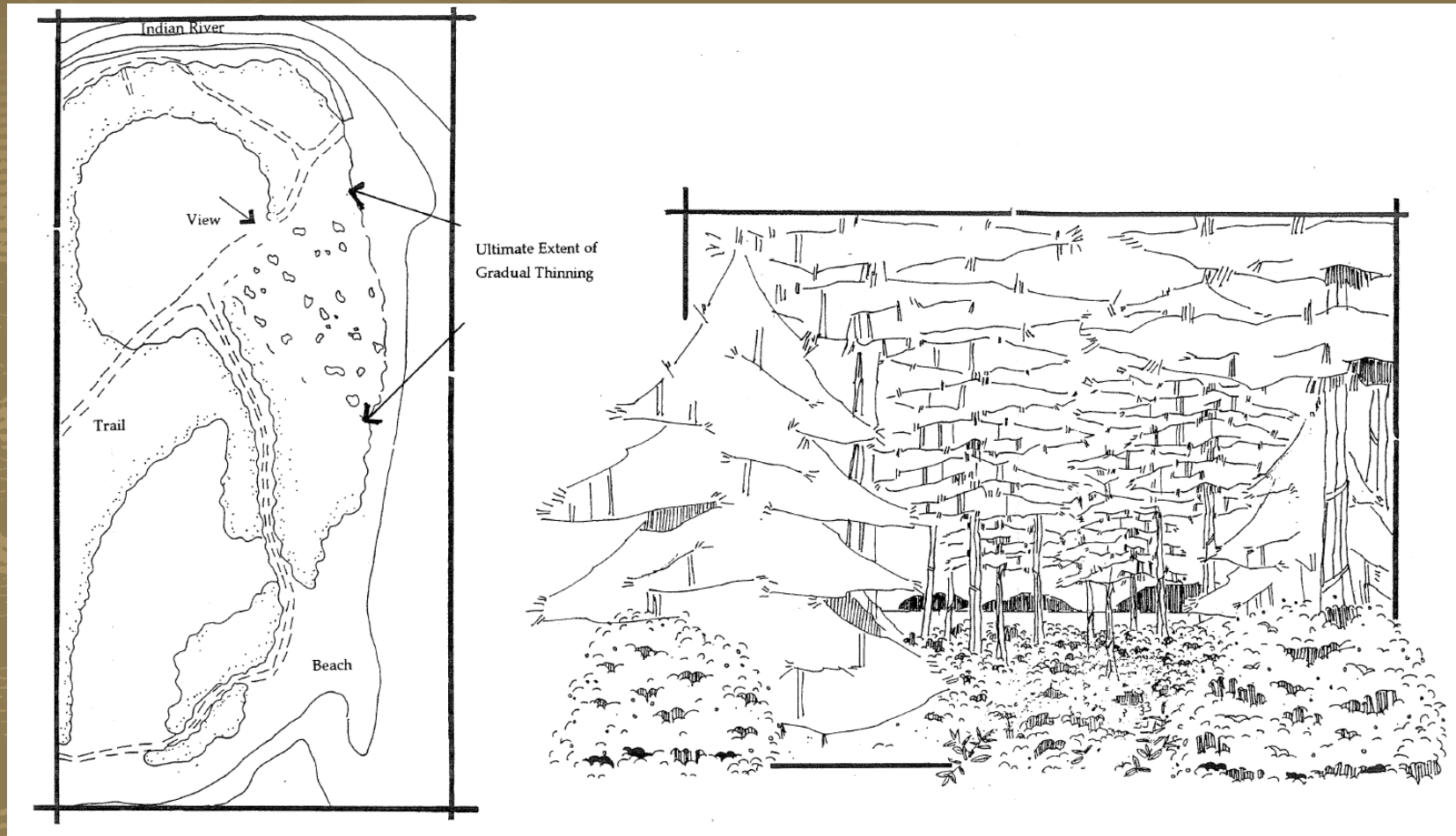


FIGURE 5-1. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE MANGEMENT ZONES

# What is the preferred Alternative?





# Option 3 from the Cultural Landscape Report

- Remove “smaller spruce and hemlock between the fort site and beach, as well as alders and dense understory...”
- SO...”...a clear view of the water will be revealed through the remaining large trees.”

# Advantages/Disadvantages

- Create Visual link between fort site and Sitka Sound that will help to interpret the historic battle...
  - Large trees will maintain soil stability
  - Scenic view of Sitka Sound will be available from fort site
  - Cost is lower
- 
- Removal may threaten archeological resources
  - Vegetation removal may increase erosion
  - Potential wind-storm damage
  - Vista maintenance cost may be higher



# Adaptive Management – Long Run

- The 1999 Landscape Report Dismissed fully restoring the open battlefield due to cost, while
- RECOGNIZING THAT IT IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE PARK...
- SO, we should think about moving towards more fully restoring the open character of the battlefield.

# What did it look like? (1985)



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# What did it look like? (1983)



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# What did it look like? (1975)



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# What did it look like? (1940)



SHORELINE, SITKA NHP

# What did it look like? (1920s)



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# What did it look like? (1920s)



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# Take Away

- We want
  - To re-establish landscape features lost to succession
  - Authenticity
  - To preserve existing resources in the ground
  - Public input and feedback on this project
- PUBLIC COMMENTS CAN BE GIVEN HERE at the public meeting, or
  - Input through Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system
    - ( <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/Shiskinoow> )



# Questions?

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Resources Division

<http://www.nps.gov/sitk>

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