



Pacific bleeding heart, *Dicentra formosa*

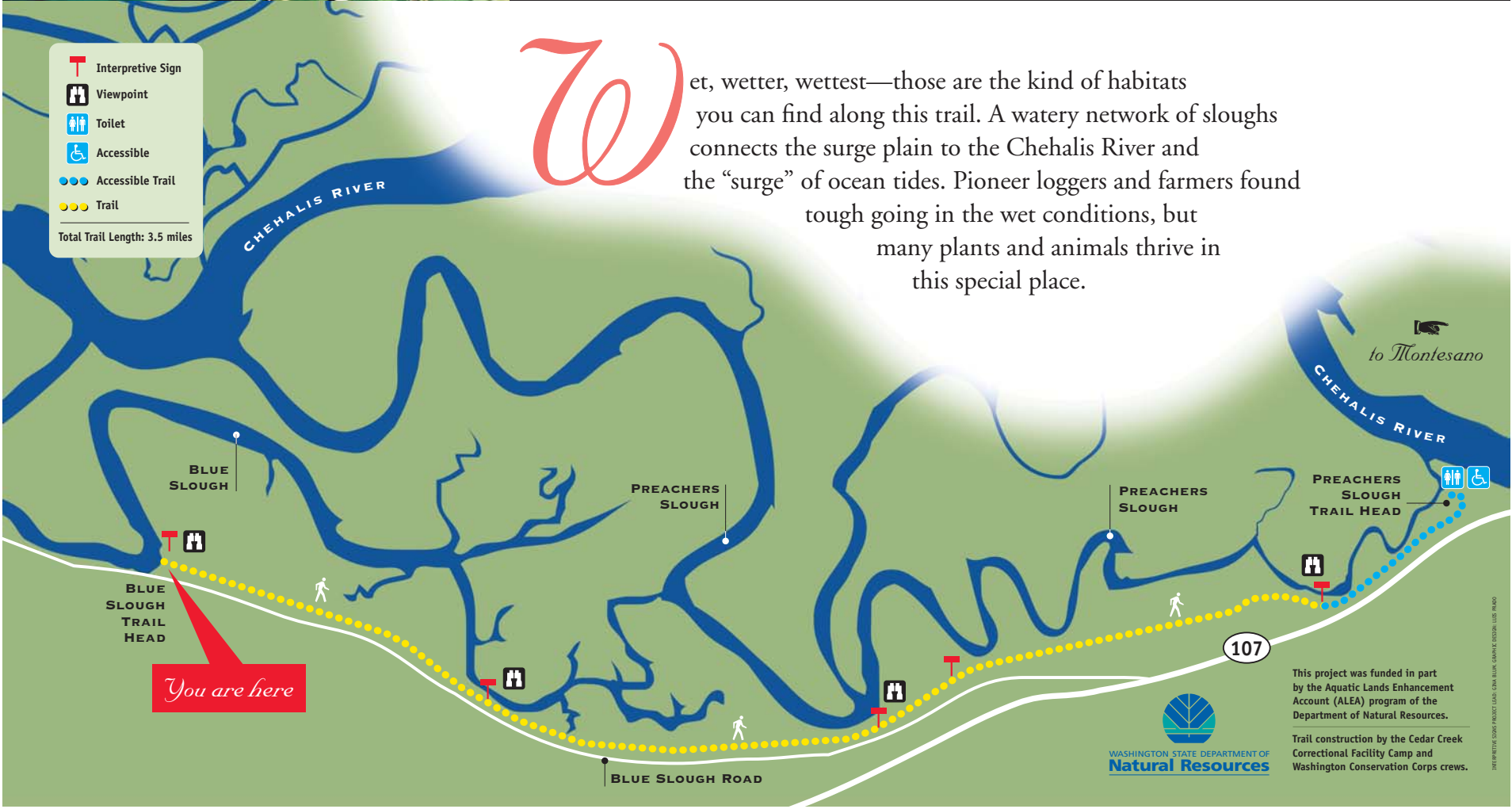


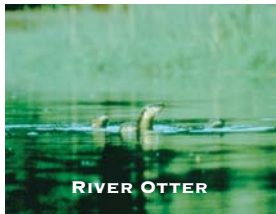
Salmonberry, *Rubus spectabilis*

STEP INTO THE FUTURE, STEP INTO THE PAST | GRAYS HARBOR HERITAGE

Welcome to the Chehalis River Surge Plain

Wet, wetter, wettest—those are the kind of habitats you can find along this trail. A watery network of sloughs connects the surge plain to the Chehalis River and the “surge” of ocean tides. Pioneer loggers and farmers found tough going in the wet conditions, but many plants and animals thrive in this special place.





RIVER OTTER



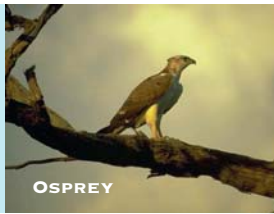
BANANA SLUG



DEER



CHUM SALMON



OSPREY

Exceptional Places

A P R O U D P A R T O F T H E G R A Y S H A R B O R H E R I T A G E



Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area

The Department of Natural Resources is proud to share with you the Chehalis River Surge Plain Natural Area, a special component of the Grays Harbor Heritage.

Natural areas, including salt marshes, mounded prairies, oak woodlands, and ponderosa pine forests are being protected statewide as the “last of the best”.

◀ Logs from all over the North River country were once dumped into Blue Slough. The logs were tucked between the pilings, away from river currents and boat traffic. Now these sentinels of a bygone era are habitat for wildlife. Birds not only nest in them, but also eat the insects that feed on the rotting wood.

This project was funded in part by the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) program of the Department of Natural Resources.

For more information on the Chehalis River Surge Plain, contact the Department of Natural Resources Central Region office in Chehalis at (360) 748-2383 or 1-800-527-3305 TTY (360) 740-6804





Wetlands threatened—Purple loosestrife blamed

▲ *Galerucella* spp., a beetle that eats purple loosestrife has been introduced in selected areas along the Chehalis River.

Purple loosestrife was brought from Europe as a garden flower, but it wouldn't stay confined behind garden fences. Loosestrife thrives in wet ground. It can rapidly take root in the surge plain. Where loosestrife grows, native plants are crowded out. When native plants are gone, animals lose habitat. A multi-agency partnership to control purple loosestrife in the lower Chehalis River is underway. Everyone can help by keeping a watchful eye out.

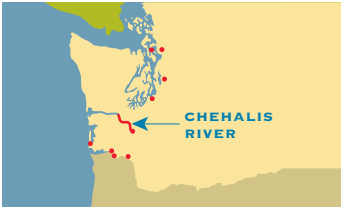


Hardhack, also known as Douglas' spirea, *Spirea douglasii*, also grows in wet conditions. The color is similar to loosestrife, but the flowers have a fuzzy look and the leaves are broader. This native flower poses no threat to wildlife.



Purple loosestrife
Lythrum salicaria
◀ If you see this purple flowered plant with its square stems, please call the Grays Harbor Noxious Weed office at (360) 482-2265

Funding for this sign was provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology



Parrotfeather poses problem for our waterways

▲ Parrotfeather locations as of 2000.

Parrotfeather belongs in the Amazon, but not in Washington's lakes and rivers. People brought parrotfeather here for aquariums and water gardens, and now it is a problem. Parrotfeather grows into large mats that can choke waterways and shade out algae, vital components of the food chain.

Native plant and animal species suffer. Recreation may suffer too.



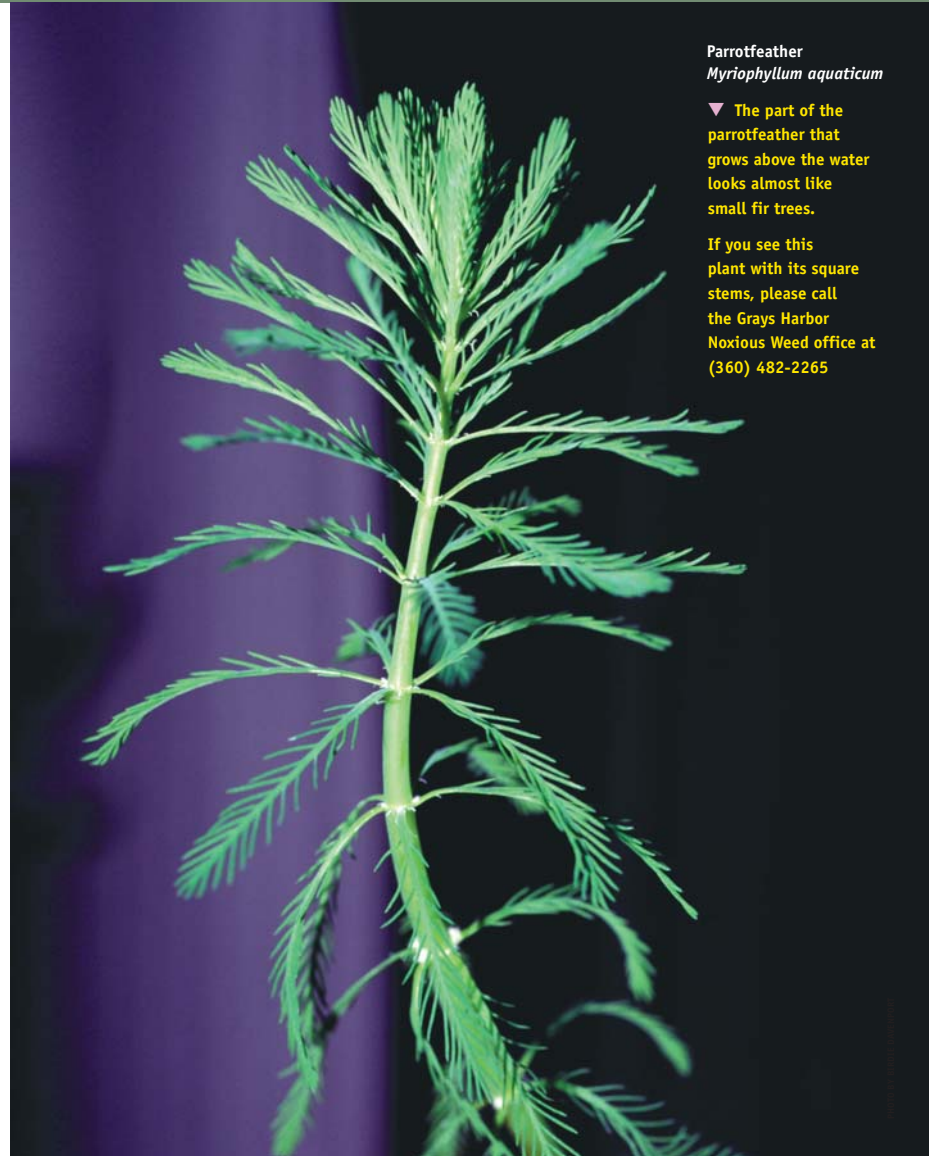
Parrotfeather mat



Parrotfeather is already in the Upper Chehalis. Check your boat and equipment carefully so you don't transfer this pest downstream or to other waters. Just a tiny fragment of parrotfeather can start a whole new plant.

Funding for this sign was provided by the Washington State Department of Ecology

RIGHT PHOTO: WA STATE WEED BOARD. LEFT PHOTO: WA DEPT. OF ECOLOGY



Parrotfeather
Myriophyllum aquaticum

▼ The part of the parrotfeather that grows above the water looks almost like small fir trees.

If you see this plant with its square stems, please call the Grays Harbor Noxious Weed office at (360) 482-2265



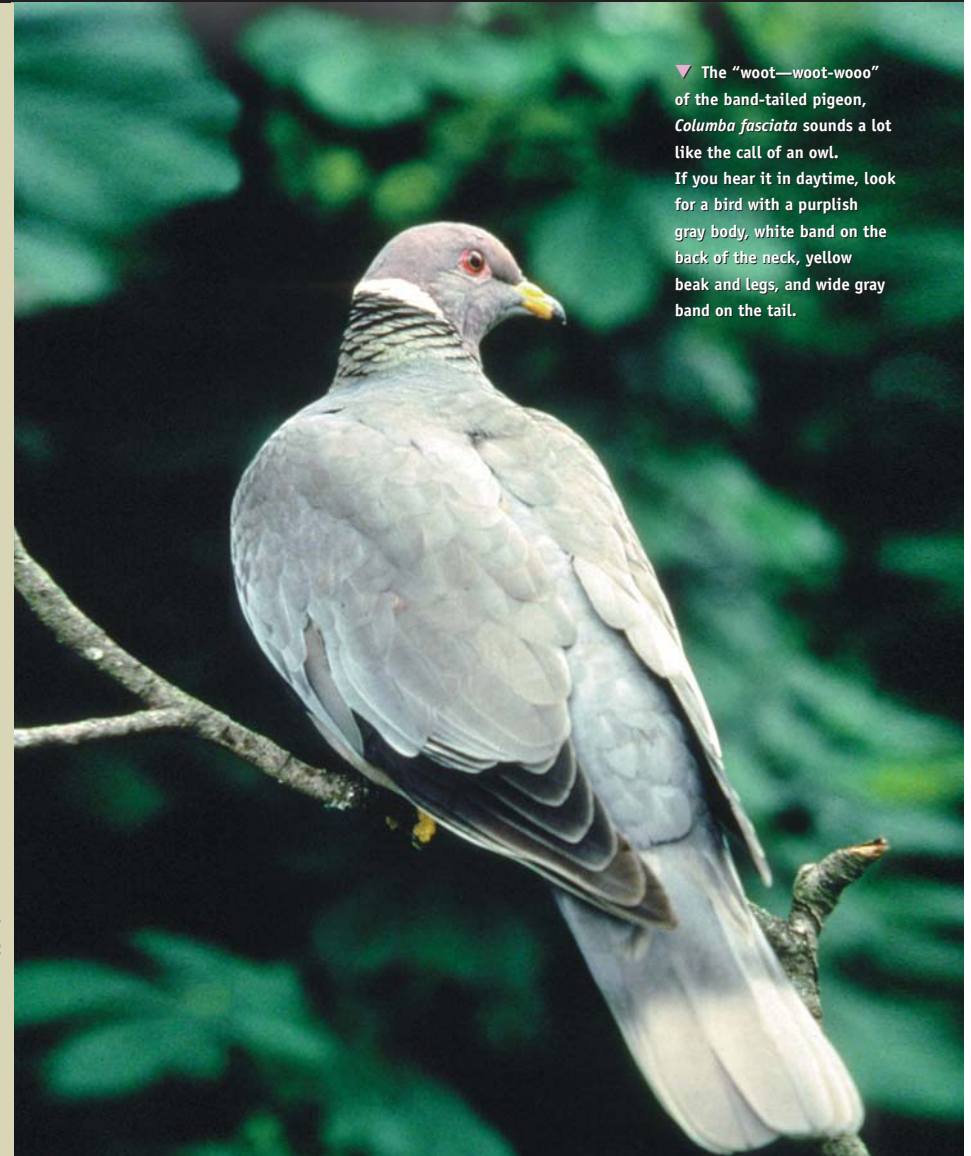
Having a place to come home to

▲ Salmonberry, *Rubus spectabilis*, is food for the band-tailed pigeon.

Each spring, band-tailed pigeons come to the Chehalis River surge plain to breed and to raise their young, but overall, the numbers of this native bird are decreasing. It is not clear why.

Sites such as the surge plain that meet their needs are increasingly important. Here the birds can find the forest they need for nesting, the fruit they need for food, and springs that provide minerals essential to their diet.

PIGEON PHOTO: CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY, #877-2; TED WILLOX PHOTOGRAPHER, SALMONBERRY ILLUSTRATION: SANDRA NEEL



▼ The “woot—woot-wooo” of the band-tailed pigeon, *Columba fasciata* sounds a lot like the call of an owl. If you hear it in daytime, look for a bird with a purplish gray body, white band on the back of the neck, yellow beak and legs, and wide gray band on the tail.



STEP INTO THE FUTURE, STEP INTO THE PAST | GRAYS HARBOR HERITAGE

From forest to slough, from slough to sawmill

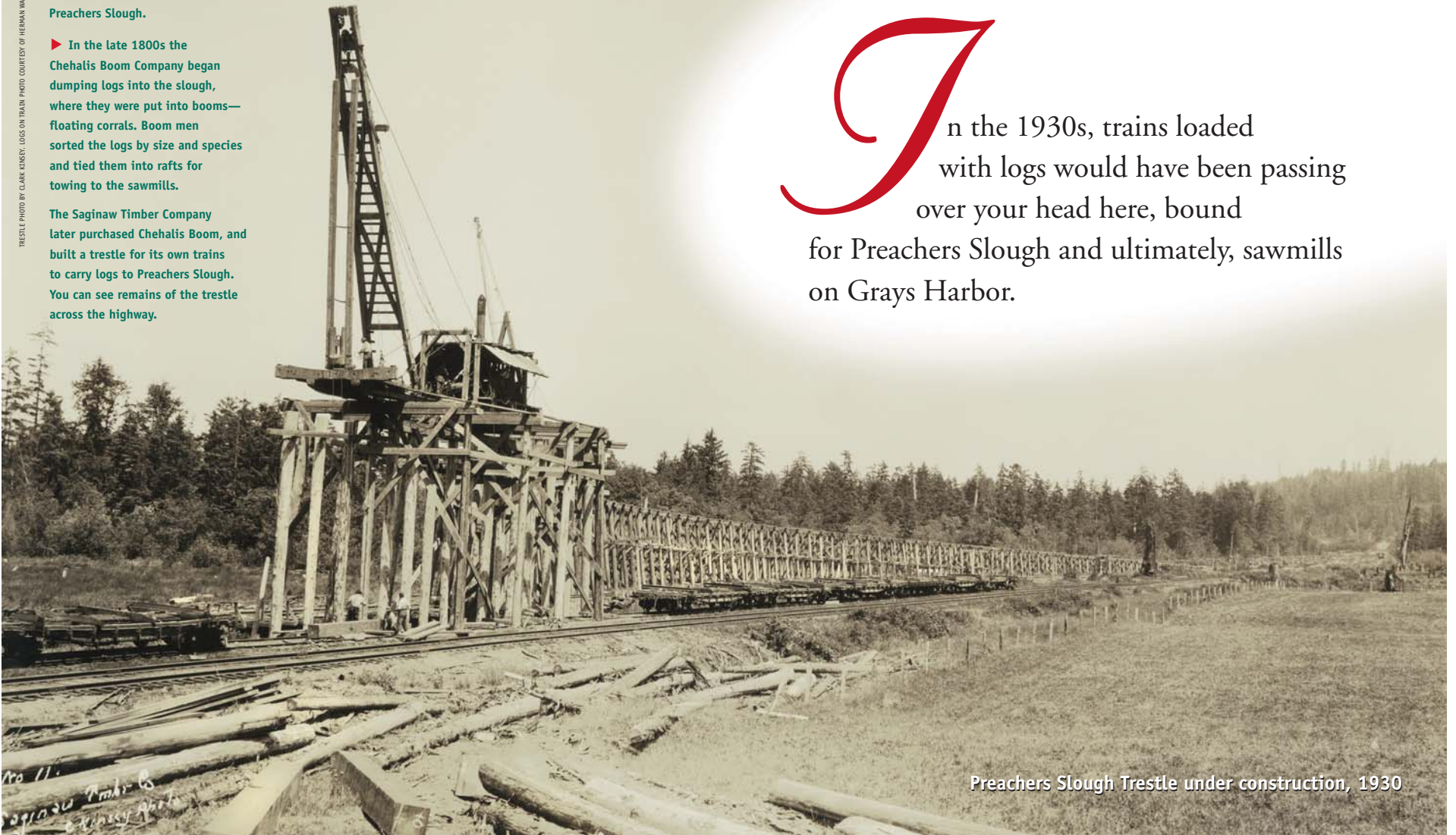
▲ Train delivering logs to Preachers Slough.

► In the late 1800s the Chehalis Boom Company began dumping logs into the slough, where they were put into booms—floating corrals. Boom men sorted the logs by size and species and tied them into rafts for towing to the sawmills.

The Saginaw Timber Company later purchased Chehalis Boom, and built a trestle for its own trains to carry logs to Preachers Slough. You can see remains of the trestle across the highway.

In the 1930s, trains loaded with logs would have been passing over your head here, bound for Preachers Slough and ultimately, sawmills on Grays Harbor.

TRESTLE PHOTO BY CLARK KINSKY, LOGS ON TRAIN PHOTO COURTESY OF HERMAN WALSER



Preachers Slough Trestle under construction, 1930



School days, school days

▲ Peterson's homestead.

Before most of the surge plain was returned to the plants and animals, people tried to farm here. They were more successful at growing children. The Peterson and Willis families had twelve each.

Because transportation was difficult, a school was needed right here on the surge plain. The Petersons, whose former homestead you are standing on, donated the land for it. The school was located across the highway from here. Every month, Mr. Willis rowed to Montesano and then hiked to city hall for school supplies.

▼ Favorite recess games were Pump Pump Pull Away, Red Rover, and Run Sheep Run. What do you think children played when it snowed?





Cattail, *Typha latifolia*

STEP INTO THE FUTURE, STEP INTO THE PAST GRAYS HARBOR HERITAGE

Nothing is made which is not first provided by nature

“

”

Attracted by the richness of the surge plain, Indians came here from many miles away to gather resources, including cattail. Sometimes called the “supermarket of the swamp,” cattail met many needs. The inner core of the new stems was prized as food. The root-like rhizomes were ground into flour. Cattail leaves could be woven into baskets and mats, and fluff from mature flower heads filled bedding and diapers.