



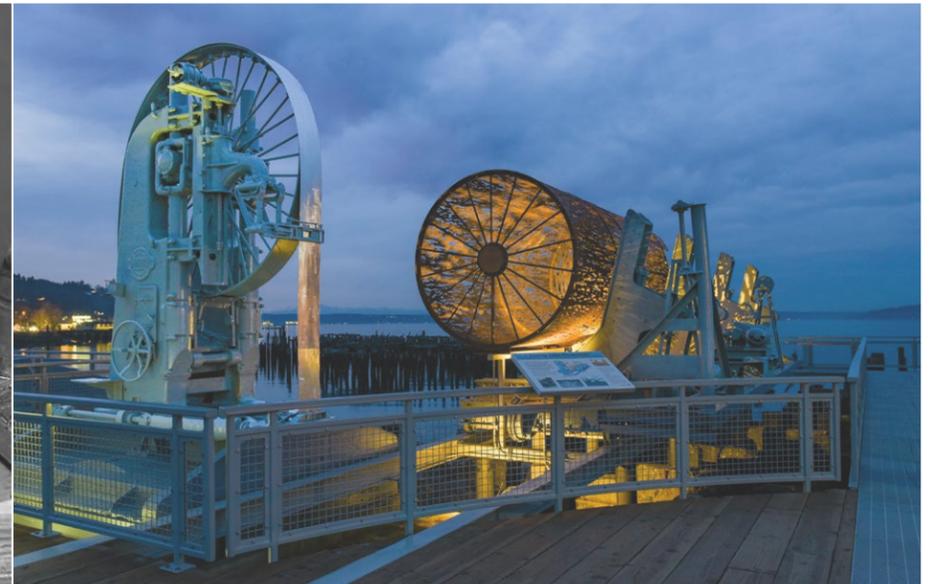
**Industry, Restoration, and Recreation**

Located just off the busy Ruston Way Trail, the expanded Dickman Mill Park and restored head saw offer a unique opportunity to experience an interpretation of Tacoma's working waterfront history.



### **Balancing Ecology and Human Use**

The restored beach and head saw from Tacoma's longest operational lumber mill returns to the waterfront—sparking curiosity and wonder, this is a place for all to explore, play, and learn from the past.



The Tacoma area was inhabited for thousands of years by American Indians, most recently the Puyallup people, who lived in settlements up and down the waterway.

Growing waterfront industries displace Puyallup villages from Tacoma waterfront, culminating in the **1854** Treaty of Medicine Creek.

**1852**, a Swede named Nicholas Delin built a water-powered sawmill on a creek near the head of Commencement Bay.

Tacoma was founded in **1872**. Its first name: "Commencement City."

Tacoma was selected as the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad in **1873** and incorporated in **1875**.

**1880s** William Rust operates a smelter on the Commencement Bay waterfront. Sawmills, shingle mills, shipbuilding, and other industries begin to populate the waterfront, which is eventually called "Ruston Way."

The Tacoma Riot of **1885** expels several hundred Chinese residents along the waterfront.

**1907** Metro Parks Tacoma established as a separate entity from the city government.

**1921** The first ship to use the Port of Tacoma, the *Edmore*, picks up lumber bound for Japan.

**1899 to 1977** Founded in 1899, and bought by the Dickman family in the 1920s, Dickman Mill operated continuously at its current location and was the last among many lumber mills on Tacoma's waterfront to close.

**1968** City of Tacoma purchases properties along Ruston Way in anticipation of future recreational use.

**1977** Dickman Mill is the last lumber mill to close on Tacoma's waterfront. Following a fire in **1979**, the remnants of Dickman Mill slowly deteriorated.

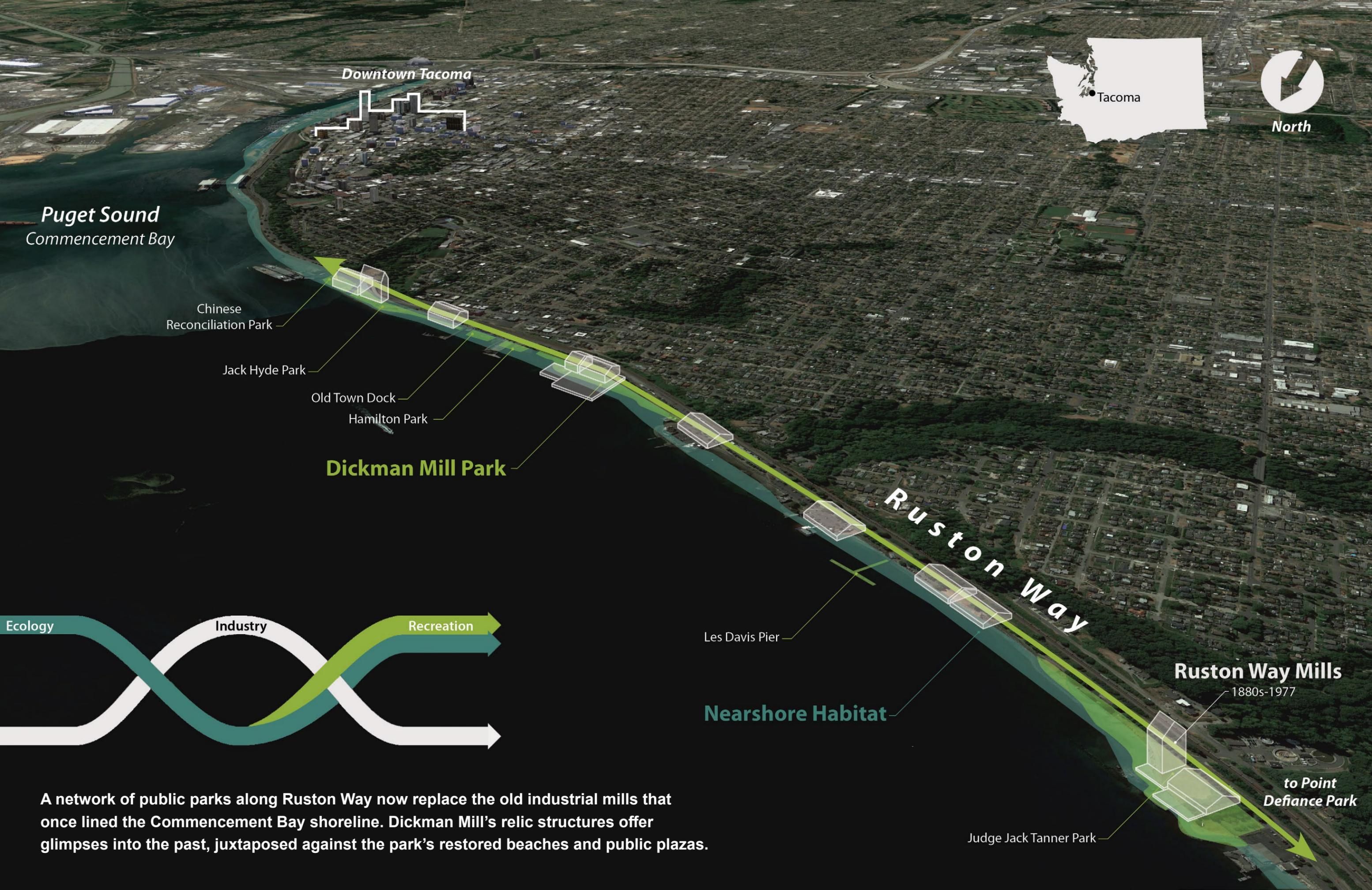
**1990s** Metro Parks acquires Dickman Mill site.

**1994** Copper cleanup efforts begin on Ruston Way at the Asarco Tacoma smelter site.

**2001** The Dickman Mill shoreline was rehabilitated and developed as a new public park.

**2010** Chinese Reconciliation Park opens on the Tacoma waterfront.

**2021** The restored Dickman Mill head saw returns to the waterfront.



Downtown Tacoma



Puget Sound  
Commencement Bay

Chinese Reconciliation Park

Jack Hyde Park

Old Town Dock

Hamilton Park

Dickman Mill Park

Ruston Way

Les Davis Pier

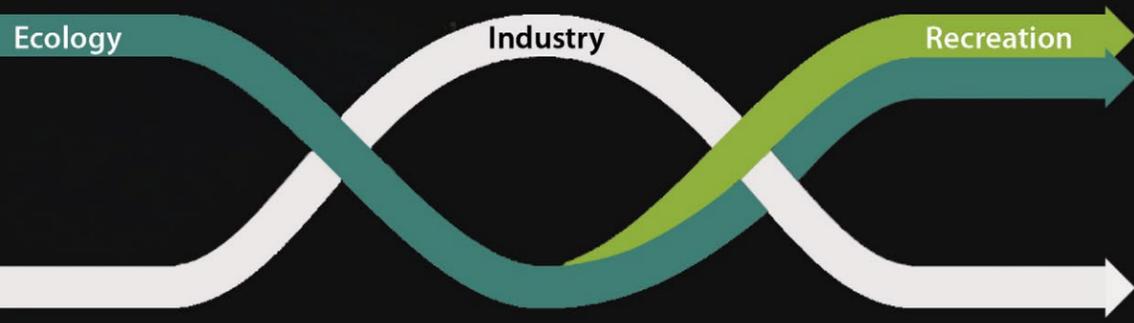
Ruston Way Mills

1880s-1977

Nearshore Habitat

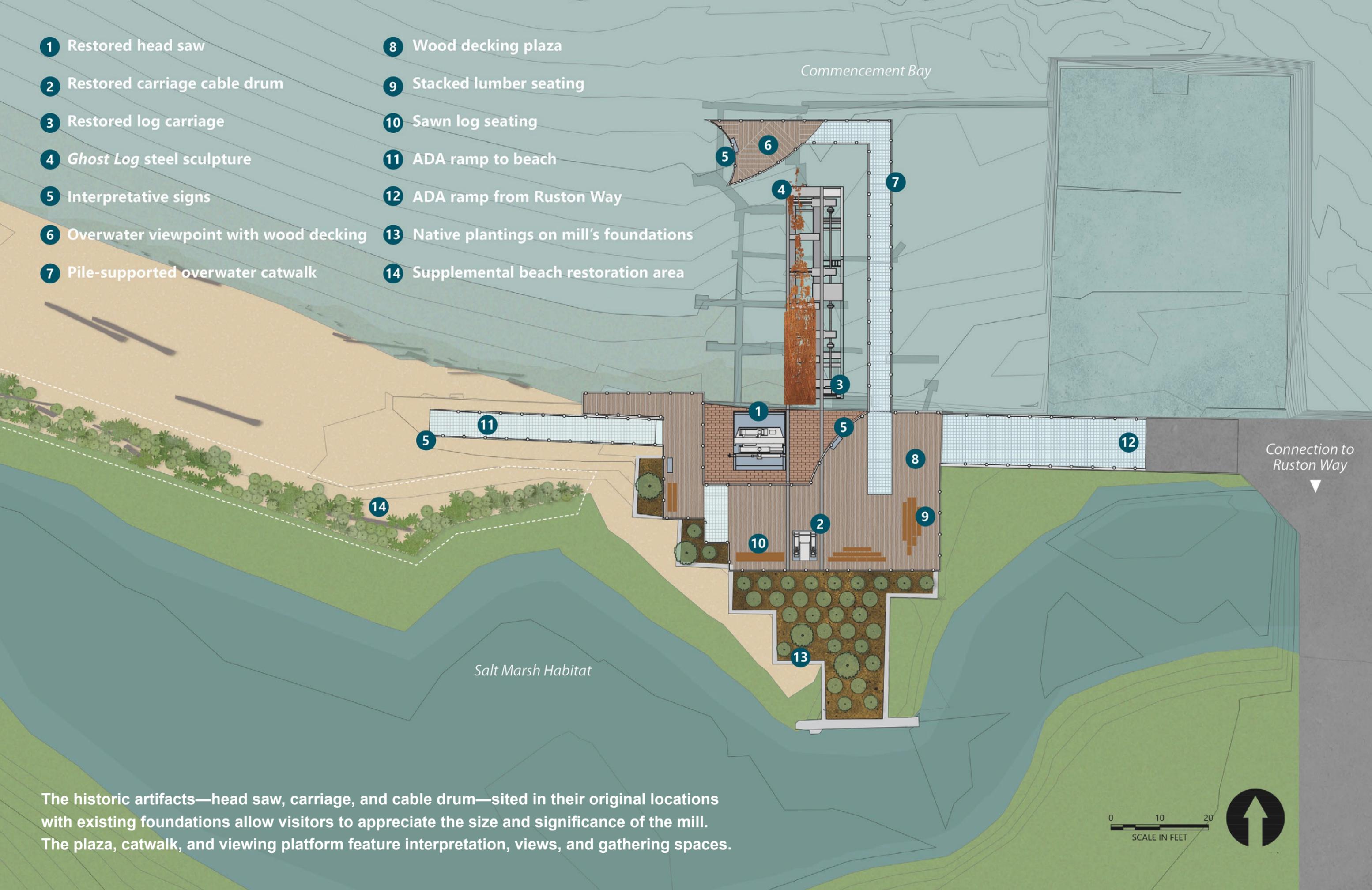
to Point Defiance Park

Judge Jack Tanner Park



A network of public parks along Ruston Way now replace the old industrial mills that once lined the Commencement Bay shoreline. Dickman Mill's relic structures offer glimpses into the past, juxtaposed against the park's restored beaches and public plazas.

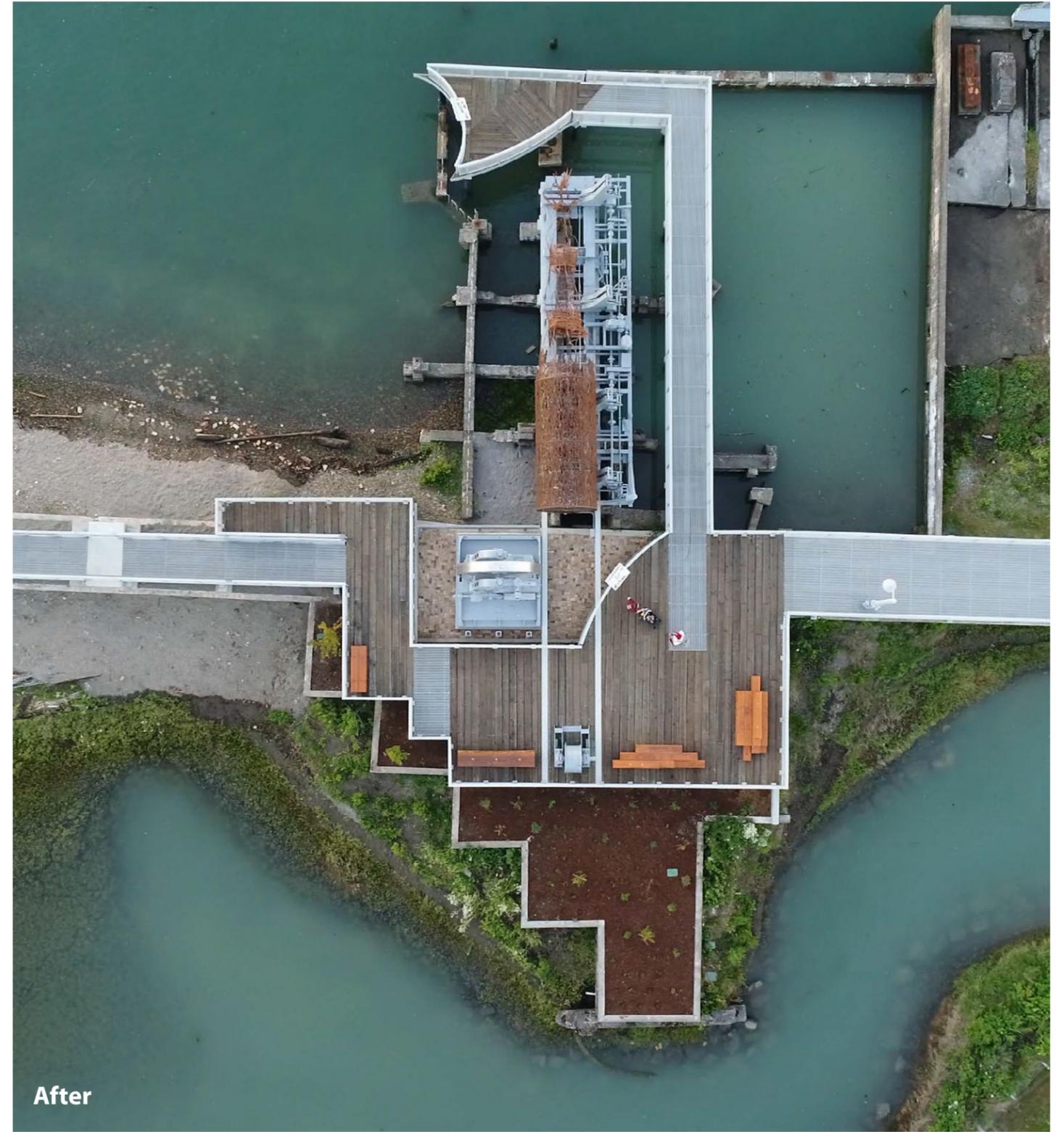
- 1 Restored head saw
- 2 Restored carriage cable drum
- 3 Restored log carriage
- 4 *Ghost Log* steel sculpture
- 5 Interpretative signs
- 6 Overwater viewpoint with wood decking
- 7 Pile-supported overwater catwalk
- 8 Wood decking plaza
- 9 Stacked lumber seating
- 10 Sawn log seating
- 11 ADA ramp to beach
- 12 ADA ramp from Ruston Way
- 13 Native plantings on mill's foundations
- 14 Supplemental beach restoration area



The historic artifacts—head saw, carriage, and cable drum—sited in their original locations with existing foundations allow visitors to appreciate the size and significance of the mill. The plaza, catwalk, and viewing platform feature interpretation, views, and gathering spaces.

0 10 20  
SCALE IN FEET

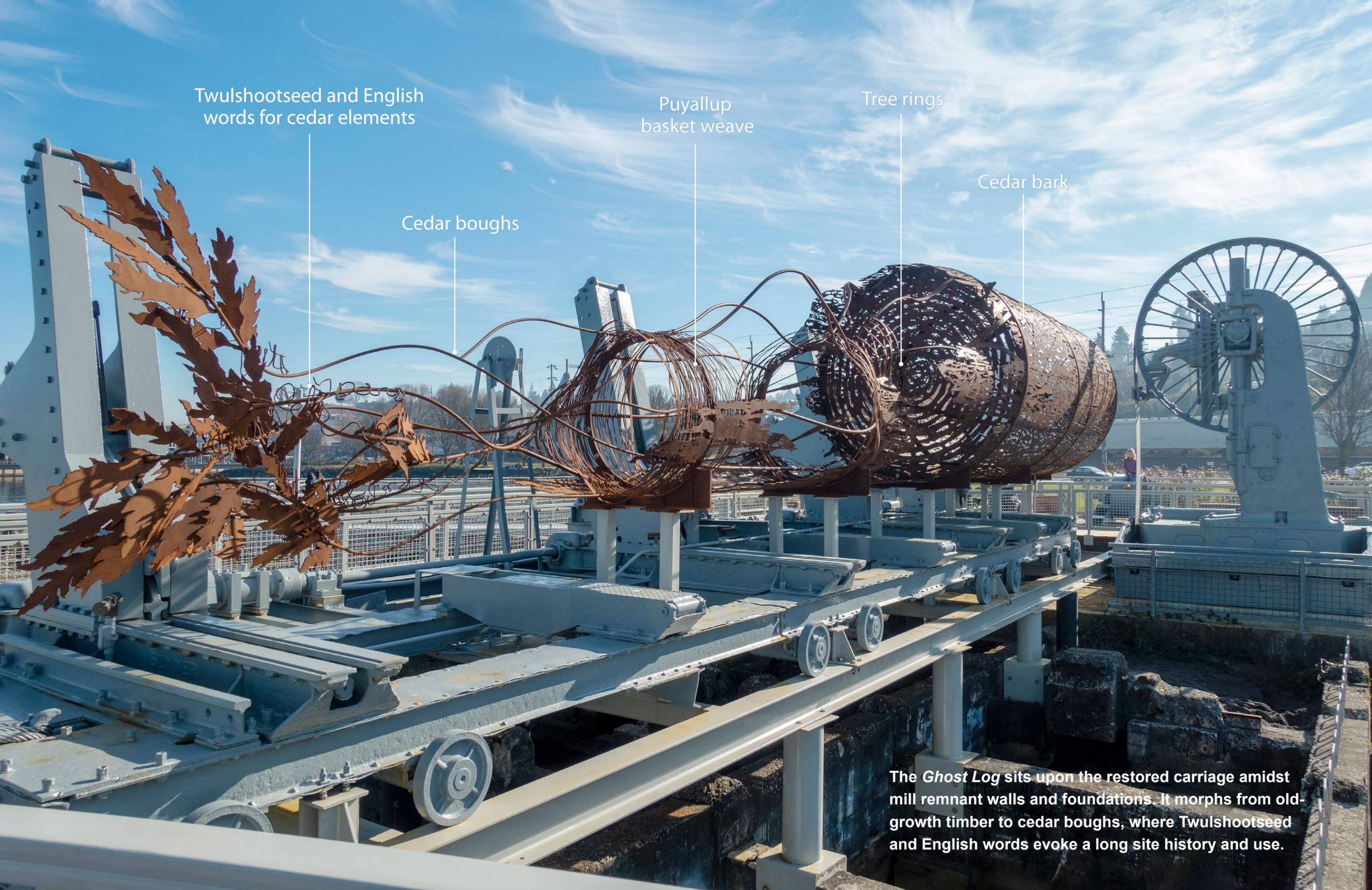




The park expansion carefully avoided impacts to restored wetland and beach areas and implemented multiple habitat enhancements, while addressing sea level rise. Restored artifacts are set within the mill's remnants and supported by existing mill walls and new structural piles.



A landmarked historic artifact on state and local heritage registers, the head saw returned to Dickman Mill Park in 2021, fully restored and protected with a marine coating to ensure its longevity and protect it from corrosion.



Twulshootseed and English words for cedar elements

Puyallup basket weave

Tree rings

Cedar bark

Cedar boughs

The *Ghost Log* sits upon the restored carriage amidst mill remnant walls and foundations. It morphs from old-growth timber to cedar boughs, where Twulshootseed and English words evoke a long site history and use.



### **Sited for Resilience**

To accommodate rising sea levels and king tides, the pile-supported deck plaza is elevated 3 feet above surrounding park areas. ADA-accessible ramps provide connections to the existing park and beach.



Dune grass



Gumweed



Douglas maple



Beach strawberry



Kinnikinnick



Snowberry

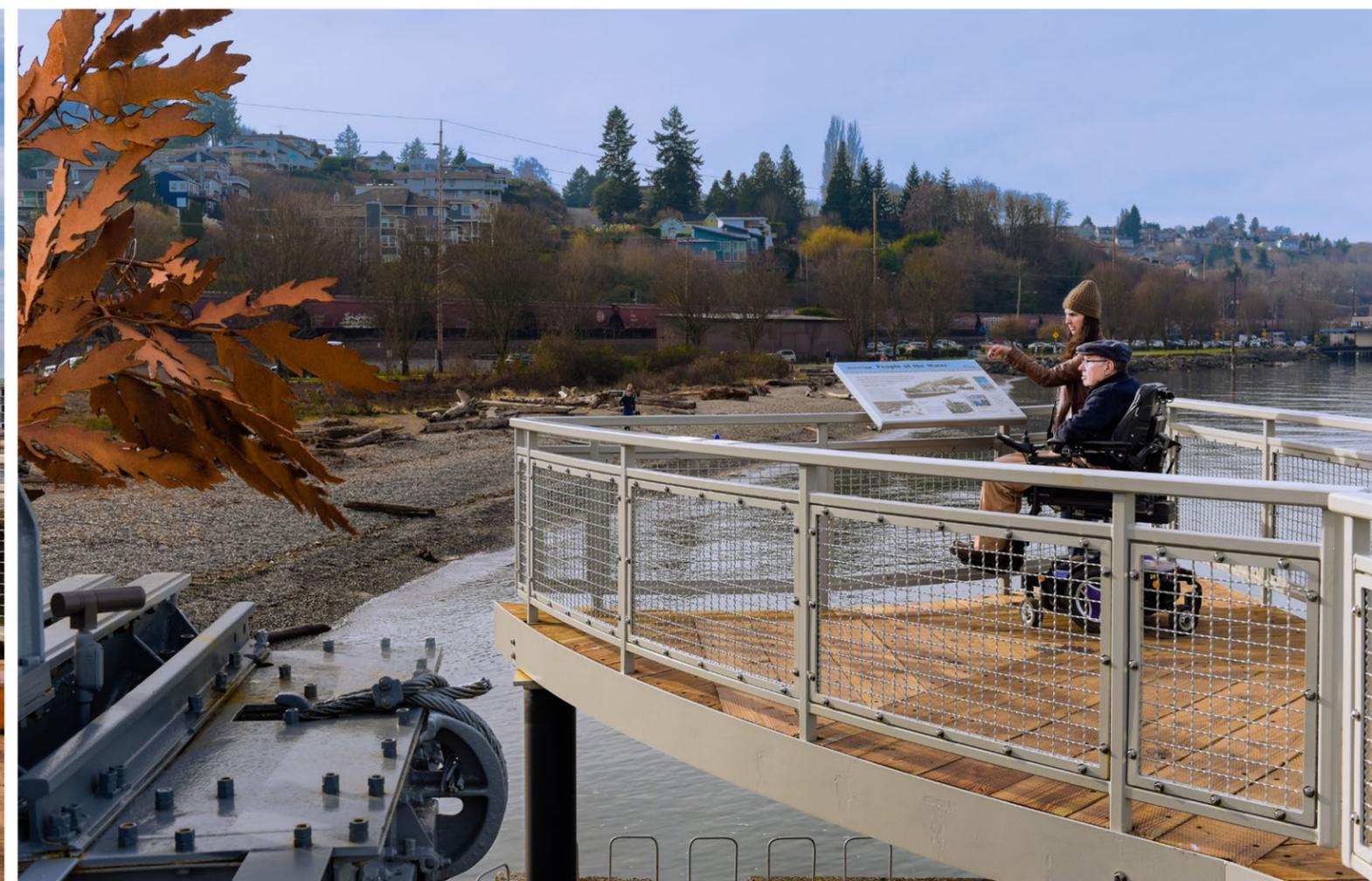
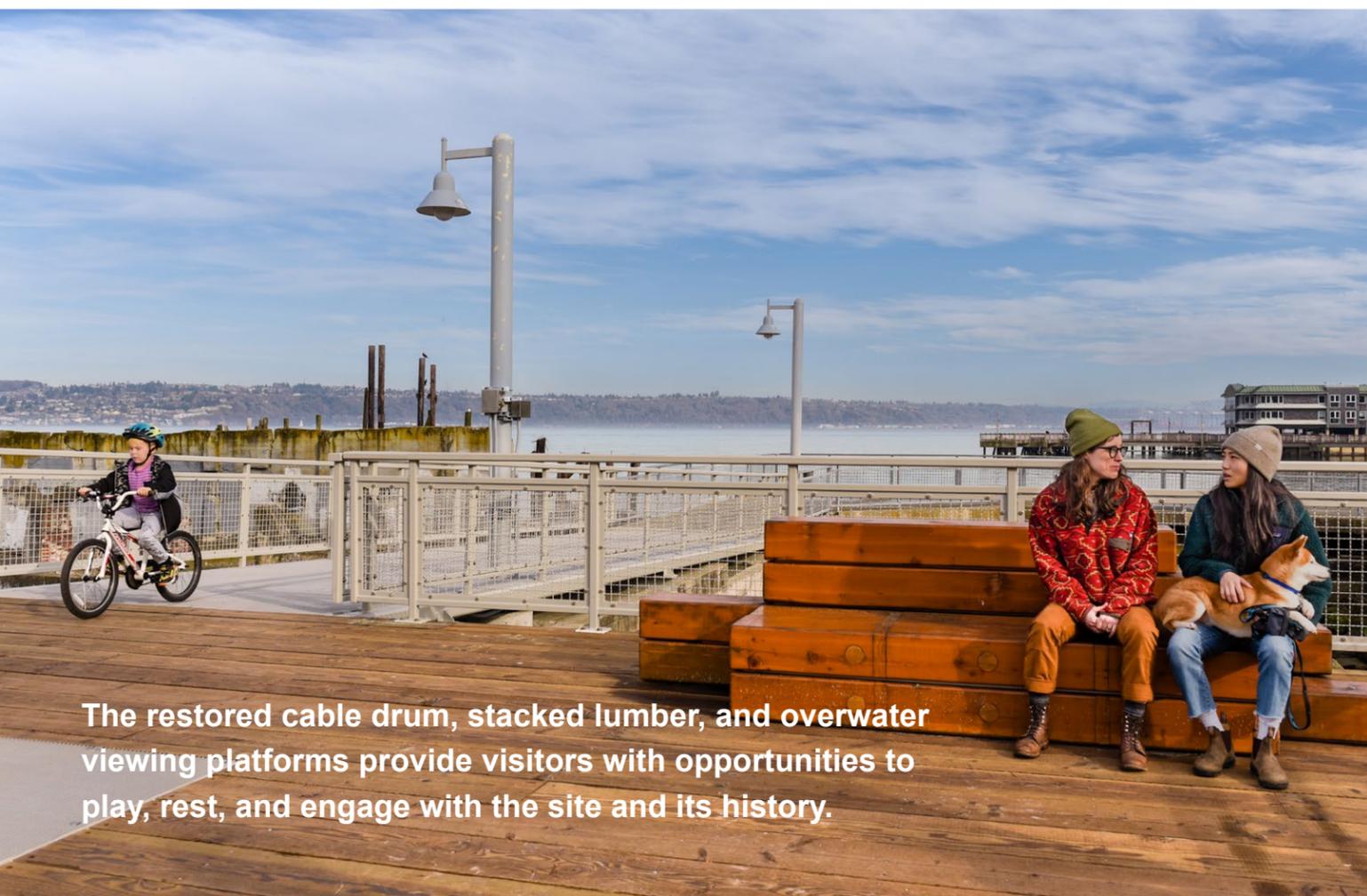


Nootka rose



Shore pine

Upland and overwater areas are designed to minimize impacts to existing habitat areas. Wetland and riparian buffers and the beach are planted with native plantings.



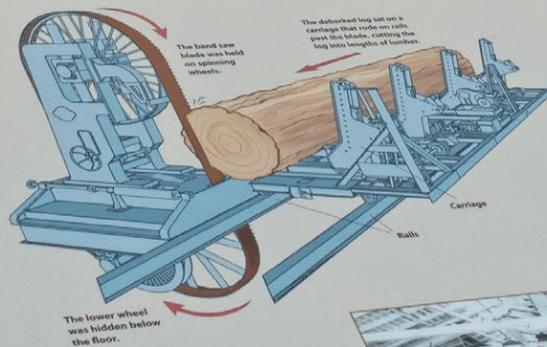
The restored cable drum, stacked lumber, and overwater viewing platforms provide visitors with opportunities to play, rest, and engage with the site and its history.



## Cutting Edge Technology

This historic head saw is a unique artifact from the Dickman Mill. It was specially designed to handle enormous old-growth logs and it helped transform Tacoma into the Lumber Capital of America.

The head saw was installed in 1923. Today, it is the last surviving unmodified saw of its type in Washington State. It is a Tacoma Historic Landmark and is on the Washington State Heritage Register.



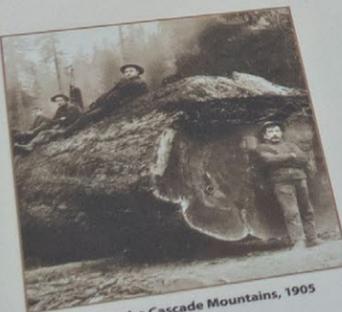
The saw blade sharpening room at Dickman Mill. The head saw was manufactured at the Sumner Iron Works in Everett, Washington. It weighs 15 tons, is 34 feet high, and was powered by a Westinghouse 225-horsepower motor. The carriage, measuring 12 x 40 feet, could be adjusted with a saw guide at the front of the top wheel to account for the tapered shape of the logs.



This restoration and expansion was made available thanks to a generous gift from Cambia Health Solutions. This was in honor of Cambia's centennial celebration (2017) and the company's founding 100 years ago in the logging camps of Tacoma.

Cambia, which means the rings of a tree, was founded on the idea of neighbor helping neighbor and a spirit of health care innovation that drives the company's focus on people and families today. This gift honors the shared history of hard work, innovation, hope, and courage.

To hear from people who lived and worked at the mill, see the QR code.



Loggers in the Cascade Mountains, 1905. Courtesy Library of Congress.



Dickman Lumber Company in 1948 with log booms and lumber. Courtesy Tacoma Public Library.



Interior of Dickman Mill showing carriage and head saw.

Interpretive signage is strategically located at viewing areas. Embedded within are QR codes that visitors can scan to hear stories from people who lived and worked at the mill site.



Firebrick from the former mill's sawdust burner can be seen in some beach areas. As part of the nearshore habitat enhancement measures, these bricks were removed from the beach and repurposed as paving at the base of the head saw.



Ramps offer access for all ages and abilities, providing connections from the beach to the new plaza and overwater areas to the larger Dickman Mill Park and Ruston Way.



**Cutting Edge Technology**

This machine, known as the Ghost Log, is a replica of the original sawmill that operated in the area from 1850 to 1950. It is a testament to the ingenuity and craftsmanship of the early logging industry. The machine is made of cast iron and steel and is a masterpiece of engineering. It is a must-see attraction for anyone interested in the history of logging.

Once the sun sets, the *Ghost Log* illuminates this new landmark destination along Ruston Way.