

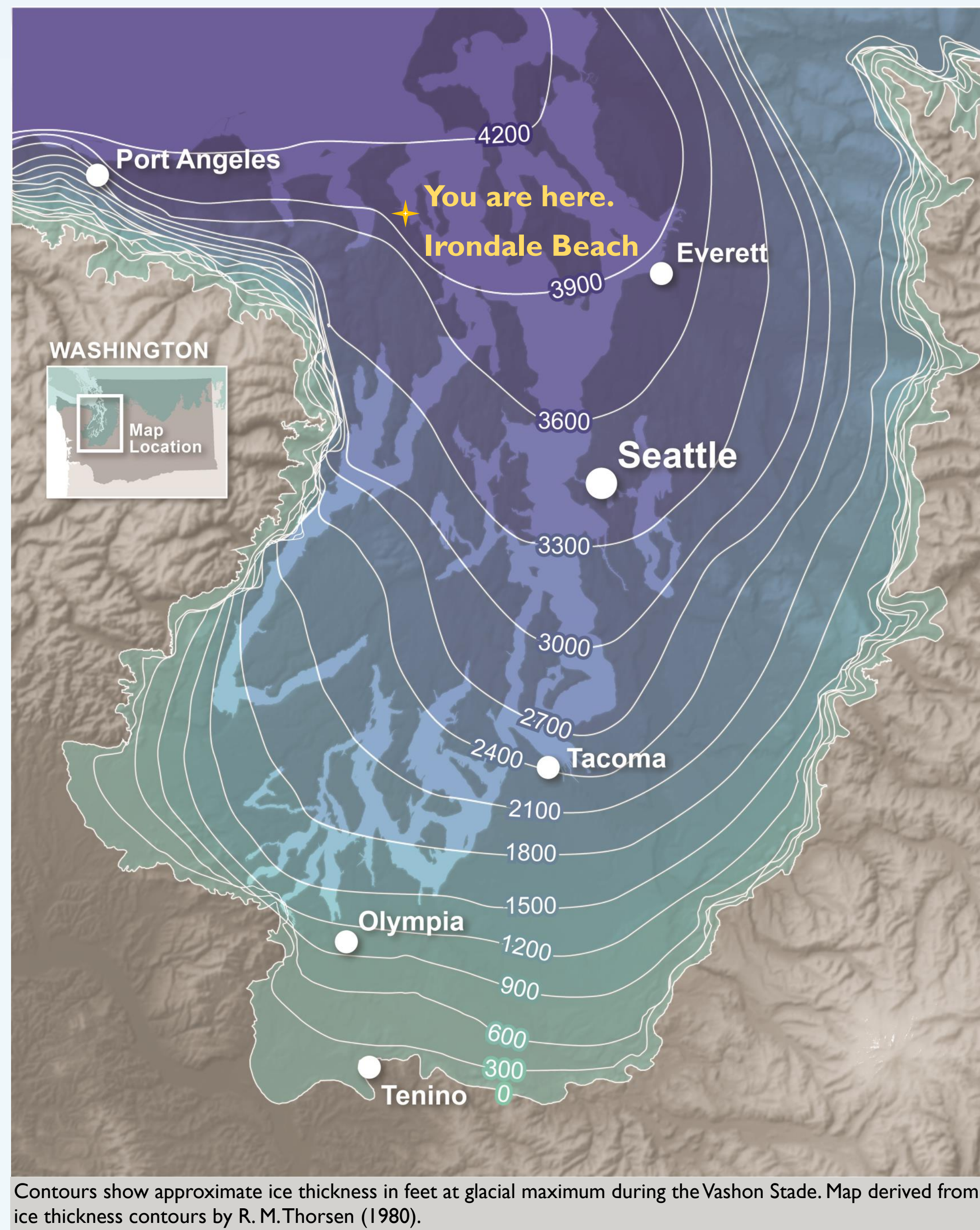
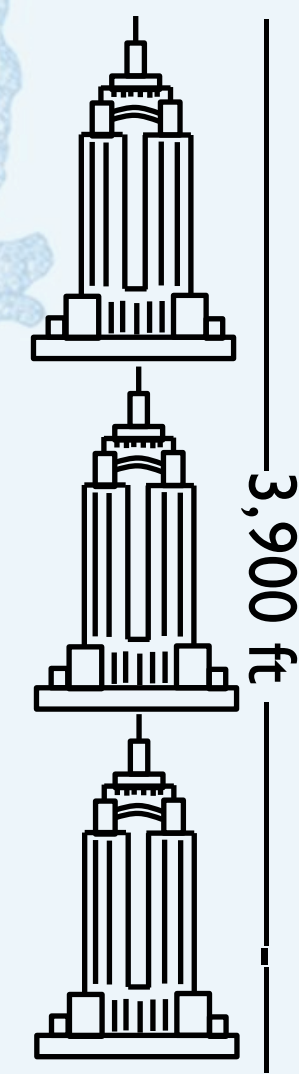
HOW IT WAS FORMED:

The Puget Lobe Ice Sheet

About 17,000 years ago, Irondale Beach was beneath a giant ice sheet, the Puget Lobe ice sheet. It was an extension of the larger Cordilleran ice sheet and part of the Vashon Stade, our latest ice advance and retreat.

The Puget Lobe ice sheet was so large that where you are standing was beneath 3,900 feet of ice.

That's three Empire State Buildings tall!



The ice sheet reached as far as Tenino, WA, staying there for about 100 years before beginning to melt. The flowing meltwater created rivers underneath the ice carving out Hood Canal, surrounding waterways, and Irondale Beach. The rivers deposited sediment along the Coast, and the earth rebounded upward while the ice shrank. When the Juan de Fuca lobe receded, marine water entered the lowlands and filled the newly carved troughs. This created the shorelines we are familiar with today.

17,000 yrs ago

NATIVE LAND:

Life on Chimacum Creek

For centuries, many Tribes occupied Olympic Peninsula shores, adapting their lives to the natural bounty of the land, rivers, and sea. They settled into permanent longhouses in the winter and traveled for fishing and resource gathering the rest of the year.

Chemakum Tribe thrived at S'Kwai village on Irondale Beach. Chemakum Creek and the village at its mouth were known as “S'Kwai.” The Chemakum language related to the Quileute language, a La Push Tribe. These Chemakuan languages are a language isolate, unrelated to any other language family in North America. Tribal legends say a great flood split the Chemakum from the Quileute. The Chemakum and their lands ultimately merged into the S’Klallam and Skokomish Tribes after their numbers dwindled to less than 70 individuals in the mid-1800’s.

Words from the past

Chemakuan Language

Chemakum Villiage: **S'kwai**

cedar: **sokwom**

basket: **amay**

canoe: **hi'ilolaka**

salmon: **kahakwa**

potlatch: **ixwaqwol**

butter clams: **chatsabilhiw**

weaving: **hokwotsisaqa**

Did you know?

Irondale Beach was host to potlatches, which are ceremonial feasts that last days. Families would save money for a marriage ritual, name giving, or other rites of passage and give gifts to the guests as payment for witnessing.



Photo: Chemakum Woman— by Edward S. Curtis 1868-1922

Natural resources found at Irondale Beach

Clams were identified by their hole in the sand. Irondale Beach has butter, native littleneck, and horse clams. Women often used digging sticks and woven baskets for clam digging.

Salmon were abundant and a main source of nutrition. They were cooked held by a cedar stick over an open flame.

Western red cedar were used for carving canoes, building longhouses, medicine, and weaving. Tribes gathered materials to preserve the tree, not kill it. Cedars can live 1400 years and grow 150 feet tall!

What was woven from Cedar?

Many things! Clothing, wallets, hats, mats, mattresses, crafts, and a variety of baskets. Including water-tight baskets for boiling water and open weave baskets for clam digging.

13,800 yrs ago-
1850's

INDUSTRIALIZATION:

The Steel City of the Northwest

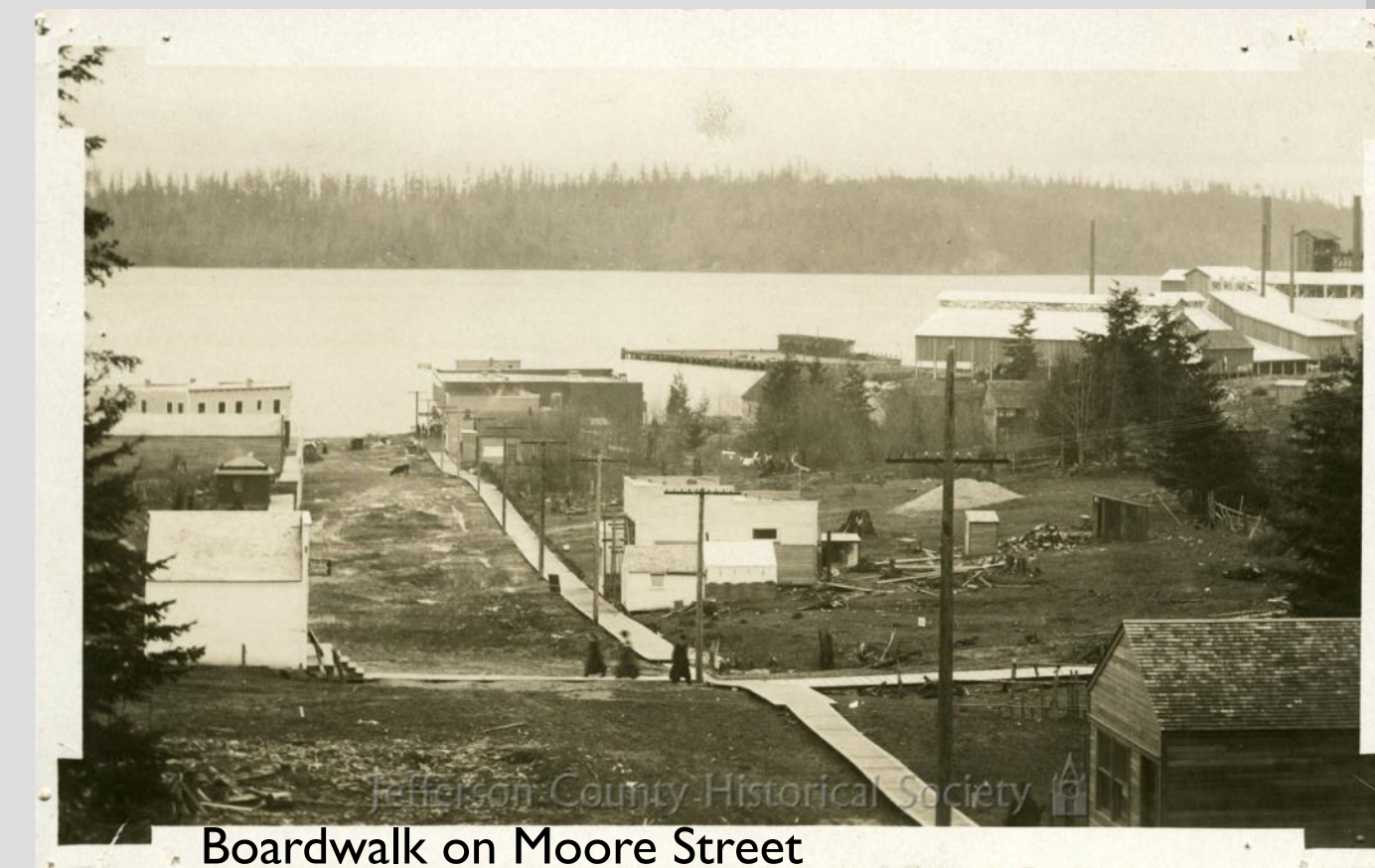
Hematite bog ore in Chimacum sparked Irondale’s industrial era. Puget Sound Iron Company began ‘pig iron’ production in 1880 with a smelting furnace, 20 beehive charcoal kilns, and a wharf along Irondale Beach.

More than 25,000 tons of charcoal iron were produced, but low quality ore closed the company. Four more companies tried for profitable production between 1903 and 1910, overhauling equipment and raising ore quality. 1909 brought the transition to steel

production and a 24 hour operation. Irondale boomed! About 1,400 people, saloons, mercantiles, a hospital, hotel and newspaper lined Moore Street

production in 1911, and together with a huge fire that destroyed the Moore Street buildings, Irondale dwindled to 200 people by 1915. World War I shortly revived the mill. From 1917-1919 22,000 tons of pig iron were produced.

Look closely and you’ll find traces of the mills on your visit today.



Some Facts About the Irondale Steel Plant

Construction begun April 15, 1909.
Plant to be completed on or about May 1, 1910.
Initial capacity—125 tons of high-grade steel per day.
Capacity two years hence—700 tons of steel per day.
Holding company—Western Steel Corporation, of Seattle.
Directors—James A. Moore, Herbert E. Law, Jacob Furth, Robert Dollar, J. E. Chilberg, Hon. Alex Henderson, S. A. Perkins, G. Henry Whitcomb, J. C. Eden, E. P. Jamison, N. W. Jordan, W. H. Armstrong, S. G. Faulkner, Robert Kelly, R. P. McLennan, E. H. Heaps.
Capitalization—\$20,000,000.
Assets—\$43,000,000, including plants, realty, coal mines, timber holdings, magnesite and lime deposits and ore beds.
Realty holdings—One mile of tide lands and 1,500 acres of upland at Irondale, on Port Townsend bay.
Company's plans for immediate future—Construction of new plants at a cost of \$10,000,000, filling in of 100 acres of tide lands as sites for additional plants.
City of Irondale, surrounding the steel plant, total area, one square mile; platted May 7, 1909; present population, 1,500; estimated population three years hence, 20,000; at present has graded streets, water and sewer systems, electric lights and telephones, a newspaper, a bank, two brick buildings, three good hotels, thirty business houses and scores of residences.

An excerpt from The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Sunday, April 17, 1910, about the third attempt at making Irondale a prosperous steel city.

1881-1919

Photos courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society and Ole Kilmer

MODERN DAY:

Irondale Beach County Park



Jefferson County purchased Irondale Beach in 2001 with local and WA State Recreation and Conservation Office funding. After finding contamination in the soil from early years of industrial use, the county partnered with Washington Department of Ecology to restore the property and turn it into a county park.

Clean up and restoration included:

- removing contaminated sediment and soils
- removing slag, a byproduct of metal smelting
- capping remaining contaminated soil to prevent further release of the contaminants
- restoring the shoreline habitat
- developing a plan to protect historical features of the site

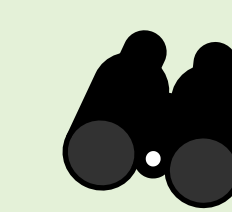


Did you know?

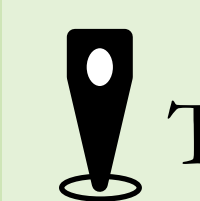
Irondale Beach is two parks in one! The Chimacum Creek tidelands to the north are owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Irondale Beach Park to the south is owned by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation.



How can you enjoy Irondale Beach?



How many types of mammals or birds can you spot?



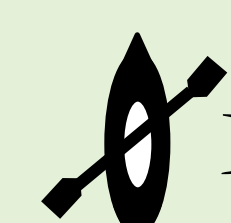
Tour the Irondale Mill.



Take a walk on the sandy beach.



Great spot for clamming or fishing!



Launch a kayak.



Want to learn more? Scan the QR code for our Irondale Beach Park History webpage!

Present Day

Photo courtesy of Washington Department of Ecology

Designed by Chelsea Kilmer