

June 2025

This paper is intended to clarify the recommendations of the Center for the Sawtooths (CeSaw) Operations Committee to the SIHA Board of Directors regarding the long term development of the Center for the Sawtooths on the site donated to SIHA in 2024.

SIHA may evolve in the next 5-15 years, thus this vision is intended to remain flexible and responsive. Financing will, of course, drive the project, but laying out a long-term possibility for what the site could look like is the goal here so that we can move forward with requests for proposals to draft a master plan.

The recommendations below are aligned with SIHA's mission to *protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of Idaho's Sawtooth country through preservation and education* and the donors' intention that the property be employed by SIHA towards the preservation and protection of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). The proposed future uses of the property are intended to fit within the donation agreement (2023) and the land's Scenic Easement (2002).

See *Design Narrative (Feb 2025)* for parameters constraining SIHA use of the property. Additionally, it is advised that a new septic system be designed and installed as that will dictate site development.

Vision

SIHA's vision is to create a public education center in the Sawtooth Valley that supports the preservation and protection of the SNRA. The Center for the Sawtooths (CeSaw) will:

- Promote **preservation, education, and responsible recreation** in the SNRA.
- Serve as a **visitor resource** for environmental education, communication of Leave-No-Trace practices, area information, resources (e.g., maps, books), assistance in trip planning, and EV charging.
- Provide a **home for nonprofits**, including offices, housing, storage, and collaboration.
- Act as a **community asset** with space for meetings, events, and qualified housing.

Future development design elements

The project will proceed in phased development, as funding becomes available. The long-term plan includes reducing the number of structures and staying within the 13,000 square foot total building footprint permitted by the scenic easement. We propose to develop the site using sustainable materials, native landscaping, and green building principles.

New housing unit (to replace the old motel (35-37*)): The old motel includes three separate buildings connected to each other by an outside deck and a single roof structure. It includes a two-bedroom apartment on the south end, a former gift shop on the north end with six motel rooms, and a common kitchen area in between. The current footprint of the building is 2,568 feet. Extensive work would be needed to use this old Motel Complex for accommodation. According to rough estimates by a local builder, to do cosmetic repairs and make these spaces habitable would cost over \$400,000. To potentially rebuild a larger and more-purpose-suited structure, would be over a million dollars, but would be much more functional and better meet our vision. **Given the state of the structure and our potential needs, the Operations Committee recommends this building be removed and not used for housing.** It can be used as storage until it is dismantled.

Replace the existing motel units with a new housing structure that will occupy a 3,500 square foot footprint (max allowable), and a second story of 1,000 additional square feet (per

easement, new builds are not to exceed 3,500 square feet of building footprint, nor exceed 4,500 square feet of total internal floor space). This structure will be in approximately the same location as the old motel building.

The new building for staff and seasonal housing will include:

- One two-bedroom apartment unit with a separate living area with kitchen, bath, and laundry. Approximately 600 to 700 square feet. (Partially furnished)
- Two Studio apartments with bath and kitchen. Approximately 350 to 400 square feet each. (Furnished)
- Ten 100 square foot single rooms and two 400 square foot multi-occupancy rooms with communal kitchen, laundry, and bath. (Furnished)
- Communal kitchen, laundry and bath and storage areas will total 700 square feet.
- A communal room with couches, TV, tables, and chairs with a designated dining area and storage. Approximately 500 square feet.
- Total square footage of this building will be 4,300 to 4,500.

Additional new housing unit: A new housing unit will be added to the western portion of the property, near the location of the old motel unit. It will be similar to the new employee housing structure described above: 3,500 square feet of building footprint with a second story of 1,000 square feet. It may be identical to the first housing structure: one two-bedroom apartment, two studio apartments, and eight single rooms with communal spaces as described above, but size and number of units may change based on need. For planning purposes we expect this structure to mirror the first.

Center for the Sawtooth Education and Visitor Center (previously the Café (41*)): The old café building was retrofitted to provide employee housing prior to donation. It has been further adapted to separate the upstairs and downstairs living areas. Downstairs has 5 rooms, 4 of which are bedrooms (two shared, two single) and one common room. It also has a kitchen, 2 toilets, 2 showers, laundry area, and outside picnic space. Upstairs has a separate entrance leading to a kitchenette, bathroom, and 3 bedrooms. SIHA will continue to utilize this building for employee housing until alternative accommodation is established. The building currently occupies 1,650 square feet of footprint and has a second story that is also approximately 1,650 square feet for a total of 3,300 square feet.

Ultimately, this building will be converted to *the Center for the Sawtooth Visitor and Education Center*. The center will offer a variety of services, including information on trails, campgrounds and other amenities, area history, geology and ecology, wildlife, and fish. Trained Naturalists will staff it to help visitors understand the SNRA. Naturalists will help visitors plan their visit, and how to best appreciate, enjoy, and protect the SNRA. The center will be open seven days a week during the summer season and may eventually be open year-round. It will be a center for learning about all things SNRA, including the natural history and the human history of the area.

The Center will include:

- Public restrooms, either within the footprint or attached to it. Two-to-three unisex, ADA restrooms. Approximately 70 square feet each. Potentially including a public shower/laundry facility if it can be worked into design.
- Office and exhibit preparation space on the upper floor. There should be six workspaces in three separate offices and an open space office design for exhibit preparation in the central portion of the building. Electrical outlets, computer hook-ups, and office furniture will be provided.
- On the lower floor, exhibit space, a bookstore, information and trip planning services and desk space, classroom space, local business brochure distribution, a 3-D area map, and a small non-public work space will be provided.
- The public portion (lower floor) of this building will maximize the use of natural materials and natural lighting and will feature an open floor plan.

Classroom and meeting building (previously the Convenience Store (30*)): This building was recently remodeled and will not require much alteration other than the development of a restroom area. Initially it will serve as SIHA office space, and as a place for small (up to thirty people) meetings or events. The building footprint is 912 square feet.

Ultimately, this building will serve as a meeting, classroom, and event space for SIHA, its partners, and the community.

Covered Outdoor Classroom: Near the culvert crossing the irrigation ditch, a pole barn style structure with an enclosed storage shed will provide space for larger classes and events. It will be approximately 20'x30' or 600 square feet.

Two garages (32, 42*): The two garages will be kept in place and used for storage of vehicles, supplies, and tools for SIHA and its partners. No alteration of these buildings is planned currently, other than cosmetic treatments and minor repairs. The garages are 465 and 375 square feet of building footprint each.

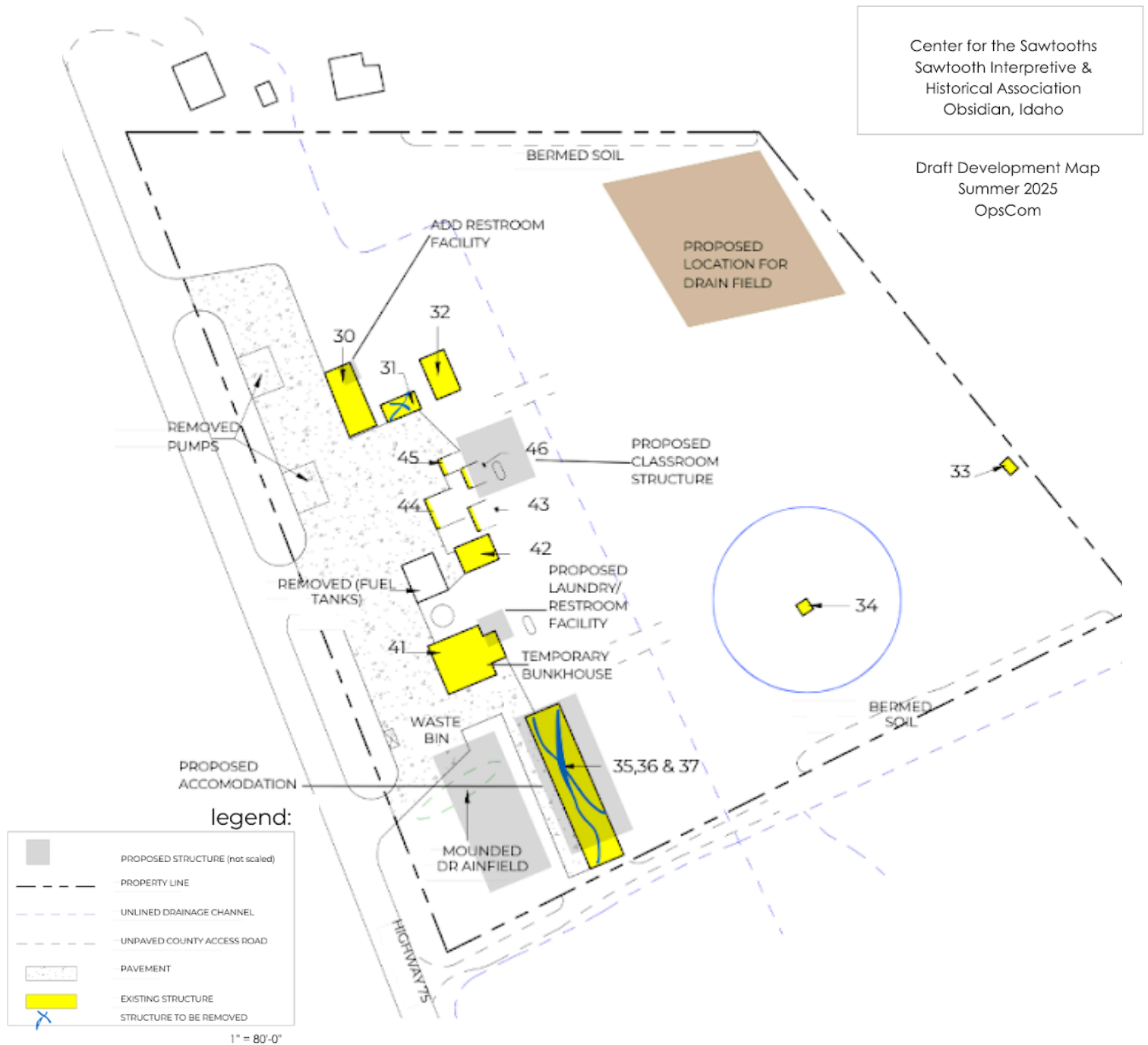
Undeveloped parcel: The 3.46 acres of the property that lies east of the canal will not have any new structures built on it per the scenic easement. It is being investigated as a potential drain field site for an improved septic system. This area may also provide space for moveable picnic tables around the property, tented venues, and an ADA interpretive nature trail. Landscaping will utilize native plants..The area will function as a component of the outdoor classroom and space for community events.

General Improvements:

- In the course of development, all overhead **power lines** will have been buried.
- The **septic system and drain field** must be expanded prior to extensive development.
- **Water lines** (old galvanized piping) from the pumphouse will likely need to be replaced.
- Any development should use sustainable products and green building principles whenever possible.
- Development will be in concert with SNRA Private Land Regulations and standards to promote protection of SNRA values.

At build-out the building footprint on the property described in this narrative will be 10,402 sq ft. The additional 2,598 sq ft that the easement allows will be held in reserve for future development needs.

***Numbers refer to the building numbers on the Scenic Easement maps.**



Costs

Preliminary cost estimates are presented below. These are very rough estimates based largely on square footage and not on actual building features. We would like to take these recommendations to potential design and development consultants to receive proposals better depicting the potential of the site and the costs of getting there. It is a potentially big project with huge funding needs, but starting with this vision, we can phase development and progress towards the future.

Building	Easement Map Label	Existing Footprint	Allowable SF per Easement	"Open the Doors" as is	Repair Cosmetic	Repair To Keep	Replace
		SF		1% (4\$/sf)	10% (\$40/sf)	40% (\$160/sf)	100% (400/sf)
Conv. Store	30	912	1400	\$3,648	\$36,480	\$145,920	\$364,800
N storage	31	240	1400	\$960	\$9,600	\$38,400	\$96,000
N garage	32	465		\$1,860	\$18,600	\$74,400	\$186,000
SE storage (historic)	33	100		\$400	\$4,000	\$16,000	\$40,000
Well house	34	100	100	\$400	\$4,000	\$16,000	\$40,000
Motel Apartment	35	400		\$1,600	\$16,000	\$64,000	\$160,000
Motel Rooms	36	1628	2600	\$6,512	\$65,120	\$260,480	\$651,200
Motel 'Gift Shop'	37	540		\$2,160	\$21,600	\$86,400	\$216,000
Cafe	41	1650	2300	\$6,600	\$66,000	\$264,000	\$660,000
S garage	42	375	1400	\$1,500	\$15,000	\$60,000	\$150,000
S pole barn storage	43	198		\$792	\$7,920	\$31,680	\$79,200
Shower house	44	396	400	\$1,584	\$15,840	\$63,360	\$158,400
Restroom M/W	45	96	300	\$384	\$3,840	\$15,360	\$38,400
Aux pump house	46	165	200	\$600	\$6,000	\$24,000	\$60,000
Building Footprint		7265	8700	\$29,000	\$290,000	\$1,160,000	\$2,900,000
Expanded SF allowed per easement			1435				\$574,000
porches allowable per easement		1332	?				
decks allowable per easement		728	?				
Additional allowed			3600			new	\$1,440,000
Expansion potential:					<i>tbd - septic placeholder</i>		\$86,000
additional aggregate building footprint if expanded			5035				
Total SF allowed			13000		Fundraising goal		\$5,000,000
Assumes one story expansion: easement only limits footprints and total building SF					no building larger than 3500 SF ground footprint		

Potential Phased Development

While development would be dictated by present needs and funding, phasing could follow the following:

1. **Site cleanup** and removal of unneeded structures and associated features. This has been initiated and will continue throughout the development process.
2. **Septic system** analysis, approval, and construction for a public water system large enough to support the vision above.

3. Upgrade the **water system piping** as needed; this is done along with any future development, along with **burying power cables**.
4. **Built toilet and Convenience Store upgrades** to provide year-round office, visitor information, classroom and meeting space, adding a toilet facility. when the Cafe-cum bunkhouse is converted to a visitor center with upstairs offices, this building would easily be adapted for improved classroom and meeting space.
5. Build one **new housing structure**, maximizing allowable footprint and establishing a living place for SIHA seasonal employees and other workforce of nonprofits and/or government service workers.
6. This would make way for the old Cafe-Bunkhouse to be converted into the **Center for the Sawtooth Education and Visitor Center** described above.
7. Build **covered outdoor classroom** to facilitate paid programming and interpretive/ outreach events.
8. Maintenance/improvements on **storage structures** as needed.
9. Second **housing structure**.
10. Additional site improvements such as **interpretive trail**.

6.10..2025 CeSaw Ops Committee