
Orcas Landing Interpretive Plan

Good interpretation is showing viewers what they can't see for themselves.

Good interpretive art is replacing 1000 words with a few brush strokes. Larry Eifert

This plan was developed to show several possible themes on at least four wayside panels at Orcas Landing, including some sculptural elements.

Option 1: One large vertical wayside panel, sculptural elements around it and salmon cut-outs on the front wall.

Seen from the ferry, a series of hand-painted metal cutouts of salmon would line the front wall, moving the eye along the landing. These would be realistically painted and sealed.

Captions reference individual concept sketches or photos in the portfolio.

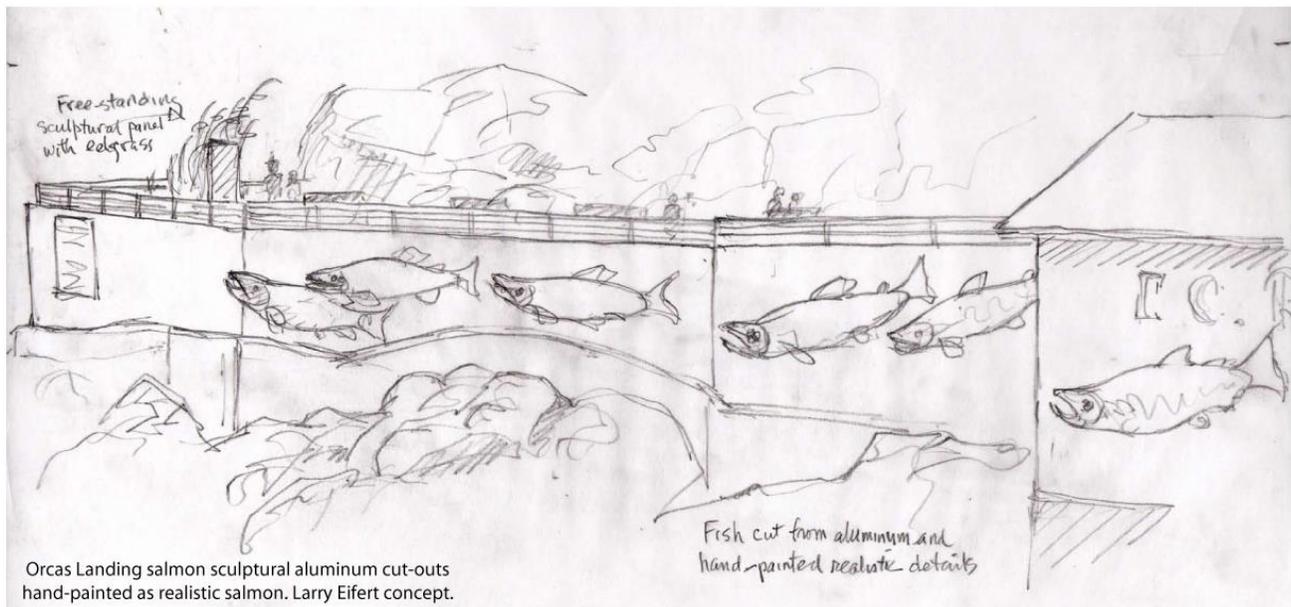


Figure 1 salmon sculptural elements



Figure 2 from the ferry

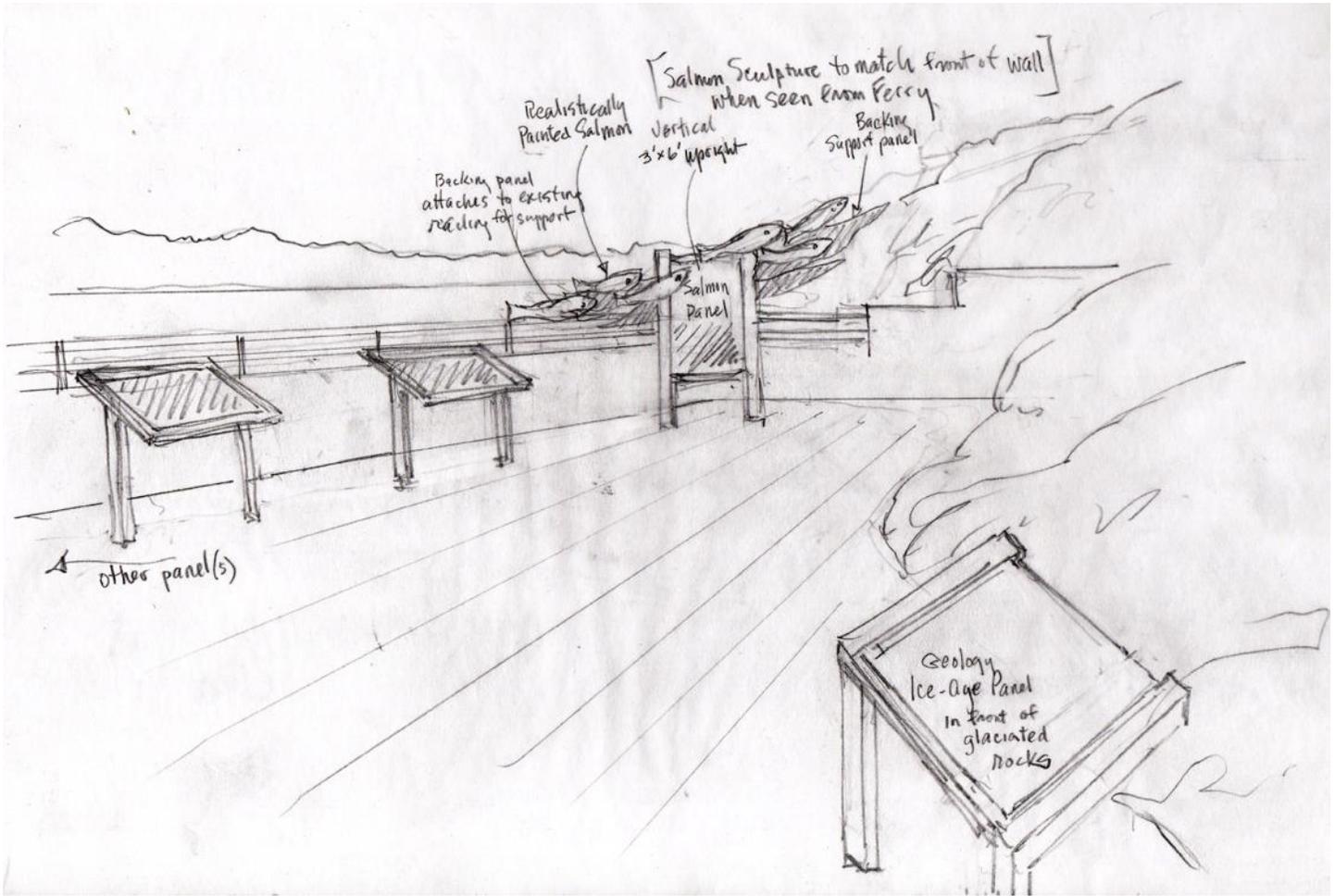


Figure 3 Concept of salmon corner

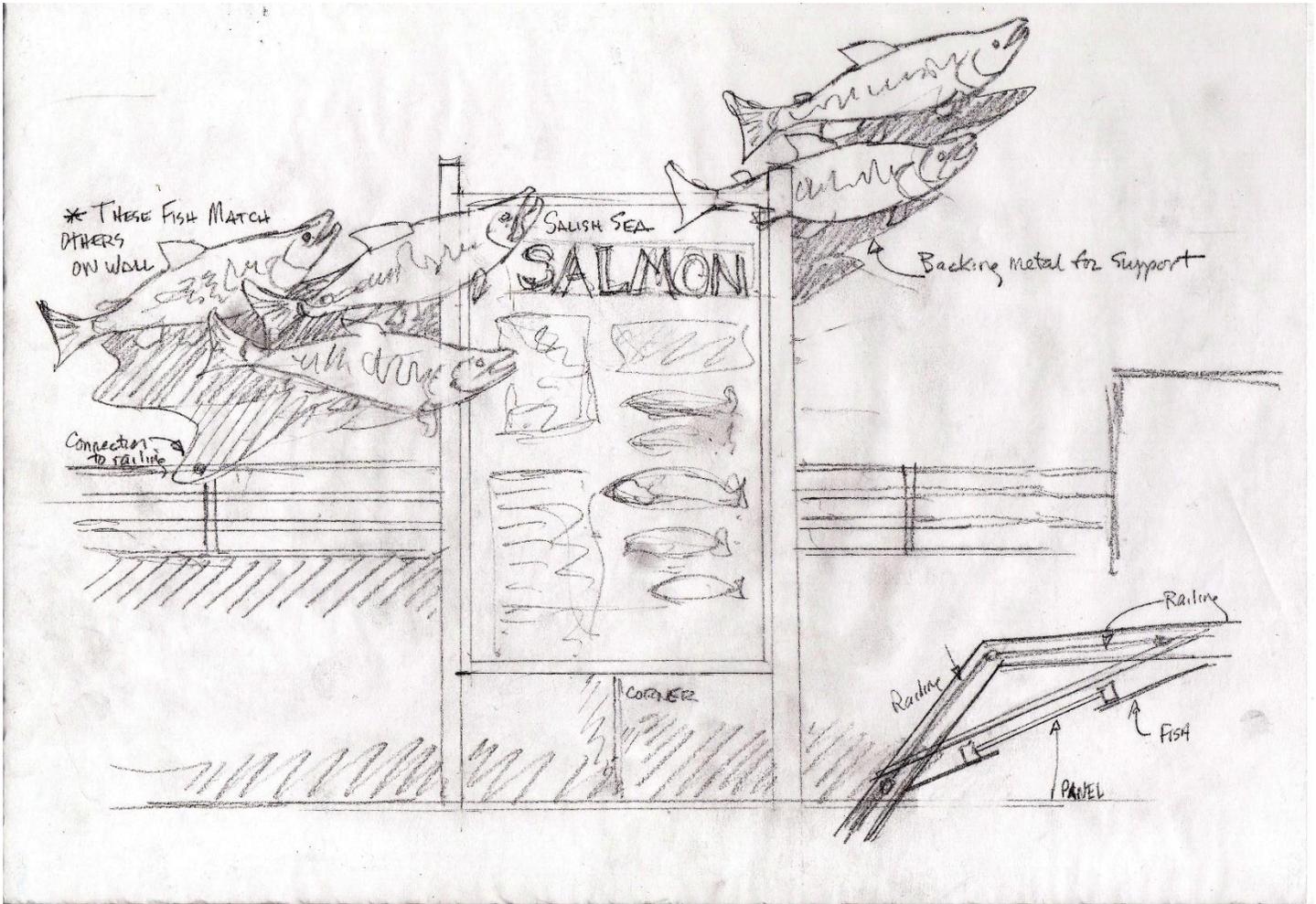


Figure 4 concept of corner vertical

1. **The focus feature might be a large vertical salmon panel in the corner – thus drawing viewers to walk the entire deck.** A backing plate would stabilize this structure and provide a surface to mount a series of sculptural salmon that are accurately painted to match the salmon paintings on the front wall. All five salmon species reportedly use this channel, hunting forage fish and using back bay areas for resting areas. The entire Landing could focus on the salmon story – because no other local species is more important and needs help more.

Salmon paintings could be on powder coated steel, aluminum, high-pressure laminate (like the panels) or stainless steel - depending on budget.



Figure 5 Example of cutout salmon paintings

2. **The underwater rocky ecosystem** in Harney Channel. This panel shows at low tide, and viewers can get a glimpse of the complex, colorful and complicated ecosystem right below the viewing platform. It also provides a 'field guide' of what is there, just a few feet away. This panel might be 48" x 24" to accommodate a larger and more complex painting.

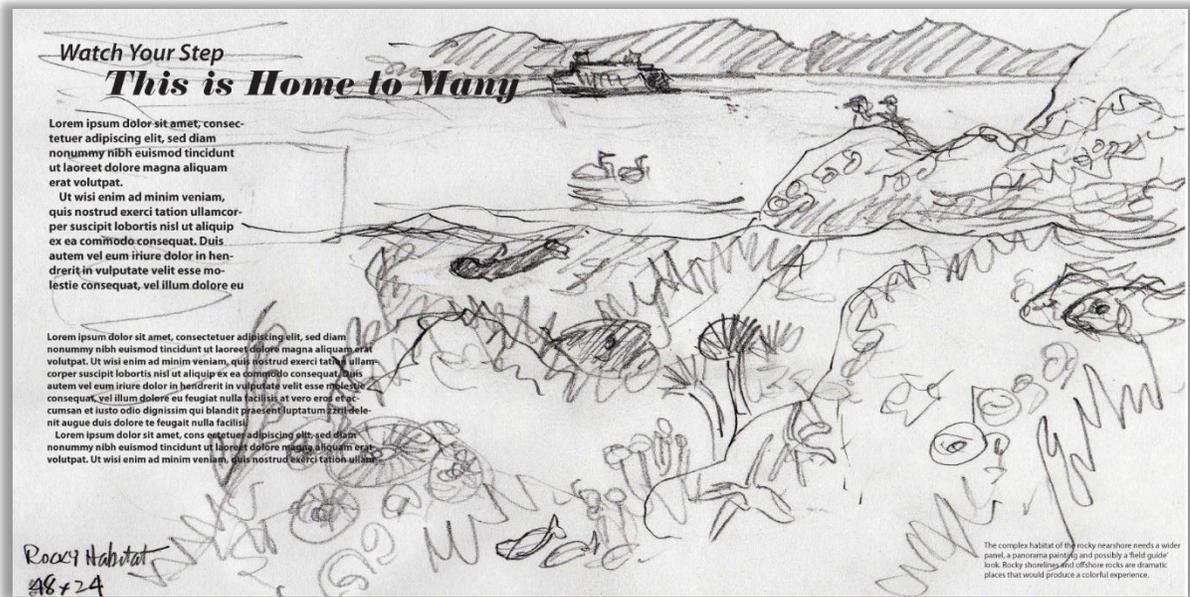


Figure 6 Rocky shorelines



Figure 7 Rocky tidepool example

3. **Isn't the Ocean Salty?** Fresh water from three large and local rivers mean the San Juan Islands are different in salt water content compared with the open ocean. Fresh water from the Fraser, Hooksack and Skagit Rivers all flow into and around the islands as they partially block out-going water flow like a sieve. This panel might be 36" x 24" and show a watershed map and how this effects marine life here.

Isn't the Ocean Salty?

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Three major rivers flow into the Salish Sea - and the San Juan Islands are downstream from all of them. How this effects the salinity of the ocean and the creatures living here would be a fascinating story.

Figure 8 Salty Ocean graphic

4. **The Ice Age Story:** We are in a 'brief' pause between Ice Age advances. The last one put a mile of ice over our heads - right here, and the moving ice ground down these rocky islands to what they are today. Look around you and find the rocks as they might have looked right after the ice melted just 10,000 years ago. A painting showing the Cordilleran ice sheet to scale over the San Juans might be a dramatic graphic.

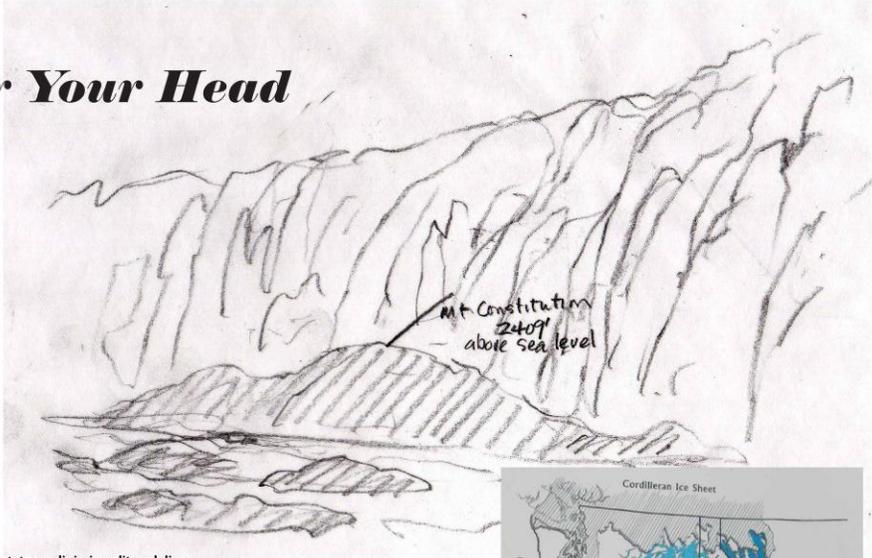
**A Mile of Ice
Over Your Head**

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Show a mile of the Cordilleran ice sheet over the San Juans as it approaches one of the MANY times in the past several million years. This could show the scene as the ice is melting. A you are here' map might aid with the story.

Figure 9 Over your head

- Eel Grass Fringe Meadows:** Two important marine ecosystems dominate this area. Eel grass beds line the shallow shoreline where there is sand, mud and silt. According to the WA Marine Atlas, eel grass is grows right here below the ferry dock. This habitat is a critical source food and shelter for young salmon and adult salmon preying on forage fish. A panel should tell this story.

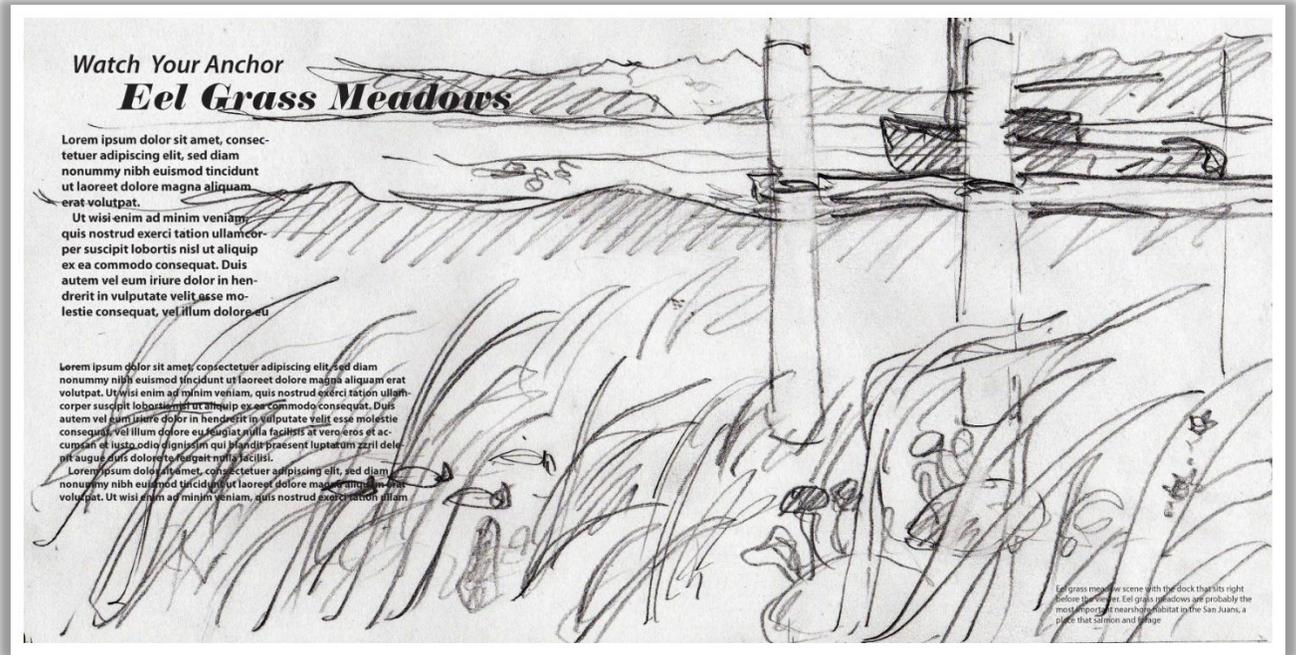


Figure 10 Eel Grass Meadows



Figure 11 Eel grass example Elwha River mural

6. **The early days: Life on a Rock.** Using a historic photo as reference, show how the Mosquito Fleet provided the main access to Orcas Island and the difficulties of living here. This is also the wayside for the human story. This is the Islander in 1902. Orcas Island in the background.

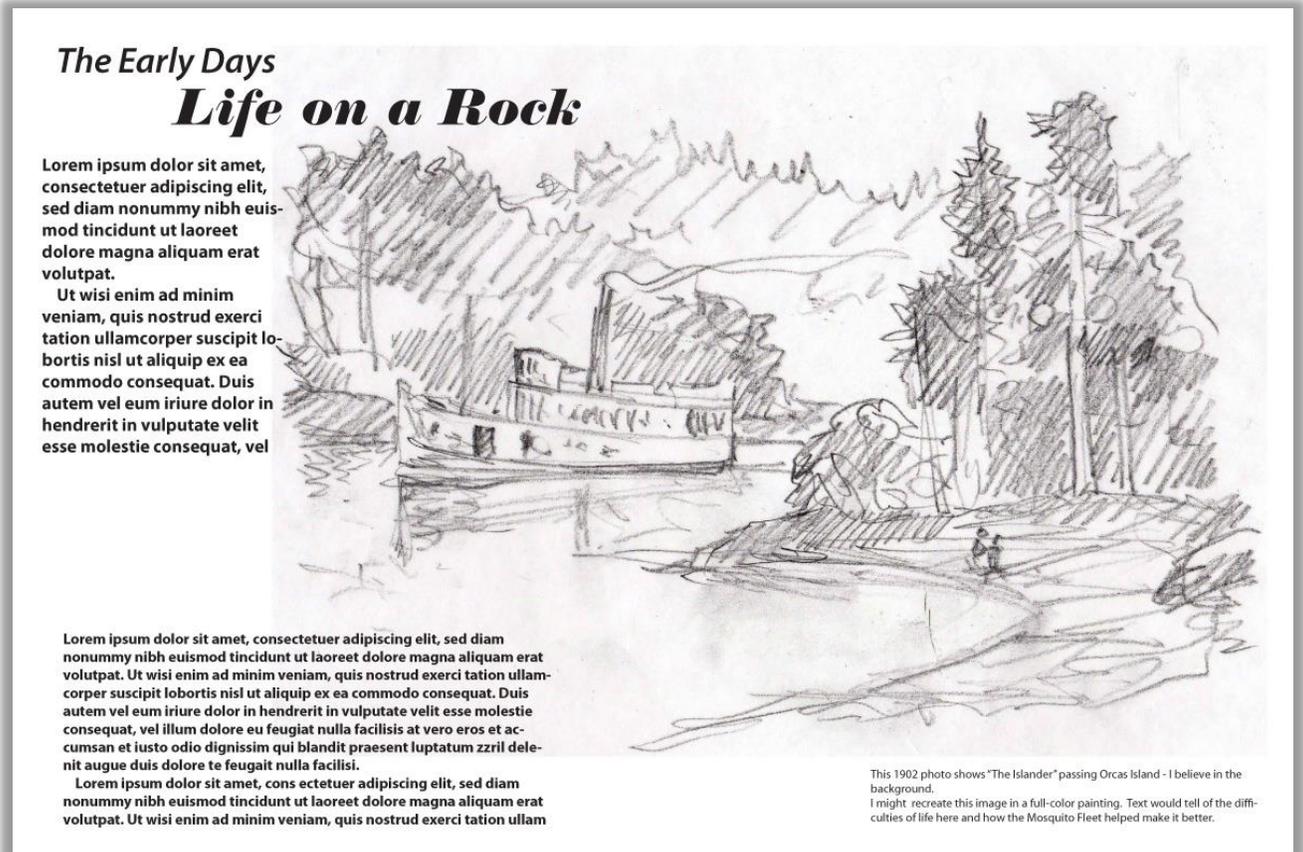


Figure 12 Life on a Rock

Other Options and Ideas:

1. The underwater panels could be combined into one.
2. Less fish, more fish, or a real mural painted on the concrete wall.
3. **Installation:**
While all wayside panels should probably be low-profile cantilevered pedestal mounted bases for ADA compliance, they could also be mounted on the existing railing. Normal cantilevered bases allow for people with wheelchairs and canes to avoid hitting the sharp front corners of the panels.
4. **Make the vertical panel area the focal point:**
One panel might be larger and vertical, possibly the farthest from the ramp to entice viewers to travel the entire expanse of the deck. This could be the salmon story with enough room to show all five species in large and impactful paintings.

5. **Placing art on the front wall below the deck.** It's envisioned that the cutouts and painted salmon could be painted with less detail than the fish on the deck. They would still be vibrant and tantalizing images for ferry travelers to be drawn to, but not to the level of detail as the others. Another element of this idea is to get the fish gathered around the largest vertical panel and should be tall enough to be seen from the ferry. Tying the two sets of fish together is an important part of this design.

Thanks for allowing me to advance these ideas. I think the Orcas Landing area could become a real gathering place for visitors and locals alike.

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