

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Where the foothills of the Cascade Mountains begin to rise from the Puget Lowlands, King County's Grand Ridge Park offers unusual opportunities for habitat and water resources conservation while also continuing the tradition of trail use in this richly textured forest landscape. The site is in a transition zone between urban and rural land uses and will soon have several thousand new residents living along its western border. As open space the Park will be managed to protect natural systems, to maintain and enhance wildlife habitats and corridors, and to preserve an integral piece of greenway along the rapidly developing I-90 corridor. Where public use does not compromise these resources, a low-impact trail system will be created for recreational use. Improvements will be made to the site's existing trails where necessary and connections will be made to regional trails in the vicinity where conditions permit. The following objectives reflect program goals and will be used to establish effective management of the natural area:

- Preserve, protect, and restore natural systems for fish and wildlife habitat
- Preserve the rural nature of the site as part of the existing network of open space in rural King County
- Provide trail access that protects sensitive features and directs public use in appropriate areas
- Provide interpretive experiences for the community and foster public involvement in site stewardship
- Comply with permitting requirements under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Implement recommendations in phases according to priority order and available funding
- Cooperate with King County Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in forest and watershed management

Significant resources and public access opportunities include:

- 1200 acres of second-growth forest
- Forested wetlands
- North and East Forks of Issaquah Creek
- Headwaters for Canyon Creek
- Numerous unnamed, unnumbered creeks
- Habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife
- Diverse habitat for a variety of resident and migratory bird species
- Existing volunteer-made trails under a wooded canopy
- Potential connections to a wider King County trail system
- Community stakeholders currently invested in the site

The following general planning and design elements are recommended for the Grand Ridge site:

- Maintain and enhance vegetation communities, especially along stream corridors, in wetland areas, and at edges exposed to urban development
- Cooperate with appropriate agencies and stakeholders in planning overall management of the forest, wildlife, fisheries, and water resources
- Improve as necessary and extend where possible the site's trails
- Increase enforcement component to control illegal encroachments from adjacent development
- Regularly monitor general site conditions for dumping, illegal access, and resource degradation
- Use existing County programs (as funding allows) to periodically monitor for water quality, habitat values, and restoration efforts to gauge the success of protection and enhancement activities
- Pursue grant-funding opportunities with appropriate agencies such as IAC (Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation) to enhance revenues for site improvements
- Coordinate with existing volunteer organizations involved with environmental stewardship to maintain the site in conjunction with KC Parks

- Coordinate with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide additional access to trails along southern edge
- Coordinate with City of Issaquah Parks Department in creating parking for trail users at the City's Central Park.
- Explore potential for expanded trail opportunities onto neighboring sites to the east