

Part V - SITE-WIDE ISSUES

Trail Design and Building

A four-foot wide low-impact trail should be planned and built in the south-to-central portion of the Park to connect with and augment existing trail segments. When parking can be made available in the area of Duthie Hill Park and when any permits (if required) are secured to cross wetland areas, the Grand Ridge trail should be continued the full north-south length of the site.

Revegetation/Habitat Restoration

Old trail segments no longer usable should be decommissioned and replanted with native conifers, with erosion-control structures installed as necessary. Survival of restoration plantings should be monitored and provided necessary maintenance, watering, and/or replacement.

Boundary Delineation – Survey/Signage/Fencing

Boundary delineation surveying should be performed where needed. Signage throughout the site will be to King County standards. Signs should include interpretive material highlighting special site features.

Access

Access to approved trails should be provided only for non-motorized bicycles, hikers, and horses. The WSDOT parking lot at High Point will provide limited parking and an entry for users at the southern portion of the park. KC Parks will coordinate further parking studies in this area with WSDOT. Access will also be provided at the City of Issaquah's Central Park. From three points in the Issaquah Highlands development, pedestrian and bicycle access will be available. No provision for parking horse trailers is being made at this time. When the trail is extended to the Issaquah-Fall City Road and when facilities are planned for Duthie Hill Park, space for parking horse trailers should be included because it is the only area where this need can be met. At some point in the future, non-motorized access may be possible from the different points in the publicly owned lands to the east.

Park Resource and Maintenance/Staff

King County Parks Resource and Maintenance staff will work with stakeholders and groups of volunteers to support monitoring and site clean up. The number of Park Ambassadors should be increased and encouraged to participate in the care of the park. The land management, maintenance, security, and coordination of the care of this park is under the jurisdiction of Local 6 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), to which Park System staff belong.

Site Safety

Site safety will be monitored by King County Parks staff with the support from volunteers and stakeholders. The objective will be to notify the County of any misuse of the trails, use of fire arms, hunting, illegal dumping, or other actions not appropriate to recreational use of the site. Corrective actions will be taken with an emphasis on voluntary compliance. Trail etiquette signs will be posted.

Special Management Areas:

Highly erodable slopes, wetlands, and small streams crossed by the proposed low-impact trail should be further assessed during the design of the trail's route to determine best management practices to protect them. Trees along the western edge of the property, where clearing for development has altered growing conditions, should

be monitored for any changes that would reduce their viability. Segments of former trails where erosion has occurred should be monitored after replanting to assure that healthy seedlings repair those sites.

Recommended Monitoring

To assess the long-term health of Grand Ridge Park over time, the following activities are recommended:

- Monitor for establishment and spread of non-native and invasive plant species, using existing KC Parks and KCDNR monitoring and removal programs. Monitor disturbed areas for weed establishment and remove as feasible. Monitor the condition of trees adjacent to developed areas.
- Monitor for any length of trail showing signs of erosion, including discontinued/replanted areas.
- Use KC Parks/DNR monitoring projects for long-term collection of resource data on fish, amphibians, native plants, and other wildlife species on site. Special attention to wetlands and streams may provide better information on the distribution and abundance of amphibian species and the sensitivities of their habitat.
- Monitor human use of the site, using King County Park staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders to assure that adaptive management techniques result in effective outcomes.

Community Development

- Establish partnerships with neighbors, local landowners, civic and environmental organizations, and local schools to promote the educational value of the Park.
- Create a forum where volunteers and stakeholders can meet regularly to address Park-related issues.
- Use existing Parks/DNR programs to formulate a consistent data collection and training program and then track and interpret results.
- Create a list and description of volunteer projects that could supplement existing site information. This list will be added to the work plan of the site managers that is published in the Maintenance and Facilities division. Potential volunteer projects could include monitoring for amphibian species; inventory of wildlife species, including birds; invasive plant removal; and litter/dumping clean up; and maintaining the Park ambassador program.

Funding and Implementation

Implementation of recommendations will be funded by annual KC Parks Capital Improvement (CIP) funds, DNR, and other applicable funding resources. Additional funding could be sought from grant-giving agencies. Implementation of work will be managed by King County Department of Construction and Facilities Management (DCFM) for KC Parks. KC Parks will oversee volunteer activities and site management.

Highest Priority

- Create alignment for low-impact four-foot wide trail beginning from the southwestern edge of the site, using a trail head at Central Park, and following the upper contours to connect with existing trail segments where possible. Create loop around the Park's central ridge to allow visitors to return to their starting point.
- Use existing onsite trail segments where possible and groom them to USFS standards using volunteer labor guided by King County staff.
- Enhance entry points from Issaquah Highlands with trail connections and signage.
- Close off unapproved sections of trail that pass onto private property as well as those portions where erosion is occurring, replanting or creating barriers as necessary.
- Provide staff for resource protection and monitoring during the construction of Issaquah Highlands Property development and construction of trails.

- Create signage designating the new park and listing rules related to pets and appropriate trail etiquette. Include interpretive signs where appropriate.
- Coordinate volunteer user groups in site improvement and monitoring activities.

Secondary Priorities

- Explore potential for continuation of trail route north from the ridge to the Issaquah-Fall City Road as well as potential for parking (including horse trailers) in Duthie Hill Park
- Design new trail route to descend from the upper ridge to the southeast, with a connection to the High Point parking lot.
- Explore potential to create more parking in the High Point area with WSDOT.
- Work with KCDNR to create connections to trails on Mitchell Hill/McCormick properties.
- Work with appropriate agencies and stakeholders in creation of a forest management plan for Grand Ridge.

Resources

Background information in this plan was collected during a field assessment that included flagging a potential north/south trail corridor. A second source of information was the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the original Grand Ridge development, completed in 1995 when “Grand Ridge” referred to the entire site, including the developed section now called Issaquah Highlands. The *McCormick/Hooker Forest Plan*, prepared in August of 1999 by King County resource professionals, also provided background data, as did the King County *Sensitive Areas Map Folio*. Three volunteer trail interest groups contributed to the inventory of existing trails. All other information was gathered through interagency cooperation, research, and field visits. Collectively this data forms the basis for resource management and public use information.