

Updated June 21, 2016



King County  
Open Space Plan:  
Parks, Trails, and  
Natural Areas  
2016 Update

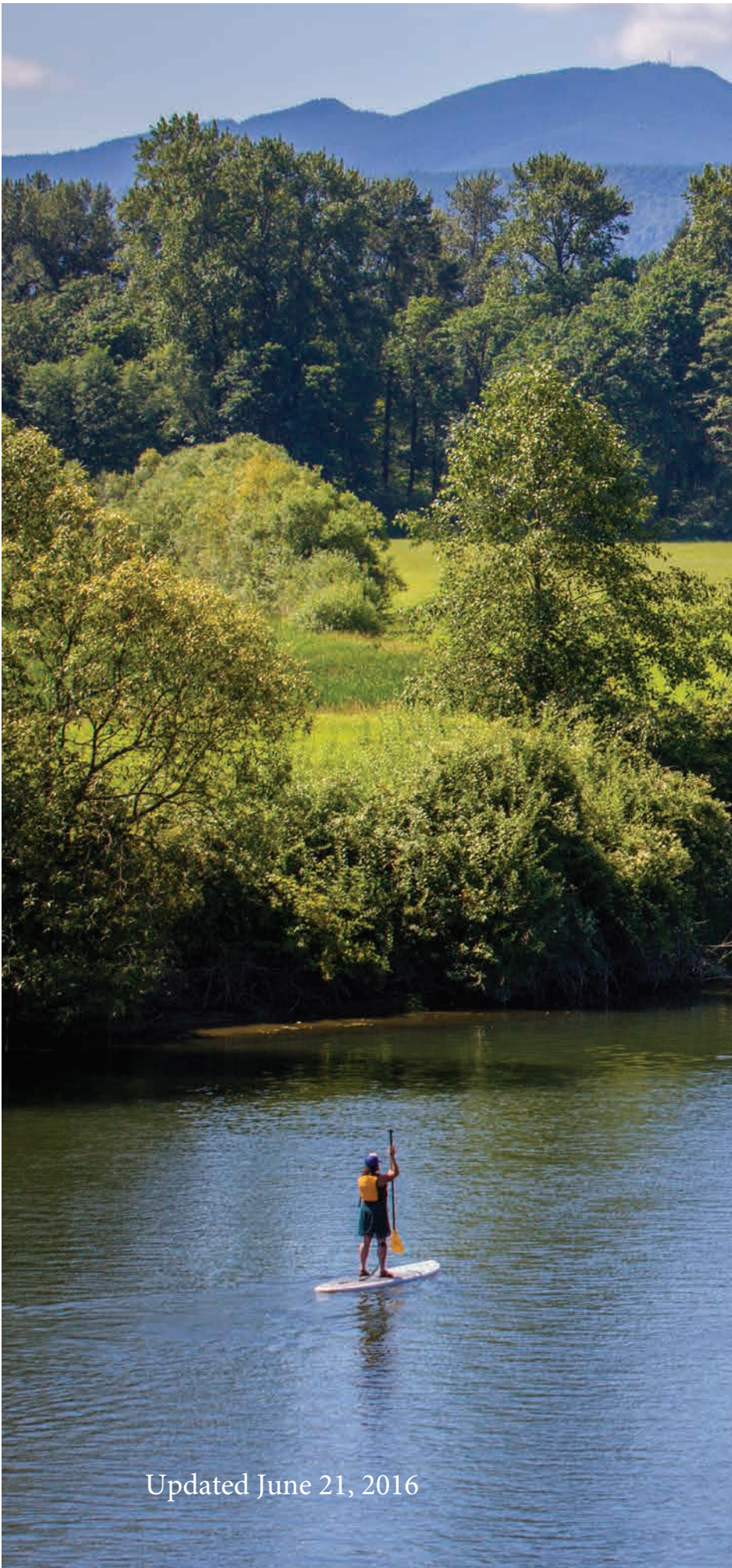


 King County

**PARKS**

**Your Big Backyard**

Updated June 21, 2016



# King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2016 Update

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1. Overview</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1.1. Purpose of this document .....	3
1.1.2. How to read this document .....	5
<b>1.2. About the King County Parks and Recreation Division</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.2.1. Mission/Vision/Values .....	6
1.2.2. Goals and objectives .....	7
1.2.3. Organizational structure and funding .....	8
1.2.4. Public engagement .....	8
<b>Chapter Two: King County’s Open Space System</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1. Service Area: A Profile of King County</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1.1. Population and demographics of King County .....	11
2.1.2. Community setting: Natural landscape of King County .....	12
<b>2.2. Open Space System Guiding Principles</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.2.1. Snoqualmie/Skykomish watershed .....	13
2.2.2. Lake Washington/ Cedar/Sammamish watershed .....	15
2.2.3. Green/Duwamish watershed .....	19
2.2.4. White River watershed .....	19
2.2.5. Vashon-Maury Island .....	20
<b>2.3. Classification of King County’s Open Space System</b> .....	<b>23</b>
2.3.1. Level one classification: Regional/local open space .....	23
2.3.2. Level two classification: Role in the system .....	24
<b>2.4. Regional Facilities</b> .....	<b>30</b>
2.4.1. Backcountry trails .....	30
2.4.2. King County Parks local historical landmarks .....	31
2.4.3. Other facilities .....	31
<b>2.5. Open Space Inventory</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Partnerships and Public Engagement</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>3.1. Partnerships</b> .....	<b>39</b>
3.1.1. Values and benefits of partnerships .....	39
3.1.2. Types of partnerships .....	40
3.1.3. Future partnerships .....	45
<b>3.2. Public Engagement</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Capital Improvement Program</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>4.1. Funding</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>4.2. Planning, Acquisition and Development</b> .....	<b>51</b>
4.2.1. Planning .....	51
4.2.2. Acquisition .....	55
4.2.3. Design and development .....	57
<b>4.3. Asset Management</b> .....	<b>60</b>

- Chapter Five: Operations and Stewardship . . . . . 61**
- 5.1. Operations . . . . . 61**
- 5.1.1. Funding . . . . . 61
- 5.1.2. Maintenance. . . . . 62
- 5.1.3. Property management. . . . . 64
- 5.2. Stewardship . . . . . 65**
- 5.2.1. Stewardship and the public . . . . . 66
- 5.2.2. Preservation and conservation. . . . . 67
- 5.2.3. Regional trails. . . . . 68
  
- Appendices . . . . . 69**
- Appendix I Maps
- Appendix II King County Parks History
- Appendix III Source Documents
- Appendix IV Six-Year CIP
- Appendix V Acquisition Guidance

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

King County, with its 1.9 million inhabitants, is the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the country. With nearly one-third of Washington State's population, King County is also the state's urban center and economic engine. Both urban and rural, King County is known for its majestic mountain ranges, forests, farmlands, waterways and shorelines that define the natural beauty and character of the region's landscape, which extends from Puget Sound on the west to 8,000-foot Mt. Daniel at the Cascade crest to the east.

These natural features contribute to an open space system that provides environmental and health benefits as well as recreational opportunities. The open space system offers places to exercise, participate in competitive sports, socialize with others, and experience the solace of the natural environment. It provides habitat for fish and wildlife, helps conserve cultural resources, maintains air and water quality, offers scenic beauty, and helps retain agriculture and forest activities in the county. Both regional and backcountry trails link the features of the county's regional open space system and serve recreation, transportation and habitat corridor functions.

The lands that make up the county's open space system contribute to residents' physical, mental and emotional health and support the high quality of life for which our area is known. The open space system also contributes to the economic strength of the County by attracting businesses, jobs and tourists. King County residents have repeatedly declared the importance of preserving open spaces and our quality of life through their continued support of funding for parks and recreation.

*The King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2016 Update (Open Space Plan)*, an update to the 2010 plan, provides a framework guiding King County in the acquisition, planning, development, stewardship, maintenance and management



*Soaring Eagle Regional Park*

of its complex system of 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 28,000 acres of open space. The Open Space Plan reflects the many changes the King County's Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) has undergone in recent years and reconfirms the agency's mission and goals of stewarding regional passive and active parks, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, local rural parks, and forest lands to provide recreation and environmental benefits to the residents of King County.

This Open Space Plan update addresses the King County Strategic Plan's goals of achieving environmental and social justice, public engagement, environmental and financial sustainability, quality local government, and regional collaboration. It also incorporates policy direction provided by the 2015 King County Strategic Climate Action Plan. Specific revisions that provide additional policy direction to implement the county's strategic vision include the following:



*Yurt at Tolt-MacDonald Park and Campground*

- King County will be developing and implementing stewardship plans for forests on all types of park lands, not just working forest lands, consistent with the Strategic Climate Action Plan, to ensure healthy and resilient forests
- Clarification that regional trail corridors provide recreational opportunities as well as nonmotorized transportation options and that future development will focus on filling gaps in the system, providing connections to regional destinations and providing equal access for all
- Acknowledgement of the importance of preserving and stewarding significant historic and archaeological resources within the open space system
- Recognition of the priority goals and objectives of the 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy

Objectives for this Open Space Plan include:

- Serving as a strategic plan guiding the work of the division
- Establishing the policy framework for operating and capital funding priorities
- Improving coordination among King County agencies involved in expanding and stewarding King County's open space system
- Defining the division's role as a leader for regional trails, parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and working forests

- Defining the division's role as a provider of local parks in the rural area of King County
- Providing clarification and guidance on maintenance and operations of Parks' open spaces and facilities
- Guiding the development of site management and master plans

Over the past decade, Parks has transitioned from a traditional general-tax funded agency to an organization that is supported significantly by a voter approved levy, and is more entrepreneurial, accountable, and performance-driven. At the same time, new challenges are on the horizon; among the most pressing is maintaining a growing system of regional trails, natural areas and forests and fulfilling the commitment to generate business revenues from this asset base. Moreover, both the division's six-year operations and capital levies expire at the end of 2019. Funding the open space system beyond 2019 will require significant effort on the part of the King County Executive, the King County Council, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks, its partners and the public. Maintaining relationships with civic, corporate, community partners and recreation users will continue as a central tenet, as the agency remains committed to stewarding and enhancing the parks and trails that make up Parks' remarkable open space system.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

### 1.1.1 Purpose of this document

King County's intention in preparing the *King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2016 Update* includes establishing both a strategic and functional plan, as well as complying with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) requirements. It is consistent with the *King County Comprehensive Plan*, the *King County Strategic Plan (as updated in 2015)*, and the *2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan*, must be adopted by the King County Council, has undergone State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review and will be updated at least every six years.

#### 1.1.1.1 Strategic Plan

The Open Space Plan is a strategic plan guiding the activities and goals of the Parks and Recreation and the Water and Land Resources Divisions of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks for the next six years.



*Chinook Bend*

The following Strategic Plan goals, objectives and implementation strategies that relate most closely with the Open Space Plan are:

#### Economic Growth and Built Environment

- Meet the growing need for transportation services and facilities
  - Enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as alternative transportation options
  - Explore innovative approaches and strategies to expand the current system
- Shape a built environment that allows communities to flourish
  - Acquire regional parks, trails, and open space
  - Maintain acquired parks, trails and open spaces

#### Environmental Sustainability

- Restore water quality, biodiversity, open space and ecosystems
- Protect natural resource areas through acquisition and maintenance

#### Public Engagement

- Expand opportunities to seek input, listen and respond to residents.
  - Ensure that communication, outreach and engagement efforts reach all residents, particularly communities that have been historically under-represented
  - Empower people to play an active role in shaping their future
  - Promote meaningful community participation in decisions that affect their community
- Improve public awareness of the King County parks system
  - Develop guidelines and standards for public engagement and education
  - Engage in the community and be available for public discussion

### 1.1.1.2 Functional Plan

The Open Space Plan is a functional plan that implements the *King County Comprehensive Plan*. The *Comprehensive Plan* is a long-range plan developed in response to the GMA that addresses urban and rural land use, transportation, housing, economic development, open space and recreation, the natural environment, facilities and services, cultural resources, resource lands, energy, and telecommunications. The policies established in the *King County Comprehensive Plan* serve as a blueprint for growth through 2022 and beyond; the policies most applicable to the Open Space Plan are found in:

- Chapter Three - Rural Legacy and Natural Resource Lands
- Chapter Four - Environment
- Chapter Seven - Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources

### 1.1.1.3 GMA Requirements

The Open Space Plan complies with the GMA, which requires that jurisdictions include a Park and Recreation Element in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan consistent with the Capital Facilities Element and provide estimates of park and recreation needs and demand for a ten-

year period. The Open Space Plan addresses the GMA's planning requirements (RCW 36.70A.020) that relate to parks and resource lands, including:

- *Open space and recreation.* Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- *Environment.* Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
- *Natural resource industries.* Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
- *Property rights.* Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.
- *Citizen participation and coordination.* Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.



View from Maury Island Natural Area



- *Public facilities and services.* Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

#### 1.1.1.4 RCO Requirements

The Open Space Plan ensures that King County remains eligible for funding from RCO, which administers state and federal grant funds for recreation and conservation projects in Washington State. The RCO requires that plans include the following information (*RCFB Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines*, dated February 1, 2014):

1. Goals and objectives
2. Inventory
3. Public Involvement
4. Demand and Need Analysis Section
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Plan adoption

#### 1.1.1.5 Open Space Plan Sources

The Open Space Plan is consistent with and informed by the planning efforts and public processes of other County plans and initiatives including:

- King County Comprehensive Plan (2016 update)
- King County Strategic Plan (2015 update)
- King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan (2016)
- King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (2015)
- King County Countywide Planning Policies (2012)
- King County Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy Ordinance 17568 (2013)
- King County Parks Levy Task Force Report (2012)
- Regional Trails Needs Report (2016)

- Parks Omnibus Ordinance 14509 (2002)
- King County Historic Preservation Program Strategic Plan (2013 )
- King County Flood Management Plan (2013 Update)
- Water Resource Inventory Areas 7, 8, 9 and 10 Salmon Recovery Plans

#### 1.1.2 How to Read This Document

The Open Space Plan is organized into five chapters that provide an overview of King County, its landscape, and the parks, trails, natural areas, and forests that fall under the jurisdiction of Parks. Chapter One provides background and context as well as provides an overview of Parks and its goals as a major open space provider. Chapter Two discusses King County's approach to and classification of open space, including an overview and inventory of the open space assets managed by Parks. Finally, Chapters Three, Four and Five relate to partnerships and public engagement, the Capital Improvement Program and operations of Parks.

Within each of the chapters are policy statements, which are numbered and highlighted in bold, a style and format similar to that of the *King County Comprehensive Plan*. The Open Space Plan also uses the same definitions of "should" and "shall" as the *King County Comprehensive Plan*. The use of the terms "shall," "will," "should," and "may" in policies determines the level of discretion exercised in making future and specific land use, budget, development regulation, and other decisions. For clarification, "shall" and "will" in a policy mean that it is mandatory to carry out the policy, even if a timeframe is not included. "Shall" and "will" are imperative and nondiscretionary. Likewise, the use of "should" and "may" in a policy reflects noncompulsory guidance. "May" and "should" in a policy statement mean that there is discretion in implementation.

## 1.2 About the King County Parks and Recreation Division

Parks stewards more than 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails and 28,000 acres of open space, 220 miles of backcountry trails and approximately 145,000 acres of working forest and ecological conservation easements. By cultivating strong relationships with non-profit, corporate and community partners, the division provides recreational opportunities for King County residents and protects the region's public lands, leaving a legacy for future generations.

### 1.2.1 Mission/Vision/Values

#### Mission

Steward, enhance and acquire parks to inspire healthy communities.

#### Vision

Parks, trails, and natural lands for all, sustained with the cooperative efforts of our community.

#### Values

- *Regional and Rural Service:* Provide park and recreation assets that serve the county-wide population, as well as communities in rural unincorporated King County.
- *Safety:* Ensure that parks, trails and recreation facilities are safe for all users.
- *Partnerships:* Pursue partnerships with public, private, and non-profit entities that leverage public dollars, enhance public recreation opportunities, and involve King County residents in the stewardship of King County's open space and recreation assets.
- *Entrepreneurial:* Generate revenue and contribute to the financial sustainability of agency operations.
- *Conservation:* Protect and enhance the ecological values of open space assets, including fish and wildlife habitat, native biodiversity, critical areas, and air and water quality.



*Taylor Mountain Forest*

- *Equity:* Strive to provide public open spaces and recreation opportunities that maximize accessibility and are equitably distributed.
- *Efficiency:* Maximize the value of public dollars through sensible cost reduction strategies while respecting best environmental management practices.

## 1.2.2 Goals and Objectives

In addition to county-wide guidance, such as the King County Strategic Plan, the Equity and Social Justice Ordinance, and the King County Energy Plan, the following goals and objectives are based on priorities developed for the 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy (Ordinance # 17568).

*Goal 1: Take care of King County's existing system of parks and trails, ensuring the system remains clean, safe and open.*

Objective 1.1: Sustain levels of service in the day-to-day operations and maintenance of King County's parks and trails by:

- Increasing staffing resources for peak seasonal maintenance and the growing inventory;
- Replacing and upgrading technology, equipment, and vehicles;
- Investing in the planning and design of a central maintenance shop; and
- Preserving and protecting the Maury Island Natural Area and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Objective 1.2: Maintain the operation of existing park infrastructure by employing a system-wide approach to rehabilitating, repairing, or replacing elements such as play structures, restrooms, sports courts, ballfields, and bridges and trestles on the Regional Trails System.

Objective 1.3: Ensure park and recreation facilities remain safe and open throughout the County.

*Goal 2: Grow and connect regional open space and natural lands, in order to protect habitat important for fish and wildlife and to provide recreation opportunities.*

Objective 2.1: Focus on securing lands in strategic acquisition zones that build upon prior public land and conservation easement investments, connect to existing sites, provide multiple benefits (recreation, public access, habitat protection) and protect regional watersheds and streams (informed by Salmon Recovery Plans, the Open Space Plan, and Conservation Futures Tax criteria).

Objective 2.2: Be a good steward of the newly acquired open space by completing stewardship plans and management goals to provide direction for maintaining and rehabilitating the sites.

*Goal 3: Improve regional trails and non-motorized mobility, to ensure that essential connections are completed and existing trails are maintained.*

Objective 3.1: Address missing trail connections, such as developing additional segments of the East Lake Sammamish Trail and planning and designing the Green-to-Cedar Rivers Trail.

Objective 3.2: Invest in planning, design, and construction of new major trail corridors, the Eastside Rail Corridor and the Lake to Sound Trail.

Objective 3.3: Preserve existing trail infrastructure by repairing and replacing aging bridges and trestles and making surface improvements throughout the system.

Objective 3.4: Identify and invest in regional trail connections in historically underserved communities such as beginning preliminary planning for a connection from the Green River Trail in Tukwila to the Duwamish River Trail in Seattle.

Objective 3.5: Identify opportunities to invest in trail connections that improve nonmotorized mobility, especially connections to transit centers.

*Goal 4: Make parks and recreation opportunities more accessible for all King County residents to enjoy.*

Objective 4.1: Expand public access to existing parklands by building and/or improving trailhead facilities, such as parking lots, restrooms, and signage, at sites including Pinnacle Peak Park and Taylor Mountain Forest.

Objective 4.2: Ensure park and recreation facilities remain safe and open by completing major maintenance projects, in all parts of the county.

Objective 4.3: Provide funding for recreational programs that serve historically underserved communities, including the White Center Teen Program, Evergreen Community Aquatics Center, and the King County 4-H program.

Objective 4.4: Cultivate community and corporate partnerships that generate revenue, create efficiencies, and/or nurture goodwill by increasing the capital appropriation for the Community Partnerships and Grants Program.

### **1.2.3 Organizational Structure and Funding**

Parks is part of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP). As of 2015, there were 180 full-time employees, approximately 90 part-time employees who work on a seasonal basis, and 120 intermittent temporary employees, all organized into six sections. Parks works closely with the Water and Land Resources Division, particularly in the areas of acquisition of natural areas, river restoration/flood protection projects, water quality monitoring, and forest stewardship. The division also frequently works with the Department of Transportation to coordinate on regional trails maintenance and capital improvements.

The voter-approved 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy (Parks Levy) provides approximately 75 percent of the division's funding for maintenance and operations. This measure will generate an

estimated \$66 million per year from 2014 through 2019 through a Consumer Price Indexed property tax levy lid lift of 18.77 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. It replaced two parks levies, the King County Parks Levy and the Open Space and Trails Levy, which expired at the end of 2013. Approximately 20 percent of the division's revenue comes from business revenues, which include user fees, land use fees, concessions, and other types of entrepreneurial activities and public-private partnerships (outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3). Parks does not receive any King County General Funds. Funding for the Capital Improvement Program is described in Chapter 4.

### **1.2.4 Public Engagement**

Whether planning for a specific capital investment, developing agency policies and park management plans or addressing the future needs of King County residents, Parks makes on-going efforts to engage and communicate with King County residents about their interests, needs and priorities for the County's open space system.

#### **1.2.4.1 Planning for the Future**

The goals and priorities outlined in this open space plan reflect the comprehensive public involvement and customer satisfaction effort carried out by Parks in 2011-2012.

#### **Data Gathering**

In 2011, Parks undertook a multi-faceted customer satisfaction effort with the following objectives:

- Determine the level of general satisfaction with the services currently provided by Parks
- Develop a better understanding of the region's current and future parks and recreation needs
- Identify the roles that King County can play in meeting those needs

The division engaged the following stakeholders through this effort:

- Parks employees and King County employees from other agencies
- Parks and recreation agency directors from other jurisdictions in King County
- The Public (via focus groups and online and on-site surveys)

Similar questions were posed to all stakeholder groups. Several meetings were held with division employees and King County employees from other agencies, and two meetings were held with parks directors from other parks and recreation departments in which 16 jurisdictions were represented. The division worked with consultants to engage the public, specifically through the use of focus groups and on-site and online surveying. In addition to two focus groups, nearly 400 people were interviewed in person, and more than 1,700 people completed the online survey.

The common themes that arose from this data gathering work include:

- Level of satisfaction was high with Parks.
- Those familiar with the division’s facilities rated them favorably.
- The public recognized the value of overall systems (open space, regional trails) more than specific facilities.
- Operations and maintenance generally rated higher than other concerns (e.g. capital expansion).
- Water quality and wildlife habitat protection were highly valued.
- Trails (including making trail connections and addressing missing links) and taking care of existing facilities and infrastructure were also top priorities.

These findings provided direction to decision-makers about priorities for the future of King County’s open space system, as well as how to develop and measure the division’s service delivery in the future.



*Burke-Gilman Trail*

### King County Parks Levy Task Force

In June 2012, King County Executive Dow Constantine convened a citizen-based task force to make recommendations addressing the following:

- What should be done to preserve the County's then 26,000-acre system of parks and trails after the current operating and capital levies expire at the end of 2013?
- What should be done to meet the future parks and recreation needs of King County residents?

The Task Force, which was made up of twenty citizens representing community groups, businesses, recreational and environmental interests, and other public agencies, issued a report recommending the County pursue a six-year, inflation-adjusted property tax levy lid lift mechanism to fund the division's operations and capital improvement program.

#### The Task Force's recommendations included the following:

- King County's parks, trails, and open space contribute to our region's high quality of life; King County residents recognize and value these services.
- A voter-approved property tax levy lid lift should be sought to fund King County Parks. There are currently no reasonable alternative revenue sources.
- Taking care of existing park and trail assets should be a priority.
- Parks has been successful at leveraging levy funds and generating revenue, but future business revenue growth should reflect slightly lower targets.
- Regional and local parks, trails, and recreation facilities are integrally linked and should be supported under a regional levy.

More information about the Task Force proceedings and its findings and recommendations can be found at <http://kingcounty.gov/parks/levy.aspx>.

### 1.2.4.2 On-going Engagement

Parks has a variety of ways to reach out to and interact with park user groups, other stakeholders, and the general public, including a division web site, robust social media presence, e-newsletter, strong media relations, participation in community fairs and festivals, and an online feedback tool.

Moreover, the division maintains relationships with more than 300 organizations, from "Friends of" groups to sports leagues to volunteer groups, which are described in more detail in Chapter 4.

#### Open Space Plan 2016 Update

This Open Space Plan update goes through a public review process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Parks sent this document to cities, agencies and other organizations based on experience from years of issuing SEPA documents and regular communication with various stakeholders. This final plan will be transmitted to King County Council for consideration. That review and approval process will include a public hearing.



*Duthie Hill Mountain Bike Park*

## CHAPTER TWO: KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

### 2.1 Service Area: A Profile of King County

#### 2.1.1 Population and Demographics of King County

As King County government contemplates need and demand for conservation and recreation assets to serve the public now and in the future, changing demographic trends provide a critical roadmap for the open space system's growth and foundation for King County's values as an open space provider. The trends in population growth and distribution inform King County's vision for acquisition, development, and management of its open space system. They also present serious challenges for the future, in particular revenue sources, recreational use patterns, and protection and conservation of ecological resources.



*Black Diamond Natural Area*

King County, with its 1.9 million inhabitants, is the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the country and the most populous in the state. With a metropolitan area of more than 3.61 million inhabitants, it is among the fastest growing regions in the country, a trend that is expected to continue well into the future. Forecasts anticipate King County growing by an additional 320,000 persons (16 percent) by 2030. With more than 1.1 million workers employed within its borders, King County is also the state's urban center and economic engine.

King County covers 2,130 square miles, approximately the size of the state of Delaware, and while unincorporated areas, that is, the territory outside of any city, cover 80 percent of the county's land area, more than 87 percent of the population resides within one of King County's 39 cities. Some 126,000 people reside in rural unincorporated areas, where King County has jurisdiction as the local government, and 127,000 residents make up unincorporated populations living within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). King County provides local government services to these unincorporated areas within the UGA, most of which are to be annexed into cities within the next ten years under the state GMA.

King County's population is becoming increasingly diverse, with more than one-third of the population being persons of color. According to 2010 census data, 65 percent of the population is non-Hispanic white, 15 percent is Asian or Pacific Islander, 9 percent is Latino, 6 percent is African-American, and 1 percent is Native American. There are 170 different languages spoken in King County, and 26 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Spanish is by far the most common language other than English spoken in King County, with Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Korean and Tagalog the next most common languages.

The median annual household income in King County is about \$71,000, which is well above the state and national levels. However, income disparity has increased since 2000, with the gap between those earning less than 50 percent of the median income and those earning over 180 percent of the median income becoming wider. Recent trends have shown a shift in where people experiencing poverty reside, with poverty rates now highest in suburban King County.

**For more information:**

2012 King County Growth Report

[www.kingcounty.gov/exec/PSB/Demographics/KCGrowthReport.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/PSB/Demographics/KCGrowthReport.aspx)

PSRC Vision 2040

[www.psrc.org/growth/vision2040/](http://www.psrc.org/growth/vision2040/)

## 2.1.2 Community Setting: Natural Landscape of King County

Within the 2,130 square miles (1,355,760 acres) that make up King County are mountain ranges, forests, farmlands, waterways and shorelines that define the natural beauty and character of the region's landscape.

This landscape was created by an active geological history of advance and retreat of glacial ice sheets, volcanic activity and constant erosion by wind and water. The County is home to the foothills of the Cascades, forested lands, lakes, and Puget Sound. These natural features provide open spaces that offer scenic beauty as well as a wide range of outdoor recreational activities, create critical habitat for fish and wildlife, help maintain air and water quality, support natural resource economies such as forestry and agriculture and provide numerous other benefits that contribute to the high quality of life in the County.



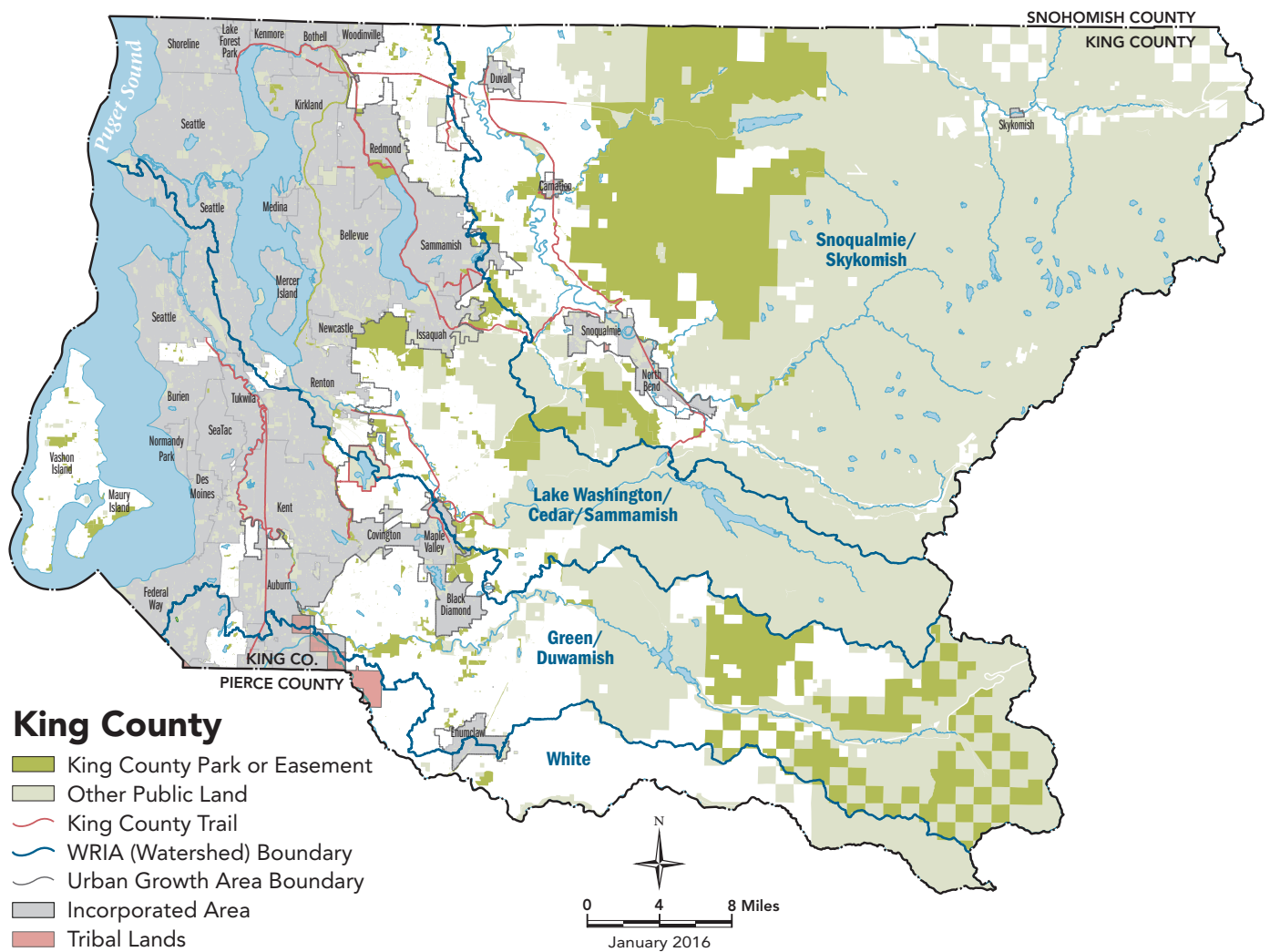
*Bass-Beaver Lake Natural Area*



## 2.2 Open Space System Guiding Principles

The following section details the major watersheds that shape King County's open space system. A watershed is defined simply as an area of land delineated by hills and mountains in which all rain water runs to the same end body of water, usually a river or lake. Water flow and quality are tempered by forests, fields, and marshes; because of this, open space planning must be approached from the landscape level, which requires long-term integrated and comprehensive land stewardship.

More detailed information about King County's watersheds, fish and wildlife, other natural features, and recreational opportunities may be found in other County inventories, plans, reports and studies. These include individual park management and master plans, regional trail planning documents, programmatic plans for King County's natural area parks and forest lands, Salmon Recovery, Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) plans, drainage basin plans and water quality plans. See Appendix III for a list of source documents that contributed to this plan.



## 2.2.1 Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed

The Snoqualmie/Skykomish/Snohomish watershed extends from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to the confluence of the Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers north of Duvall, and eventually drains through the Snohomish River to Puget Sound. The watershed includes many streams that provide habitat for nine salmonid species, contains the 268-foot high cultural heritage site Snoqualmie Falls, and is home to two federally recognized tribes, the Tulalip and Snoqualmie Tribes. The watershed provides habitat to native char, bull trout/Dolly Varden and eight species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, coho, chum, sockeye, pink salmon, coastal cutthroat trout, and steelhead.

Bisected by the jurisdictional border between King and Snohomish counties, urban land use is currently concentrated near the estuary and is largely outside the boundaries of King County. Population growth in the basin is expected to

increase from just over 300,000 in 2000 to over 500,000 in 2030, a 59 percent increase over 30 years, though this will largely occur in the parts of the basin outside of the boundaries of King County.

Within King County, the Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed encompasses more than 680 square miles with approximately 75 percent of the land classified as Forest Production District (FPD), including both public and private forest. There are a few King County owned working forest sites within this watershed, including a 90,000-acre forest conservation easement on the Snoqualmie Tree Farm, a 4,000 acre conservation easement on the Raging River Forest, and the 440 acres of King County's Mitchell Hill Forest. Downstream of the Snoqualmie Falls, most of the floodplain is zoned for agriculture and lies within the 14,500 acre Snoqualmie Agriculture Production District (APD). Almost 5,000 acres of farmland within the Snoqualmie APD has been protected through King County's Farmland Preservation Program.



*A view of Mt. Si from the Three Forks Natural Area*

There is growing interest in recreation opportunities within the watershed on federal, state, county, and local government lands; much of the recreational focus is located on and along the Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers and their tributaries. The US Forest Service manages large swaths of public land in the watershed including Wild Sky and Alpine Lakes Wilderness Areas. King County's Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail is highly valued as a recreational corridor providing opportunities for users to ride horses, walk or bike along the valley and experience its rich natural beauty and agriculture history.

Within the Snoqualmie/Skykomish watershed, the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie is recognized as a top whitewater kayaking destination, drawing river enthusiasts from across the County. A collaborative effort involving federal, state, county and local agencies and community and recreation groups has been working to expand recreational opportunities in this area, including expanding and formalizing public access to the river.

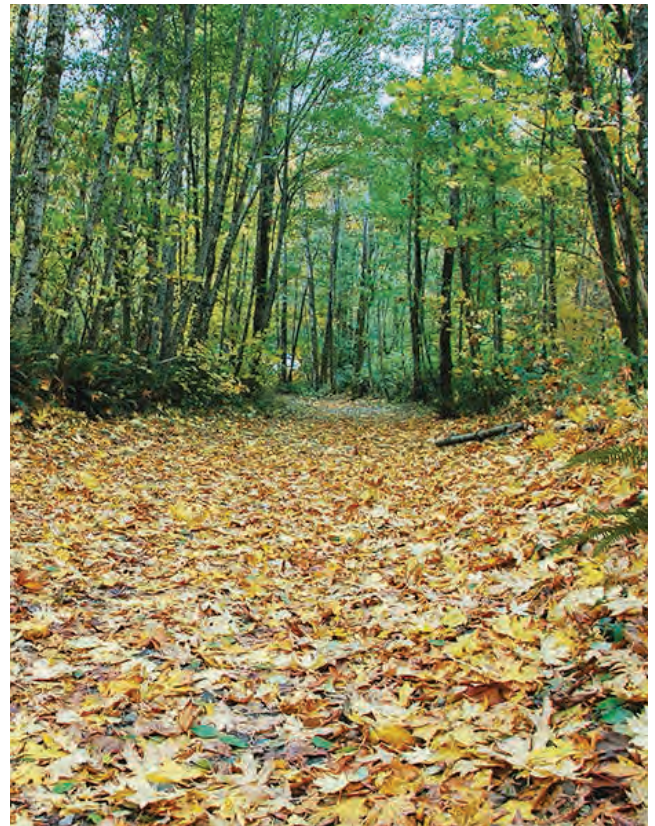
The Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area is located along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, about nine miles east of the city of North Bend. At nearly 5,658 acres, it contains primarily forested lands and wetlands, and its tributary streams provide important habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. River access for kayak launching and fishing is also possible from the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area, along with the 40-acre Tanner Landing Park. These opportunities, combined with the state's popular Mount Si Natural Resources Conservation Area and Middle Fork Natural Resource Conservation Area (WADNR) just miles away, are quickly developing a "destination recreation" reputation for the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

County-owned upland sites offer hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding and include sites such as Soaring Eagle (600 acres), Duthie Hill (130 acres) and portions of the 1,300-acre Grand Ridge Park (also part of

Sammamish watershed). King County provides additional recreation parks at Preston Park and Athletic Fields, and the historic Preston Community Center. In total, King County manages more than 4,300 acres of parks and natural areas in the Snoqualmie basin.

### **2.2.2 Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed**

The Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed covers 692 square miles and contains two major river systems (Cedar and Sammamish), three large lakes (Washington, Sammamish, and Union), and numerous creeks including Issaquah and Bear Creeks. The watershed drains to Lake Washington, through the Hiram Chittenden Locks and into the Puget Sound. It is the most densely populated watershed in Washington, with approximately 55 percent of the watershed's population inside the Urban Growth Area. The watershed's projected population for 2022 is 1.6 million. Two basins, the Cedar River and the Sammamish River, are highlighted on the upcoming pages.



*Cougar Mountain*

### 2.2.2.1 Cedar River

The Cedar River is the largest tributary to Lake Washington and drains an elongated basin of 188 square miles that flows approximately 50 miles from its headwaters in the Cascade Mountains to Lake Washington.

The Cedar River can be divided into two reaches: the Upper Cedar River, from the Cascade Crest to the Landsburg Diversion Dam, and the Lower Cedar River, from the Landsburg Dam to the mouth at the City of Renton. The Upper Cedar River watershed contains roughly 79,951 acres, most of which are owned by the City of Seattle to provide a major part of the area's water supply. The municipal watershed is almost entirely coniferous forest and is governed by a Habitat Conservation Plan. The Lower Cedar River contains 42,240 acres of land with an extensive hydrological system that includes 15 named tributaries, and many high-value wetlands, lakes, and aquifers. Most of the lower basin remains forested, with less than half the land use classified as low- to medium-density development.

The Cedar River corridor provides a network for fish and wildlife migration. Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon, winter steelhead, bull trout, and coastal cutthroat are known species to inhabit the Cedar River system. The Lower Cedar River main stem and four main fish-bearing tributaries (Lower Rock Creek, Walsh Lake Diversion, Peterson Creek and Taylor Creek) provide spawning habitat for Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon and steelhead and cutthroat trout. The Cedar River's Chinook population is one of the native stocks that comprise the evolutionarily significant unit of Puget Sound Chinook salmon, which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Cedar River also provides habitat for Puget Sound steelhead which are listed as a threatened species under the ESA.

Within the Cedar River watershed is the multi-use Danville-Georgetown site (341 acres) with a network of well-kept trails, which are popular with equestrians. There are multiple natural area parks along the Cedar River with river access, including Belmondo Reach Natural Area and Cedar Grove Road Natural Area.

Ravensdale Park, a recreation park, is located in Rock Creek Valley, a few miles east of Maple Valley between Kent-Kangley Road and Ravensdale Way. The historic mining town of Ravensdale sits adjacent to the park's southeast corner, and the small community of Georgetown borders the north side of the park, across the road. The facilities in the park, consisting of six athletic fields, a community center, parking and a picnic area and restrooms serve many of the rural residents of Rock Creek Valley, as well as the City of Maple Valley. Aside from the Tahoma School District's fields, there are no public athletic fields in the valley other than those at Ravensdale Park.

The Cedar River offers fishing and whitewater recreation. In addition, the river corridor provides recreation opportunities offered at the local and regional levels. The 16-mile Cedar River Trail, owned and maintained by King County, follows a former railroad right-of-way alongside the river from King County's 37-acre Landsburg Park to downtown Renton and continues on a city trail to the shores of Lake Washington. The Cedar River Trail links a number of King County-owned park sites, providing a scenic natural setting in addition to recreation and educational/interpretive experiences for those passing along on foot, bicycle or horse. Future interagency agreements may establish links between the Cedar River Trail and the county's Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail and Iron Horse State Park.

### 2.2.2.2 Sammamish River

The Sammamish River basin covers approximately 240 square miles and encompasses the land area that drains to Lake Sammamish, the Sammamish River and out into Lake Washington. The Sammamish River stretches 13.8 miles from its origin at the north end of Lake Sammamish to its mouth at the northern tip of Lake Washington.

Over the past century, the Sammamish River, previously a slough, has been significantly altered by human activities. In the 1960s, the river channel was deepened and straightened to increase its flood-flow capacity and to drain the surrounding wetlands for farming and development. Ongoing restoration and enhancement efforts are helping to mitigate these actions and improve water quality and habitat.

The Sammamish River Valley is known for its farming history, and approximately 1,100 acres of the valley have been designated as an Agricultural Production District (APD). Through the Farmlands Preservation Program, King County has acquired development rights on more than 70 percent (800 acres) of that APD, which has been instrumental in retaining agricultural production in the scenic valley.

The Sammamish River is primarily a migratory corridor for Chinook, coho, sockeye and kokanee salmon and steelhead trout that spawn in Issaquah Creek, Bear Creek, Little Bear Creek, North Creek and Swamp Creek. However, the river exhibits water temperatures in the summer and early fall that can pose a thermal barrier to salmon migration and can reach temperatures lethal to salmon.



Ray Heller

*Sockeye Salmon in Bear Creek*

### 2.2.2.2.2 Issaquah Creek Basin

The Issaquah Creek Basin is an important ecological basin in urbanized King County. Issaquah Creek is the main tributary to Lake Sammamish with headwaters originating from the steep slopes of Cougar, Squak, Tiger and Taylor mountains. The basin encompasses about 61 square miles, over 75 percent of which is forested, with the remainder in wetlands and pastures. Less than 10 percent is urban or cleared areas, however, the population in the basin is projected to increase 18 percent by 2020. More than 40 percent of the land is in public ownership by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks, King County, and the City of Issaquah.

The upper and middle Issaquah Creek Basin is identified as a Regionally Significant Resource Area (RSRA) because of its exceptional fisheries habitat and undeveloped character. RSRAs are portions of watersheds that contribute to the resource base of the entire Puget Sound region because they contain exceptional species and habitat diversity and may support rare, threatened or endangered species. Eight species of salmonids (six anadromous) are known to utilize the Issaquah Basin, including Chinook salmon listed as threatened under the ESA. The Issaquah Creek Hatchery currently produces Chinook, coho, and Lake Washington steelhead.

The basin includes a significant amount of public open space for conservation and recreation purposes. King County manages several sites within the basin: the multi-use Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park (approximately 3,200 acres), the Cougar-Squak and Squak-Tiger Corridors (970 acres), Preston Ridge Forest which is a 190-acre working forest, and a portion of the multi-use 1,300-acre Grand Ridge Park. King County's 1,900 acre Taylor Mountain Forest and Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Tiger Mountain Forest are managed

as working forest lands, protecting and conserving important salmon habitats, providing sustainable timber production, and providing passive recreation opportunities. The County owns almost 6,000 acres of forest easement land in the Upper Raging River area. In addition, King County has acquired land for ecological purposes, including the 120-acre Log Cabin Reach Natural Area and the 212-acre Middle Issaquah Reach Natural Area.

From its beginning as a dairy farm and country estate to its current use as a regional hub for recreation, Marymoor Park has been recognized for its rich natural setting and outstanding location at the north end of Lake Sammamish. King County first acquired Marymoor Park in 1962 in an effort to save the land from development and establish a public park. Today, the 620 acres that make up Marymoor Park offer a myriad of year-round recreational opportunities, which include 15 natural and six artificial athletic fields (soccer, baseball, cricket, lacrosse, and rugby), a velodrome, tennis courts, walking/biking trails, nature trails, a community garden, a rowing launch, an off-leash dog park, a climbing rock, a foot reflexology path and a model airplane flying field. Marymoor is also home to outdoor summer concerts and movies and the historic Clise Mansion, which is used for weddings and other events.

Several regional trails link the various parts of the Sammamish Watershed. The Sammamish River Trail runs along both sides of the river with a hard surface trail on one side and a soft surface trail along the other. The trail links numerous King County park sites and parks in the cities of Bothell, Woodinville and Redmond. The trail links with the Burke-Gilman Trail to the west and offers more than 20 miles of paved trail for bicyclists and walkers along waterways in urban and suburban King County. The Marymoor Connector Trail links the Sammamish River Trail to the East Lake Sammamish Trail, extending the trail connection into the city of Issaquah.

### 2.2.3 Green/Duwamish Watershed

The Green/Duwamish River Watershed is located in south King County and covers 482 square miles. The Green River is the longest river in the County, flowing for more than 93 miles from in the Cascade Range to Elliott Bay in Seattle. The mountainous headwaters of the Green River are within the forested Tacoma Municipal Watershed, which supplies most of the drinking water for the Tacoma area. The Green River becomes the Duwamish River at its confluence with the remains of the historic Black River at Tukwila. Land use in the watershed is varied, with mostly forest at the headwaters, agriculture, forest and rural residential in the middle watershed, and residential, commercial, and industrial in the lower watershed. The population of the watershed is approximately 400,000. The Green River system provides habitat to eight species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, coho, chum, sockeye, and pink salmon, coastal cutthroat trout, steelhead, and bull trout/Dolly Varden.

There are three regional trails in this watershed, including the southern segment of the 15-mile Interurban Trail and the 7.5-mile Soos Creek Trail. The Green River Regional Trail winds more than 19 miles from the County's Cecil Moses Park near Seattle's south boundary (along the Duwamish River) to North Green River Park in south Kent (along the Green River), near the city of Auburn. It provides excellent views and access to the Green River and surrounding river valley.

The Green/Duwamish River Watershed contains a significant amount of public lands managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Active recreation opportunities are predominantly provided by city jurisdictions, such as Seattle, Tukwila, and Kent. Washington State manages three popular state parks which provide river and lake access for whitewater rafting, kayaking and boating, and for shoreline activities like wildlife watching, fishing, picnicking and hiking.

Within the Green/Duwamish River Watershed is the 1,100-acre Black Diamond Open Space. Located just south of Maple Valley along Maple Valley-Black Diamond Road, this site is very popular with mountain bikers and equestrians. Black Diamond open space provides habitat to a variety of wildlife, by containing both upland habitat as well as aquatic habitat in the various creeks and ponds. King County owns many open space sites in this watershed in fee and conservation easements ranging from a five-acre park to a forest conservation easement holding more than 45,000 acres in the upper watershed resulting from a transfer of development rights. Most open space sites offer mostly passive recreation such as hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and water access. The 105-acre Auburn Narrows Natural Area is a popular fishing site, the 1,400-acre Green River Natural Area is a popular equestrian site and the 30-acre Whitney Bridge Park offers picnicking and boat access. The 97-acre North Green River Park offers additional recreation amenities, including soccer fields and a community garden.

### 2.2.4 White River Watershed

Part of the larger Puyallup/White River Watershed, the White River, (located in south King County), originates from glaciers on Mount Rainier, travels 68 miles, and drains 494 square miles before ultimately meeting the Puyallup River near the city of Sumner and draining to Puget Sound at Commencement Bay in Tacoma. The vast majority of the Puyallup/White River Watershed lies within Pierce County. The description below focuses on the White River and the specific areas and resources within King County.

The White River joins the West Fork of the White River just before reaching the Greenwater River at the town of Greenwater and together they form the boundary between Pierce and King Counties. The White River's headwaters and a majority of the river are protected by the Seattle and Tacoma Municipal Watersheds, Mount Rainier National Park and the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Downstream

of the Mud Mountain Dam and upstream of a Puget Sound Energy (PSE) diversion dam, the river flows through agricultural areas, rural residential properties, and private forestlands. Within this reach, the river flows between large blocks of public land, including King County's 314-acre Pinnacle Peak Park, the City of Enumclaw's Anderson Riverview Park, and floodplains protected by King County to more urban areas further downstream.

The White River and its tributaries serve as spawning, rearing and transportation areas for Chinook, pink, chum, and coho salmon, as well as rainbow, steelhead and cutthroat trout. The native spring run Chinook salmon is listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened. The White River system is also home to native char (bull trout/Dolly Varden).

Pinnacle Peak is a multi-use site; a volcanic cone that rises straight out of Enumclaw farmlands and down to the White River. Pinnacle Peak is one of the most popular hikes for Enumclaw and South county families. A one mile long forested trail climbs 1,000 vertical feet to the top of the 1,800 foot geological knob. At the top, there are concrete footings of an old fire lookout and spectacular views from the south-side of Mt. Rainier and the White River valley.

With much of the open space either in the ownership of PSE, within the Muckleshoot Reservation, or privately held as agricultural properties, public access is limited in this area.

The Muckleshoot Tribe, a federally recognized Indian tribe, owns 3,850 acres in southern King County, near the Pierce County border. Members of this tribe are descendants of the Duwamish and Upper Puyallup people, and have lived in the region for thousands of years.

## 2.2.5 Vashon - Maury Island

Vashon-Maury Island is located in the central Puget Sound and encompasses a total land area of 37 square miles (24,000 acres). The topography of Vashon-Maury Island varies from sea level to elevations in excess of 460 feet. At these upper elevations the topography levels off into gently rolling plateaus.

Vashon-Maury Island has a population of about 10,500 and has a rural character. The vast majority of the Island is zoned rural, most of the residential population is concentrated along parts of the shoreline. Vashon-Maury Island is in rural, unincorporated King County and features such natural resources as forests, wetlands, streams a sole source aquifer, and a saltwater shoreline. The island is about 73 percent forested land; 16 percent non-forested land, and 11 percent developed land.

Vashon-Maury Island has been altered significantly in the last 100+ years. Virtually all of the original pre-settlement forested wetlands and upland forests were logged by the late 1800s. The resulting second-growth forest was heavily logged in the mid-1900s. Although forest lands have been regenerated on the island, land cover has changed from native, large spans of old-growth coniferous forests to younger, even-aged forests dominated by Douglas-fir and with a significant hardwood presence.



*Island Center Forest*



Vashon's freshwater environment includes more than 70 mapped streams and tributaries, which originate from upland seeps and wetlands and drop through the steep channels and bluff line that surrounds the island. The two primary stream basins which represent a substantial portion of the island's freshwater environment are Shinglemill Creek and Judd Creek. Vashon-Maury Island also has approximately 70 mapped and likely many more unmapped freshwater wetlands.

The Vashon-Maury Island nearshore accounts for 51 miles of the 92 miles of marine shoreline found within the boundaries of King County, and it represents the only marine shoreline under King County's jurisdiction. It supports a variety of ecosystem functions and is characterized by a combination of beaches, bluffs, lagoons, spits, pocket estuaries, and fringing eelgrass. In 2000, some of the state owned aquatic lands along the Maury Island and Quartermaster Harbor were designated an aquatic reserve by Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Fifteen island streams are known to support salmonids including coastal cutthroat trout, rainbow/steelhead trout, coho salmon, chum salmon, and juvenile Chinook salmon. Juvenile and adult coho, Chinook and coastal trout have been observed at numerous points along the marine shorelines, as well.

Approximately nine percent of Vashon-Maury Island is in public ownership, additionally, the Vashon Maury Island Land Trust owns several nature reserve parcels and holds conservation easements on many more. King County and the Vashon Park District both offer passive recreational opportunities on natural lands and parks.

Located in the center of Vashon Island, Island Center Forest is a 350-acre working forest and nature preserve that is managed to demonstrate sustainable forest management while protecting and restoring the health of the site's habitat. Island Center Forest features various forest



*Maury Island Marine Park*

stands, Mukai Pond, and Meadowlake wetlands, and forms the headwaters of Judd Creek. It provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including more than 70 bird species. There are over nine miles of backcountry trails used by hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers, and its wetlands are popular for bird watching and wildlife photography. A diverse site with a unique history, Island Center Forest is also used for scientific research.

King County's 320-acre Maury Island Marine Park and 275-acre Maury Island Natural Area offer close to 2.5 miles of Puget Sound shoreline and provide habitat for a diversity of marine species. Dockton Park (23 acres) lies along the eastern shoreline of Quartermaster Harbor and is primarily used as a marina, picnic and boat launch area, and summer swim beach. Dockton Forest is an 85-acre working forest that offers an extensive trail system used by hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. The County has acquired several hundred acres of natural area sites, such as Neil Point, Piner Point, and Raab's Lagoon, which are largely undeveloped and may provide public access to the shoreline as well as significant ecological value.

Parks implements its mission in the context of the policies outlined below. The policies reflect the evolution of King County government in the region and reinforce the vision set forth by key guiding documents, such as the *2016 King County Comprehensive Plan*, *2015 King County Strategic Plan*, *King County Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy Ordinance 17568 (2013)*, *King County Parks Levy Task Force Report (2012)*, and the *Parks Omnibus Ordinance 14509 (2002)*.

- OS-101 King County will be a regional provider of open space with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural and cultural resources and provide recreation, education and interpretative opportunities, ecological value, and scenic beauty.
- OS-102 King County will focus its regional open space efforts on key corridors within the following: Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed; Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed; Green/Duwamish Watershed; White River Watershed; and Vashon-Maury Island.
- OS-103 King County will focus its regional open space efforts on the following functional roles: recreation, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, forest lands, and multi-use sites.
- OS-104 Regional parks will be available to all citizens of the County.
- OS-105 King County will be the provider of local parks for unincorporated rural areas of the County.
- OS-106 Local open space sites in urban growth areas will become the responsibility of cities.
- OS-107 King County will have a countywide regional trails network of non-motorized, shared use (multi-purpose) paths that link cities and communities and offers recreation, alternative commuting options, cultural opportunities, and migration corridors for wildlife.
- OS-108 King County will conserve and manage valuable forest lands for the health of the forest ecosystem, and where appropriate, as viable working resource lands.
- OS-109 King County will acquire lands for their ecological value and steward them in a manner that protects and enhances their environmental benefits while ensuring appropriate public use, appreciation, and enjoyment.
- OS-110 King County should consider adding natural areas that are outside of key open space corridors if they include regionally significant features and improve the distribution of open space within the County.
- OS-111 King County will develop a system of soft surface backcountry trails that provides passive recreation experiences in a natural, rustic setting.
- OS-112 King County's efforts in aquatics will focus on the operation of the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center as a venue for regional, national and international competitive events and recreation programs.
- OS-113 King County will work with a variety of public and private groups to identify and protect significant open space lands.
- OS-113a **King County shall consider equity in the development and acquisition of its open space system to help in the reduction of health disparities and in the promotion of environmental justice.**

## 2.3 Classification of King County's Open Space System

King County's open space system includes lands and facilities with a variety of resources and functions. This classification system forms the framework for stewardship and management of open space sites, while balancing elements such as recreational opportunities, public access, and ecological values.

- OS-114 Open space sites in the King County system will be classified using a two level system; first, identifying the site as regional or local (rural or urban (UGA)); and second, identifying its primary role within the system.
- OS-115 New open space sites will be classified at the time of acquisition and through development of site management, stewardship or master plans.

### 2.3.1 Level One Classification: Regional/Local Open Space

Level one classifies a site as regional or local based on size, features, significance of ecological value, and who it serves. This classification guides future use, development, and preservation and is appropriately scaled to serve a site's purposes. Local sites are further identified by location within a rural area or UGA.

#### 2.3.1.1 Regional Open Space

- OS-116 Regional sites and facilities are generally large in size, have unique features or character, and/or are important as part of a larger system. These sites are destinations whose users come from distances and from multiple jurisdictions drawn by the type of site or facility (such as a regional trail), and/or that provide a unique or high level of activity, contain significant facilities, and/or have high ecological value.

Designating a site as regional establishes a presumption of county ownership and management responsibility. For those regional sites that lie within multiple jurisdictions, single custodianship is more appropriate, thus ensuring consistent management and cost efficiencies.

Some sites with both regional and local characteristics may attract a significant number of users from a city, and these sites may best be owned and managed by a city or cities. Cities and other agencies may negotiate with King County to own or develop partnerships for these regional sites. King County may also pursue cost sharing arrangements with cities, where appropriate.

- OS-117 King County should retain ownership of regional open space system assets, including sites that lie within both urban and rural areas and those that serve as "urban separators" providing a buffer along the UGA boundary. However, partnerships and cost-sharing are encouraged to maximize opportunities and enhance levels of service.

#### 2.3.1.2 Local Open Space

Local parks are often informal meeting places for the surrounding neighborhoods or communities, providing a social function and a sense of community identity. Traditional local parks have active and passive recreation facilities including play areas, open grassy fields, developed ballfields, tennis or sport courts, small picnic areas and trails. Less developed local parks provide for conservation of local community character and natural resources and offer opportunities for passive recreation.

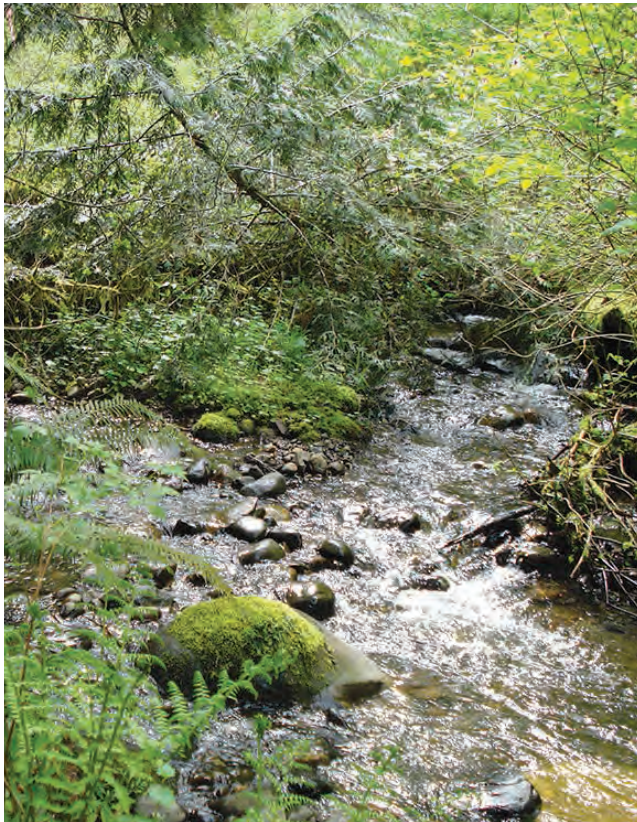
- OS-118 Local sites and facilities are smaller in size and serve the close-to-home park and recreation needs of a community. These sites are predominantly used by nearby residents.

OS-119 King County will provide local sites in the rural area predominantly serving rural residents.

The designation of local facilities within unincorporated King County is used to guide future ownership responsibility. Consistent with the State GMA and the Countywide Planning Policies, King County's role in the urban unincorporated area is the temporary stewardship of remaining local facilities until these areas annex to cities.

OS-120 King County will transfer local parks and other open space sites to the cities in which they are located. Transfer of local open space sites should be included as part of annexation or incorporation interlocal agreements that cover other services and facilities.

OS-121 King County will encourage and promote the transfer of local parks in the UGA to the cities in whose potential annexation area (PAA) they are located.



*Grand Ridge – Canyon Creek*

## 2.3.2 Level Two Classification: Role in the System

Level two classifies each site based on its primary intended purpose, while acknowledging that many sites may have multiple benefits and/or functions. This designation guides the site's use, development, restoration, management and conservation.

OS-122 All King County open space sites will be classified within the following categories: 1) recreation site, 2) regional trail, 3) natural areas, 4) working forest land, and 5) multi-use site.

### 2.3.2.1 Recreation Site

For both regional and local sites, active recreation can be characterized by the prevalence of organized, scheduled activities and/or a variety of recreational uses, such as a highly developed athletic field complex with lights and extensive support facilities. Parks manages 2,686 acres of recreation sites in fee and 219 acres in easement. This type of recreation accommodates intensive use that requires a significant amount of development to support the site. Site development, maintenance and programming will reflect this level of developed facilities and intensive use. Undeveloped or low development areas may exist on predominantly active recreation sites, providing additional benefits such as habitat value, environmental protection, and scenic value.

OS-123 Recreation sites are dominated by recreation facilities. They receive a higher level of public use and should be managed to accommodate developed areas for informal, organized or intense recreation. This may include either or both active and passive recreation activities.

Passive recreation can be characterized by the prevalence of low-impact, individually-oriented activities, such as informal play, hiking, walking, jogging, horseback riding and mountain biking.

This type of recreation is less intensive and may require some minimal improvement or development, which helps ensure appropriate public access. Examples of such improvements or development include picnic tables and park furniture, signage, grass fields or open meadows, and backcountry trails.

### 2.3.2.2 Regional Trail

King County is home to one of the largest nonmotorized regional trail systems in the country. King County and numerous city jurisdictions collectively offer approximately 300 miles of shared-use (multi-purpose) paved and unpaved trails connecting urban areas of the County with rural valleys and mountains, linking communities along the way. King County stewards approximately 175 miles of the overall network, and several cities and other jurisdictions are responsible for the remaining portions of the current network.

Regional trails are nonmotorized facilities and may be paved or soft-surface (gravel) or a combination of both. Regional trails provide both recreational opportunities and mobility options, connecting users with dedicated nonmotorized routes to parks, work, school and other destinations. Trails can be used for walking, jogging, cycling, skating, and, where appropriate, horseback riding.



*Burke-Gilman Trail*

Regional trails run through residential neighborhoods, commercial and business districts, and industrial areas, as well as farmlands, river valleys, lake shores, foothills, and dense forests. Routes use abandoned railroad grades, water pipeline and power line corridors, linear parks, river levees and other special features. Some routes use innovative means such as sharing road rights-of-way to fill gaps or extend the network to important destinations. Wooded trail corridors provide routes for wildlife migration throughout the County. Soos Creek Regional Trail, for example, parallels one of the largest wetland corridors in King County; this stream and wetland system provide habitat for hundreds of species of animals.

Local trails, which may include safe routes to schools, local municipal paths, or official neighborhood connectors, are locally important facilities but are not part of the Regional Trails System. Connections from local trails that feed into the Regional Trails System are coordinated between King County and the relevant local jurisdictions.

Several regional trails cross county boundaries to the north and south and connect with similar trails in Snohomish and Pierce counties and to the east with the cross-state John Wayne Pioneer Trail and Iron Horse State Park.

For more than 30 years, King County has played a leadership role in developing the overall vision of a countywide Regional Trails System, as well as in maintaining the regional trails that are under its direct jurisdiction. King County works with other county agencies, local jurisdictions and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop the overall trails network and ensure connectivity throughout the County. King County also collaborates with community groups and trail users, such as Friends of the Soos Creek Park and the Cascade Bicycle Club, who help maintain trails and advocate for the vision of the Regional Trails System.

- OS-124 Regional Trails provide nonmotorized recreational, transportation and commuting opportunities and may serve a variety of user types or may be designed for a more limited user group.
- OS-125 Regional trail corridors serve multiple users and should be designed to accommodate different modes of use. Trail corridors may include separate trail areas for different uses where feasible and practicable.
- OS-126 Regional trails may be designated as primary or secondary for mapping or other purposes based on the trail's development condition and its ability to be used for multiple purposes such as bicycling, walking, skating, jogging, horseback riding and other uses.

A "primary" regional trail is defined as a shared-use (multi-purpose) regionally-significant off-road facility that provides recreational opportunities and enhances regional mobility. Primary trails are facilities that meet regional trail development guidelines for size, grade, and other characteristics and are suitable for multi-purpose use (e.g., bicycling, hiking, jogging, skating, etc.). Some primary trails may also be appropriate for equestrian use.

A "secondary" regional trail is a regionally significant off-road facility that provides connections essential to the Regional Trails System, but which may not meet all of the criteria for shared-use, size, grade, surfacing, and other characteristics. While not being appropriate for all uses, secondary trails may provide important connections within the regional trails system. Some secondary trails may be appropriate for equestrian use.

### 2.3.2.3 Natural Areas

Natural areas are characterized by a site's uniqueness or diversity of native vegetation and fish and wildlife habitat, and embody the beauty and character of the region's landscape. These lands often support wetlands, streams and rivers, riparian areas, small lakes and ponds, upland forests and vulnerable or rare habitats. The management goals for these areas are to conserve and enhance ecological value including native biodiversity and to accommodate passive recreation use that does not harm the ecological resources in the site. Natural areas provide an opportunity for the County to maintain and enhance the ecological value of the region because of the ability afforded to preserve, protect, and enhance ecological processes and habitat features. In the future, some natural areas may be looked upon to provide refuge for certain species from the impacts of climate change.



*Black Diamond Natural Area*

King County supports passive recreation on 8,231 acres of natural area land so long as the use does not degrade a site's natural systems. Public use is thoughtfully and sustainably integrated into each site through an evaluation of historic and current public use patterns and the identification of those portions of the site that require maximum protection from human impacts. Appropriate levels of public use on natural areas will vary from site to site and may require some minimal improvement to appropriately direct use. The Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-Owned Natural Areas describes general policies for ecological land management. The King County Ecological Lands Handbook provides guidance and structure for writing individual site plans. Parks also holds conservation easements on 1,235 acres of private properties; those easements restrict development and help protect the lands' natural resource values.

OS-127 Natural areas, also known as ecological lands, are managed almost exclusively for environmental protection and enhancement. These areas are valued for their important natural resource functions and character, including but not limited to benefiting and protecting ecosystems and critical areas such as wetland and riparian areas, air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, native biodiversity, trees and other natural or scenic resource purposes. Healthy and diverse forest cover on these sites promote resiliency to changing climate conditions and in addition sequester carbon which minimizes the impact of climate change.

OS-128 Interpretive and educational programs, nature programs, and activities that emphasize the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural resources of the site and the outdoors are appropriate uses of natural areas.

OS-129 Appropriate public access, use and

management activities should be allowed on natural areas as compatible with the natural resource values of these sites and consistent with the long-term quality of the site or its resources. Development will be limited to making the site available for public enjoyment in a manner consistent with site resources. Improvements and enhancements will focus on keeping the site as a fully functioning natural ecosystem.

OS-130 Natural areas require individual management plans to determine how best to determine the enhancement and restoration efforts needed and support public uses. Site management/stewardship plans should be developed for natural areas guided by the King County Ecological Lands Handbook and the Programmatic Plans for Management of King County-owned Ecological Lands.

### 2.3.2.4 Working Forest Land

Forests are an important part of the character, environment, and economy that make King County a unique place to work, live, and play. Yet, development pressure in King County has resulted in a rapid decline in forested acreage and a decline in forest health. Since the values forests provide are best achieved at the landscape level, forest viability quickly erodes when fragmentation by conversion to residential development or other land use occurs.

Healthy forest lands contribute significant benefits to any open space system. They have important ecological value for the retention and infiltration of stormwater for the elimination of runoff and replenishment of groundwater, as a source of water for rivers and streams that support fish populations, for providing fish and wildlife habitat, improving air quality, reducing wildfire risk, sequestering and storing carbon dioxide and helping mitigate the impacts of climate change. Forests can also provide

economic value, both as a source of revenue generated from harvesting timber and other forest products and as a recreation destination. King County has undertaken a multi-faceted approach to forestry that encourages the conservation of forest land and economically viable forestry, and is working cooperatively across agency and landowner boundaries to retain a viable forested landscape.

King County has determined that some forested properties in its open space inventory should be managed as working forest lands. These lands preserve contiguous tracts of forested property (primarily in the Rural Forest Focus Areas and the Forest Production District) to retain active forestry, protect areas from development and/or provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development.

Parks manages 3,789 acres in fee and 142,285 acres in easement of working forest properties to sustain and enhance environmental benefits, demonstrate progressive forest management and research, and provide revenue for a self-supported management program. When managing working forests, King County balances sustainable timber production with conservation and restoration of resources, and public use. Managing this balance will be most effective over time if done in the context of the surrounding regional landscape of each working forestland. Success of this forestland conservation vision will depend on a cooperative approach with other public agencies, conservation organizations and private owners to retain a viable forested landscape.

Prior to county ownership, working forests on open space sites were not managed for conservation purposes. They tended to be low-elevation, second- or third-growth forests altered by previous human activity, with a wide range of management histories. Because of historic management activities, these forests are now mostly dominated by monoculture and/or overstocked stands and contain minimal understory vegetation. These site conditions

make them susceptible to insects, diseases, fire and storm damage and negatively affect the forests' ecological values, scenic qualities, and recreational enjoyment.

In addition, King County stewards approximately 22,000 acres of forested lands within all open space land categories. A majority of this acreage is located adjacent to the urban/rural boundary and experiences heavy public use. These lands serve as a buffer along the urban growth boundary, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities such as hiking and trail running, mountain biking, and horseback riding. In some specific instances, forests on these open space sites can benefit from the same working forest policies, stewardship plans, and actions as those for working forest sites to preserve forest health and long-term viability.

Historically, the Puget Sound was predominantly covered in conifer forests; today, large diameter conifer trees occupy only 17 percent of King County open space lands. King County conducted an assessment of forest conditions using the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool and found an estimated 1.6 million trees on King County open space lands, or an average of 188 trees per acre. The County's open space forest lands pose a significant management challenge especially with additional environmental stressors resulting from climate change, drought, urban development and increased fire risk. Approximately 80 percent of King County's forested open space lands are candidates for stewardship restoration; this would include shifting from passive maintenance to active stewardship restoration actions that would improve ecological value, transitioning the forests from one planted for commercial value to ones of a more natural ecosystem.

Complementing the working forests owned by Parks, King County holds forest conservation easements on more than 145,000 acres of land, including those secured as part of the transfer of development rights program.

Key policies and goals for managing working



forests in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks inventory are outlined in the *King County Comprehensive Plan*, Executive Order for the Implementation of Forest Policies (PUT 8-18), the *Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-owned Forest Properties* and the *Farm and Forest Report (1996)*.

King County's working forest lands were acquired for and are managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation and restoration of resources and public use. These forestry-related policies may also be considered in directing stewardship of forest lands on other open space sites.

- OS-131 Forest lands should be conserved in key areas through land or easement acquisitions to provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development, to protect forested lands from development, and to retain lands in forest cover.
- OS-132 Management goals for working forest lands should include enhancing ecological benefits and services, demonstrating progressive forest management, providing passive recreation opportunities and generating revenue to facilitate sustainable management of those sites.
- OS-133 Working forest lands shall be managed consistent with the Executive Order for Implementation of Forestry Policies (PUT 8-18) and the Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-owned Working Forest Properties (2003).
- OS-134 Forest Stewardship Plans shall

be completed for each working forest site.

- OS-135 Balancing multiple management goals will be most effective taking into context the surrounding regional situation; therefore, sites should be managed through a cooperative approach with other public agencies, conservation organizations and private owners to retain a viable forested landscape.

### **2.3.2.5 Multi-Use Site**

King County multi-use sites include 13,091 acres in fee and 38 acres in easement that support both active and passive recreation, with less intensively developed facilities and natural resource areas. Many of these sites are distinguished into informal levels of use "zones," directing heavy public use to localized sections of the park in order to preserve and protect native habitat and natural resources in other portions of the park. Thus, these sites can be more heavily used by hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers while serving as key upland wildlife corridors. Additionally, some multi-use sites are large enough to accommodate multiple fish bearing streams and essential wetlands and bogs.

- OS-136 Multi-use sites include lands that have areas of ecological value, but also may accommodate extensive public access and active and/or passive recreation opportunities.

Each portion of a multi-use site will be developed and managed to support the level of use or conservation appropriate to that portion of the site.

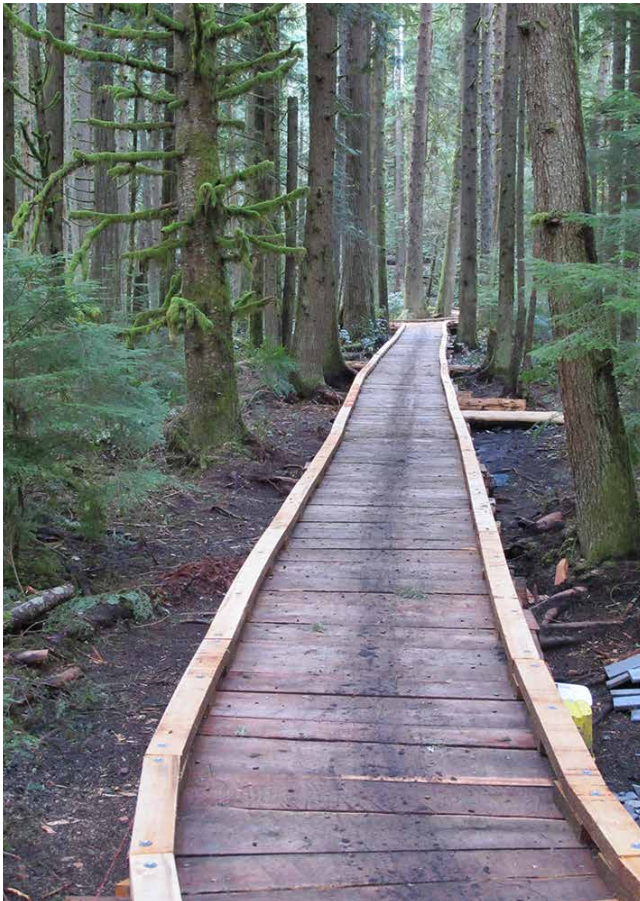
## **2.4 Regional Facilities**

## 2.4.1 Backcountry Trails

Many local, state, federal, and private open space sites in the County offer hundreds of miles of natural surface “backcountry” trails that allow users to directly experience the County’s vast and varying natural beauty found in the County’s forests, meadows, and marine and fresh water shorelines. These trails are intended for passive recreation and users of backcountry trails are generally looking for a natural experience with forests and trees, streams and wetlands, and birds and wildlife.

Parks stewards a growing network of more than 220 miles of backcountry trails distributed among 18 sites.

Backcountry trails are designed to take advantage of the natural terrain. These trails are generally narrow paths, but may also include existing maintenance roads and former logging roads. Backcountry trails are characterized



*Grand Ridge Park*

by natural surface trails that cross a variety of landscapes and terrain and at varying lengths and distances. These trails feature loops, single track trails and trail connections between parks and other natural areas.

Backcountry trail uses include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, running and nature observation. Designated allowable uses may differ by trail and site, though at present, most backcountry trails in King County’s jurisdiction are shared by all nonmotorized users.

Backcountry trails are managed in a manner that protects natural resources, ensures public safety, and requires minimal maintenance.

Many of the natural area parks, multi-use sites, and forest lands acquired by King County over the past 25 years contain existing networks of ‘social trails’, which were originally created by local hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. King County formalized and improved some of these trails, which now serve as the backbone of its backcountry trail network.

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, purchased in the mid-1980s, was the first backcountry trail network developed and managed by King County in partnership with hiking and equestrian trail users. Other major backcountry trail sites in King County’s inventory were once private timber holdings (Taylor Mountain Forest, Grand Ridge Park, Henry’s Ridge and Black Diamond Natural Areas) or Washington State Department of Natural Resources Trust Lands (Dockton Forest, Soaring Eagle, and Island Center Forest).

The County has also established a destination mountain bike park at Duthie Hill Park that contains six miles of cross country and nearly two miles of freeride trails. Proposals for other enhanced mountain bike park areas on other sites within the park system are being considered.

King County collaborates with other major public and private land holders of adjacent sites

with backcountry trails to ensure connections and improve access to these trails. King County also relies upon trail users and community groups to help preserve lands for trails and open space, maintain and improve existing trails, and construct new trails to meet the growing demand for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. King County partners with many trail user and advocacy groups including the Washington Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Backcountry Horsemen – Tahoma Chapter, Enumclaw Forested Foothills Recreation Association, Friends of Rock Creek Valley, King County Executive Horse Council, Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust.

### **2.4.2. King County Parks Local Historical Landmarks**

King County has a rich cultural history going back at least 1,200 years that is evident in archaeological traces of hunting, fishing, stone tool creation, early settlement and other activities. Euro-Americans and other immigrants arrived in the early 1850s to farm, log, fish, mine, settle and form communities. This long and varied history is present in a wide variety of cultural resources including subsurface sites and above-ground buildings, structures, objects and districts throughout the County. Many of these resources are recognized and protected through state registration, listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or with County landmark designation. The value of cultural resources is recognized in both Comprehensive Plan policies and the Executive Procedures for Treatment of Cultural Resources. Their preservation is compatible with park and open space uses.

People continue to be attracted to waterways and lowlands for many of the reasons assumed to be important in prehistoric times: sustenance, transportation, views, recreation and more. Particularly in floodplain and waterfront areas, recreation and open space

lands have a high probability for archaeological sites, both prehistoric and historic. Cultural resources attract visitors and often contribute character and identity to parks and provide rich interpretive opportunities. Several King County parks contain significant historic resources, known archaeological sites, or both, including Marymoor, White Center, Tolt-MacDonald, Fall City and Preston Community Center. It is highly likely that archaeological sites are present in many other recreation and open space lands.

- OS-135a King County should preserve and steward significant historic and archaeological resources within its open space system, including those with facilities created and/or managed in partnership with other organizations.
- OS-136a King County should consider cultural resources in its open space acquisitions and management and steward such resources in a manner that protects and enhances their cultural, educational and scientific benefits while ensuring appropriate public use, appreciation and enjoyment.

### **2.4.3. Other Facilities**

Parks constructs and maintains many facilities, including parking lots, restrooms, and picnic and rest areas for public benefit throughout the open space system. The Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center with its Olympic-sized pool hosts over 50 competitive events annually as well as provides space for public lap swims and family swims. Throughout the Parks system, over 80 ballfields, 25 picnic shelters, a community center, and an outdoor concert venue are available to be reserved for private use.

## **2.5 Open Space Inventory**

Today, Parks stewards more than 28,000 acres of open space, which is comprised of 200 parks and 175 miles of regional trail corridors. In addition, King County holds nearly 145,000 acres of conservation easements. More than 220 miles of backcountry trails are located in county open space and conservation easements.

King County's open space system is an ever-evolving inventory of public land that has experienced considerable change since its beginnings in the early twentieth century. Many of the first parks in the system were donated to the County, and early park facility development was spurred on by the construction of community centers by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Many of the initial county park sites and facilities are now owned and operated by cities that have expanded or incorporated in the ensuing years.

Over the years, King County has expanded, shifted and refined its role in the provision of park and recreation services to become an open space system that is focused on regional parks and recreation amenities, natural areas, forests, regional and backcountry trails and local parks in rural unincorporated areas of the County. In response to the State GMA, this shift called for local parks located in the urban area to be transferred to cities. Since 2002, more than 60 parks and pools comprising nearly 1,600 acres of local park sites have been transferred to cities, among them, the transfer

of the King County Fairgrounds to the City of Enumclaw.

In the last 20 years, thousands of acres of open space have been added to the open space inventory, mainly in the form of new sites, additions to existing sites, and through conservation easements. These acquisitions reflect the shift toward regional natural areas, regional trails and forest lands.

In addition, King County has looked beyond fee acquisition for the preservation of open space and has utilized a number of tools to obtain forest and ecological conservation easements that provide conservation values and benefits without the need for County ownership. Since 2004, King County has added nearly 140,000 acres of conservation easements; today, Parks owns a total of nearly 145,000 acres.

The chart on the following pages shows the inventory of King County's open space system, identifying each site by its primary role and classification as described in Section 2.2 Classification of the Open Space Plan. The classification system provides a method to describe the role of each site in the system and provides direction for its use, management, development or restoration and enhancement.

This inventory list can be expected to change due to new acquisitions and transfers to cities, but provides a snapshot of the system of open space lands as of January 2016.

## Local Parks

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Bingaman Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	16.72 (1.05)	Urban
Boulevard Lane Park	Multi-use	30.28	Urban
Bridle Crest Trail Site	Recreation	1.51 (.56)	Urban
Bryn Mawr Park	Recreation	4.81	Urban
Camelot Park	Multi-use	18.08	Urban
Cedar Creek Park	Multi-use	77.97	Rural
Coalfield Park	Multi-use	19.81	Rural
Cottage Lake Park	Multi-use	20.63	Rural
Dockton Park	Recreation	20.76	Rural
Dick Thurnau Memorial Park	Recreation	33.42	Urban
Duvall Park	Multi-use	24.50	Rural
Echo Lake Interchange Site	Natural Area	7.75	Rural
Fall City Park	Multi-use	27.54	Rural
Fall City Park West	Multi-use	33.36	Rural
Five Mile Lake Park*	Recreation	25.15	Urban
Flaming Geyser Park	Multi-use	104.34	Rural
Gold Creek Park	Recreation	34.68	Rural
Hamm Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	3.88	Urban
Hollywood Hills Equestrian Park	Recreation	7.29 (12.24)	Rural
Honeydew Park	Multi-use	0.15	Urban
Hyde Lake Park	Multi-use	25.49	Rural
Instebo Park	Recreation	0.69	Rural
Kathryn Taylor Equestrian Park	Recreation	25.95	Rural
Lake Desire 2 Natural Area	Natural Area	1.10	Urban
Lake Francis Park	Recreation	9.66	Rural
Lake Geneva Park	Recreation	18.64	Urban
Lake Joy Park	Recreation	0.74	Rural
Levdansky Park	Recreation	17.27	Rural
Maple Valley Heights Park	Recreation	2.95	Rural
Maplewood Heights Park	Recreation	19.16	Urban
Maplewood Park	Recreation	44.61	Urban
May Creek Park - County	Natural Area	47.29	Urban
May Valley Park	Recreation	54.27	Rural
Mirrormont Park	Multi-use	10.82	Rural
North Green River Park	Multi-use	104.92	Urban
North Shorewood Park	Recreation	6.26	Urban
Northshore Athletic Fields	Recreation	19.08	Rural
Novelty Hill Little League Fields	Recreation	6.63	Urban

**Local Parks *continued***

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Ormes Hill Park Site	Multi-use	9.55	Urban
Preston Park	Recreation	0.56	Rural
Quigley Park	Recreation	0.51	Rural
Ravenhill Open Space	Multi-use	25.68	Rural
Ravensdale Park	Recreation	42.47	Rural
Redmond Ridge Park	Recreation	10.00	Urban
Renton Park	Multi-use	19.09	Urban
Sierra Heights Park	Recreation	8.30	Urban
Sixty Acres Park	Recreation	89.69	Rural
Skyway Park	Recreation	23.40	Urban
South County Ballfields	Recreation	21.16	Urban
Sunset Playfield*	Recreation	13.95	Urban
White Center Heights Park	Recreation	6.38	Urban
Whitney Bridge Park	Multi-use	29.82	Rural

\* Managed by others

**Regional Parks**

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Ames Lake Forest	Working Forest	(425.38)	Rural
Auburn Narrows Natural Area	Natural Area	104.89	Urban/Rural
Bass Lake Complex Natural Area	Natural Area	419.83	Rural
Bassett Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	31.71	Rural
Belmondo Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	23.79	Rural
Big Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	101.15	Rural
Big Finn Hill Park	Multi-use	218.86	Urban
Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	89.66 (76.83)	Rural
Black Diamond Open Space	Multi-use	1,101.89	Rural
BN Peninsula Natural Area	Natural Area	26.57	Rural
Boxley Creek Site	Multi-use	146.72	Rural
Camp Sealth Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(100.99)	Rural
Canyon Creek Headwaters Natural Area	Natural Area	69.92	Rural
Canyon Creek Natural Area	Multi-use	(27.28)	Rural
Carey Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(9.91)	Rural
Carnation Marsh Natural Area	Natural Area	175.43	Rural
Cavanaugh Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	61.49	Rural
Cecil Moses Memorial Park	Recreation	3.25	Urban

**Regional Parks *continued***

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Cedar Grove Natural Area	Natural Area	74.92	Rural
Cedar Grove Road Natural Area	Natural Area	5.66	Rural
Cemetery Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	45.87	Rural
Chinook Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	70.98	Rural
Christiansen Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	(19.17)	Rural
Cold Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	129.53	Rural
Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park	Multi-use	3,178.03 (4.69)	Urban/Rural
Cougar Mountain Wellsite 2	Recreation	0.55	Urban
Cougar/Squak Corridor	Multi-use	704.20 (.51)	Rural
Covington Natural Area	Natural Area	55.84	Rural
Cross Kirkland Corridor	Recreation	(67.61)	Urban
Crow Marsh Natural Area	Natural Area	25.86 (100.16)	Rural
Danville-Georgetown Open Space	Multi-use	341.09	Rural
Dockton Forest	Working Forest	105.40	Rural
Dockton Natural Area	Natural Area	43.55	Rural
Dorre Don Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	93.80 (.76)	Rural
Duthie Hill Park	Multi-use	135.63	Rural
Ellis Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	3.25	Rural
Evans Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	38.22	Rural
Evans Crest Natural Area	Natural Area	29.84	Rural
Fall City Natural Area	Natural Area	76.29	Rural
Flaming Geyser Natural Area	Natural Area	73.07	Rural
Forest Glen Natural Area	Natural Area	3.76	Rural
Fred V. Habenicht Rotary Park	Recreation	4.42	Rural
Grand Ridge Park	Multi-use	1,295.96 (.88)	Urban/Rural
Green River Natural Area	Natural Area	1,110.92 (.19)	Rural
Griffin Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	65.97 (2.67)	Rural
Hatchery Natural Area	Natural Area	24.46	Rural
Hazel Wolf Wetland Natural Area	Natural Area	(115.93)	Rural
Henrys Ridge Open Space	Multi-use	246.74	Rural
Horsehead Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	34.91	Rural
Inspiration Point Natural Area	Natural Area	6.07	Rural
Island Center Forest	Working Forest	357.07	Rural
Island Center Forest Equestrian Trail	Recreation	(.43)	Rural
Island Center Forest Natural Area	Natural Area	81.90	Rural
Issaquah Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	48.08	Urban/Rural
Jenkins Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	7.25	Rural
Jones Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	2.54	Rural

**Regional Parks *continued***

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Juanita Triangle Park	Multi-use	0.55	Urban
Juanita Woodlands Park	Multi-use	36.27	Urban
Kanaskat Natural Area	Natural Area	196.76 (.24)	Rural
Kathryn C. Lewis Natural Area	Natural Area	10.05	Rural
Lake Youngs Park	Recreation	4.81	Urban
Landsburg Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	87.66	Rural
Little Si Natural Area	Natural Area	28.07 (.38)	Rural
Log Cabin Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	118.18	Rural
Lost Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	8.11	Rural
Lower Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	16.43	Rural
Lower Lions Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	6.57	Rural
Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	36.38	Rural
Lower Peterson Creek Corridor Natural Area	Natural Area	66.65	Rural
Manzanita Natural Area	Natural Area	2.03	Rural
Marjorie R. Stanley Natural Area	Natural Area	17.61	Rural
Marymoor Park	Recreation	617.66	Urban
Maury Island Marine Park	Multi-use	316.65	Rural
Maury Island Natural Area	Natural Area	273.86	Rural
May Valley 164th Natural Area	Natural Area	3.66	Rural
McGarvey Park Open Space	Multi-use	400.43	Rural
Middle Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	106.43 (25.06)	Rural
Middle Boise Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	1.84	Rural
Middle Evans Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(38.29)	Rural
Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area	Natural Area	662.46 (79.35)	Rural
Middle Issaquah Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	88.39 (124.17)	Rural
Mitchell Hill Forest	Working Forest	443.37	Rural
Mitchell Hill East Equestrian Trail	Recreation	(.64)	Rural
Moss Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	371.93	Rural
Mouth Of Taylor Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	28.84	Rural
Neely Bridge Natural Area	Natural Area	36.88	Rural
Neill Point Natural Area	Natural Area	53.11	Rural
Northilla Beach Natural Area	Natural Area	5.86	Rural
Nowak Natural Area	Natural Area	8.08	Rural
Paradise Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	122.66 (50.51)	Rural
Paradise Valley Natural Area	Natural Area	4.72 (79.35)	Rural
Patterson Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	329.47	Rural
Patterson Creek Preserve Forest	Working Forest	(243.01)	Rural
Peterson Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	144.89	Rural



**Regional Parks *continued***

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Open Space Classification</b>	<b>Fee (Easement)</b>	<b>Urban or Rural</b>
Petrovitsky Park	Multi-use	88.02	Urban
Piner Point Natural Area	Natural Area	13.64	Rural
Pinnacle Peak Park	Multi-use	313.95	Rural
Pipeline Number 5 Trail Site	Recreation	(.93)	Urban
Point Heyer Natural Area	Natural Area	49.75	Rural
Porter Levee Natural Area	Natural Area	51.35	Rural
Preston Athletic Fields	Recreation	13.81	Rural
Preston Mill	Recreation	21.67	Rural
Preston Ridge Forest	Working Forest	189.55	Rural
PSE Trail Site	Recreation	0.28	Rural
Raabs Lagoon Natural Area	Natural Area	17.07	Rural
Raging River Natural Area	Natural Area	55.13	Rural
Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area	Multi-use	1,913.25	Rural
Ravensdale Retreat Natural Area	Natural Area	145.63	Rural
Redmond Ridge Trail Site	Recreation	0.19 (9.73)	Urban
Redmond Watershed Addition Park	Recreation	2.47	Rural
Redmond Watershed Trail Site	Recreation	0.56 (.34)	Rural
Ricardi Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	10.12	Rural
Ring Hill Forest	Working Forest	320.52	Rural
Rock Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	143.74	Rural
Shadow Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	41.61 (22.20)	Rural
Shinglemill Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	69.25 (45.66)	Rural
Snoqualmie Forest	Working Forest	(89,603.28)	Rural
Soaring Eagle Regional Park	Multi-use	597.01	Rural
Spring Lake/Lake Desire Park	Multi-use	391.38	Urban/Rural
Squak Mt/Tiger Mt Corridor	Multi-use	266.28	Rural
Steve Cox Memorial Park	Recreation	9.88	Urban
Stillwater Natural Area	Natural Area	45.39 (101.38)	Rural
Stossel Creek Forest	Working Forest	(52.27)	Rural
Sugarloaf Mountain Forest	Working Forest	284.28 (2.54)	Rural
Tanner Landing Park	Multi-use	40.80	Rural
Taylor Mountain Forest	Working Forest	1923.91	Rural
Three Forks Park	Multi-use	285.44 (.71)	Rural
Tokul Creek Forest	Working Forest	165.36 (536.47)	Rural
Tollgate Farm	Multi-use	161.23	Rural
Tolt River - John MacDonald Park	Multi-use	522.10	Urban/Rural
Tolt River Natural Area	Natural Area	272.84	Rural
Uplands Forest	Working Forest	(506.13)	Rural
Upper Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	21.56 (15.99)	Rural

**Regional Parks *continued***

Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Upper Green River Watershed Forest	Working Forest	(45,051.40)	Rural
Upper Raging River Forest	Working Forest	(5,837.40)	Rural
Wetland 14 Natural Area	Natural Area	50.81	Rural
Wetland 79 Natural Area	Natural Area	6.87	Rural

**Regional Trails**

Trail Name	Open Space Classification	Fee	Urban or Rural
Burke Gilman Trail Site	Recreation	31.21	Urban
Cedar River Trail Site	Recreation	145.46	Urban/Rural
Cedar River to Lake Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	22.16	Urban
East Lake Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	121.47 (.21)	Urban
East Plateau Trail Site	Recreation	27.35 (2.84)	Urban/Rural
Eastside Rail Corridor	Recreation	171.17 (13.33)	Urban
Eastside Rail Corridor - Woodinville	Recreation	(29.09)	Urban
Foothills Trail Site	Recreation	69.11	Rural
Green River Trail Site	Recreation	24.28 (5.15)	Urban
Green To Cedar Rivers Trail Site	Recreation	131.64 (23.71)	Urban/Rural
Klahanie Trail Site	Recreation	(7.60)	Urban
Landsburg Kanaskat Trail Site	Recreation	21.46 (.28)	Rural
Marymoor Connector Trail Site	Recreation	(1.48)	Urban
Preston Snoqualmie Trail Site	Recreation	94.68 (.36)	Rural
Sammamish River Trail Site	Multi-use	131.04 (.31)	Urban/Rural
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Kellogg Site	Recreation	27.93	Rural
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Site	Recreation	501.34 (2.57)	Rural
Soos Creek Park and Trail	Multi-use	788.83 (3.52)	Urban/Rural
Soos Creek To Lake Youngs Trail Site	Recreation	0.46	Rural
Tokol Bypass Site	Multi-use	(34.79)	Urban
Tolt Pipeline Trail Site	Recreation	2.36	Urban/Rural
West Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	56.48 (7.87)	Urban

**Pool**

Name	Open Space Classification	Urban or Rural
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center Site	Recreation	Other

## CHAPTER THREE: PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### 3.1 Partnerships

In addition to collaboration with other King County agencies such as the Water and Land Resources Division, Parks works to establish strategic community and corporate partnerships, which enhance its ability to acquire property, develop recreational opportunities and amenities, restore lands and maintain and operate facilities. As Parks is only partially funded by tax revenue, development of strategic revenue-generating partnerships is a core component to ensure that open space lands are acquired and stewarded and recreation facilities are developed, operated and maintained.

#### 3.1.1 Values and Benefits of Partnerships

The value and benefits of partnerships are recognized throughout the Open Space Plan. There are many benefits to King County, its partners and county residents in establishing these partnerships.

- Partnerships enable King County and its partners to leverage their fiscal and human resources to provide facilities and services greater than any one partner could achieve.
- Partnerships, such as those with schools, athletic organizations, user groups, and community-based organizations, encourage optimal and appropriate use of public facilities.



*Volunteers at Tolt River Natural Area*

- Partnerships enable King County and its partners to draw on each other's expertise to steward and maintain the region's open space resources and recreation facilities.
- Partnerships provide opportunities to bring together agencies, individuals, and interests to work toward achieving common goals.
- Partnerships empower community groups to invest in their open space system.
- Partnerships can generate non-tax revenue designed to support maintenance and operations of the system.

King County is committed to actively pursuing and facilitating partnerships to provide regional open space sites and recreation facilities, programs and services throughout the County. The following policies provide a solid foundation on which to build these partnerships.

PIO-101 King County will encourage and pursue partnerships with public agencies and jurisdictions, private organizations and businesses for support and funding of the open space system and its resources to increase the range of sites, facilities and interpretive and educational programs available to the public.



*Painting the Wayne Mural Tunnel*

PIO-102 King County will encourage and promote mutually beneficial agreements with school districts, other agencies and private groups for the joint use, stewardship and management of sites and facilities for public recreation and natural resource protection consistent with the planned purposes for each site and facility.

PIO-103 King County will evaluate its various private and community programs to determine how best to increase opportunities for all residents of King County.

### 3.1.2 Types of Partnerships

Agreements and partnerships are varied and site specific, depending upon the parties involved and the type of acquisition, development, use, and stewardship being considered. However, partnerships may generally be categorized within the following areas:

- Fund Development
- Community Partnerships and Grants Program
- Youth Sports Facilities Grant Program
- Inter-agency and Inter-jurisdictional Coordination
- Community-based Partnerships

#### 3.1.2.1 Fund Development

Through the Partnerships for Parks initiative, Parks cultivates and establishes corporate partnerships that increase recreational opportunities for King County residents and generate new non-tax revenue to support the operations and maintenance of the open space system. The division strives to ensure that corporate partnerships and agreements reflect the aesthetics and values of the division in supporting vibrant communities and healthy lifestyles.

The Parks Omnibus Ordinance (14509) provides the statutory framework for the Parks and Recreation Division's financial structure, offering flexibility in negotiating partnerships for fund development. These partnerships generally generate business revenues for the division and can take a variety of forms, including concessions, naming rights, event sponsorships, legacy gifts and grants, marketing and advertising, parking, facility rentals, utilities and lease agreements, and public/private real estate development, among others.

Business revenues represent approximately 15 percent of the Parks and Recreation Division's operating expenditures. The division's financial plan requires the total amount of business revenue earned to grow three percent each year. For more detailed information, reports on these revenues are available on the King County Parks website.

Future revenues necessary for maintaining a status quo system are dependent on the

successful cultivation of fund development partnerships and strategic use of capital investments that balance recreation, stewardship and revenue objectives.

To date, examples of partnership revenue include:

- \$984,000 annually from events and facility use agreements (including Cirque Du Soleil, Marymoor Park Concerts Series, Timber! Outdoor Music Festival)
- \$918,000 annually from parking fees at Marymoor Park
- \$279,000 annually from concession agreements
- \$200,000 annually from cell towers and other utility agreements
- \$107,400 annually from sponsorships and general donations
- \$107,000 annually from camping fees at Told-MacDonald Park and Campground



*Concert at Marymoor Park*

The King County Parks Foundation, established in 2013, is devoted to cultivating private sector philanthropies by leveraging public donations, including land, to enhance community connections to regional trails and open space, support land and easement acquisitions, increase recreation opportunities and support the parks system for future generations.

### 3.1.2.2 Community Partnerships and Grants Program (CPG)

The Community Partnerships and Grants Program is a public/private partnership initiative that empowers user groups, sports associations, recreation clubs, and other types of non-profit organizations to construct, develop, program, and/or maintain new or enhanced public recreation facilities on King County land in a manner that maximizes public investment in facilities and/or does not result in significant new publicly funded operations and maintenance costs.

King County contributes use of land and capital improvement seed grants, while community partners contribute the necessary additional capital and in-kind resources to develop the new or enhanced facility. Community partners also sign a long-term agreement with Parks to manage and clarify responsibility for operations, maintenance, and programming, which is typically carried out by volunteers and/or through revenue-based programs or other resources.

As of 2015, more than 60 projects were in early discussions, design development, under construction, or completed. In total these projects represent over \$70 million dollars in current and potential future recreation facilities for the citizens of King County.

Some examples of completed projects resulting from this type of partnership include:



*Ravensdale Park Ballfield*

- Ravensdale Park redevelopment with the Ravensdale Park Foundation includes four new synthetic fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and football, a new restroom, parking lot, new maintenance building, and related infrastructure.
- New synthetic lacrosse field (with lights, restrooms, and related infrastructure) in partnership with Kirkland Lacrosse.
- New 20,000 square foot Bethaday Community Learning Center at Dick Thurnau Memorial Park in partnership with Technology Access Foundation which includes classrooms and community space.
- New boathouse at Marymoor Park in partnership with the Sammamish Rowing Association that includes a 12,000 square foot multi-story boathouse with three bays, multi-purpose room, lockers, offices, and related infrastructure.
- New picnic shelters at Maury Island Marine Park, Preston Park, Fred Habenicht Park, and Island Center Forest through relationships with various CPG partners.

### 3.1.2.3 Youth Sports Facilities Grant Program

The Youth Sports Facilities Grant (YSFG) program provides matching grant funds to rehabilitate or develop sports fields and facilities serving youth in King County. Initiated in 1993, the program strives to facilitate new athletic opportunities for as many youth in King County as possible. Eligible public sector entities include: school districts, park districts, utility districts, cities, or King County. Non-profit organizations, such as youth sports leagues or youth oriented agencies, are also eligible, but must partner with the public entity on whose land the field or facility is or will be located unless a long-term lease is in place. Only projects located in King County are eligible for funding. Types of projects the program funds include athletic fields, sports courts, skateboard parks, climbing walls, playgrounds, running tracks, and gymnasiums, among others.

The YSFG program is funded and sustained through a one-quarter of one percent car rental tax and interest on the program's \$2.6 million endowment. Program funds can only be used for constructing or renovating facilities and not for maintaining or operating them. Through year 2015, the program has awarded roughly \$13 million in grants, funding about 325 projects widely distributed throughout the county. Examples of YSFG partnerships include:

- Auburn Parks and Recreation, Lea Hill Park, Free-Game Court, \$60,000 grant
- Si View Metropolitan Park District, Si View Park Athletic Fields, \$65,000 grant
- Vashon Park District, Burton Adventure Recreation Center, Skate Park, \$75,000
- Seattle Parks and Recreation, Montlake Park, Sports court, \$53,500

### 3.1.2.4 Inter-agency and Inter-jurisdictional Coordination

Parks has formed several partnerships with other public entities, such as school districts and cities, to coordinate planning, acquisition, and/or development of open space sites and recreational amenities.

PIO-104 King County will provide regional leadership in open space efforts and encourage public understanding, involvement and commitment to regional open space preservation and recreation goals.

PIO-105 King County will work to bring together a diversity of agencies, groups and individuals to advocate for, help grow and support the region's open space.

Some examples of these types of partnerships include:

- Bellevue ballfields at Marymoor Park – Jointly funded the development of and share responsibilities for maintenance and operations.

- Middle Green River Coalition – Participate with the Coalition, local and state entities, recreationists, landowners, and citizens to protect and enhance open space along the Middle Green River and its tributaries.
- Mountains to Sound Greenway – Collaboratively plan and implement the Greenway vision with local and state entities, non-profit organizations, the private sector, and citizens through strategic acquisitions, habitat restoration and invasive weed control.
- Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust – Coordinate with the Trust to conserve lands to protect the natural ecosystems and rural character of Vashon-Maury Island.
- Trust for Public Lands (TPL)—Work with TPL on purchases of key lands and easements.
- Forterra – Work with Forterra on achieving long-term conservation initiatives such as the Skykomish Valley Economic Development, Recreation, and Natural Resource Conservation Initiative (2014).



Camp Sealth

### 3.1.2.5 Community-based Partnerships

In planning, developing and stewarding King County's large and complex open space system, Parks often develops relationships with community-based organizations that represent constituencies concerned with a particular community, recreational asset (including the range and scope of recreational activities taking place on properties throughout the system), wildlife species, or ecosystem. These partnerships vary in nature and complexity, depending upon the issue, and often involve some level of volunteer commitment on behalf of the group.

Some current partners include:

- *Enumclaw Forested Foothills Recreation Association* works cooperatively with public agencies and other groups to conserve and protect the multi-purpose use of forested foothills, aquifers, wetlands and wildlife habitat of southeast King County.
- *Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA)* advocates and volunteers to build and maintain trails for mountain biking in Washington State, as well as educates people about the sport. They also developed and provide programming for the Duthie Hill Mountain Bike Park.
- *Friends of Island Center Forest* is a community-based coalition of stakeholders that actively stewards and advocates for the protection of Island Center Forest.
- *Friends of Marymoor Park* is made up of park users groups, park neighbors and others who want to share information and help enhance and better utilize the facilities and programs within the park.
- *Washington Trails Association*, works to preserve and promote hiking opportunities across the state, constructs and maintains backcountry trails at multiple sites on King County's open space lands.



- *Water Tenders* is a group of citizens who work to protect, preserve and restore the wetlands and streams in the Bear Creek watershed.
- *Sammamish Rowing Club* offers rowing lessons and programming based out of Marymoor Park.

### 3.1.3 Future Partnerships

Parks will continue to establish partnerships for planning, acquisition, development, preservation, maintenance, and stewardship of the open space system by actively identifying and cultivating potential opportunities for the formation of partnerships. These relationships will be pursued through a variety of activities including community outreach, requests for proposals, and direct cultivation of other agencies and groups to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Several considerations must be addressed in the evaluation and prioritization of potential partnerships. These include public benefits and costs (human resources, financial resources, opportunity costs, direct and indirect costs), as well as the legal framework which defines King County's ability to enter into partnership agreements and the conditions of those agreements. This framework includes federal laws, Washington State laws, and the King County Code and ordinances (such as land-use zoning codes and development regulations) deed restrictions, and funding source restrictions.

PIO-106 King County will assess partnerships to ensure the success for each of the partners and provision of the greatest public benefit.

PIO-107 King County will evaluate partnerships at sites slated for capital development to enhance revenue generation opportunities and create additional recreation uses in appropriate locations.

## 3.2 Public Engagement

Parks continually seeks ways to encourage the public to explore and enjoy King County's open space system, provide feedback in acquisition, planning, restoration, development and management of lands and amenities provided by the division and its partners.

The following policies encourage public participation in the planning and delivery of services and programs to balance the diverse and competing needs and priorities of King County residents:

PIO-108 King County will seek and encourage public input, advice and participation in open space system issues using a variety of methods to encourage public engagement, including public meetings, focus groups, advisory committees, surveys, email and other electronic communication tools.

PIO 109 The King County Parks and Recreation Division will engage the public consistent with the County's Strategic Plan's goals related to public engagement, service excellence and equity and social justice.

PIO-110 King County will design and conduct a public participation process appropriate for the site when preparing master plans, park project program plans, site development and site management plans.

Parks establishes advisory committees to provide input and recommendations on a variety of issues affecting the management of the lands and assets of the park system. Examples of current advisory committees include:

- *Cedar River Council* is a group of citizens and local, state, federal and tribal government representatives and elected officials working to preserve and restore the health and public benefit of the Cedar River.

- *The Conservation Futures Citizens Committee* makes annual recommendations for allocation of Conservation Futures Tax levy funds to King County jurisdictions and the Parks Levy funds for King County Parks' related acquisitions.
- *The King County Rural Forest Commission* represents a variety of rural forest interests and advises King County on policies and programs affecting rural forestry. It works to identify strategies to conserve and manage private and county forestlands and promotes the practice of forestry in rural areas of the County.
- *The Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board*, which was created as part of the 2004-2007 Parks Levy and renewed with subsequent Parks levies (2014-2019), plays an integral role in ensuring citizen input and oversight of the expenditure of levy proceeds per guidance provided in the levy ordinance.
- *The Community Service Areas* are seven independent entities formed to improve communication between the County and the residents of the unincorporated areas.

PIO-111 New funding initiatives for open space should be based on a county-wide planning and public engagement process that identifies community needs and regional opportunities.

PIO-112 King County will encourage appropriate public use of the open space system, provide awareness of the opportunities it offers and increase public knowledge and understanding of the system.

PIO-113 King County will utilize clear, concise and timely communication with the public.

As part of its public engagement process, Parks utilizes a variety of communication channels that employ best practices and the latest technology and through which the public can engage with King County. Some examples of these efforts include:

- [Parksfeedback.com](http://Parksfeedback.com) – a survey tool that allows park users to respond to questions and write comments about their experiences – both positive and negative -



*Island Center Forest*

in King County's open space system, which is then "red flagged" in the email inboxes of key agency staff.

- *King County Parks electronic media presence* – through its website, blog, and other multi-media tools, the agency frequently disseminates information to the public about its services and operations using channels that encourage interaction with and the involvement of readers.
- *Outreach Events* – throughout the year, agency staff attend fairs, festivals, and other gatherings, which provide opportunities to interact directly with the public, answer questions, and distribute information about King County's parks, trails, and open space system.

PIO-114 King County will encourage and support volunteer efforts to maintain and enhance lands and their natural resources, programs and recreation facilities, including trails as well as help promote understanding, appreciation and support of the county's open space system.

From one-day events to years of stewardship, the individuals who volunteer their time, energy, and passion in King County's parks and trails play an important role in protecting and preserving the county's natural heritage and recreational assets. While providing invaluable assistance, volunteers become involved with and invested in King County's open space system, in turn contributing to and ensuring resources for the long-term stewardship of the system.

There are multiple ways volunteers are involved with King County's open space, such as:

- *Parks and Trails Ambassadors* – these volunteers commit to providing 100 hours annually of their time to carry out tasks such as educating and assisting visitors, reporting on trail conditions, monitoring restoration efforts, assisting with volunteer work parties,

and clearing litter on park properties.

- *Adopt-a-Park or Trail* – these volunteers often form formal or informal "Friends of..." types of associations and provide volunteer service at least four times annually in a specific park or trail.
- *Service Volunteers* – these volunteers, who come from local businesses, schools, scout troops, religious institutions, community-based organizations, and other groups and individuals, are interested in participating in community service projects, with commitments extending from one day to many years' involvement over multiple sites. They are matched with volunteer opportunities throughout the system, appropriate to their availability, geographic preference, age levels, and other factors.
- *Cultivating Corporate Volunteerism* – these volunteers provide significant volunteer hours and match volunteer hours with corporate matching dollars.



*Trail building at Taylor Mountain Forest*



## CHAPTER FOUR: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

King County Parks and Recreation Division's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) supports open space acquisition and stewardship to enhance King County's natural areas and forests; the construction and rehabilitation of regional and rural park facilities; and the development of regional and backcountry trails for the benefit of King County citizens. The CIP is consistent with the direction set forth in the enacting ordinance for the 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy (Ordinance #17568), the King County Parks Levy Task Force Report and the King County Strategic Plan. The CIP aligns with the division's goals including:

- Goal 1: Take care of what we have.
- Goal 2: Grow/connect regional open space and natural lands.
- Goal 3: Improve regional trails system and regional mobility.
- Goal 4: Make parks more accessible.

Furthermore, the CIP reflects King County's emphasis on promoting equity and social justice and the county's "fair and just" principle by undertaking projects that reduce barriers to accessing park sites and trails and investing in major maintenance in underserved areas of the County. More information on the County's equity and social justice policies can be found on King County's website [www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice.aspx).

### 4.1 Funding

Funding for park and trail development, recreation facilities and acquisition projects comes from a variety of revenue sources described in this section. The budget process for the operating budget and the development of a six-year CIP plan occurs biennially. The process involves Parks staff, the King County Executive, the Metropolitan King County Council, and the public.



Marymoor Park

The primary sources for Parks' CIP funding include:

- *Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy*: On August 6, 2013, King County voters approved a Consumer Price Index property tax levy lid lift of 18.77 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for the period of 2014-2019. Over 37 percent of the revenue generated by this levy is allocated to the King County Parks' CIP for the purposes of regional trail development; open space and natural lands acquisition; major maintenance repair; and development of trailhead facilities to increase access to parks and trails. The levy expires at the end of 2019.
- *Real Estate Excise Tax #1 (REET 1)*: Under state law, and further refined by King County code, REET funds may be spent on specified types of capital projects. REET 1 funds may be spent on capital projects for "planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction,

repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of a variety of facilities within the unincorporated area including parks; recreational facilities; [and] trails." Revenues are generated by a real estate sales tax of 0.25 percent collected in unincorporated King County.

- *Real Estate Excise Tax #2 (REET 2)*: Under state law, REET 2 funds may be spent on capital projects for "planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of a variety of facilities within the unincorporated area including parks". The King County Code further defines the use of REET 2 allowing their use only for "planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation or improvement of parks located in or providing a benefit and open to residents of the unincorporated area of King County." Revenues are generated by a real estate sales tax of 0.25 percent collected in unincorporated King County.
- *Conservation Futures Tax (CFT)*: A countywide property tax of 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Revenues may be used solely for acquisition of open space, agriculture, and timber lands. This source cannot be used to acquire park sites for active recreation.
- *Partnerships*: The Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) Program leverages county funds typically through a use agreement in which a community-based partner or sports organization contributes funding or in-kind donations toward the construction of a capital project.
- *Grants*: Grant funding typically comes from federal or state agencies and has included Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) transportation grants for nonmotorized mobility and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's various grant programs. Other federal and state programs may also offer grant opportunities.



Burke-Gilman Trail

- CIP-101 King County will encourage and pursue partnerships with other agencies, jurisdictions and the private sector to maximize funding of the park, trail and open space system and its resources.
- CIP-102 King County will leverage its funding with external resources, including the aggressive pursuit of grants, outside funding sources, and partnerships.

## 4.2 Planning, Acquisition and Development

King County will use this Open Space Plan as a guide for acquisition, planning, stewardship, and design decisions for the enhancement and development of the open space system.

- CIP-103 King County will plan, acquire, develop, restore and enhance open space sites and recreation facilities as appropriate, including recreation and multi-use sites, regional trails and backcountry trails, natural areas and forest lands, to further the vision and goals of this plan.
- CIP-104 King County will plan and develop facilities that encourage multiple public uses and benefits and will work to reduce user conflicts while minimizing impacts to natural resources.
- CIP-105 King County will systematically apply the open space classification system to sites in its inventory, along with use area designations of county open space lands to clearly facilitate appropriate use, programming, development, maintenance, and stewardship.
- CIP-106 King County will coordinate open space planning, acquisition and development with other county projects and programs and with other agencies and organizations that may provide mutual benefits.
- CIP-107 King County will acquire, plan for, steward, develop and operate the park system consistent with the King County Strategic Plan's goals for economic growth and built environment, environmental sustainability, financial stewardship, service excellence and public engagement.

### 4.2.1 Planning

King County pursues a variety of planning activities that are coordinated with and build upon each other to further the goals of the open space system.

- CIP-108 King County will evaluate and update the King County Open Space Plan when necessary to address changing conditions such as system growth, respond to new initiatives, and remain eligible for grant opportunities.
- CIP-109 King County will evaluate and update the Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR) and engage in other regional trail planning efforts to respond to changing conditions and needs, provide a viable capital development program, and remain eligible for grant opportunities.
- CIP-110 As soon as possible after acquisition and prior to significant development, use or large scale restoration of a site, King County will prepare a site management, stewardship or master plan. These individual plans should identify appropriate types and levels of development and public access, rules for use, and required stewardship (including maintenance, restoration, monitoring and enforcement) needed for public enjoyment, resource conservation, safety and liability. King County will prepare interim maintenance plans for all new property acquisitions to address basic resource protection, public access, safety/liability issues and budget and staffing needs.

CIP-111 Management and stewardship plans will be guided by the King County Ecological Lands Handbook and the Programmatic Plans for Management of King County-owned Ecological Lands and for Working Forest Lands. These plans will also be informed by the regional and backcountry trails planning documents and best available science.

CIP-112 Future management actions for open space sites shall be consistent with their individual plans. Changes in conditions, such as increased public use or acquisition of new land, will require evaluation and periodic updating of these plans. Plans should be evaluated every 10 years and updated as appropriate.

Planning should also consider the potential for redevelopment, restoration and enhancement of existing sites and facilities as an especially important strategy to maximize the recreation and resource values and revenue generating potential of existing sites. Recognition of an adaptive strategy for use and management

of open space lands provides for appropriate long-term public benefit and health of the system.

CIP-113 King County should monitor open space recreation use patterns as background for future planning efforts, including how open space sites serve the public benefit and determine subsequent recommendations to enhance or restore sites to increase their benefit to King County's open space system, its goals and vision.

#### 4.2.1.1 Recreation Planning

King County, along with many other local jurisdictions, has created new athletic fields on sites throughout the County in recent years. Considering population growth and other demographic trends, it is important to understand and monitor the need for recreation facilities and ways in which they can be built and maintained to maximize resources and serve the greatest public benefit. King County currently achieves this in part through partnership-based



*The Blue Trees on Burke-Gilman Trail in Kenmore*





*East Lake Sammamish Trail Construction*

programs such as the Community Partnerships and Grants Program and Youth Sports Facilities Grants Program. Refer to **3.1.2.3** and **3.1.2.5**.

CIP-114 King County should work with athletic organizations, school districts and the public to identify active recreation facility needs and coordinate funding strategies.

#### **4.2.1.2 Regional Trails Planning**

King County's long-term capital program for expansion and enhancement of its regional trails system is found in the *King County Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR)*, which serves as King County's official long-term plan for the Regional Trails System. The RTNR provides guidance for development of King County's components of the overall regional trails network. This plan is based upon previous regional trail plans including the *Regional Trails System Network Vision (2012)*, the *King County Regional Trails Plan (1992)*, and the *King County Urban Trails Plan (1971)*, as well as ongoing

regional trails feasibility, planning and open space initiatives. These plans recognize the regional trails system as a major element of King County's open space system. They are the result of regional planning processes that identified trail routes, trail types, development policies and cost estimates.

Coordination and/or partnerships with local cities in planning for the regional trails system are important to King County, as regional trails that pass through city jurisdictions play an important and growing role in the overall trails system.

CIP-115 King County should provide regional leadership and coordination for the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of the countywide Regional Trails System to ensure regional trail connections between jurisdictions and linkages with other local trails.

### 4.2.1.3 Habitat Planning

Planning for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat and native biodiversity provides valuable information that contributes to the planning and management of open space sites, especially for natural areas and forest lands. This type of planning also informs decisions regarding how best to determine appropriate public access and recreational activities at an open space site.

CIP-116 King County will continue fish and wildlife planning efforts through individual site management, stewardship and maintenance plans that are consistent with salmon recovery plans and to ensure biodiversity values are an integral part of open space decisions.

### 4.2.1.4 Backcountry Trails Planning

Planning for backcountry trails helps to ensure that such trails are properly located

and constructed to accommodate and balance appropriate uses. Planning also helps identify the need for and location of support infrastructure such as trailheads, parking lots, kiosks, signage, and restrooms. Public involvement with trail user groups and other agencies providing similar nearby recreational opportunities should be a critical part of the planning process.

CIP-117 King County should develop a backcountry trails programmatic plan that establishes protocols for and guides planning, design, construction, and maintenance of backcountry trails on King County's open space sites.

### 4.2.1.5 Planning Tools

Having a variety of information about park sites and the county's overall open space landscape is critical for the planning and stewardship of the system. To properly manage the system it is imperative to employ such database tools as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and



*Grand Ridge Boardwalk*

the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool. An inventory should include information such as purchase information, funding records, historic site development and survey information, master plans, site management guidelines, forest stewardship plans, site plans and specifications, site conditions including site improvements and maintenance requirements. Such an inventory will facilitate King County's property acquisition, planning, property management, development review, project development, stewardship, restoration and scheduling responsibilities.

CIP-118 King County will maintain a comprehensive asset inventory, in coordination with other county inventories, databases, and information provided by GIS tools.

#### 4.2.1.5 External Influences

Outside activities can affect the open space system. This may be a result of new local, state or federal legislation or regulations, planning proposals from other agencies or from private sector development proposals. Participation in the development and review of these proposed actions is important to ensure the future enhancement, protection and sustainability of the open space system.

CIP-119 King County will review legislation, codes, regulations and land use and development proposals, to ensure the full range of open space issues and impacts are addressed.

CIP-120 King County will pursue opportunities for participation with the private sector to further open space goals.

#### 4.2.2 Acquisition

The lands that are added to the open space system enrich the quality of life in the County and contribute to a public lands legacy for future generations. Anticipated development growth in King County will bring additional pressures to preserve all types of open spaces for their many benefits including conservation

values and recreational opportunities. Limited public funds make every acquisition decision important. Acquisition decisions must consider the implications of future maintenance and development, use and management, natural resource conservation, and ecological restoration.

Because resources such as rivers, wetlands, or habitat corridors seldom reflect human-made jurisdictional boundaries, open space acquisitions for conservation or recreation goals must be informed by a systems-based, landscape level strategy to maximize both ecological and public benefits.

CIP-121 King County will emphasize acquisition of sites that provide for multiple benefits and functions.

CIP-122 King County's open space acquisitions should be consistent with the goals of this plan. Appendix V summarizes more specific acquisition criteria to be considered when evaluating future potential open space acquisitions.

CIP-123 King County should work with conservation organizations, local, state and federal governments, tribes, and landowners during the formation of acquisition strategies to identify acquisition priorities to protect systemic goals not bound by jurisdictional and property boundaries.

CIP-124 Acquisitions of lands or easements that are of adequate size to achieve the acquisition purpose, provide continuity, expand public access, and/or are adjacent to, or provide connections between, existing public open space lands should be considered priority acquisitions.

CIP-125 King County should acquire open space properties that provide public benefit and recreational opportunities or resource protection in proportion to the cost of acquisition, ownership, development and management.

CIP-126 King County will acquire, protect and conserve high priority sites through a variety of means, including fee simple purchase, donations and purchase of conservation easements and covenants, as well as through the use of the King County Transfer of Development Rights Program.

CIP-127 King County will prepare a site acquisition evaluation of potential open space lands before they are acquired to evaluate short and long-term stewardship funding needs and availability and ensure the lands are appropriate for the intended use and contribute to larger open space goals.

CIP-128 King County will strive to protect through fee acquisition or easement acquisition lands that have high ecological value with unique or otherwise significant habitat features where development would negatively impact important ecological processes and functions.

CIP-129 Distribution, spatial structure, and diversity of native wildlife and plant populations and communities as well as potential impacts on them of climate change should be taken into account when acquiring conservation easements or land.

Areas on park land with high ecological value that are provided special protection under the County's Critical Areas Ordinance protection include, but are not limited to: aquatic areas, wetlands including bogs and their buffers, marine shorelines, intertidal and subtidal habitat and riparian zones, lands that protect and conserve headwater and old growth upland forest, Regionally Significant Resource Areas and Locally Significant Resource Areas; designated Wildlife Habitat Network, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas; 100-year floodplains, and channel migration hazard areas. As another level of natural land conservation, the voter approved Open Space Protection Amendment



*Preston Ballfields Construction*

to the King County Charter ensures that King County owned property listed on a "High Conservation Value Property Inventory" receives a higher level of protection against land use change, specifically to preserve natural or scenic resources and passive recreational opportunities.

### 4.2.3 Design and Development

Early King County participation in review of development proposals can result in mutual benefits to the community and neighborhood by ensuring appropriate levels of recreation development and protection of natural resources while providing predictability in the early stages of the review process. Safe, environmentally-sensitive and cost effective design of site development, restoration or enhancement projects is a major responsibility in public projects. The following policies demonstrate King County's commitment to the development and approval of capital projects.

- CIP-130 King County will prepare site designs and specifications for the development, enhancement or restoration of an open space site to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of this plan. This is consistent with funding, project program plans, site management plans and guidelines, forest stewardship plans and master plans.
- CIP-131 King County will design, develop, restore and maintain sites to encourage the safe use and public enjoyment of the county's open space sites, while protecting and enhancing their natural resources.
- CIP-132 King County is committed to the design and development of accessible sites and recreation facilities.
- CIP-133 King County will demonstrate fiscal responsibility in its review and approval of design and development to balance development costs with long-term operational costs and public benefits.

Regulatory compliance is a required element of any project, resulting in increased public safety and resource protection. For example, King County's backcountry trail programmatic permit has reduced permitting costs and staff labor hours and helped facilitate consistent trail design and construction standards while ensuring compliance with critical area regulations. This has resulted in enhanced stewardship of natural resources and increased appropriate recreation use of open space sites.

- CIP-134 King County will maintain, develop and restore open space sites consistent with all local, state and federal regulatory permit requirements. Programmatic permits, where allowed and appropriate, will be pursued when such permits increase cost effectiveness and increase project success.

#### 4.2.3.1 Unified Design

A unified design program is cost effective in terms of minimizing future design and maintenance costs. Standardization minimizes replacement and repair costs, reduces part and supply inventories and simplifies maintenance. It also promotes an identifiable image for the system.

- CIP-135 King County will develop and implement design standards and details which promote a unified, identifiable image of the county's open space system.
- CIP-136 High priority will be given to aesthetic considerations in the design and development of open space sites. Designs will be evaluated based on color, scale, style, and materials appropriate for their proposed use. Development should be consistent with the site's role and purpose in the system and blend with surroundings and the natural environment.

CIP-137 When appropriate and feasible, open spaces should include educational and interpretive signage or other features which enhance a user's understanding and enjoyment of a site and its features and resources.

#### 4.2.3.2 Regional Trails

Development of the King County Regional Trails System is based on guidance from the *King County Regional Trails System Development Guidelines*, the *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* and other professionally-recognized guidelines such as the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) local roadway standards. These guidelines provide technical guidance for on-going development of regional trails and are updated periodically to incorporate best available trail development engineering and design/development practices.



*Burke-Gilman Trail*

CIP-138 Regional trails should be developed in accordance with the most recent edition of the King County Regional Trails System Development Guidelines, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide and/or other appropriate state or national professional guidelines.

CIP-139 Development plans should be prepared for regional trail corridors in King County based on the priority guidance provided by the 2016 Regional Trails Needs Report. These plans may include feasibility studies, trail designs, construction materials, and environmental mitigation. Development of additional mobility connections between regional trail corridors and important destinations may be based on applicable access feasibility analysis. New trail planning activities should include public outreach to ensure important community involvement in the development of the Regional Trails System.

CIP-140 Ensure that equity is considered and appropriately prioritized in the development and operations of the Regional Trails System.

CIP-141 The regional trails network will provide access to important regional destinations: urban centers, civic and commercial centers, regional transit, and important points of interest throughout King County.

CIP-142 Regional trail corridors should, to the extent possible, provide a network of linear parks and routes that enhance the natural environment of our

- region, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide positive benefits to the environment.
- CIP-143 Regional Trails System development should prioritize the filling of important gaps in the planned trails network to enhance connectivity and overall network integrity.
- CIP-143 King County should explore innovative opportunities and strategies to expand the regional trails network.
- CIP-144 Regional trails development should be based on relevant trail plans including Regional Trails Plan (1992), 2016 Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR), Regional Trail System Network Vision (2012).
- CIP-145 King County recognizes and fosters the unique character and environment of each regional trail corridor while ensuring the consistent development of regional trail facilities.
- CIP-146 The Arts Master Plan for the King County Regional Trails System (2015), which provides a vision and blueprint for the cultural and aesthetic development of the regional trails network, should provide a basis for the implementation of site-specific or temporary art and cultural activities on the trails network as well as for planning the aesthetic character of new regional trails.
- CIP-147 In depth planning for development may be undertaken in potential high-use urban corridors where regional trails will be utilized most.
- CIP-148 Regional Trails System development and related activities should be guided by the Planning and Development goals and strategies in the King County Regional Trails System Strategic Plan (2011) and the King County Strategic Plan (2010-2014).
- CIP-149 Regional trails should be accessible when trail users wish to use the trails for recreation and utility uses such as home-to-work or other “commute” type trips.
- CIP-150 Regional trails network planning should be based on the most accurate data and information available, including accurate estimates of trail uses.
- CIP-151 King County should/shall provide up-to-date mapping and consistent wayfinding throughout the regional trails network to enhance user navigation and travel. Trail wayfinding programs should be consistent with the USDOT MUTCD and regionally-accepted wayfinding programs.

#### **4.2.3.4 Backcountry Trails**

- CIP-152 King County should strive to design, develop and maintain backcountry trails in a manner that protects natural resources, ensures public safety, and requires minimal maintenance. The latest versions of the US Forest Service Trails Management Handbook and US Forest Service Specifications for the Construction of Trails should inform construction and management of King County’s backcountry trails.

### 4.3 Asset Management

King County Parks is in the process of selecting and implementing an asset management system that will be able to integrate tabular data with spatial components (i.e. GIS integration). This system will be used to store and manage a detailed inventory and condition assessment of existing parks system assets. An asset management system will allow the division to improve the ability to plan, schedule, and implement major maintenance programs; track and report costs; and improve long-term

financial planning. With an aging, diverse and geographically dispersed parks system, an asset management system is an essential step to achieve the goal of protecting the public's investment and keeping King County's park system safe and open for all residents to enjoy.

**CIP-153** King County should implement an asset management system to manage its aging, diverse and geographically dispersed system of park assets.



*Grand Ridge Boardwalk*



## CHAPTER FIVE: OPERATIONS AND STEWARDSHIP

As of 2016, the King County Parks and Recreation Division is the caretaker of 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, 200 miles of backcountry trails, 28,000 acres of open space, and 145,000 of conservation easements. These open space lands make King County one of the region's important providers and managers of public lands. As such, the principles and policies that guide the stewardship and management of these lands and resources are critical to ensure that these assets continue to contribute to the region's quality of life now and for future generations.

### 5.1 Operations

Parks' Operations section is responsible for a wide variety of tasks including maintenance and repair of facilities, preparation and upkeep of athletic fields, preservation of ecological restoration, including invasive weed control and vegetation management, and other day-to-day activities to keep all King County parks safe and enjoyable spaces.

The Section is organized into 11 maintenance districts, two business units, five specialty programs, six professional support teams, and two public service programs.

#### 5.1.1 Funding

Operational funding supports a wide range of activities associated with the stewardship and operation of the open space system. Historically, operational funding for King County's open space system came from the County's general fund. In 2002 general fund support for Parks was greatly reduced; in 2004 a four year property tax Parks levy largely replaced lost funding. Subsequent six-year Park levies (2008-2013 and 2014-2019) provide the majority of the division's funding.

Parks aggressively pursues efforts to diversify sources of revenue to supplement the levies, which do not provide full funding for operations. One significant revenue source includes user fees from ballfield use, facility



*King County Parks Maintenance*



*Cirque du Soleil*

rentals, camping, swimming and parking. Other revenue sources include, but are not limited to, grants, King County Park Foundation donations, park permit fees, concessions on park lands, and entrepreneurial revenues, which include corporate sponsorships and major events such as the Marymoor Park Concert Series or Cirque du Soleil.

- SO-101 King County will continue to work with agencies, jurisdictions and the public to develop new and creative funding sources and other strategies to build and support the system.
- SO-102 King County will maximize and leverage operational funds through public-private and nonprofit partnerships, pursuit of grant funds, use of volunteers, development, use and management agreements, as well as continue to seek other opportunities.
- SO-103 King County will continue to pursue workforce efficiencies to help offset the growth in operation and maintenance costs.

- SO-104 King County will continue to pursue use of a portion of open space capital revenue sources, such as REET (per RCW 82.46.010) or CFT (per RCW 84.34.30 and KCC 26.12.010), for ongoing maintenance and stewardship of sites acquired or developed with these funds.
- SO-105 A fiscal analysis should be prepared to evaluate all capital project proposals to address stewardship needs of new projects. It should identify the long-term operation and maintenance cost and the source of funds to support the project.
- SO-106 King County will work to ensure that future funding strategies to acquire and develop land for all open space purposes include a funding source to cover stewardship and maintenance costs.

## 5.1.2 Maintenance

### 5.1.2.1 Maintenance Practices

Maintenance actions include enhancement, restoration, and the day-to-day care of the open space assets under the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Division. Rooted in the mission, vision, and values outlined in this Open Space Plan, the maintenance practices implemented by the division will follow the subsequent policies:

- SO-107 King County should strive to use locally-adapted native species for landscaping, natural area restoration, rehabilitation, and erosion control wherever feasible. Landscaping and habitat restoration projects should include provisions for adequate maintenance of plantings to prevent invasion of weeds and ensure survival of native plantings.
- SO-108 Use of drought-tolerant plants and native vegetation in new site development projects will be

emphasized to minimize the need for irrigation, reduce impact of non-native species and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

- SO-109 Water conservation is an important consideration in management of the system. New construction and the rehabilitation of older facilities will incorporate low water use principles and equipment. Use of recycled water will be considered, when practical and effective.
- SO-110 Recycling efforts in parks will be promoted along with use of recycled materials available and appropriate for park uses. Salvage of materials from structure demolitions will also be conducted when feasible.
- SO-111 The environment and the health and safety of staff and park users will be protected from the inappropriate use of hazardous or toxic materials and the use of those materials in the soils or structures. Safety Plans will be developed when needed to further outline safety protocols and practices.
- SO-112 Use of pesticides and fungicides will be based on integrated pest management (IPM) principles, per Executive Order PUT 8-17 related to pest and vegetation management activities and Parks' Best Management Practices. The goal of this policy is to minimize the use of chemical pesticides to contribute to improvement in public health and the environment in King County, including the habitat, food, and sensitive life stages of threatened Chinook salmon and bull trout.
- SO-113 Landscaping along King County's regional trails should be consistent with the most recent version of the Regional Trails System Development Guidelines and the Regional Trails System Landscape Characterization Study or as determined by a professional landscape architect.

### 5.1.2.2 Assessing Maintenance Needs

King County will strive to understand and plan for current and future maintenance needs through the following policies:

- SO-114 King County will develop measurable site maintenance plans and management goals to provide direction for the stewardship of open space sites and utilize these measures to evaluate effectiveness and provide guidance and historical data for future maintenance decisions.
- SO-115 King County will monitor, review and evaluate how site maintenance is conducted to account for the changing needs of the system and identify and incorporate new procedures and tasks to address the conservation of ecological values and recreational assets.
- SO-116 King County will develop and maintain a plan for major maintenance needs and rehabilitation of open space sites and facilities to ensure safe and sustainable public use and to reduce lifecycle costs.
- SO-117 King County will steward and maintain lands and facilities within the park system in compliance with the division's Best Management Practices Manual.



*King County Parks site boundary sign*

### 5.1.3 Property Management

Good property management reinforces King County’s commitment to sound stewardship of its open space system. As property custodian and manager, Parks is responsible for guiding the use of its 28,000 acres of open space and 145,000 acres of conservation easements and ensuring the value of this legacy for future generations.

SO-119 King County will encourage and allow the use of open space land that is compatible with its location and condition, consistent with its acquisition funding source, purpose of the acquisition and management goals and can be demonstrated to appropriately provide public recreation opportunities and protect the lands’ natural resources.

SO-120 King County will encourage and promote mutually beneficial agreements with school districts, other agencies, jurisdictions, partners and private groups for the use and management of sites and facilities

for recreation, educational and revenue generating activities as well as to accomplish habitat and forest restoration.

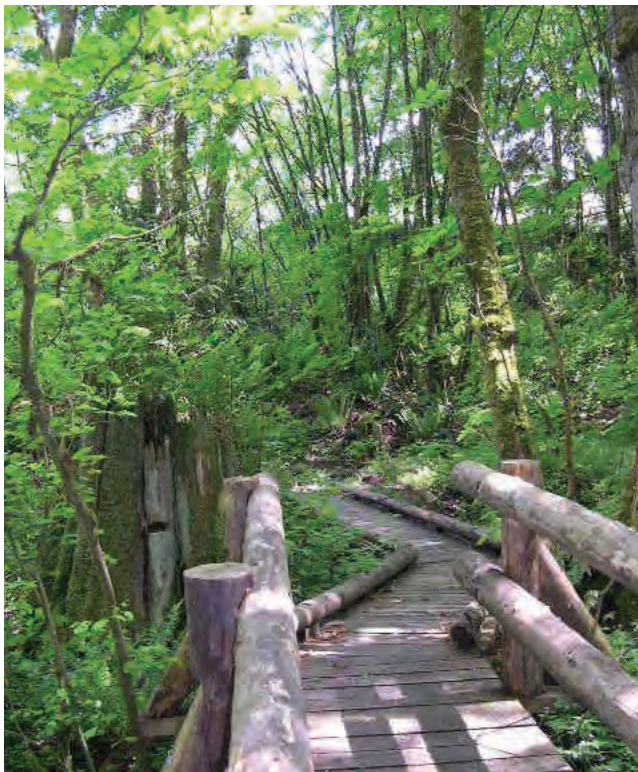
SO-121 King County will evaluate requests for alterations to open space sites to ensure that they are consistent with park purposes, master plans, forest stewardship plans and site management guidelines and will not diminish open space values, public use, aesthetics and stewardship.

SO-122 King County will issue use permits or agreements for events sponsored by others when the use is consistent with site conditions and amenities, aesthetics, park purposes, acquisition funding restrictions and will not deter from open space stewardship and other public use of the site.

SO-123 King County will not allow alterations or enter into agreements or permit uses that incur future obligations to the County for maintenance, replacement, rehabilitation or removal until a thorough analysis of the long-term cost has been prepared, risks and liabilities to the County clearly identified, and supportive funding is identified or provided.

SO-123a King County will monitor all existing agreements, easements and use permits to ensure they continue to be in compliance with their terms and conditions, current county policies and codes, and remain in the best interests of the site and the public.

SO-124 King County will consider concessions and business endeavors that are compatible with site management goals and enhance the park experience by providing an opportunity for increased public use, enjoyment, education, and enhanced stewardship of the site.



Grand Ridge

- SO-125 King County will consider concession and business operations for effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of services, as well as for revenue generation. The County will grant concession and business agreements that do not result in uncompensated costs to the County.
- SO-126 King County will clearly post signage with applicable rules and restrictions for open space sites in a manner that is easily understood by the public. Language(s) used on signage should reflect the **predominant languages spoken in the** community in which the site is located and those using the site, **consistent with County policies regarding provision of services to populations with limited English proficiency.**
- SO-127 King County will address unauthorized uses of open space land by working to abate and restore impacts resulting from encroachments, seek voluntary compliance with park rules and work with the Sheriff's Office on emphasis patrols and issuing citations.
- SO-128 King County will maintain a policy and procedure for the naming of park, recreation and other open space sites and features, including trails, and consistent with RCW 36.32.430.
- SO-129 King County will accept gifts or donations of equipment, materials, land, labor or improvements for a site that are consistent with site purposes and conditions, enhance aesthetics and stewardship values, are consistent with site management guidelines, forest stewardship, master, maintenance and development plans; reduce stewardship costs, provide additional resource protection and/or improve efficiencies.
- SO-130 King County will work with nearby property owners, park users, volunteers, agencies and the public to enhance and protect the character, function and natural resources of the open space system.

## 5.2 Stewardship

For King County, the term 'stewardship' represents responsible management of the open space system to ensure public safety, provide appropriate public access and use, and protect a site's ecological and recreational value through maintenance, monitoring, enhancement, and restoration. Stewardship also implies the use of new techniques, skills, training and equipment, the development and implementation of best management practices, and the pursuit of revenue and partnership opportunities that sustain sound stewardship and operations.

In light of population growth and development, diminishing natural resources and a challenging revenue environment for county government, sound stewardship of the open space system only grows in importance. Even as public use of and demand for parks and trails continues to rise, Parks will continue to face challenges in securing appropriate levels of funding to maintain and manage the open space system for the foreseeable future.



*Cold Creek Natural Area*

SO-131 King County will steward its open space system and keep these lands in perpetuity for open space purposes. Other uses will be considered only if they can be demonstrated to be appropriate through a public process. Recommendations for disposing of any property shall be carried out in compliance with King County's codified surplus property provisions and based on the County's public recreation or open space needs. Surplus of open space sites must also be consistent with requirements associated with their funding sources and Section 897 of the King County Charter Amendment regarding the conveyance, surplus and use of high conservation value open space properties.

SO-132 King County will manage open space sites to ensure that the land, facilities and natural resources are protected and that appropriate public use is safe and enjoyable. The public is expected to have access to the fee owned properties within the open space system for recreational, scientific, and traditional cultural use, but access may be restricted when necessary to protect or restore natural resource values and processes, when deed or easement restrictions limit or prohibit public access, and/or when safety issues warrant limitations on public use. Restrictions on some types of recreation uses may be required to achieve management goals. Access strategies for each site will be identified through management and stewardship plans and appropriate use determined via a public process.

Ponds created by beavers can be an asset to ecosystems by helping retain runoff, reducing downstream runoff and trapping sediments and pollutants. However, beaver dams cause

upstream flooding and as development expands into areas with an abundance of beaver habitat, there is an increased chance of private and public properties being affected by beaver activity.

SO-133 King County shall prepare a strategic beaver management policy based on science to guide decisions and actions on where and how beavers can co-exist with humans and where beavers should be excluded or removed. Prior to strategy development, King County shall work on a case by case basis on park lands to reduce public safety or public infrastructure risk or impacts to neighboring properties.

### 5.2.1 Stewardship and the Public

As park and trails users, advocates, volunteers, and taxpayers, the public plays a key role in the long-term stewardship of the open space system. King County residents continue to demonstrate that they value the benefits of King County's open space system and the role that it plays in enhancing regional quality of life and communities. Most recently this was demonstrated through public votes, including:

- 2003 approval of a four-year property tax levy to support operations and maintenance
- 2007 approval of a six-year property tax levy to support operation and maintenance and support open space expansion
- 2009 approval of a charter amendment strengthening protection and conservation of certain ecologically valuable open space properties
- 2013 approval of a six-year property tax levy to support regional trail development; open space and natural lands acquisition; and major maintenance repair, including development of trailhead facilities to increase access to parks and trails

SO-134 King County will promote awareness of the role of the County’s open space system in the quality of life in the region, in the recreation industry and its economic benefit to the region.

### 5.2.2 Preservation and Conservation

SO-135 King County will integrate habitat management and enhancement as a major component of its stewardship. Natural areas will be managed primarily to protect and restore ecological processes, conserve wildlife habitat, and foster native biodiversity. This focus may include management, enhancement and restoration of degraded natural areas to increase their ecological, wildlife habitat, climate change adaptation and resiliency, and educational values.

SO-136 King County commits itself to preservation, protection and conservation of native biodiversity and will demonstrate this in daily activities. Environmentally sensitive maintenance techniques and best management practices will be followed to the greatest extent possible at all open space sites.



*Auburn Narrows*

SO-137 King County will work with other agencies to maintain the necessary quality and quantity of water in its streams and lakes to provide for plant communities, suitable fish and wildlife habitat and recreational use.

SO-138 King County will promote forest management and restoration in order to conserve and enhance its parks with healthy forest canopies that contribute to improved water and air quality, surface water management, fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, climate change adaptation, and energy conservation.

SO-139 King County should be a leader in natural resource management by demonstrating environmentally sound and sustainable forest practices on County-owned open space sites that result in retention of forest cover and improved forest health. This may include adopting forest management practices that promote carbon sequestration.

SO-140 Priorities for restoration projects on open space sites should be based on priority recommendations in the WRIA plans (Salmon Recovery Plans), the Flood Hazard Management Plan, individual site management and stewardship plans, and other King County-endorsed planning documents.

SO-141 King County will track and monitor the ecological and forest conservation easements in its inventory to ensure conservation values are protected and that lands are being managed consistent with the terms and conditions of the individual recorded easement. Parks shall work with the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review to ensure conservation easement information is available in the county’s permit system.

Biodiversity includes plant and animal species, their genetic diversity, the habitats they use, the ways that species and habitats interact with each other, and the physical environment and processes necessary for those interactions. Some major benefits of biodiversity include purification of air and water, soil fertility, and moderation of floods, droughts, temperature extremes, and forces of wind, as well as control of pests and disease, resiliency and adaptation to a changing climate, and pollination of plants.

Parks encourages native plant and animal diversity through natural resource restoration implemented by King County or other agencies or partnerships. Parks is committed to tracking those restoration efforts through mapping and on-site evaluation.

King County is developing and implementing an expanded forest stewardship program to restore a diversity of native tree species, remove invasive species, and gradually return the forests within the open space system to a more resilient mature conifer forest structure. An assessment of the current state of forest composition and structure has already occurred and will be continued as new lands are acquired. This assessment will provide needed baseline data to inform stewardship planning. Developing and implementing forest stewardship plans for Parks owned sites is identified as a significant goal in the County's 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan.

SO-142 King County will continue to conduct forest assessments, develop stewardship plans and implement forest restoration projects that will promote healthy forest throughout the park system.

SO-143 King County supports the integration of conservation principles into its management actions in order to conserve native biodiversity through policies for land and water resource management, climate change planning, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation.

SO-144 King County will strive to identify and conserve components of native biodiversity within its open space system that may be especially sensitive to the impacts of climate change and work to conserve biodiversity through the protection and restoration of ecological processes that create and sustain habitats and species diversity.

SO-145 The conservation principles presented in King County's Ecological Lands Handbook and in the King County Comprehensive Plan provide broad guidance to focus and direct restoration activities to enhance natural resources and ecological value on open space sites. King County will strive to steward natural lands consistent with these principles, where applicable.

SO-146 On all open space sites, Parks will develop a coordinated strategy for preventing, monitoring and controlling infestations of state-listed noxious weeds, and where feasible, other non-native invasive weeds of concern.

### 5.2.3 Regional Trails

Safety and enjoyment are high priorities on King County's Regional Trails System. Millions of nonmotorized trips are made annually on regional trails, and the condition of these trail corridors is a high priority for King County. Regional trails provide linear parkland corridors that enhance our region's natural environmental character, provide environmental benefits, and create a pleasant alternative to increasingly dense urban landscapes.

SO-147 King County should maintain regional trails in a safe and secure manner. Ongoing maintenance should seek to ensure that trail surfaces are in good condition and that corridor landscaping is maintained to preserve trailside clearance, site lines, and user enjoyment.

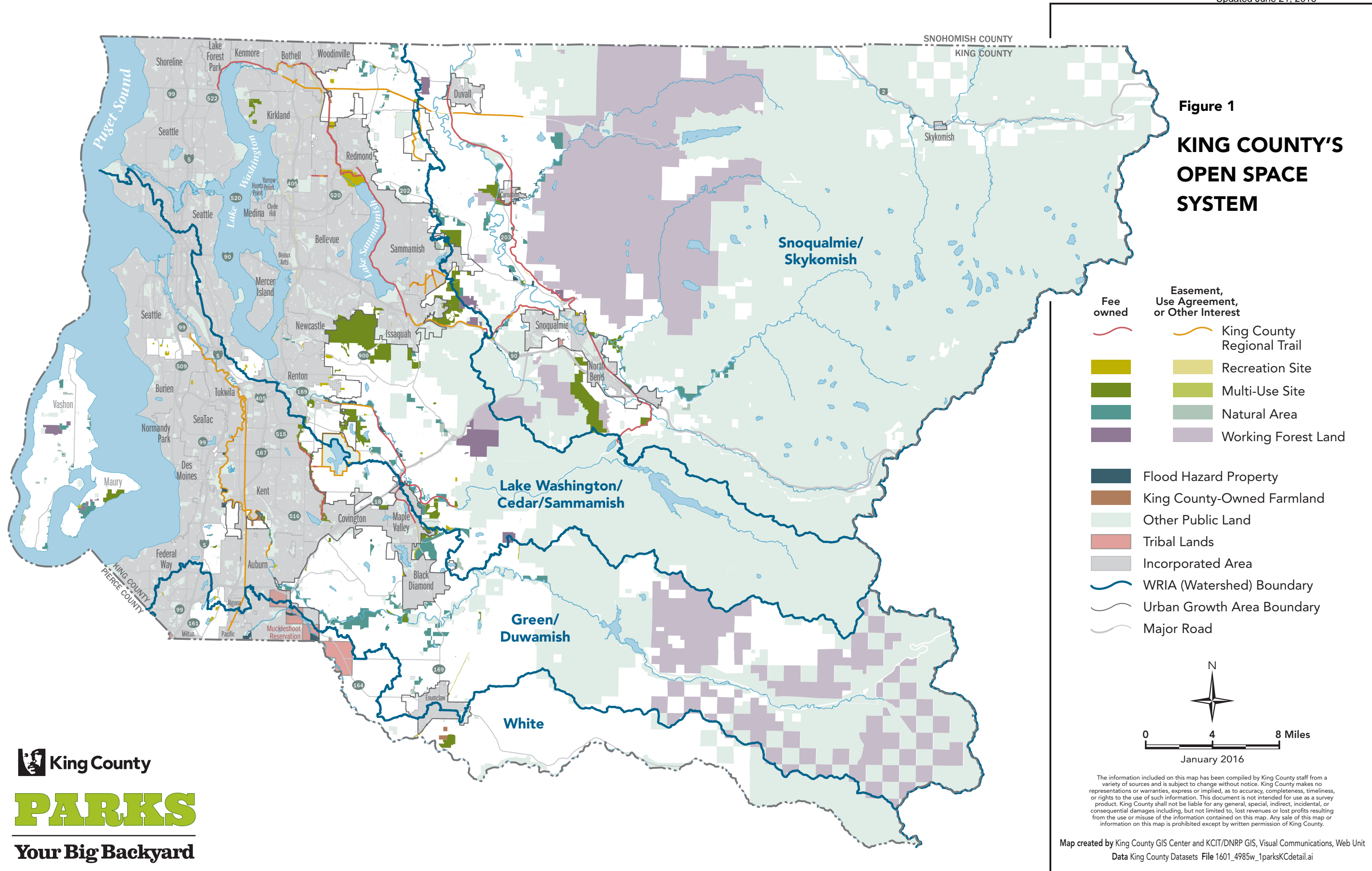


# APPENDICES

Appendix I	<b>Maps</b>
Appendix II	<b>King County Parks History</b>
Appendix III	<b>Source Documents</b>
Appendix IV	<b>Six-Year CIP</b>
Appendix V	<b>Acquisition Guidance</b>

## APPENDIX I: MAPS

- Figure 1 **King County Open Space System**
- Figure 2 **Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed**
- Figure 3 **Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Southeast)**
- Figure 4 **Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Northwest)**
- Figure 5 **Green/Duwamish Watershed (Northwest)**
- Figure 6 **Green/Duwamish Watershed (Southeast)**
- Figure 7 **White River Watershed**
- Figure 8 **Vashon-Maury Island**
- Figure 9 **Regional Trail System**
- Figure 10 **Backcountry Trail Sites**
- Figure 11 **Wildlife Habitat Network**



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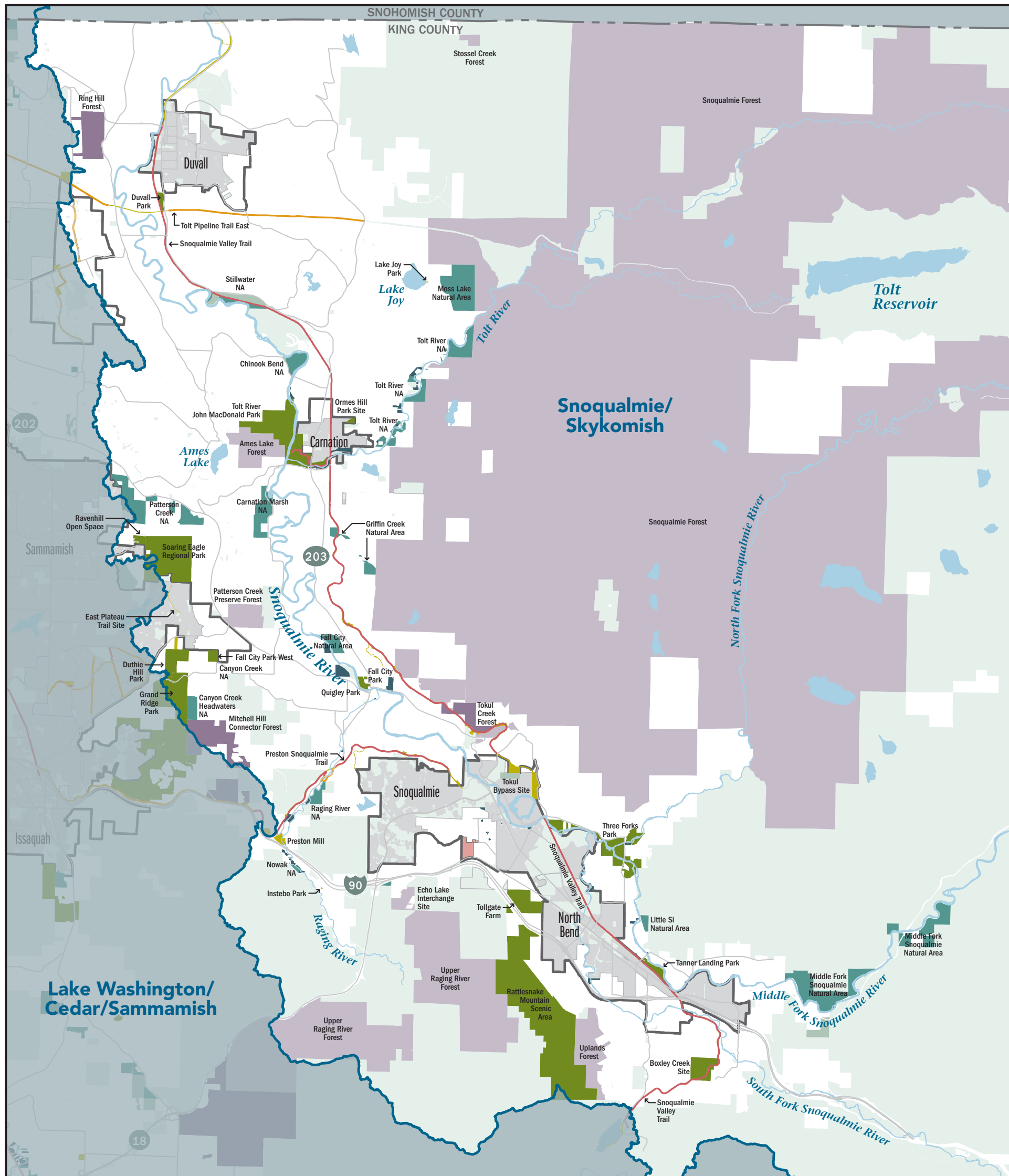
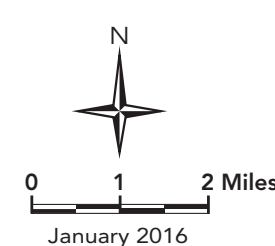


Figure 2

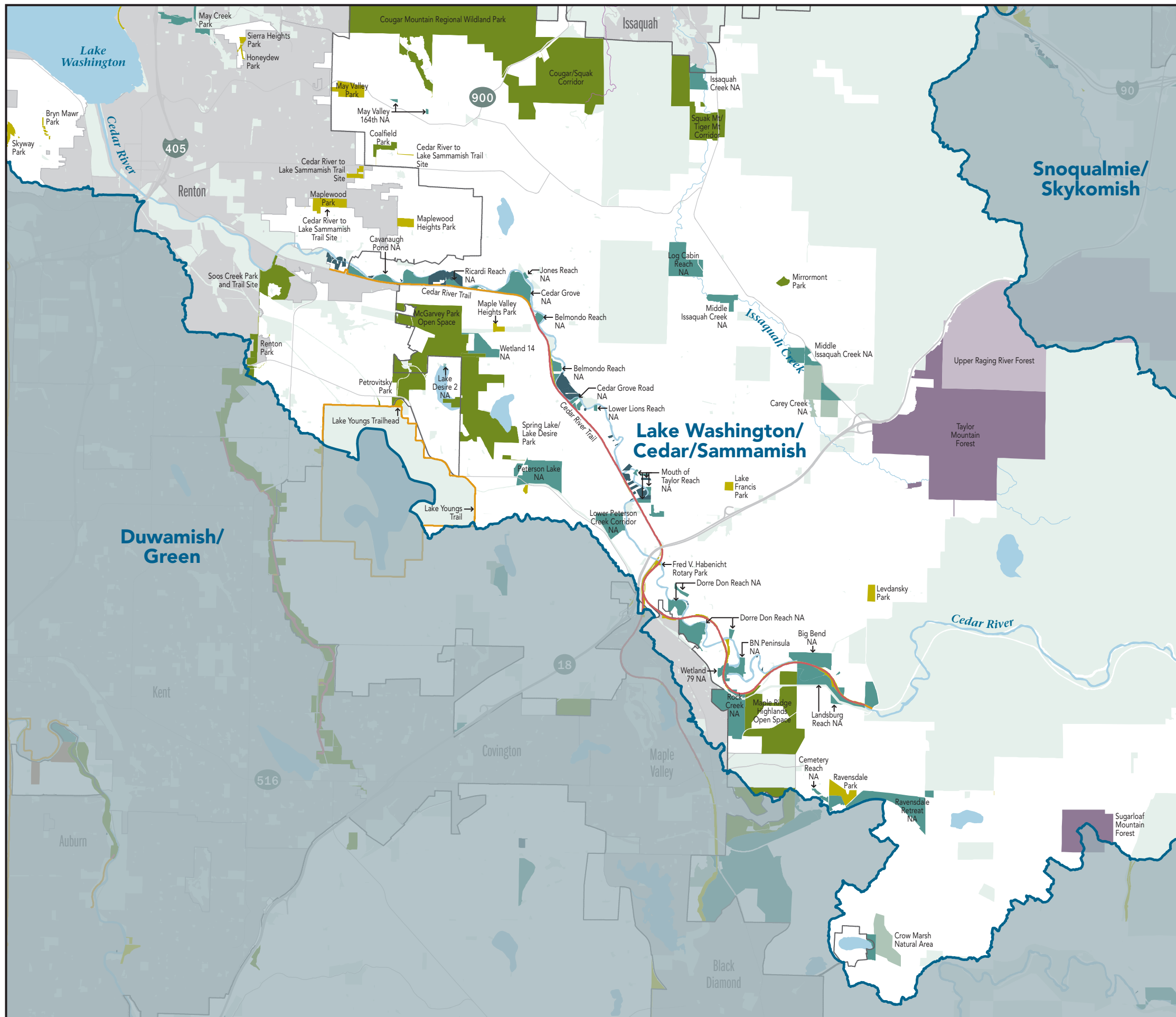
KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed






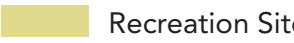



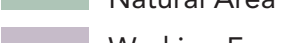


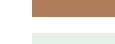
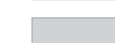





- |                 |  |                            |                            |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Fee owned       | Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest | King County Owned Farmland | Other Public Land          |
| Recreation Site | Multi-Use Site                             | Tribal Lands               | Incorporated Area          |
| Natural Area    | Working Forest Land                        | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary  | Urban Growth Area Boundary |
|                 |  | Major Road                 |                            |



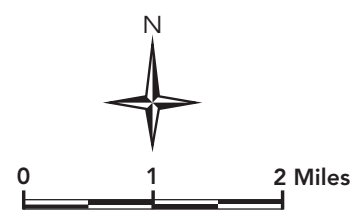
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**Figure 3**  
**KING COUNTY'S**  
**OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**  
**Lake Washington/**  
**Cedar/Sammamish**  
**Watershed (Southeast)**

- |   |                  |   |   |
|---|------------------|---|---|
|    | <b>Fee owned</b> |  | <b>Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest</b> |
|    |                  |  | King County Regional Trail                        |
|    |                  |  | Recreation Site                                   |
|    |                  |  | Multi-Use Site                                    |
|    |                  |  | Natural Area                                      |
|    |                  |  | Working Forest Land                               |
|   |                  |   | Flood Hazard Property                             |
|  |                  |   | King County-Owned Farmland                        |
|  |                  |   | Other Public Land                                 |
|  |                  |   | Incorporated Area                                 |
|  |                  |   | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary                         |
|  |                  |   | Urban Growth Area Boundary                        |
|  |                  |   | Major Road  |

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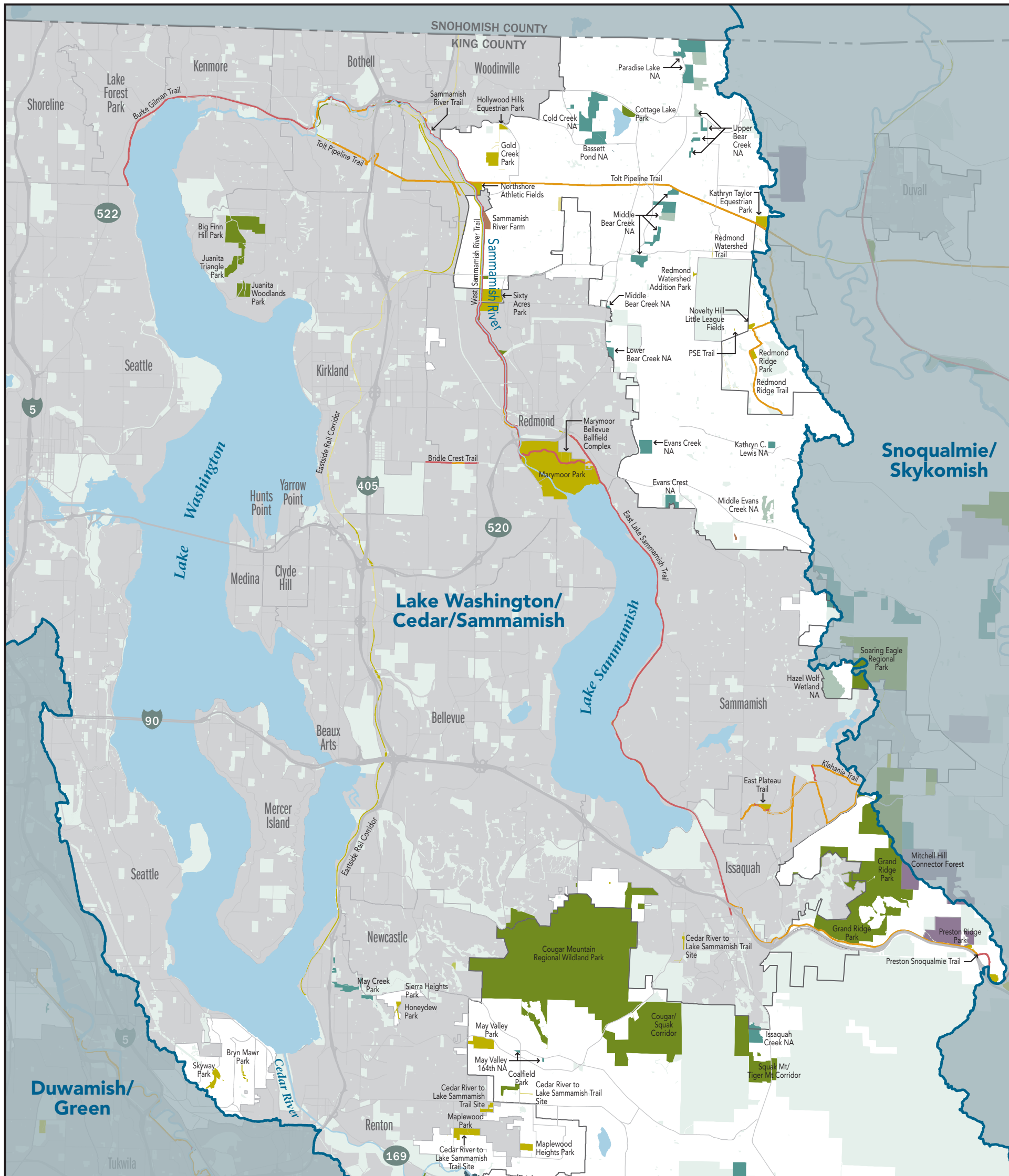
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January 2016

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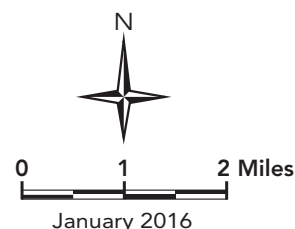




**Figure 4 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

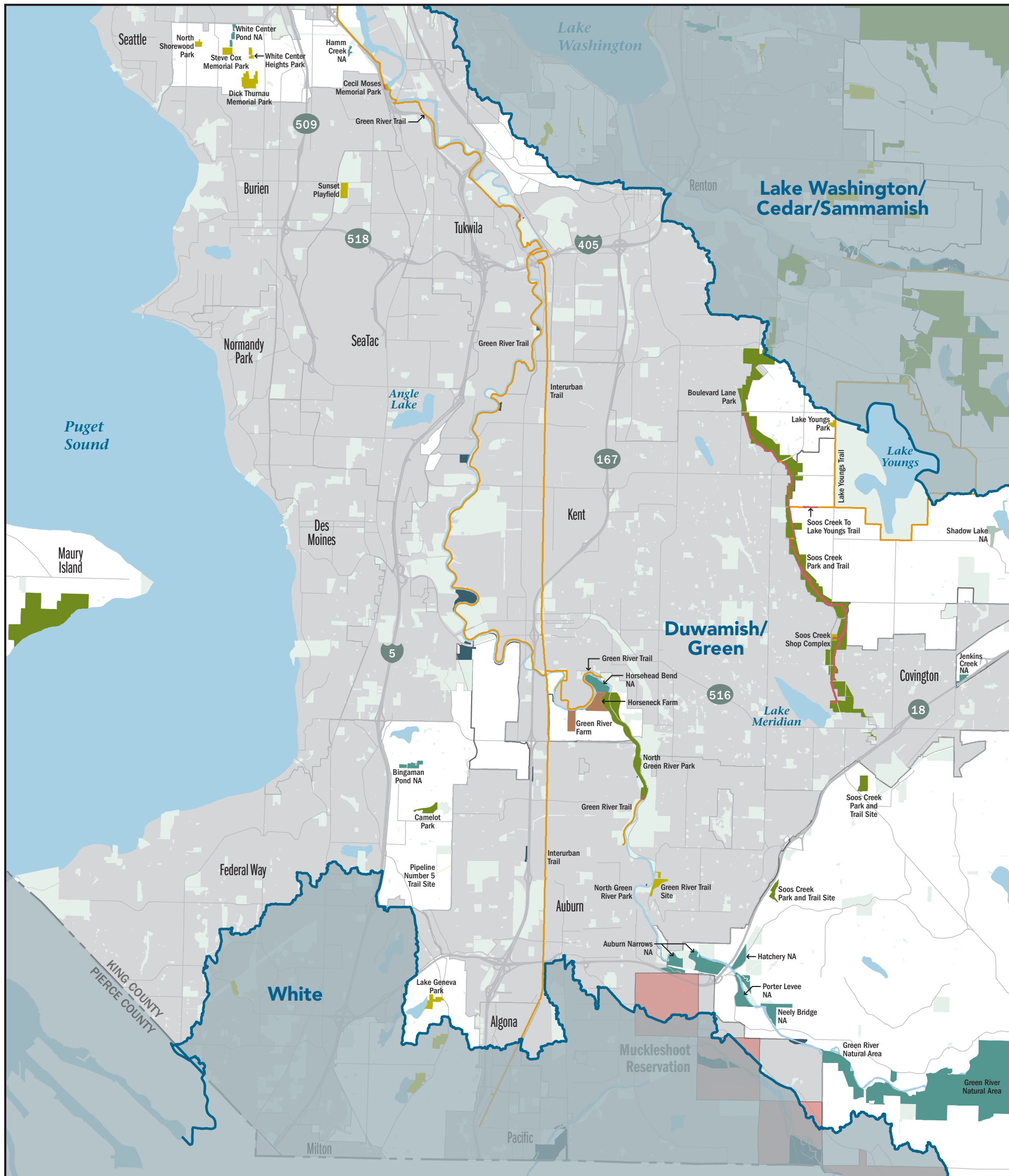
**Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Northwest)**

- |                            |  |                            |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Fee owned                  | Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest | Flood Hazard Property      |
| King County Regional Trail | Recreation Site                            | King County-Owned Farmland |
| Multi-Use Site             | Natural Area                               | Other Public Land          |
| Working Forest Land        | Major Road                                 | Incorporated Area          |
|                            | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary                  | Urban Growth Area Boundary |



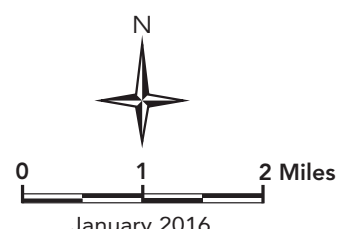
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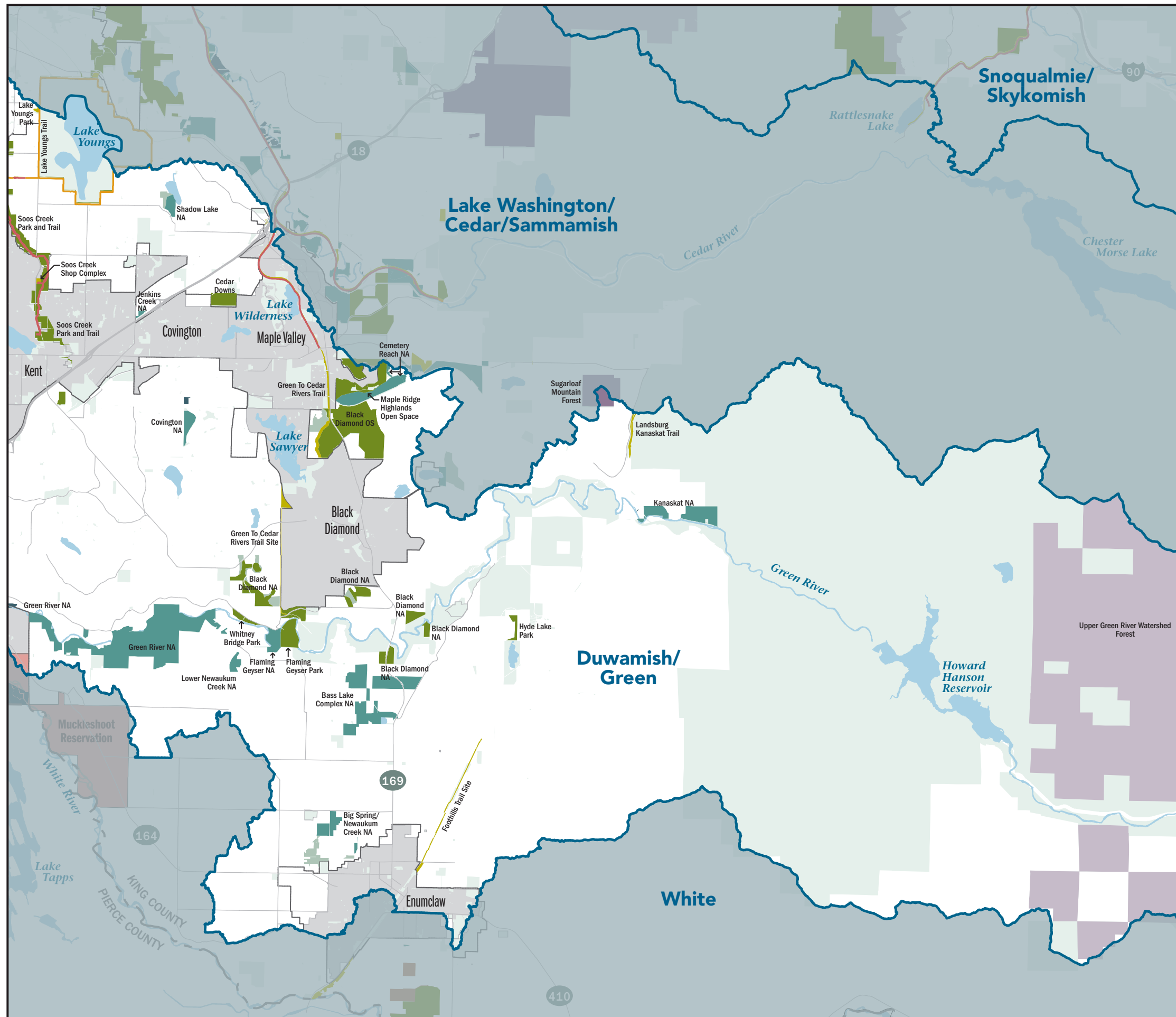
**Figure 5 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM Duwamish/Green Watershed (Northwest)**

- |                     |  |                            |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Fee owned           | Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest | Flood Hazard Property      |
| Recreation Site     | King County Regional Trail                 | King County-Owned Farmland |
| Multi-Use Site      | Recreation Site                            | Other Public Land          |
| Natural Area        | Multi-Use Site                             | Tribal Lands               |
| Working Forest Land | Natural Area                               | Incorporated Area          |
|                     | Working Forest Land                        | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary  |
|                     |  | Urban Growth Area Boundary |
|                     |  | Major Road                 |










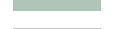





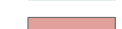






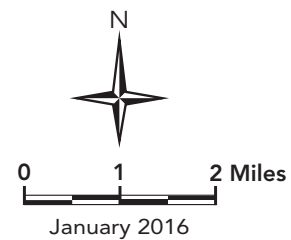
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**Figure 6**  
**KING COUNTY'S**  
**OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**  
**Duwamish/Green**  
**Watershed (Southeast)**

- |   |                  |   |   |
|---|------------------|---|---|
|    | <b>Fee owned</b> |  | <b>Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest</b> |
|    |                  |  | King County Regional Trail                        |
|    |                  |  | Recreation Site                                   |
|    |                  |  | Multi-Use Site                                    |
|    |                  |  | Natural Area                                      |
|    |                  |  | Working Forest Land                               |
|    |                  |   | Flood Hazard Property                             |
|    |                  |   | King County-Owned Farmland                        |
|    |                  |   | Other Public Land                                 |
|   |                  |   | Tribal Lands                                      |
|  |                  |   | Incorporated Area                                 |
|  |                  |   | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary                         |
|  |                  |   | Urban Growth Area Boundary                        |
|  |                  |   | Major Road  |

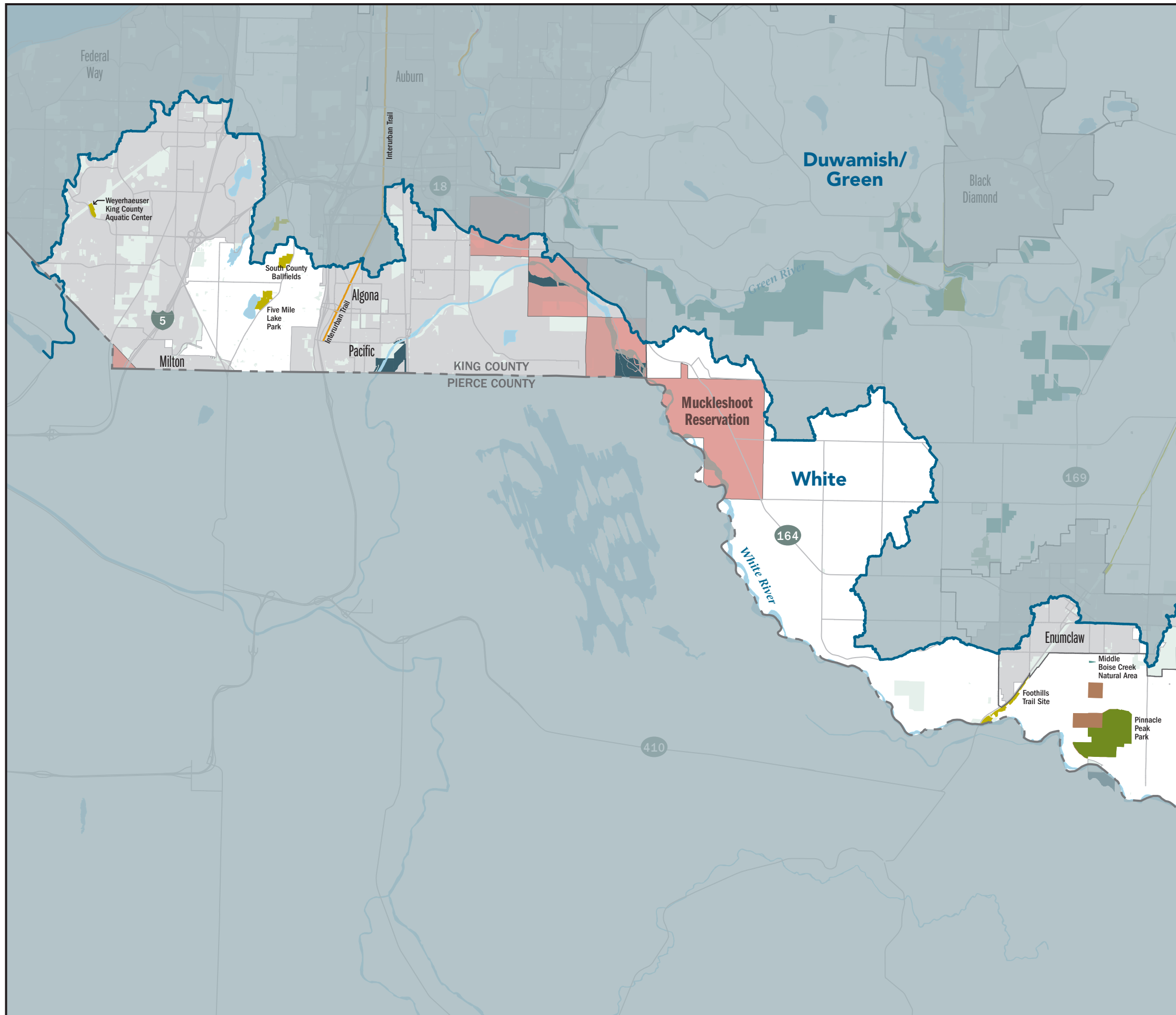


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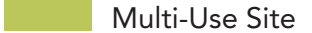

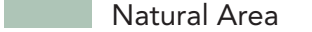












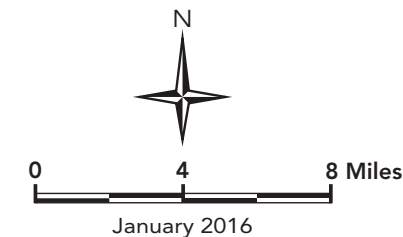




**Figure 7**  
**KING COUNTY'S**  
**OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

**White River Watershed**

- |   |                  |   |   |
|---|------------------|---|---|
|    | <b>Fee owned</b> |  | <b>Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest</b> |
|    |                  |  | King County Regional Trail                        |
|    |                  |  | Recreation Site                                   |
|    |                  |  | Multi-Use Site                                    |
|    |                  |  | Natural Area                                      |
|   |                  |   | Working Forest Land                               |
|    |                  |   | Flood Hazard Property                             |
|    |                  |   | King County-Owned Farmland                        |
|    |                  |   | Other Public Land                                 |
|   |                  |   | Tribal Lands                                      |
|  |                  |   | Incorporated Area                                 |
|  |                  |   | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary                         |
|  |                  |   | Urban Growth Area Boundary                        |
|  |                  |   | Major Road  |



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 Data King County Datasets File 1601\_4985w\_7parksWHITEmap.ai



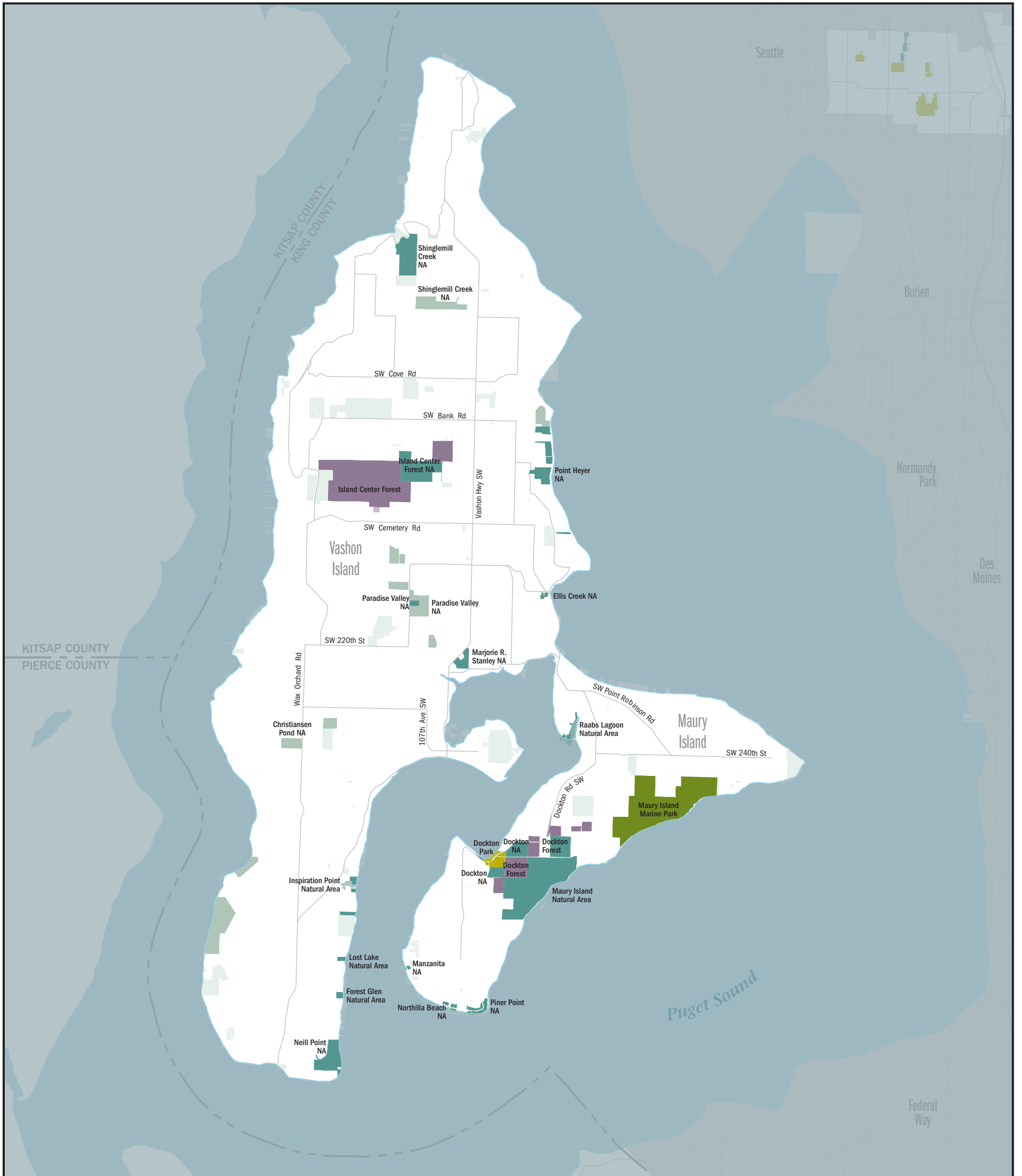
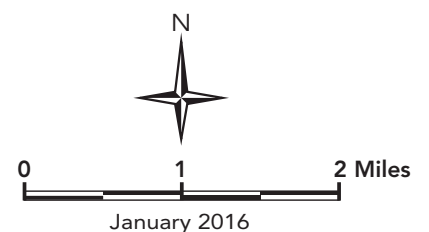


Figure 8

KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

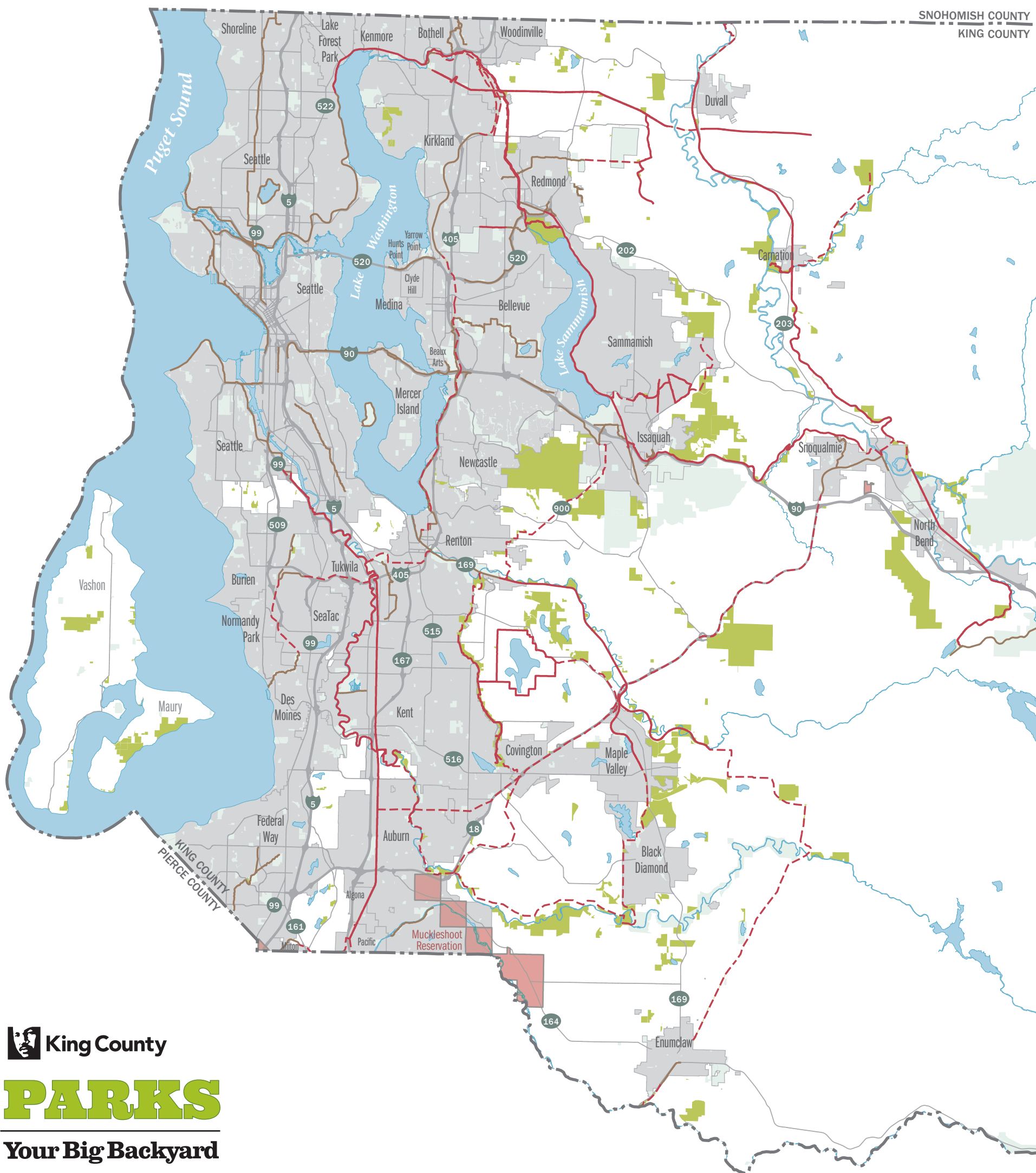
Vashon – Maury Island

- |                     |  |                            |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Fee owned           | Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest | Flood Hazard Property      |
| Recreation Site     | King County Regional Trail                 | King County-Owned Farmland |
| Multi-Use Site      | Recreation Site                            | Other Public Land          |
| Natural Area        | Multi-Use Site                             | Incorporated Area          |
| Working Forest Land | Natural Area                               | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary  |
|                     | Working Forest Land                        | Urban Growth Area Boundary |
|                     |  | Major Road                 |







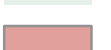



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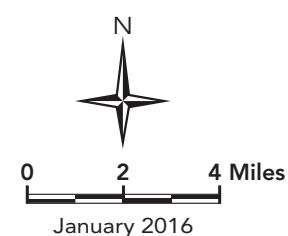
Map created by King County GIS Center and KCIT/DNRP GIS, Visual Communications, Web Unit  
Data King County Datasets File 1601\_4985w\_8parksVASHONmap.ai



**King County**  
**PARKS**  
**Your Big Backyard**

**Figure 9 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM Regional Trails System**

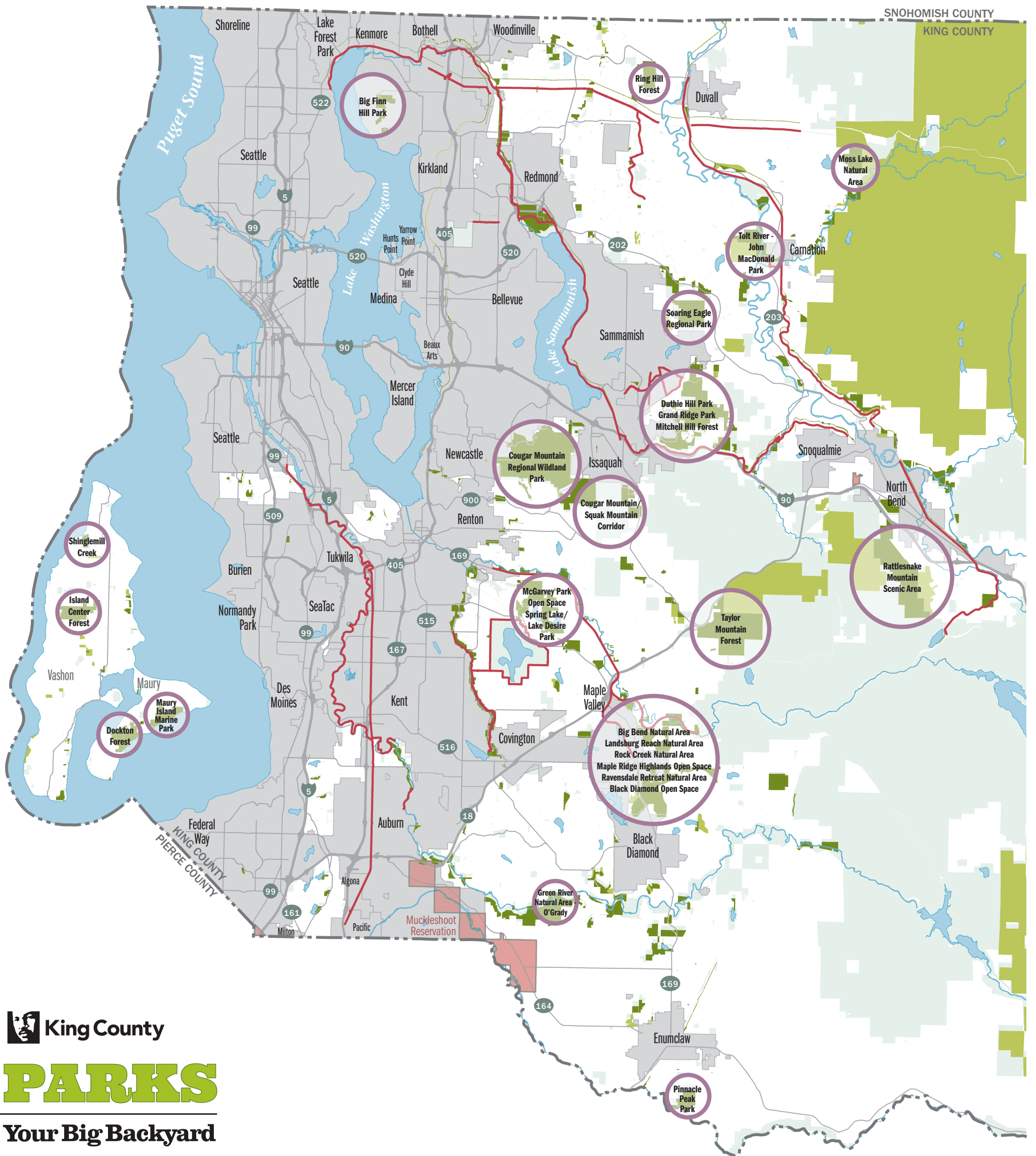
-  King County Regional Trails
-  King County Future Trail Project
-  Other Regional Trails
-  King County Park System
-  Other Parks
-  Tribal Land
-  Incorporated Area
-  Major Road



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

Details regarding King County Future Trail Projects can be found in the Regional Trails Needs Report in the Appendices of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

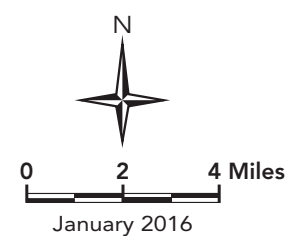
Map created by King County GIS Center and KCIT/DNRP GIS, Visual Communications, Web Unit  
 Data King County Datasets File 1601\_4985w\_9parksREGtrails.ai



**King County**  
**PARKS**  
**Your Big Backyard**

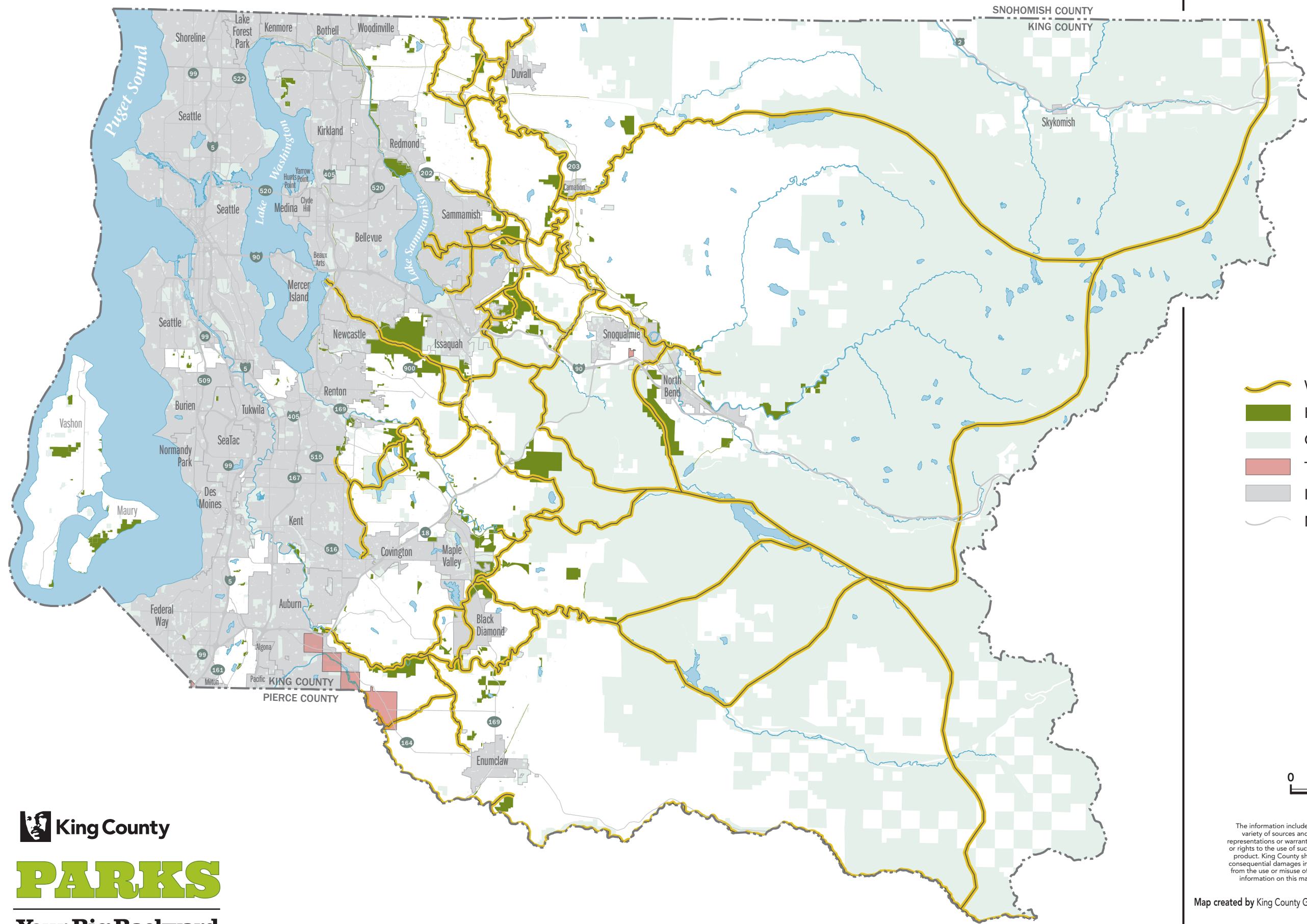
**Figure 10 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM Backcountry Trail Sites**

-  Backcountry Trail Site
-  Regional Trail
-  King County Park System
-  King County Park System Easement
-  Other Public Land
-  Tribal Lands
-  Incorporated Area
-  Major Road










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**Figure 11**  
**KING COUNTY'S**  
**OPEN SPACE**  
**SYSTEM**  
**Wildlife Habitat**  
**Network**

-  Wildlife Network
-  King County Park System
-  Other Public Land
-  Tribal Land
-  Incorporated Area
-  Major Road

N  
  
 0 4 8 Miles  
 January 2016

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 Data King County Datasets  
 File 1601\_4985w\_11parksKCwildlife.ai

## APPENDIX II: KING COUNTY PARKS HISTORY

### **King County's Evolving Role**

Since the early 1900s, the role of Parks in providing recreation and open space opportunities has evolved and expanded through several distinct periods, largely driven by the major funding efforts that directed them.

### **1900 to 1950: Establishment of King County's Parks System**

During this era, the need for a parks and recreational system for unincorporated areas of the County became apparent, and the first steps were taken to acquire land and provide recreation programs. Many of the original park lands were donated to the County, and the first park properties were acquired. Facilities added or built during this period include the Works Progress Administration (WPA) buildings, which are some of the largest and most well-preserved log structures that remain in the nation today.

### **1951 to 1965: Focus on Recreation**

The focus during this period shifted to providing innovative recreational programs and acquiring additional park lands. Acquisition became important as growth shifted to suburban areas on the Eastside and to the north and south of Seattle. Of particular interest for the government was lakefront access, as well as areas for playgrounds, games, sports and parkways. The first county-wide park bond issue was passed for \$1 million in 1956. The County acquired its first regional park, Marymoor Park, in 1962 for \$1.1 million.

### **1966 to 1980: The Forward Thrust Era**

During a period of unprecedented park expansion funded by the Forward Thrust bond issue, what was then called the King County Department of Parks and Recreation acquired and developed recreation facilities and programs distributed widely throughout the county. Forward Thrust was a model interjurisdictional and interdisciplinary effort at the regional planning level. With \$49.2 million from the bond, the county government was

able to leverage millions more in grants and matching funds from other state and national programs. King County's park system doubled in size, adding more than 4,000 acres, 53 miles of waterfront, and miles of trail rights of way. One of the most notable Forward Thrust park initiatives was the creation of the aquatics system of sixteen indoor pools and one outdoor pool. The King County Comprehensive Plan, the Ten Year Program for Open Space Acquisition (1965), the Urban Trails Plan and the General Bicycle Plan (1976) all contributed to shaping the future of the system at this time.

### **1980 to 2000: The Open Space Era**

By 1980, the focus shifted to regional parks, natural resources and the preservation of open space. County residents, responding to dwindling open spaces and loss of habitat and public access, passed a \$50 million Farmlands Preservation Bond issue in 1979 to preserve agricultural open space, and then a \$117 million Open Space Bond in 1989 to acquire other open space lands. In 1993, King County established a \$60 million Conservation Futures Bond Acquisition Program to purchase open space, parks and trails and initiated the \$14.8 million Waterways 2000 Program to conserve streams and rivers to protect salmon and provide open space for recreation and education. During this period, regional facilities, such as the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center, were developed and significant passive recreation and natural area parks, such as Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, Moss Lake Natural Area, Spring Lake/Lake Desire Park, and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area, were acquired to protect ecological resources and provide passive recreation opportunities.

Another significant development during this period was the 1999 listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. As a result, the State of Washington passed several

laws directing planning efforts to address habitat degradation in fresh and salt water on a watershed-scale. This led to the beginning of the Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) planning process that continues to shape open space planning and management today.

King County also led the way in building a regional trails network during this period. The development and expansion of active recreation parks characterized this era, in particular delivering sports programs outside the incorporated areas of the County. Innovative programs such as the Youth Sports Facilities Grant program and the 101 Ballfields Initiative provided funds for construction and rehabilitation of many recreation facilities located on school sites throughout the County.

### **2000 to 2004: A Time of Transition**

The Washington State Growth Management Act encourages the annexation or incorporation of urban unincorporated areas. Between 1990 and 2000, ten new cities formed in King County, shifting the responsibility for local parks and recreation services from King County to the cities. The cumulative impact of annexations and incorporations coupled with a fiscal crisis in 2002 prompted King County to reevaluate the provision of all non-mandated services supported by its general fund, including the parks and recreation system. Committed to ensuring that the public be able to enjoy the trails, parks and recreation facilities in the County, King County investigated a broad variety of funding options to preserve its open space system.

In the spring of 2002, the Metropolitan Parks Task Force (MPTF) was established to identify ways to keep the county's parks and recreation system open in 2003 and beyond and to restore stability to the parks system by removing it from dependence on the general fund. The MPTF issued its recommendations in June 2002 and called for the County to:

- Refocus its parks and recreation mission to provide for regional trails, regional passive parks, regional resource and ecological lands, regional active recreation facilities and rural parks
- Transfer all local facilities within cities and work to transfer local facilities in potential annexation areas
- Implement a broad variety of new entrepreneurial strategies to help raise revenues to support park operations
- Facilitate the acquisition and development of active recreation facilities by convening potential partners and providing capital funding when appropriate rather than assuming ongoing operation and maintenance obligations
- Seek voter approval for a property tax lid lift to support county regional and rural parks

These recommendations evolved into the Parks Business Transition Plan, becoming the blueprint for the transformation of the county's parks system. Another key element to the transition was a companion ordinance, referred to as the Parks Omnibus Ordinance (14509), which was approved by the King County Council and gave Parks the authority to implement its newly refocused mission and vision. In the spring of 2003, voters approved a four-year levy to support regional trails, parks, and recreation facilities maintained by King County.

It was also during this period that the parks agency was merged with the Department of Natural Resources, forming the Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

**2004 to Present: A Refocused Mission**

After the tumultuous start to the decade, Parks came away with a refocused mission and role, providing regional active and passive parks and recreation amenities, natural area parks, regional trails, working forest lands, and local rural parks. As a result, it diversified its revenue base, which currently largely comes from property tax levy support; nearly a quarter of the agency's operations funding is derived from a combination of entrepreneurial initiatives, competitively priced user fees, and gifts and grants. Public-private partnerships have further contributed to the agency's ability to leverage resources, creating new public recreation amenities and offering programs, events and other ways for the public to enjoy and benefit from King County's open space system.

Parks has also continued to transfer local urban parks and pools to cities and other entities, such as school districts and non-profit organizations. Since 2000, more than 60 local parks and pools comprising over 1,500 acres of local park sites have transferred to cities.

In 2007, King County voters renewed the original operations and maintenance levy for an additional six years and approved a companion, six-year capital expansion levy dedicated to support the acquisition of natural area parks and expansion of the regional trails system. In 2009, King County voters passed the "Open Space Protection Act", an amendment to the county Charter to strengthen the protections against the sale or transfer of 96 open space properties totaling 156,000 acres.

In 2013, King County voters renewed their support and approved the 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy by more than 70 percent. This six-year levy provide funding for operations and maintenance, as well as for capital improvements for King County's growing open space system.





## APPENDIX III: SOURCE DOCUMENTS

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## APPENDIX IV : SIX-YEAR CIP

	2016	2017	2018	2019 <sup>2</sup>	2020	2021
Regional Open Space Acquisition <sup>3</sup>	7,750,000	7,000,000	7,150,000	7,300,000	-	-
<b>Regional Trail System</b>						
<i>Eastside Rail Corridor</i>	4,000,000	3,860,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-
<i>Lake to Sound Trail (South County Regional Trail)</i>	2,000,000	1,200,000	6,900,000	8,400,000	-	-
<i>East Lake Sammamish Trail</i>	2,600,000	7,500,000	8,000,000	4,000,000	-	-
<i>Foothills Regional Trail</i>	1,000,000	2,750,000	1,000,000	5,500,000	-	-
<i>Snoqualmie Valley Trail</i>	600,000	2,000,000	-	-	-	-
<i>Mobility Connections</i>	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-
<i>Other Regional Trail Projects</i>	1,150,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	-	-
<b>Major Maintenance and Infrastructure Repair</b>						
<i>Trailhead Development and Access</i>	500,000	1,000,000	500,000	1,000,000	-	-
<i>Bridges and Trestles Rehabilitation</i>	350,000	2,000,000	500,000	1,500,000	300,000	300,000
<i>Play Area Rehabilitation</i>	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	200,000	200,000
<i>Central Maintenance Shop</i>	2,250,000	2,900,000	2,900,000	200,000	-	-
<i>Park Facility Rehabilitation</i>	800,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
<i>Emergency Repairs (small capital projects)</i>	1,100,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	1,400,000	1,500,000	1,600,000
<i>Other Major Maintenance and Infrastructure Repair<sup>4</sup></i>	9,900,000	5,400,000	7,100,000	8,400,000	7,900,000	9,300,000
<b>Community Partnerships and Grants</b>						
<i>Mitigation Monitoring</i>	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
<i>Feasibility Studies</i>	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,550,000</b>	<b>44,760,000</b>	<b>44,300,000</b>	<b>46,650,000</b>	<b>13,450,000</b>	<b>14,950,000</b>

## Notes:

- 1 Funding sources for the six-year capital improvement program include: Parks Levy, Real Estate Excises Taxes (REET), and state and federal grants.
- 2 The 6-year Parks Levy expires on December 31, 2019.
- 3 Specific projects are determined each year through recommendations from a citizens committee.
- 4 Other major maintenance projects includes but is not limited to repairs and rehabilitation to ballfields, parking lots, sewer systems, and restrooms.



## APPENDIX V: ACQUISITION GUIDANCE

This information provides clarification to the information contained in Section 4.2.

- The King County Parks and Recreation Division further considers the following elements when evaluating and selecting sites for acquisition:
  - Consistent with applicable open space policies and goals
  - Identified as a Regional Trail Corridor in the Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR), the Regional Trails Inventory and Implementation Guidelines, or other relevant regional trails plans
  - Provides connectivity, such as an in-holding in an existing King County-owned site, adjacent to an existing King County-owned site, adjacent to another publicly-owned or a privately-owned recreation/conservation land,
  - Provides multiple benefits/functions, such as active recreation, passive recreation, habitat protection, forest conservation, revenue generation, greenbelt/greenspace, view corridor
  - Buffers/protects the urban growth line
  - Provides for increased recreation opportunities that are regional in scope, such as allowing for a recreation use that is not available elsewhere in the system and/or allowing for a recreation use that is underserved elsewhere in the system
  - Addresses a rural local park need
  - Able to become financially sustainable through direct and indirect revenue generation, partnerships, efficiencies, or other means
  - Provides an opportunity for a public/private partnership in development, management and maintenance of the site
  - Accommodates, or able to accommodate a backcountry trail that adds to/enhances

a backcountry trail network on an existing King County-owned site; would allow for a trailhead and/or parking facility; provides trail connection to a regional trail; is located within a designated equestrian community, and/or provides trail linkages between public lands

- Resolves a land/resource management issue, such as providing maintenance access, providing public access, resolving an encroachment and/or allowing for a higher impact recreation use, thus conserving other more sensitive sites
- Addresses needs for cost efficiency/savings including leveraging of other acquisition, stewardship and/or development funds, providing public benefit in proportion to cost of acquisition/ownership, and not providing significant out-of-the-ordinary long-term maintenance or capital expense

The Water and Land Resources Division further considers elements when evaluating and selecting acquisitions. Some examples include:

- Provides priority salmon habitat as identified by a WRIA Salmon Recovery Plan
- Provides large contiguous tracts of forest land within Forest Production Districts and Rural Forest Focus Areas identified in the King County Comprehensive Plan
- Consistent with King County's goals for habitat and natural area protection and restoration

When assessing individual open space sites for acquisition, King County should include the following types of information as part of its analysis:

- Identify proposed site's role and classification (i.e. active park, trail, natural area)

- Inventory and analyze proposed site's conditions for assessing suitability for the proposed acquisition purpose (topography, soils, hydrology, vegetation, sensitive areas, wildlife, size, access, visibility, zoning, adjacent land uses, etc.)
- Identify proposed site's boundaries and any adjustments that may be needed to provide for access, use, management, and sustainability of the site resources
- Estimate future costs of ownership (site clean-up, removal of structures, securing of site, signage, restoration, development, maintenance, etc.)
- Identify relationship and/or linkage of proposed site to larger open space system context

This information is available in alternative formats.  
Please call 206-477-4527 or TTY Relay: 711.

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