



KITSAP COUNTY PARKS
PORT GAMBLE FOREST HERITAGE PARK
RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP & PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN

INTRODUCTION:



Kitsap County Parks assumes the responsibility as guardian of our inherent park resources -- natural, cultural, and historic; and works to provide for recreational use and facilities which are compatible with those inherent park assets, including native forests, wetlands, fish-bearing streams, shorelands and shellfish.



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Background:

Through the long time efforts of the Forest and Bay Coalition (regional conservation and recreation interests) toward preserving open space, habitat, and recreation opportunities on the Port Gamble peninsula, the WA State Legislature authorized funds for the purchase of 535 acres of forested uplands and 1.5 miles of shorelands and tidelands from Pope Resources company. Through the WA State Department of Ecology they provided Kitsap County with \$175,000 to develop resource assessment studies with the purpose to develop an overall park stewardship and a public access plan, including recreation opportunities.

Beginning in February of 2015, the County began a planning process to address the inherited natural, cultural and historic resources and evaluate existing and potential recreational use. Our planning approach included the creation of a Stewardship Steering Committee, comprised of local citizens, conservation and recreation interests, recreation business leaders, technical advisors and Tribal representatives.

Over a five-month period, this Committee assessed the qualities of wetlands, streams, wildlife, shellfish, forest composition, and addressed existing and potential recreational interests, including both passive and active recreation activities. Together, we developed clear management intentions that strive for a reasonable balance of resource protection and enhancement, intertwined with public access, trails and other recreation opportunities.

Stewardship Plan Requirements:

The County will manage the Shoreline Block lots via a stewardship committee. Activities that can be funded by Ecology include creating and staffing the stewardship committee, hiring consultants to advise the County on resource management issues, and doing outreach to the community.

Interagency agreement with WA Department of Ecology reads:



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The Stewardship Plan, at a minimum, will include the following elements:

1. Description of stewardship goals and objectives
2. Property description
3. Types of proposed planned public uses for the property to the extent they are known
4. Existing roads, parking areas, access points and trails and proposed features to the extent they are known
5. Historic, archaeological and cultural resources
6. Existing natural resources, such as vegetation communities, soils; water resources including wetlands, streams and marine waters; rare, threatened and endangered species; high-quality and sensitive habitats; old-growth and mature forest stands; and tidally influenced lands and associated biota
7. Maps depicting natural resources, roads, parking areas, access points, and trails
8. Proposed management activities for addressing invasive or non-native plant and animal species, forest health, forest diversity, fire control, protection of high-quality habitats, public use and access.
9. Deliverable: Stewardship & Public Access Plan Report due: July 1, 2015.

Stewardship requires understanding of existing conditions. Noted will be cultural and historical use, ecosystem features, superlative and sensitive resources, existing use patterns and impacts. Stewardship planning is also a determination of preservation and conservation measures balanced with an appropriate public access and recreation. The Stewardship Plan will map-outline varying landscape “zones” depicting levels of resource conservation, public access and levels of recreation activity.

Stewardship Plan Elements:

1. Property Profile – compiling maps and narrative perspectives about existing conditions
2. Issues, Concerns & Opportunities – evaluating current resource issues, impacts, and public access and use issue and opportunities
3. Resource Management Approach – addressing resource protection issues and allowable public activity management
4. Conservation and Recreation Land Classification Plan – land-use “zones” of acceptable use & resource protection areas
5. Final Recommendations and Stewardship Activity Actions & Priorities



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Stewardship Steering Committee Membership:

Recreation Interests

North Kitsap Trails Association -- Linda Berry Maraist / Evan Stoll
Evergreen Mountain Bike Association -- Brian Kilpatrick
Backcountry Horseman – Elaine and Jim Davis
Radio Controlled Airplanes – Ron Bruhn (ORCA flying club)
Waterways Recreation --John Kuntz [Olympic Outdoor Center]

Tribes

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe -- Kelly Sullivan / Laura Price
Suquamish Tribe -- Jay Zischke

Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board

Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board – Alvin Andrus

Conservation Community

Kitsap Audubon – Judy Willott / Gene and Sandy Bullock
Great Peninsula Conservancy -- Debbie Engel / Kate Kuhlman

Neighbors

Olympic Property Group -- John Rose / Julie McAfee
Mark Shorn

Kitsap County Parks Planning Team:

Jim Dunwiddie – Parks Director
Steven Starlund – Parks and Open Space Planner, Stewardship Plan Lead
Arno Bergstrom – Parks Forester
Ric Catron – Park Projects Coordinator
Dori Leckner – Parks Superintendent
Lucretia Winkler – Mapping Consultant
David Nash -- Public Works Mapping Consultant
Phil Struck, Mike Hall – Parametrix, Wildlife Resources Consultant
Jamie Glasgow – Wild Fish Conservancy – Stream Inventory Consultant
Steve Ottmar --- AES Consultants – Property Boundary Survey

Planning Advisors:

Kitsap County Commissioner -- Robert Gelder
Kitsap County Projects Manager -- Eric Baker
Washington Dept. of Transportation-- Thomas (T.J.) Nedrow
Kitsap County Public Regional Trails Planner -- Stephen Padua



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STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE'S STEWARDSHIP PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Port Gamble Heritage Forest Park's Resource Stewardship shall:

Protect, Restore and Enhance Natural Resources:

1. Protect, restore and enhance Natural Resources; sensitive natural areas, plant species and wildlife habitat
2. Work toward a forest restoration regime for forest health and habitat diversity; create a diverse forest community with varied tree age and species, and suitable for diverse wildlife habitat
3. Protect the aquifer recharge function of this landscape
4. Protect and enhance shoreline habitat; including shellfish and forage fish
5. Protect the water quality of Bay through management of shoreline and uplands
6. Understand the importance of the Pacific flyway (avian "highway") and this landscape's key role
7. Plan for stewardship and public use as part of the large-scale surrounding landscape

Respect Historical and Future Cultural Integrity:

1. Preserve cultural and historical aspects of the lands and shore, inclusive of all Tribes; recognize and protect populations of medicinal plants and other culturally significant flora
2. Preserve and enhance the State Scenic Highway 104 viewshed along the Heritage Forest alignment

Promote Responsible Recreation and Public Use of the Park:

1. Meet recreational needs of the Region
2. Develop a cohesive trail system; create trail loops, trails close-in, and extensive travel trails
3. Develop safe public access points and trailhead parking
4. Plan for connecting corridors for recreation trails [Sound to Olympics] and wildlife travel
5. Recognize and planning for "water trails" as part of Kitsap Peninsula Water trail system
6. Explore land adjacent to the Shoreline Block which intended for a mountain bike ride center , and discuss how to integrate this activity area with park's natural resources protection
7. Engage all users/activities to get them excited about nature-education and conservation through recreation

Stewardship Steering Committee should abide by Core Values:

1. Respect for each other's perspectives, interests and needs
2. Recognize and encourage collaboration amongst conservation and recreation interests
3. Engage and not alienate existing users and long-time resource stewards
4. Ensure access for all abilities in recreation planning and design standards
5. Recognize the value of co-existing nature and recreation
6. Promote active nature-based recreation [eco-recreation]
7. Teach the next generation conservation values, and get kids healthy outdoors
8. Understand the local and regional economic benefits of recreation combined with well-planned resource stewardship



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Public Discussion & Involvement Process:

Public review of resource and public use issues and opportunities, was discussed with the representative Stewardship Steering Committee, presented at a public workshop, and further notices through a press release and website notices. General public comment was welcomed and gathered throughout the planning process. Further review continued with briefing to Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board and the Kitsap County Board of County Commissioners.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMMITTEE / BOARDS</u>	<u>PLAN TOPIC/REVIEW</u>	<u>TIME/LOCATION</u>
3/03	Steering Committee	Issues/Opportunities	6-7:30pm Poulsbo
3/18	KC Park Board/Public Review	Res. Mgmt. Approach	6-7:30pm Port Orchard
3/28	Public Workshop	Workshop/Comments	9-10:30am Poulsbo
4/07	Steering Committee	Land-use Classification	6-7:30pm Poulsbo
4/15	KC Park Board Briefing	Res. Mgmt. Issues	6-8:00pm Silverdale
4/21	Steering Committee	Res. Issues/Land Class.	6-8:00pm Poulsbo
5/05	Public Workshop	Review/Comment	6-7:3pm Poulsbo
5/12	Steering Committee	Draft Res. Mgmt. Plan	6-8:00pm PGST
5/20	KC Park Board Briefing	Resource Mgmt. Class	6:00-7:30 Port Orchard
6/03	Kitsap County Website Post	Resource Mgmt. Class. Map & descriptions	
6/09	Steering Committee	Sent Draft Plan Outline & Summary / Review	
6/10	Kitsap County Website Post	Draft Mgmt. Plan Summary	
6/10	Board of Commissioners	Draft Mgmt. Plan Summary -- Briefing	
6/17	Kitsap County Park Board	Draft Plan Review & Public Comment	
6/23	Steering Committee	Draft Plan Review Due	
6/30	Kitsap County Website Post	Final Report for Review/Comment	
6/30 -7/10	Public Review / Comment	Stewardship Plan -- Open Public Review/Comments	
7/01	WA Department of Ecology	Final Report Sent	
7/08	County Commissioners	Stewardship Plan Review -- Parks Briefing	
7/13	County Commissioners	Plan Review / Approval	



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Our management approach includes a **Landscape Classifications System** that recognizes outstanding and sensitive resource areas, and outlines those landscape areas where various recreational activities are considered compatible. This management direction is depicted on a **Resource Stewardship Map**.

Landscape Classification System:

This landscape classification system strives to recognize, map, and thereby direct management of inherent resource values (natural, cultural, historic), on Kitsap County Parks managed properties, while providing an appropriate level of use and compatible public access, recreational use and facilities.



Resource Management | Land-use Classification Definitions – includes resource management and protection requirements, allowable and preferred public access and recreational activities, and reasonable public access facilities.

Classification Categories:

1. NA = Natural Area [Natural / Historic / Cultural Significance]
2. C = Conservation Area
3. PR = Passive Recreation
4. AR = Active Recreation
5. DR = Developed Recreation
6. SP = Specialized Recreation



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NA = Natural Area [Natural | Cultural | Historic]



Protect, restore, and enhance inherent natural, cultural and historic attributes. The key purposes for ecosystem reserves are to: represent the biodiversity of an area, provide habitat for species, and provide sites for scientific research, long-term monitoring, and education. Cultural and historic sites are protected with best management practices.

Acceptable Land use: Let natural processes prevail. Observe and monitor health. Ecosystem restoration activities only.

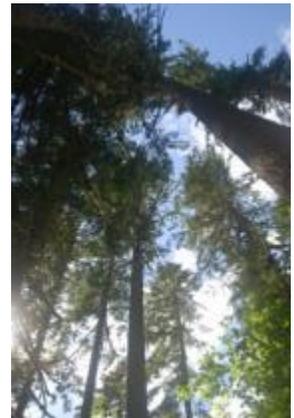
Allowable Activities: Authorized access by permit. Management activities to promote health and longevity; ex. invasive species control. No developed recreational access or use.

C = Conservation Area

Protect key resource elements including historic and cultural features. Minimal, limited, and resource-compatible public access. Conditional Access intended for education, restoration and resource management purposes. Restricted access due to potential environmental or heritage impacts. Research, monitoring, and study activities allowable.

Acceptable Land use: Prescriptive habitat restoration. Monitor ecosystem health. Invasive species management and control.

Allowable Activities: Prohibited organized large group activities. NO pets, livestock, bicycles. Educational and interpretive activities which have minimal resource intrusion and impact. Limited recreational harvest activities and those which sustain and complement resource health and diversity; ex. shellfish, berries, brush picking.





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PR = Passive Recreation



Moderate resource disturbance acceptable with dispersed and moderate use [ex. Trails, viewpoints]

Acceptable Land use: Manage landscape for recreational safety and limited impact use. Determine a carrying-capacity for trail access and use.

Allowable Activities: Some recreational harvest of traditional vegetation, low impact trails, manage “hazard trees” in concentrated areas, some conditional commercial harvest for stand maintenance. NO large recreational events. View points. Public amenities; ex. restrooms, interpretive and educational activities. Conditional use: Leashed dog walking may be permitted, depending on resource protection requirements. Watertrail launch and day-use sites are appropriate.

AR = Active Recreation

Resource-based recreation activities that have moderate to high intensity use and some developed “comfort” facilities [e.g. restrooms, trailhead parking, more developed trails and trail facilities]

Acceptable Land use: An area of high level of recreational activities and facilities. Modification of landscape is allowable with the protection of sensitive and critical resource areas. Design and operation of active recreation facilities are responsible for protection of sensitive natural areas and waterways.



Allowable Activities: Nature-based recreation activities and facilities. Events are allowable with permit and scheduling. Large event impacts need to be mitigated. Provide for visitor comfort amenities. High capacity designed trails, parking. Dog walking, on-leash is recommended. Some designated areas and equestrians may have dog walking where voice control is permitted.



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DR = Developed Recreation.

Acceptable impacts for moderate to high levels of recreation intensity and development. Recreation and public access areas with moderate to large-scale developed facilities. Site impacts and modification are acceptable with appropriate environmental reviews and mitigations.



Acceptable Land use: High capacity urban-style recreation with developed facilities for access and visitor comfort. Natural areas and landscape amenities in keeping with “park-like” environment and experience.

Allowable Activities: All forms of developed playfields; ball fields, trailheads, skate park, picnic shelters, nature trails, camping, ADA facilities,

SP = Specialized Recreation



An area developed for one or several unique uses which requires special care, and made available for public use in a controlled manner.

Acceptable Land Use: Dependent on recreational experience and activity demands.

Allowable Activities: Dependent on recreational needs. Ex.; bike recreation areas, amphitheaters, model airplane fly



fields, non-motorized organized events such as runs, walks, bike rallies, watertrail activities.

ALL CLASSIFICATIONS:

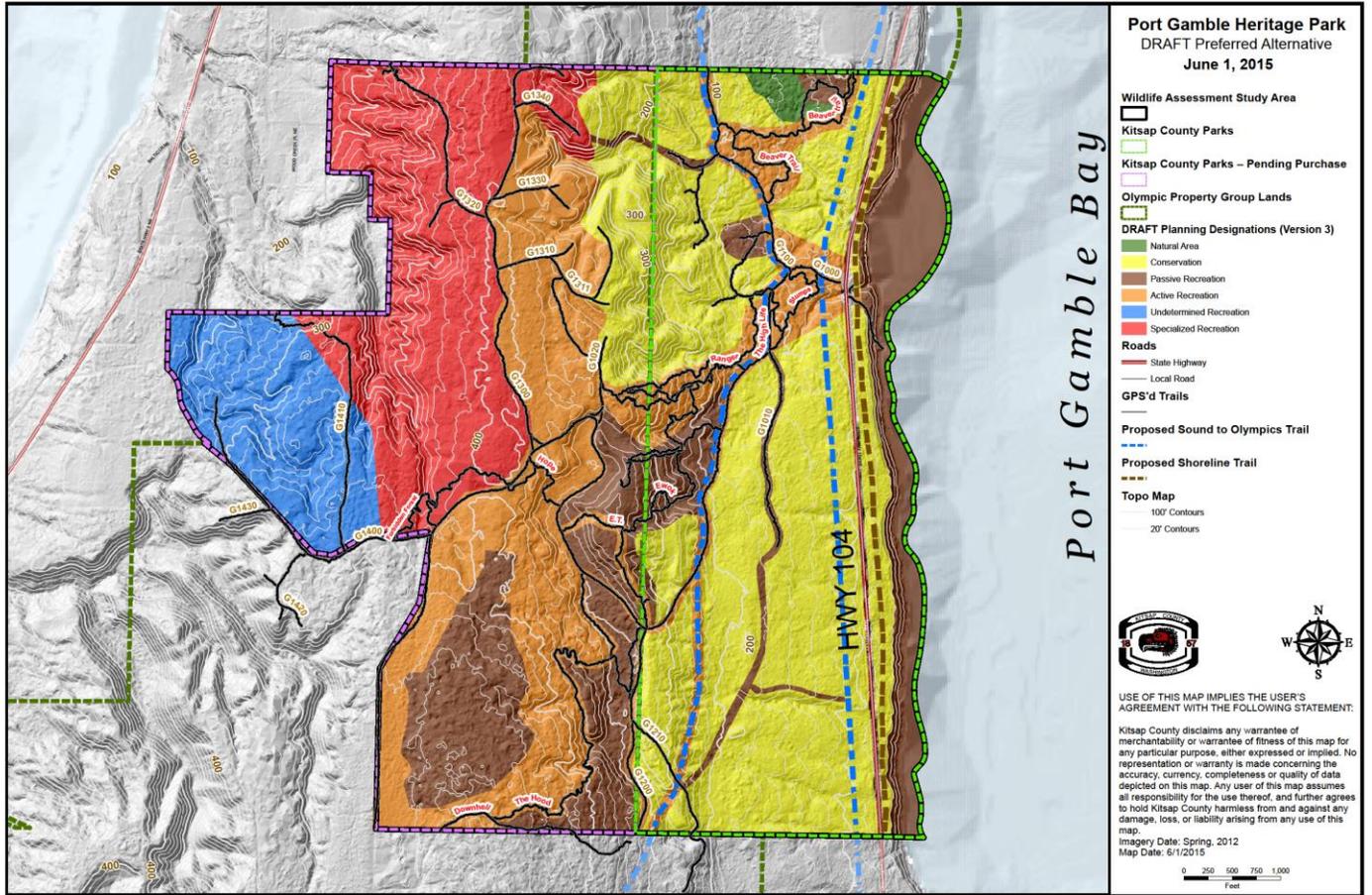
Conditional Uses: Allowances are made for resource use for recreation and public access which are not identified in the land classifications and which may be determined an acceptable “conditional use”, on a case-by-case basis, through a Kitsap County Parks planning process. These will be noted in a Park Management Plan.

Forest Restoration Activities: As a result of historic silvicultural practices on this property, directed to commercial timber harvest, the current forest structure and composition has limited diversity, age class and understory complexity throughout much of this landscape. Restoration activities, directed for forest health and habitat purposes, may include, but limited to; types of restorative thinning, inter-planting of native tree species, and introduction of other native plants.



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LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION MAP





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RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP & PUBLIC ACCESS | MANAGEMENT APPROACH

INTRODUCTION:

As County Parks must assume the responsibility of guardians of our park resources (natural, cultural, historic) as well as address the demands for recreational use and facilities of our park properties. Striking an informed balance of conservation and use can be reasonably achieved after by assessment of those inherent resources; such as forests, wetlands, fish-bearing streams, shorelands and shellfish.

Our management approach included:

1. **Applying a Landscape Classifications System** that recognizes outstanding and sensitive resource areas, worthy of conservation and protection, and depicts those landscape areas where various recreational activities and levels of intensity are compatible. These land-use and conservation areas will provide for diverse recreational use, exceptional outdoor experiences, while protecting key resource values. This system is depicted on our **Stewardship Map**.
2. **Identifying and addressing Issues, Concerns and Opportunities.** In addition, the Steering Committee, Park staff, technical advisors and Tribal representatives clarified and discussed specific management issues which are currently impacting the Heritage Park property. These discussions highlighted anticipated resource protection needs, public use needs and potential new recreational opportunities.
3. **Stewardship requires community partnership and committed volunteers** that have been the foundation of the acquisition of this park. Volunteers have invested thousands of hours and many years in working to acquire the property, maintaining and improving the trails and supporting events.



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Following are those prominent and prevalent issues, concerns and opportunities, and proposed management objectives and directions to address them:

NATURAL | CULTURAL | HISTORIC RESOURCES PROTECTION



Native Vegetation vs. Invasives

Issue: Selective forestry began in 1878. In the 1920's timber production began in earnest. The majority of the acreage was clear-cut then replanted with a monoculture of Douglas fir trees planted closely together to maximum future timber-harvests. Some old growth trees on steep slopes remain, most likely due to the high cost of timber harvest in those areas.

Management Objectives:

- Trees are stressed, as they do not have sufficient space for normal growth and development. Forestry tracts are to be mapped and selectively thinned to open up the existing dense tree canopy, allowing light to reach the forest floor. In opening up the forest floor, space for under-planting with native species such as Western red cedar and Western hemlock can occur; approximating the original forest conditions prior to the 1920's clear-cutting.
- Concurrently, invasives such as Scotch Broom are being removed, allowing native shrubs such as salal, huckleberry and salmonberry to naturalize. Identify and control invasive vegetation with the purpose to enhance native plant populations and communities and create natural habitats.



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Fish, Wildlife & Habitat

Issue: A dense, dark Douglas fir monoculture forest does not support a healthy eco-system as it does not support a diversity of wildlife. Some stream crossings utilize under-sized culverts that do not allow for salmon to migrate upstream. Existing creosote pilings in Gamble Bay are toxic to wildlife, including important feeder fish that serve as the foundation to the food-chain.

Management Objectives:

- Replace the Douglas fir monoculture by selective thinning and re-planting with compatible native species such as cedar and hemlock.
- Replace, or remove under-sized culverts.
- De-accession un-needed trails and former logging roads as appropriate.
- Designate areas where there is no public access to protect wildlife habitat and sanctuary. Provide interpretive displays regarding wildlife populations and viewing opportunities.
- Provide “bird blinds” and overlooks for controlled access for remote viewing of wildlife areas.
- Remove and dispose of creosote pilings in Gamble Bay.
- Remove and replant shellfish, such as oysters from creosote pilings above the tideline.
- Re-plant eelgrass where desirable to serve as an incubator for feeder fish.

Streams, Wetlands, and Waterbodies

Issue: Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park has wetlands and numerous streams which empty into Gamble Bay. Impacts to the bay start upstream, and are dependent on the water’s proximity to trails and area usage. Park visitors such as hikers, mountain bikers, wildlife viewers, dog walkers, and horseback riders may contribute to water quality degradation if recreation facilities are not properly located, designed and maintained. It is advisable to monitor water quality in wetlands and streams.

Management Objectives:

- Consider all wetlands, streams and springs as integral to the entire watershed ecosystem, aquifer recharge, and in support of fish-bearing streams, and water dependent critters.
- Coordinate with Clean Water Kitsap or Department of Ecology to develop a feasible water sampling program for the park’s wetlands and streams.



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- Determine trail usage along with proximity to streams and wetlands, and categorize which streams are typed as fish bearing.
- Confer with the county or Department of Ecology regarding existing NPDES permits.
- Define contaminants most likely for a particular stream or wetland such as fecal coliforms, sediment, zinc, copper, oil, etc.
- Apply prescriptive measures such as culvert or trail removal.

Shorelands, Tidelands & Shellfish

Issue: The Port Gamble Heritage Forest Parks includes 1.5 miles of shorelands and tidelands. Nine types of shellfish are harvested along similar shorelines in this area -- Region 8. The shellfish population has been largely un-tapped for recreational harvest while in private land ownership. The pounds of harvestable clam stock and number of oysters is substantial. Currently there are no State harvest surveys, regulations or seasons to govern recreation or commercially approved harvest. Health of the Port Gamble Bay and stewardship of those resources is paramount. If the natural shellfish beds are let alone, without any harvest, there are concerns of snail invasion and over-crowded oyster beds. Health Dept. determines water quality for safe shellfish harvest. Our tidelands are currently certified as healthy.

Management Objectives: (Shorelands, Tidelands & Shellfish)

- Protect the shorelands and tidelands from upland impacts, garbage, and pollutants, and promote the long-term health of the Port Gamble Bay,
- Recommend that Kitsap County enter into a shellfish management agreement and develop shellfish resource management plans with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and affected Tribes, for a period of three years. Management would include population surveys and health assessment of the shellfish resource, determination of recreational harvest seasons and catch limits and patrol and enforcement of recreational harvest activities. Kitsap County Parks would have oversight of this plan and operations.
- Encourage the propagation and protection of native shellfish stock. After the three (3) year program evaluation, consider all management options including potential commercial harvest of all or a portion of the shoreline.



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- Limit access to the shoreline in approved and developed trails and parking areas.
- Encourage the development of shoreland passive-use trails.
- Provide for on-site public education and interpretation of the shellfish resources, licenses, harvest seasons and regulations and responsible resource stewardship.

Forest Restoration and Management

Issue: Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park has 535 acres of densely stocked conifer plantations ranging between 23 and 50 years old. This condition is the product of past management practices and doesn't adequately provide for the long term forest health and habitat potential for this new park. Our Stewardship Plan study area includes approximately another 300 acres with similar forest conditions.



Management Objectives:

- Establish a Forest Stewardship Committee which will help direct forest enhancement plans and operations based on county approved guidelines. (Including buffers for streams, wetlands, seeps and springs.)
- Use non-conventional, or restoration, thinning in these overstocked stands to improve forest health and restore wildlife habitat. Operationally called variable density thinning (VDT), this type of ecological restoration thinning is specifically recommended for young dense Douglas fir plantations.



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Commercial Vegetation Harvesting

Issue: The harvesting of timber, brush and other special forest products has long been a part of the traditional and cultural history on the lands that include the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.

Management Objectives:

- For the heritage park, conventional timber harvesting has ended. Forest thinning for future habitat enhancement and species diversification will be directed by a Forest Stewardship Committee.
- Harvesting of brush and other special forest products is sustainable and may be allowed in certain areas and can provide a source of revenue for the park.
- The harvesting of mushrooms for personal use is allowed, without a permit, and subject to the Kitsap County Parks Mushroom Harvesting Policy.
- Allowing commercial management and harvesting of shellfish in the tidelands will be in a limited area and determination made after extensive evaluation of the shellfish surveys, recreational harvest needs, and a look to bettering the shellfish beds and populations.
- Commercial harvesting will only be allowed under contact or by permit.

Wildfire Protection

Issue: Wildfire is a reality and to minimize that risk during periods of high fire danger, Pope Resources has annually closed the Port Gamble Uplands that surround the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park. This closure includes public access to Pope Resource lands.

Management Objectives:

- Be a responsible neighbor: develop and implement a wildfire prevention plan for the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park that protects both the park and surrounding private property owners.
- County Parks will work with local and regional wildfire management agencies to develop a plan for forest fuel management, fire prevention and fire suppression response.



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Historical / Cultural Resources

Issue: Port Gamble Park and surrounding OPG property have a rich and varied history. Native inhabitants gathered resources from the shoreline and uplands. In addition, logging operations occurred for approximately 90 years in the uplands. Historical information to the public focuses mainly on the shoreline and mill site. Interior upland modification and historical information is lacking. The visitor's experience in the park can be enhanced by sharing the information gathered for this project.

Management Objectives:

- Determine area of historical interest.
- Highlight areas of past historical activities by working with the Tribes and Port Gamble Museum to present information to the public.
- Reference researched articles and books on the county website and QR codes access for more in-depth interpretation.
- Develop signage and interpretive trails where appropriate.
- Develop signage and/or interpretive trails where appropriate. Provide opportunities for Tribal traditional uses of the resources, including such activities as gathering plant materials and bark for subsistence and/or ceremonial purposes (described by Treaty). Provide interpretation of historic and current subsistence and ceremonial resource use and respect.



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PUBLIC ACCESS & RECREATION

Public Access & Events

Issue: Previous land owners, Pope Resources Company have allowed public access of the interior lands for hikers, equestrians and bikes via existing logging roads. Over the years the mountain bike community has organized numerous events with permission from Pope Resources on the logging roads and trails, attracting hundreds of participants at a time. Recreational trail-use of the interior trails will continue, but hikers and equestrians will increase in addition to the ongoing bicycle events. Public access to the 1.5-miles of shoreline has been limited, and public shellfish harvest posted as private lands.

Management Objectives:

- Events will require a Parks Permit along with a required parks fee. Fees to be determined based on impacts to: the resources, other recreational access and uses, and degree of site monitoring, mitigation, oversight, and clean-up required for each event. Trails have a carrying capacity and costs associated with events must be paid for by the applicant for staff time, porta-potties, traffic & safety control, trash removal and as necessary for trail repairs.
- Park staff and volunteer stewards will monitor impacts of large group activities on the protection of inherent resources and recreational experiences for all park users. Kitsap County will consider the nature of large social gatherings and their needs, as well as respect for recreationists desiring areas of nature-solitude. Event impacts on the resource will be remedied or mitigated. Special Events may require a County Parks Department Permit, per County Policy. User fees may be charged per County Park Policy, Kitsap County Park Fees & Charges Schedule as approved by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. Other County Departments responsible for fire and health, for example, may charge additional fees.
- The Shoreline will be opened for non-motorized use at selected locations where trailhead parking can be provided and safe passage to the tidelands can occur. More planning is needed for designation of official watertrail launch areas, day-use and water access accommodations for non-powered vessels. Shoreline trails along the bluff and viewing areas is encouraged.



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- Public access will be limited to designated trailheads and developed parking areas, compared with hazardous roadside pullouts, and signed appropriately. Parks will work with WA Department of Transportation to warn travelers along SR 104 as to parking/trailhead pullouts and any trail crossings, and opportunities for visual vegetation “pruning” to provide pocket view of Port Gamble Bay.
- Accommodations will be made for infrequent “fly-overs” by the radio controlled model aircraft which have a take-off and landing field adjacent to the north of the parklands. This use will be monitored for impacts and future resource modification needs, such as vegetation pruning, for safe model-aircraft field-approach and event operations.
- Other motorized aircraft, including “drones” are not permitted over the parklands at this time without authorization and permit.

Recreational Trail Development and Management

Issue: Upon acquiring this property as a Park, there were no designed trailheads, parking, County Park signage, trail signage, or approved recreational routes. Over 40 miles of forested trails and roadway trails currently exist in the park, many adjoining those existing on Pope Resource’s forestland properties to the north, south and east of the Park’s Shoreline Block. Most have former road numbers or user-applied names. Existing user-developed trail maps are mostly accurate to layout and access. New trails and trail technical structures, designed for trailbikes are currently being constructed without safe standards or permission by County Parks. For events and trail emergencies, there needs to be consistent names and locations for trail and roads. The general public will need orientation and rules.

Management Objectives:

- Work to provide recreational access and activity areas for all non-motorized recreationists which are compatible with the land management objectives.
- County Parks will give preference for a future trail connection and continued trail route through the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park for the **Sound to Olympics Trail** [STO) for a shared-use, active-recreation use corridor.
- Accurately map all roads and designated trails with GPS technology.



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- Display maps and current names/numbers on informational kiosks at County trailhead parking. Post maps on County website.
- Parks will research and work to apply web-based trail maps for ease of access by recreationalists and emergency response staff.
- Work with trail users to develop a consistent naming procedure and approval for existing and new approved trails. Identify trails by levels of challenge, construction and use, as part of the displays and maps, [ex. “parkway, destination loop, spur, challenge, interpretive”] and which correlate with the County Park’s trail categories. Develop a system of way-finding trail signage.
- Enforce new trail application and approval process for any new trails. Remove any trail structures or routes which are unsafe, not built to standards, or impact wildlife habitat, or sensitive vegetation.
- The two approved trailhead parking areas along SR 104 will be named; Shoreline Trailhead (on the eastside of the roadway near MP 18) and G-1000 Trailhead (named after the forest road access name and which lies adjacent to SR 104 on the west side).
- County will continue to work with WA Department of Transportation to improve visitor safety, consider pedestrian walkways across SR 104 and encourage a reduction in traffic speed through the park.

Recreational Safety/Behavior/Rules

Issue: On the privately owned forest land, there was virtually unlimited public access, except during forest restoration thinning operations and recreation activities were largely unregulated. As a County Park, there are standards for public use and non-motorized recreation activities. An expected increase and diversity of recreational use will increase impacts to these public lands and will require rules enforcement.

Management Objectives:

- Work to educate and inform visitors about the property’s resources and the need for protection, through signage, tours, interpretive media and publicity.
- Develop orientation and way-finding signage throughout the property.



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- Develop park rules for this Heritage Parks that take into account the special needs of all park users; the casual hiker, the mountain biker, the equestrian, the nature-lover, the classroom, the visitor, the recreational clam-digger, the kayaker, the business community, the environmentalist and others.
- The park is a “Land of Many Uses”, as such serves the entire community and will require monitoring, enforcement, and management by Parks staff and Park Stewards volunteers. Work with local law enforcement agencies and emergency response organizations to best protect the natural resources and the recreation public.
- Close, sign and/or de-construct “rogue-built” trails where there exists unapproved, poorly designed, or unsafe trail construction and routes through areas of user conflict or sensitive areas. Work to discourage such behavior.
- Implement a system of trail classification and rating that would denote the type of trail development standard (ex .parkway/spur/single-track-challenge, etc.), trail features, and difficulty. This will help to alert and inform the users as to the expected trail experience and use.
- Work with Emergency Response agencies to develop a system of response for consistent park trailhead addresses, road and trail signage and emergency response protocols.

Economic Interests

Issue: Much of the existing and future recreational events have a significant positive contribution to the local Port Gamble economy and surrounding area businesses.

Management Objectives:

- Continue to support and look for opportunities to encourage recreation events, trainings and educational events which help to promote business health in related services, e.g. rentals, eateries, lodging, tours, etc.



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Future Property Acquisition

Issue: Much of the area under study with this Stewardship Plan, and of importance to resource stewardship and recreation opportunities, has yet to be acquired for County Park management.

Management Objectives:

- The County will continue to pursue funding and other opportunities to acquire significant portions of the Port Gamble forested landscape, currently owned by Pope Resources Company, which will contribute to the goals and objectives of this plan.
- The County will work to ensure that future land acquisitions, associated with these Park lands, have stewardship planning monies available for initial property resource assessments, hazard identification, stewardship and management activities necessary to take control and ownership.
- Stewardship and public use planning on such newly acquired properties would be advised to follow similar planning processes, as demonstrated in this technical and public process.

Ongoing Resource Stewardship

Issue: To continue stewardship of these parklands and application of the management objectives, and land-use determinations there will need to be a concerted effort by local citizens, interest groups (recreational and conservation), and Tribes to stay involved and develop more prescriptive management agendas, actions and funding possibilities.

Management Objectives:

- Create a Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park Stewardship Group which will be coordinated through Kitsap County Parks, Stewardship Program and would enlist local citizens and other recreation and conservation interests, to further the resource management and recreational needs in this area. The Stewardship Group will work to achieve consensus in the detailed implementation of this Plan, and work to further develop stewardship and recreation strategies.
- Develop a detailed Park Management and Development Plan and support various funding strategies pursuits with County Parks' staff.



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- To create a cadre of informed Stewards, the County shall develop and offer [dependent on available funds and staff capacity], a series of *Stewardship Certification Courses* to instruct volunteers in the various aspects of resource assessment, monitoring, management, and recreation planning and development. These “education-intensives” may include topics on wetland, streams and wildlife, forest restoration, recreation trails, native vegetation & invasives, cultural and historic preservation, shellfish and tideland management, public education and interpretation and other stewardship and recreation management topics.
- Park staff and volunteer stewards will continue to monitor and report resource issues; vandalism, unauthorized park use, and garbage dumping, and develop clean-up events.



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STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES:

Critical to any resource stewardship program on newly acquired property, several management actions must take place. Those include:

1. Identification of New Ownership, Management and Authority
2. Identification and Removal of Hazards, Vandalism, Garbage and Debris
3. Control and Improvement of Public Access Areas
4. Identification and Management of Existing Resource Impacts or Damage
5. Display and Enforce Public Use and Recreational Rules and Guidelines

Following are examples of stewardship management activities planned, underway, or accomplished during the Stewardship contract period:

Identification of New Ownership, Management and Authority

Ownership identification and public access control began with installing Heritage Park signs at major trailheads and parking areas. Since the installation of formal signage and after our community-involved garbage cleanup, there has been no evidence of garbage, vandalism or miss-use of the property access areas. This has been a successful stewardship activity for public use control.





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Identification and Removal of Hazards, Vandalism, Garbage and Debris

Members of the Stewardship Steering Committee and Parks staff organized a park cleanup focused at our Hwy 104 Trailhead (#2), the PSE powerline right-of-way, and along both sides of Hwy 104. Years of accumulation of garbage, tires and appliance and car parts, resulted in sixty cubic yards of garbage and two hundred tires for disposal. One hundred volunteers showed up for the event, ranging in ages from seven to seventy-two and logged in more than 500 hundred work-hours.



Control and Improvement of Public Access Areas

An existing roadway pullout along SR 104 was heavily overgrown, potholed and not signed as to trailhead access, ownership or public access requirements. Volunteers and park staff cleared the former log operations landing site and developed a well-graveled and fenced trailhead parking. This developed and signed public access area has curtailed dumping and other illegal activities. A porta-pottie was added to the parking area for sanitation control.



Photos of Port Gamble Trailhead G-1000
Parking – Before and After Re-construction



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Identification and Management of Existing Resource Impacts or Damage

Sensitive Areas 'Trail Re-route: The Steering Committee identified current impacts to wildlife and shoreline of a heavily used trail along the eastern edge of a large beaver pond ecosystem. It was agreed to re-route the multi-use trail away from the pond to eliminate wildlife disturbance and reduce impacts inherent with heavily used trail corridors in sensitive habitats.

A Steering Committee Trails Subcommittee and Park Staff approved a ~600 ft. trail re-route 100+ ft. distance from the pond. The existing route will be re-constructed and restricted for passive-use only with no dogs permitted. The new "gated" route will be designed to include viewing blinds and interpretive signage for quiet wildlife observations.



Partnering with local trail and conservation groups, it is likely that the re-route and re-construction can occur over the next 12 months. North Kitsap Trail Association and Great Peninsula Conservancy have been awarded grants from REI to begin the trail projects.



As part of the Beaver Pond Trail re-route, County Parks partnered with Great Peninsula Conservancy and REI to offer a one-day trail construction and maintenance training. This workshop recruited trail crew leaders for future stewardship projects as well as help develop our re-route stewardship trail.



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Training announcement:

Trail Crew Leadership Training – June 13

We need trail crew leaders! Join us for a one day leadership training course on Saturday, June 13, at Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park (9 am – 3 pm). This hands-on outdoor workshop will be conducted by Washington Trails Association and cover the basics of flatland trail design, drainage, trail construction and maintenance, safety, and crew leadership.

Training limited to 24 participants. Tools and hard hats provided. Bring sturdy gloves, boots, long sleeve shirt, long pants, lunch and water. **Contact Kate Kuhlman (360) 373-3500 to register.**

Trail Crew Leadership Training sponsored by: Kitsap County Parks, Great Peninsula Conservancy, and REI.



Twenty-four participants received hands-on sustainable trail construction and maintenance training by Washington Trails Association and received trail design and construction manuals.

Display and Enforce Public Use and Recreational Rules and Guidelines

County Parks developed and displayed a new “You Are Here” Map on the Trailhead G-1000 parking along with Recreation Rules to best orient and direct users of the Heritage Park.

County Parks will continue to enforce our resource protection in compliance with **Kitsap County Code 10.12.050 Removal of or damage to park property:**

“It is unlawful to remove, destroy, mutilate or deface any tree, shrub, flower or other plant; any rock, cliff or other natural feature; any building or other manmade structure or artifact; any vehicle, implement, tool or other park property lawfully in any park.”



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Public Announcement & Comments:

Kitsap County Website Notice of Stewardship Plan and Activities:

Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park Resource Stewardship and Public Access Plan

In 2014, Kitsap County Parks acquired 535 acres of forested uplands and 1.5 miles of shorelands and tidelands on the northern portion of the Port Gamble Peninsula.

Beginning in February of this year we began a planning process to address the stewardship of our inherited natural, cultural and historic resources and evaluate potential recreational use. Our planning approach included the creation of a Stewardship Steering Committee, comprised of local citizens, conservation and recreation interests, recreation business leaders, technical advisors, and Tribes.

Over the last 5-month period this Committee assessed the qualities of wetlands, streams, wildlife, wildlife, shellfish populations, the age and vitality of the forest stands, and addresses the needs and desires of a variety of recreationists – both passive and active activities.

Together, we developed Stewardship & Recreation Guiding Principles, which strive for a reasonable balance of resource protection and enhancement, intertwined with public access and trail facilities. The result of our overall stewardship and public use plan is summarized in the Landscape Classifications & Map, and recommendations for the agency and volunteers are detailed in the Management Issues & Objectives report. [Click Here](#) for the reports.

Parks published and distributed a “Stewardship Plan” flyer that outlined the work of the Steering Committee’s Plan Outline and Guiding Principles, also available on the County Parks’ website. Public Comments were received from our Public Workshop on March 28, 2015 in Poulsbo, through e-mails, letters, and from the County website feedback.

Public Workshop Topics of Discussion:

- Receive additional input from Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition
- Laudine DeCoteau Creek is a fish-bearing stream
- 24”-30” culvert under SR 104 may be a deterrent to upstream beaver and salmon health
- Old 1909 Telephone Road to be used as Bluff Trail
- Public safety on SR 104 shoulders
- Verify stream location via surface ground-truthing
- Opportunities to use power line corridors

Public Comments:

I think these plans for land use and trails are extremely exciting and well thought-out and will be of value to a wide variety of people. Congratulations! -Bob Smaus

“Our primary concerns are the future of events/group activities on Port Gamble Trails & some water trail issues. The Port Gamble trails have been touted as a great location for events, we hope that will continue. There are also a lot of youth teams and classes that use the trails.” – Linda Berry Maraist, North Kitsap Trail Association

“Regarding use of the Port Gamble heritage park, my comment centers around the use of dogs. As an equestrian I have been attacked by a loose dog that was not under control of its owner who was riding a bicycle. I suggest the following dog restrictions. Dogs are allowed only if on leash at all times. If you are a bicycle rider or a horseback rider, your dogs are not allowed with you on the trails – no exception. This area is a multiple use area and all sorts of issues can come up, like horses or bicycles going too fast. Just adding dogs to the mix is too much. And, dogs bite.” -- Charles Regimbal



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Planning Comments:

Our County Parks staff share the community’s appreciation of the concerted efforts of the Forest and Bay Coalition and aligned organizations in their pursuit of lands acquisitions to create the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park. The public area offers a foundation for sustainable forest conservation, wildlife habitat, and a wide range of recreation opportunities. The continued stewardship efforts and support by those groups and individuals will enhance our park and open space goals, into the future. Thanks to All.

■ Jim Dunwiddie, Kitsap County Parks Director

“I appreciate the community’s work in creating this stewardship plan. The structure that is created through this process can be expanded and/or replicated for other properties that may come to fruition as part of the overall conservation effort.”

■ Robert Gelder, Commissioner, Kitsap County District 1

**Kitsap County: Parks Director, Jim Dunwiddie
Board of Commissioners: Robert Gelder, Charlotte Garrido, Edward E. Wolfe**