

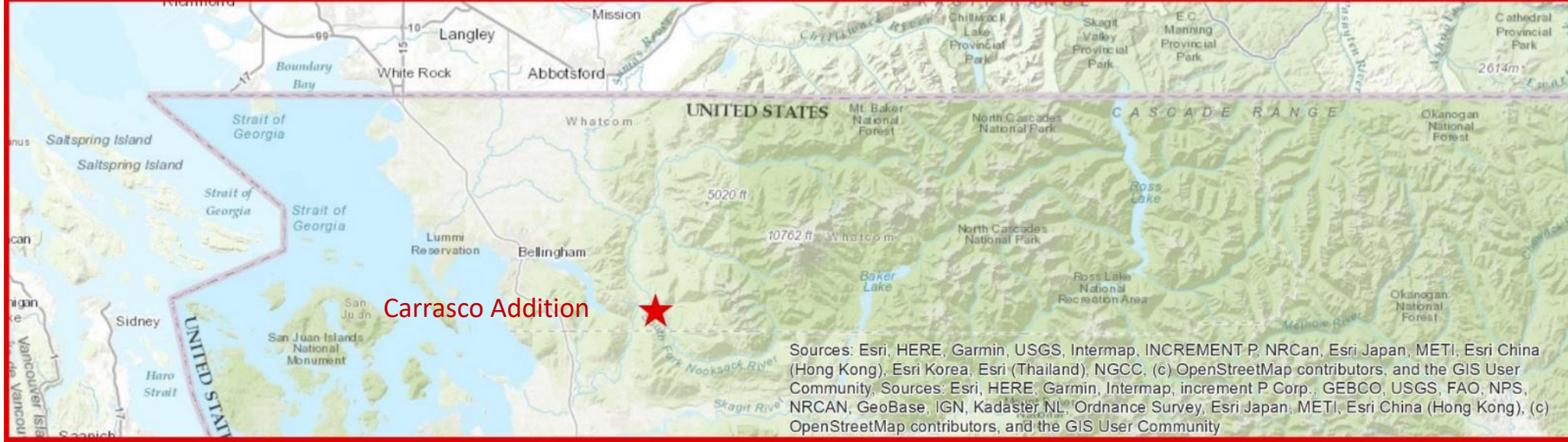
# South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

Whatcom County Parks and Recreation

WWRP – Trails

Project: 24-1946



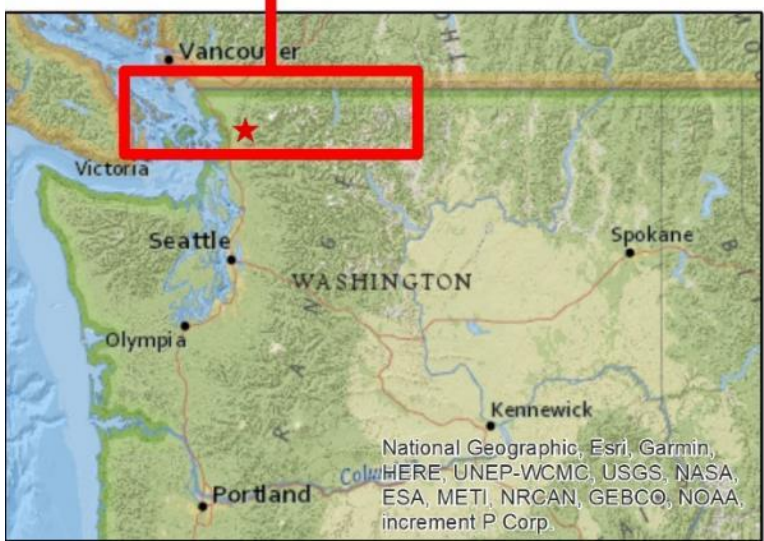


Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Whatcom County



Washington State



# 0. Project Introduction Regional Location Map

## South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

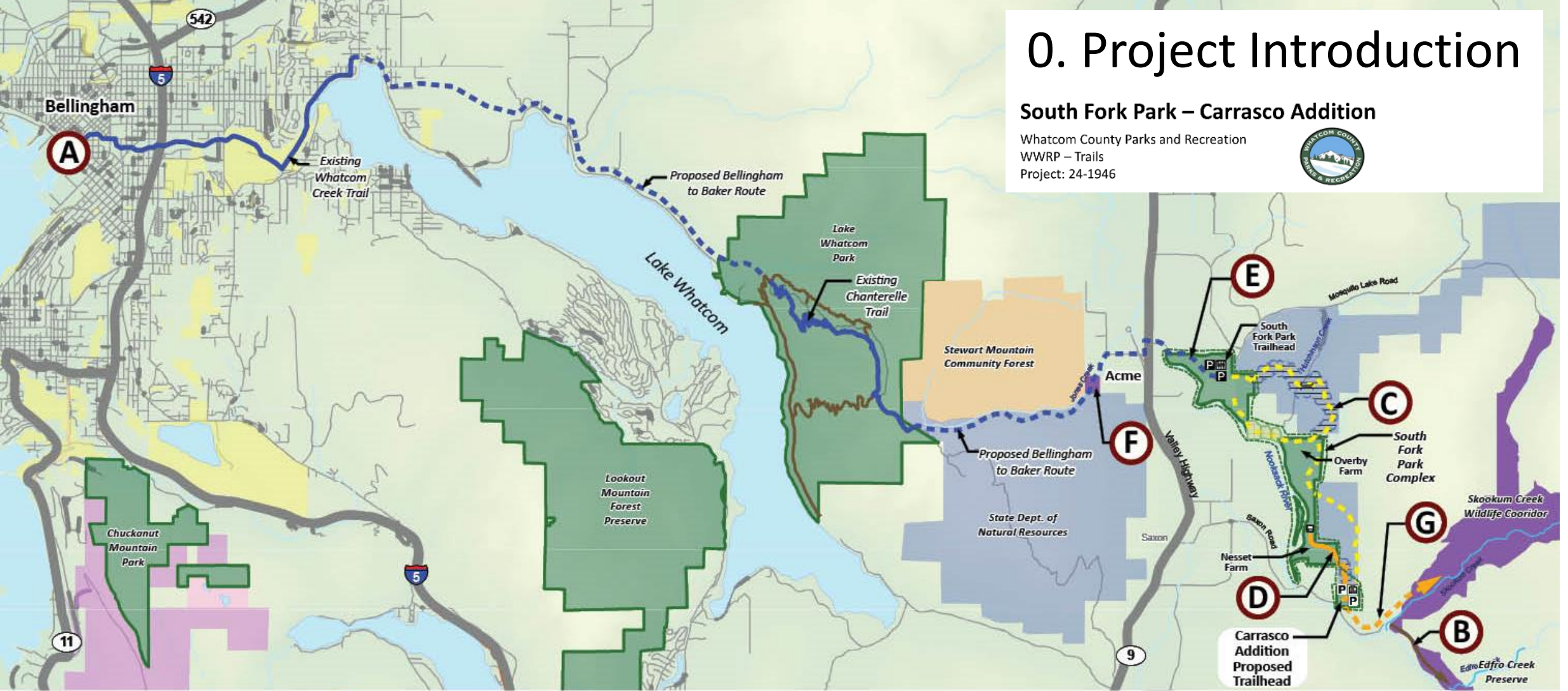
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# 0. Project Introduction

## South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

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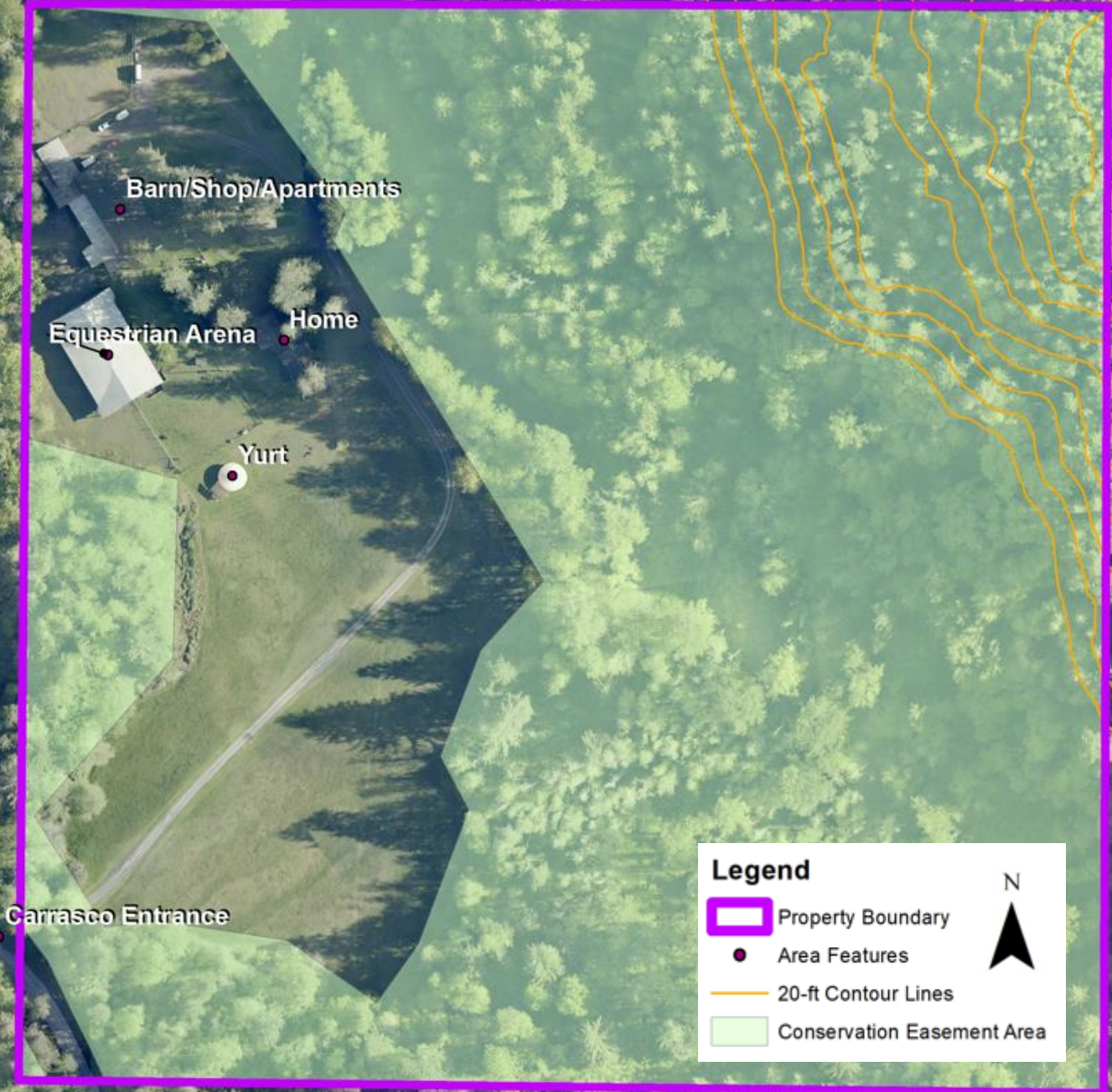


<p><b>A</b> Bellingham to Baker Terminus</p> <p><b>B</b> Proposed Equestrian &amp; Pedestrian Connection to Existing Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) Edfro Creek Preserve</p> <p><b>C</b> Alternate Route for Equestrian Connection</p>	<p><b>D</b> Nettet Farm Trail</p> <p><b>E</b> Proposed Bellingham to Baker Trail Connection to South Fork Park Complex -Pending Acquisition - Connection to Paved Berm and Road System</p> <p><b>F</b> Proposed Connection to WLT Skookum Creek Wildlife Corridor</p>	<p>State Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) Lands</p> <p>Stewart Mountain Community Forest</p> <p>Whatcom County Parks &amp; Recreation</p> <p>Whatcom Land Trust Lands</p>	<p>Existing Bellingham to Baker Trail</p> <p>Proposed Bellingham to Baker Trail *</p> <p>Existing DNR Trail Easements</p> <p>Potential Whatcom Parks Acquisitions</p>	<p>South Fork Park Proposed (with Alternate Hiking/Equestrian Pedestrian Routes) *</p> <p>Potential Hiking/Equestrian Trail Route to WLT Skookum Creek Wildlife Corridor</p> <p>Existing Trails (Non-Exhaustive)</p>
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\* Potential Trail Routes Are Presented Depending Upon Tribal, DNR, Stakeholder, and Community Input, And Success With Future Land Acquisition.

# 0. Project Introduction

- 40 acre parcel
- 29.5 acres under Conservation Easement
- Current Parcel Use – not open to the public pending development



## Carrasco Parcel Map

### South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

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South Fork Park Entrance



South Fork Park Restroom



South Fork Park Equestrian Trailhead



# 1. Need – Local Priorities

## Recreational Inventory/Current Use

- South Fork Park (S.F. Park) - one of two parks in the Acme Valley. Other is a small community park north in Van Zandt.
- Amenities: restroom facility; separate day-use parking for cars and equestrian trailers. 63,364 visitors in 2023.
- 1.5 mile meadow perimeter trail (within the northern S.F. Park parcel).
- Nearby trails:
  - 1-mile hiking/equestrian trail within Edfro Creek Preserve (southeast of Carrasco) which extends 6.5 miles onto DNR lands
  - Private and DNR forest roads exist east of the S.F. Park complex.

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Nesset Farm Dairy Barn



Nesset Farm Utility Barn



Nesset Farm Homestead



# 1 Need – Local Priorities

## Recreational Inventory/Current Use, continued

- Nesset Farm – Farmstead along the South Fork of the Nooksack River. Underutilized community asset.
- No public access since purchase in 1998.
- Without Carrasco Parcel, public pedestrian access to Nesset Farm from S.F. Park would necessarily pass through DNR (length would be approximately 6.5 miles)

### South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

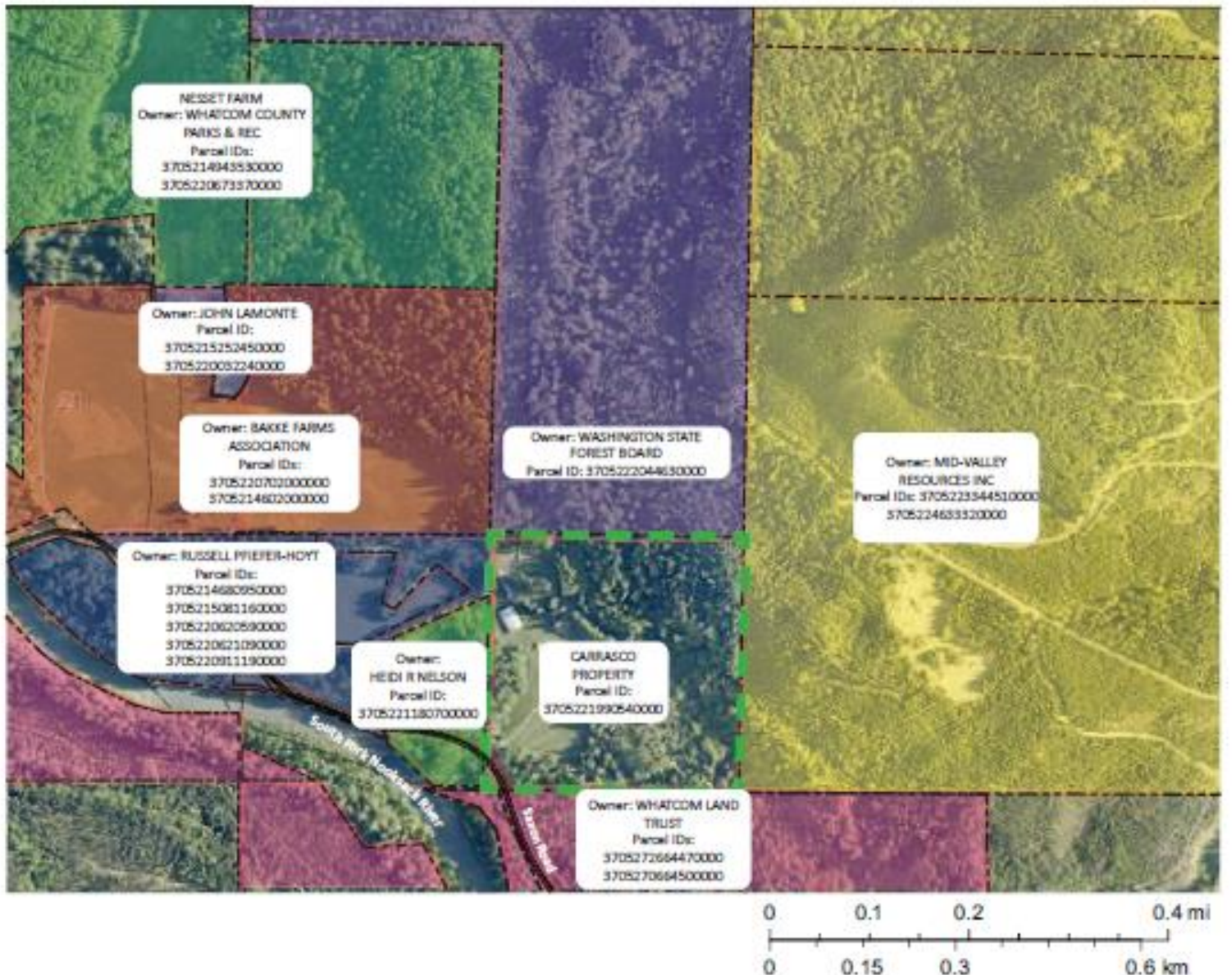
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# 1. Need – Local Priorities

## Service Gaps

- Lack of public trail access to Nessel Farm.
- Need for a trailhead to facilitate equestrian access to nearby WLT properties at the end of Saxon Road.
- Need to address tribal concerns regarding routing trail connectivity to northern part of S.F. Park.
- Visitors to Lake Whatcom Park seek connectivity eastward across Stewart Mountain.
- Opportunity to connect to DNR properties in the future to facilitate potential extension of Bellingham to Baker Trail eastward.



## South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

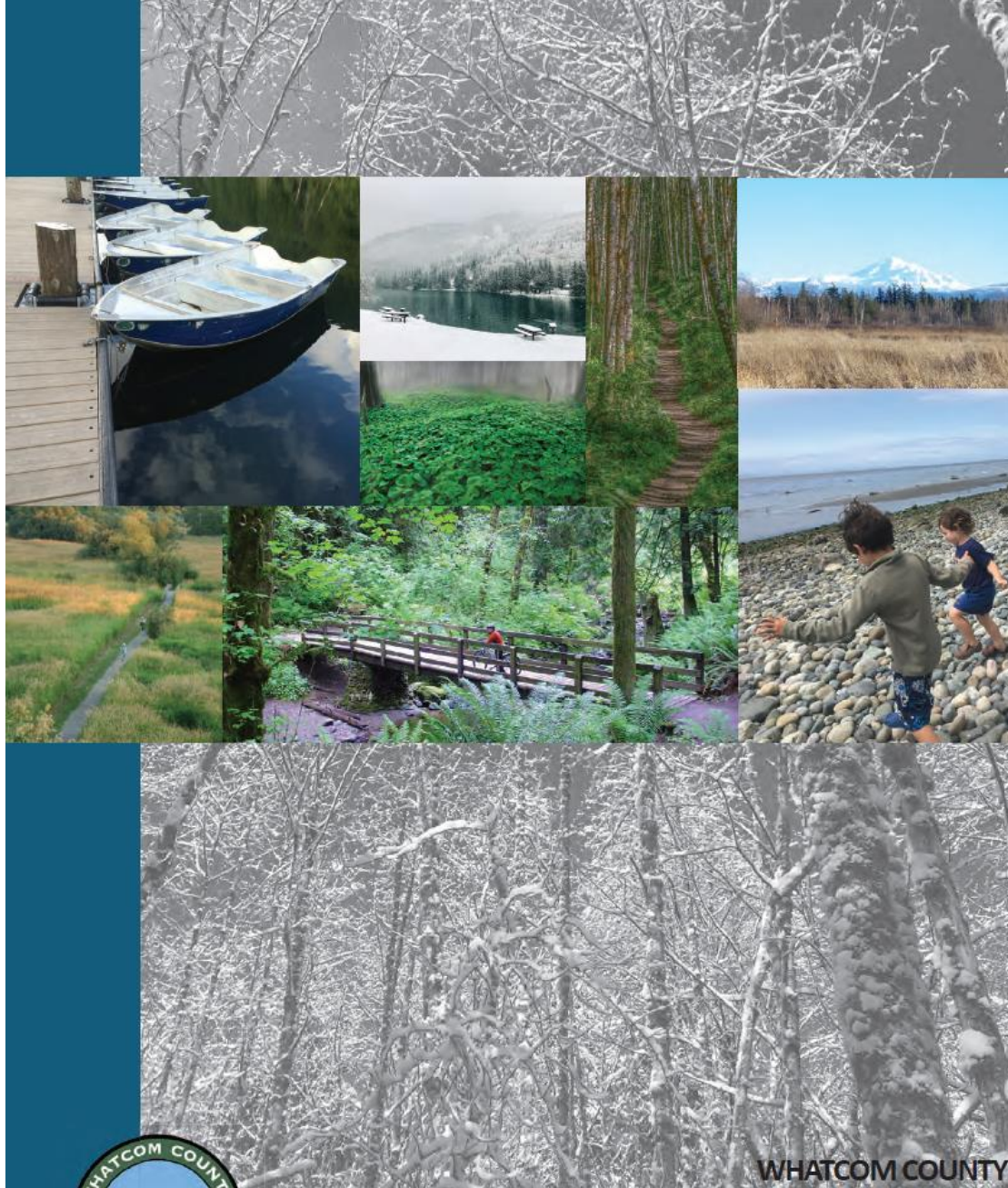
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# 1. Need – Local Priorities

## 2024 Comprehensive Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan

- Prioritizes Regional Park Development and trail connectivity.
- Planning to include robust community engagement and support economic development and tourism.
- Priority given to improvements associated with development of South Fork Park.
- Nessel Farm and South Fork Park trail connectivity is a major planning initiative.

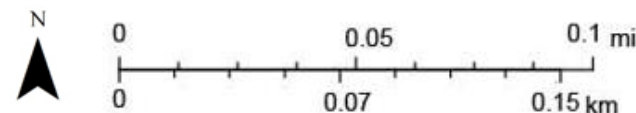


## 2. Project Scope

- Fee simple acquisition of 40 acre property (via waiver of retroactivity).
- 29.5 acres of good quality forest habitat, including forested wetlands.
- Future development would result in trailhead amenities including parking, restroom facilities, and wayfinding/interpretive signage.



Conceptual Site Plan

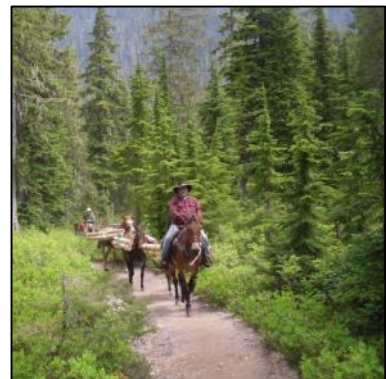


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Equestrian Trails



Hiking



Trail Running



## 2. Project Scope

### Recreational Opportunities

- Pedestrian access to Nasset Farm including areas along the Nooksack River.
- Equestrian and hiking access from Carrasco to:
  - the northern trailhead in SF Park
  - Edfro Creek
  - DNR road systems
- Future hiking and equestrian access to road systems along WLT property along Skookum Creek.
- Planned trail connection across Stewart Mountain as part of Bellingham to Baker trail for hiking and trail running.

Trail Access to Nasset Farm for Outdoor Interpretation



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## 2. Project Scope

### Structures to be Removed

1. Main Residence
2. Shop with Attached Apartments (2) and equipment storage barn
3. Yurt

Other structures include a riding area and miscellaneous fencing and small storage sheds.

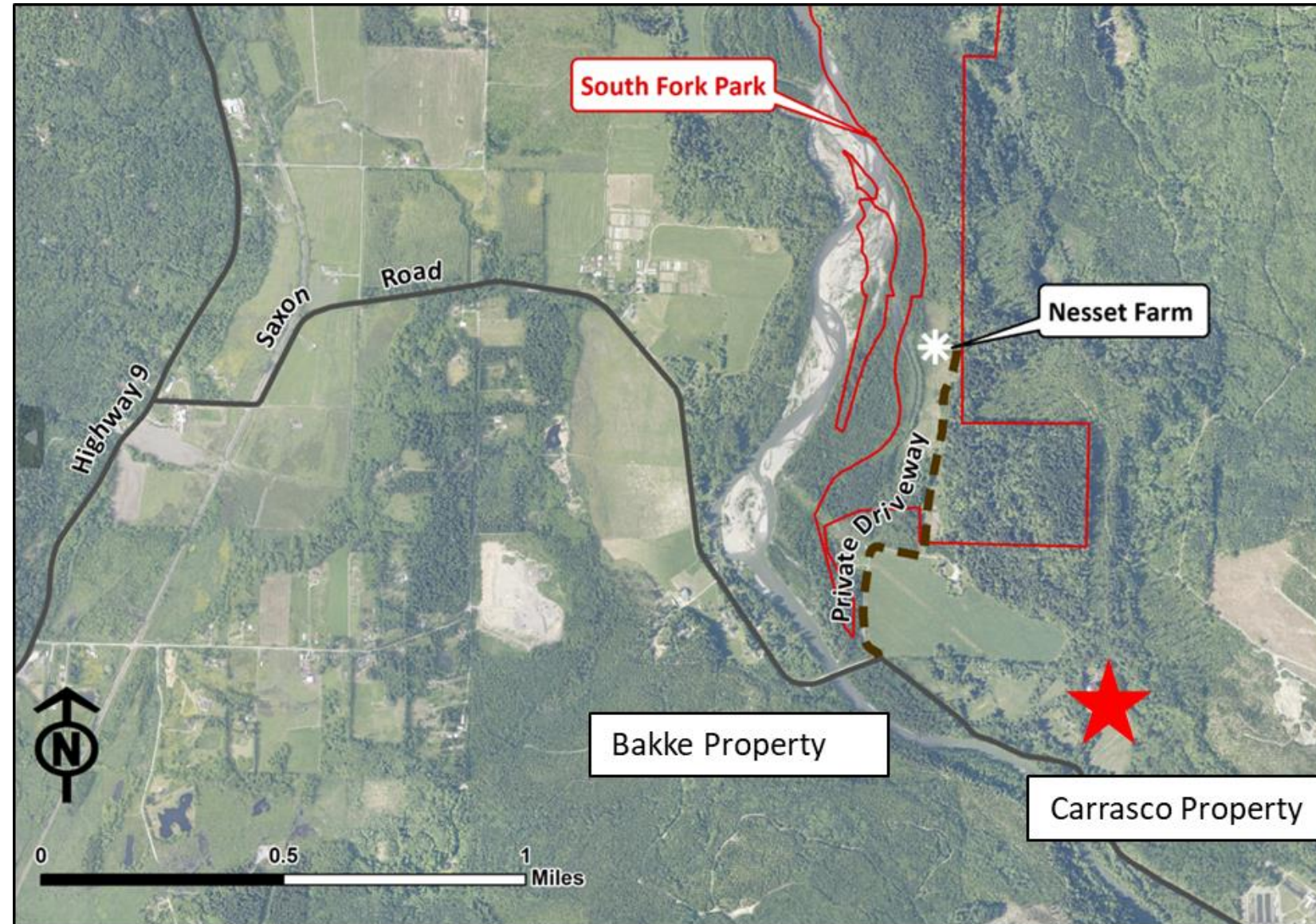
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### 3. Immediacy of Threat

- Owners lived in the San Juan's, property most recently operated as a VRBO.
- County given opportunity in 2022 to purchase before owners put on market.
- Nessel Foundation and Whatcom Land Trust supported purchase by the County for fear of losing the opportunity for Nessel Farm access.
- Family of nearby Bakke property (existing non-public access easement) wanted to pursue purchase.



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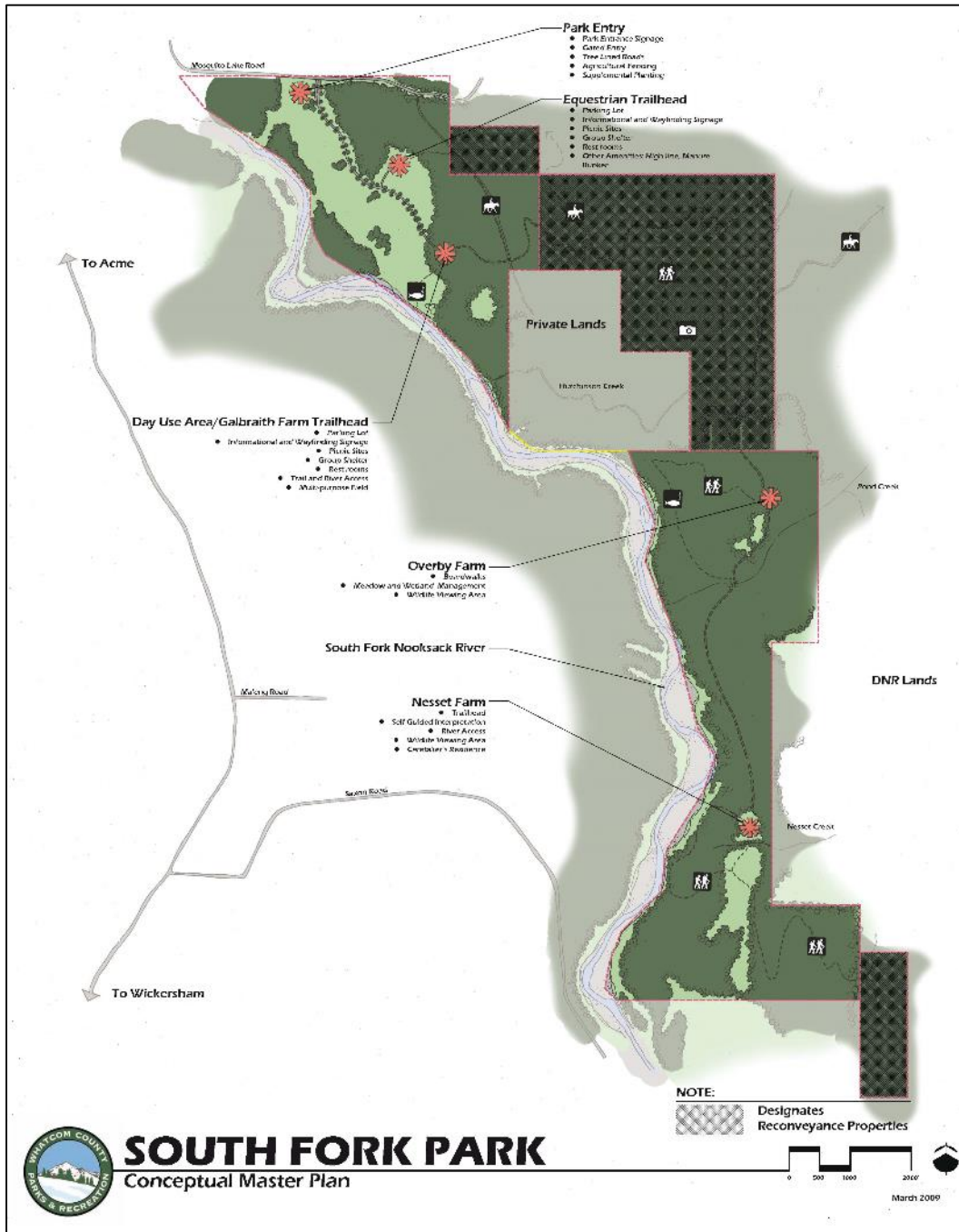
# 5. Project Engagement – Methods

## Past Engagement (formal park planning process)

- S.F. Park Property Acquisition phase (1989 to 1998) and Conceptual master planning process (2007 to 2012)

## Recent Engagement (informal and formal)

- Semi-annual meetings with representatives of Lummi Nation, Nooksack and Swinomish Tribes.
- Meetings with local residents concerned about tourism impact of tubing ban
- Meetings with stakeholders (e.g., Back Country Horsemen, Nessel Farm Foundation)
- Meetings with other land management org (e.g., WLT and DNR)
- Monthly meetings for Stewart Mountain Community Forest



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## 5. Project Engagement – Community Influence

Need to purchase Carrasco largely driven by the following:

- Direct input from Nessel Farm Foundation and Whatcom Land Trust - need for trailhead to facilitate public trail access to Nessel Farm
- Tribal (and DNR) feedback - desire to find alternate routing to connect northern and southern areas of S.F. Park
- Acme business community - desire for trail-based recreation to support local tourism
- Back-country Horsemen – support for formal trailhead facilities along Saxon Road to facilitate access to other trail systems

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THE NESSET FOUNDATION  
July 19, 2023

To: Whatcom County Council  
From: The Nessel Foundation  
Cc: Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive  
Subject: Support for Carrasco



To: Whatcom County Council  
Cc: Whatcom County Executive  
July 18, 2023



August 2, 2023

Whatcom County Council Office  
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105  
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Dear Whatcom County Council Members,

On behalf of the Whatcom Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen we are writing to express our enthusiastic support for the County's purchase of the property along Saxon Road referred to as the Carrasco Property.

Our mission is to promote enjoyment, use, and education about horse use in America's back country and we have a long history in Whatcom County of working with the County, Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Whatcom Land Trust, Washington State Parks, Washington Trails Association, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, and others to improve equestrian trail access in the community.

We applaud the primary purpose of the Carrasco purchase to provide long-needed public pedestrian access to the Nessel Farm property which the County acquired nearly 25 years ago. Specific to our mission, our excitement relates to the potential for the purchase to further support improved equestrian access to trails in the Mt. Baker foothills. Its purchase will allow for creation of an additional trailhead in the Acme Valley and the opportunity to finalize a trail connection to South Fork Park to the north and further connections to the Edfro Creek (Thousand Puddles Trail) and Skookum Creek areas to the east and south.

We hope that Whatcom County Council will approve the County to purchase Carrasco and we look forward to working with the County to create trail opportunities that are minimally impactful on the land, but maximally impactful in terms of improving recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to Whatcom County alike.

Respectfully,

Roger Edmonds, President  
Custer, WA

Tim Van Beek, Public Lands Chair/Financial Manager  
Lynden, WA

Hall Walker WLT President

Rand Jack  
The Nessel Foundation Pres

## 5. Project Engagement - Partnerships

- Nessel Farm Foundation
- Back Country Horsemen of Washington
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Stewart Mountain Community Forest collaborative

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# 7. Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat

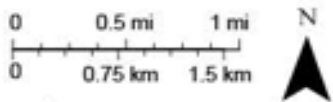
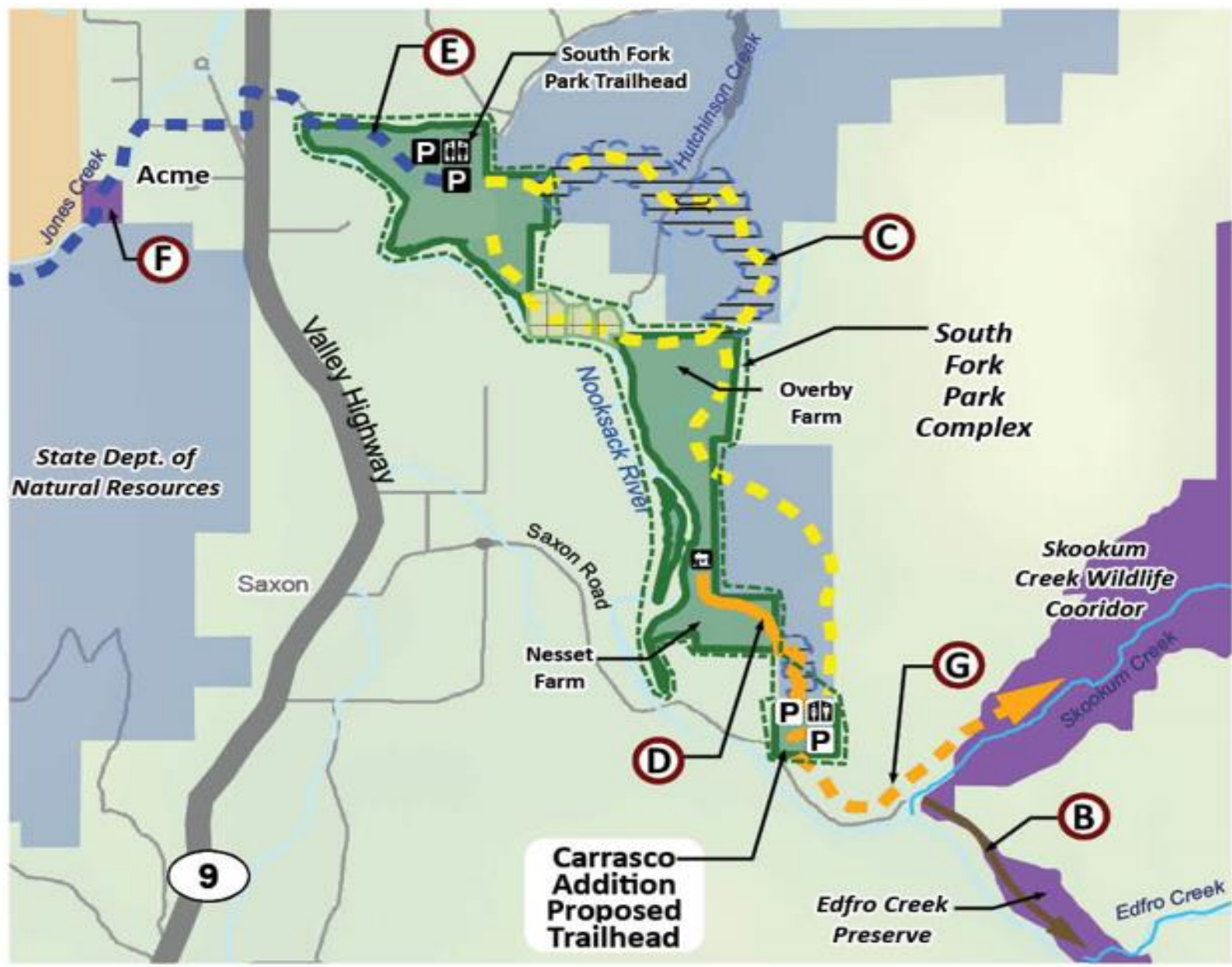


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- (C)** Alternate Route for Equestrian Connection
- (D)** Nessel Farm Trail
- (E)** Proposed Bellingham to Baker Trail Connection to South Fork Park Complex
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- (G)** Proposed Connection to WLT Skookum Creek Wildlife Cooridor
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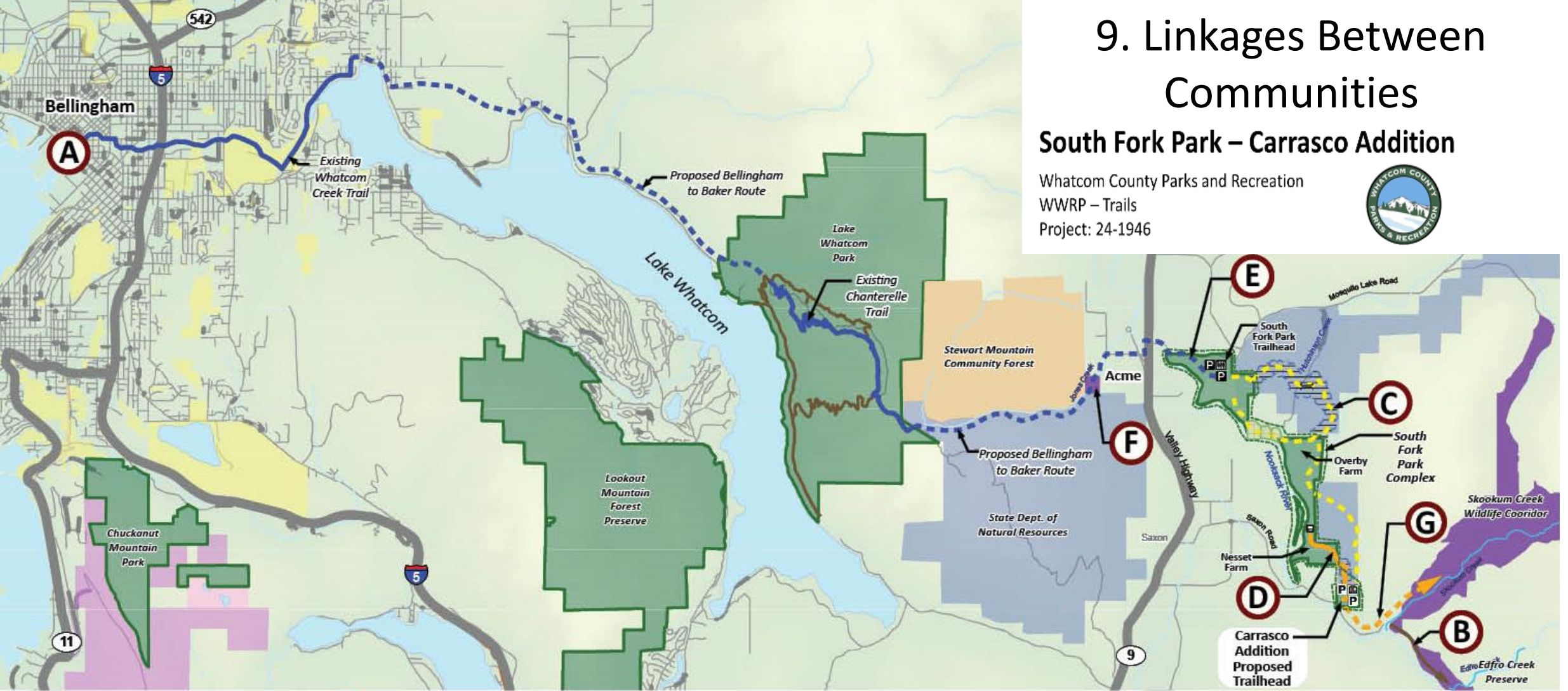


# 8. Linkages Between Trails

# 9. Linkages Between Communities

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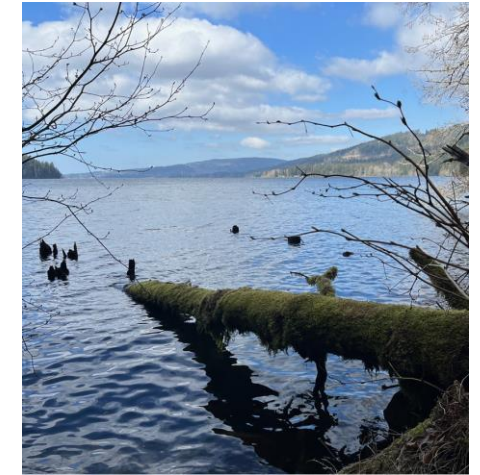
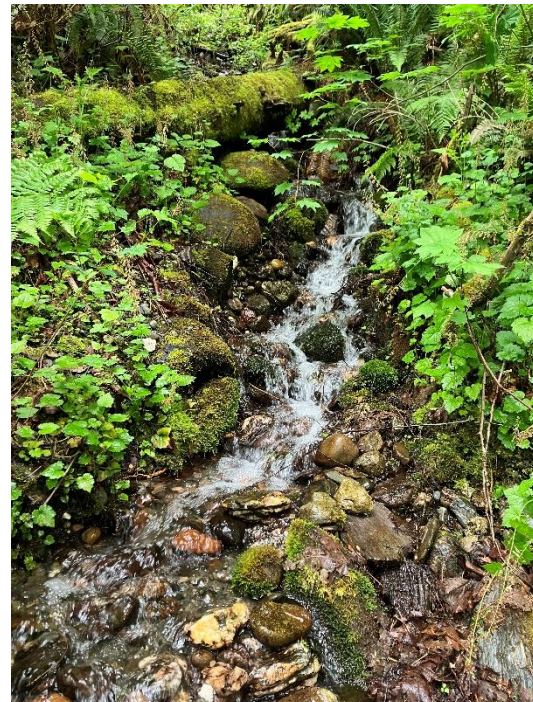


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# 10. Water Access or Views



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Views of Carrasco Property and from Planned Nettet Farm Trail :



Views of with Community Trail Connections:



View of Acme from east side of Stewart Mountain



View from Skookum Creek Preserve



View of Lake Whatcom from Chanterelle Trail



View of South Fork Park (north)

# 11. Scenic Values

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Tom Nessel in cedar dugout canoe, South Fork Nooksack River, circa 1920.



Alice Nessel picking wild blackberries, circa 1940.

## 12. Cost Efficiencies

**Documented commitments from the Tom and Ingeborg Nessel Foundation (501c3 Organization dedicated to preserving Nessel Farm):**

- Provide \$150,000 in donations towards demolition of structures associated with the Carrasco Property
- Following purchase, construct approximately 1 mile trail from Carrasco Property to Nessel Farm

**South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition**

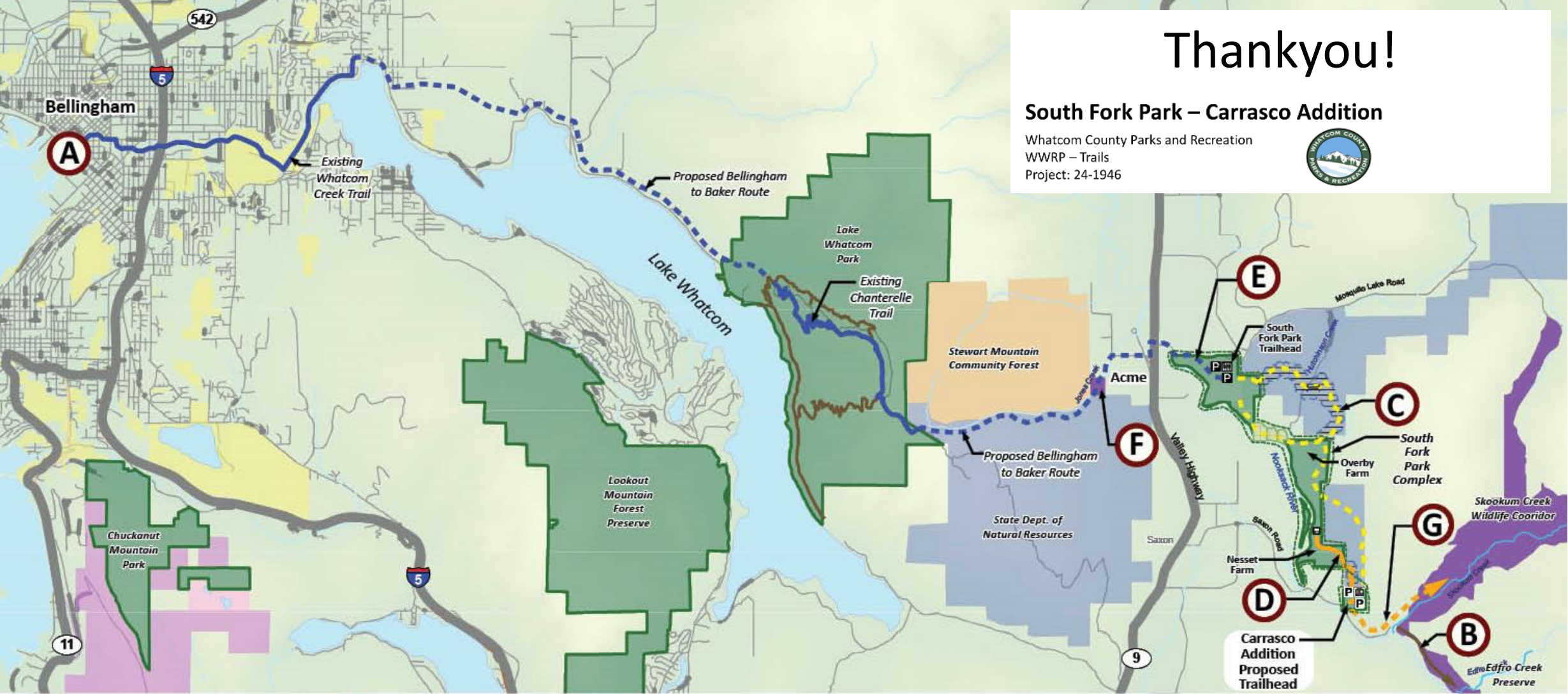
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# Thankyou!

## South Fork Park – Carrasco Addition

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- |   |  |   |   |  |
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