

**WHATCOM COUNTY**

**COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**JANUARY 2024**

## Acknowledgements

This plan is the result of input and collaboration of many individuals. Whatcom County Parks is thankful to all of Whatcom County residents that participated and provided valuable input through online surveys, meetings and interviews. We are especially grateful to the Parks Commission for their tireless dedication and commitment to providing thoughtful input and counsel addressing increasingly complex issues facing the department.

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### References

Planning documents used to inform the 2024 CPROS Update (as amended)

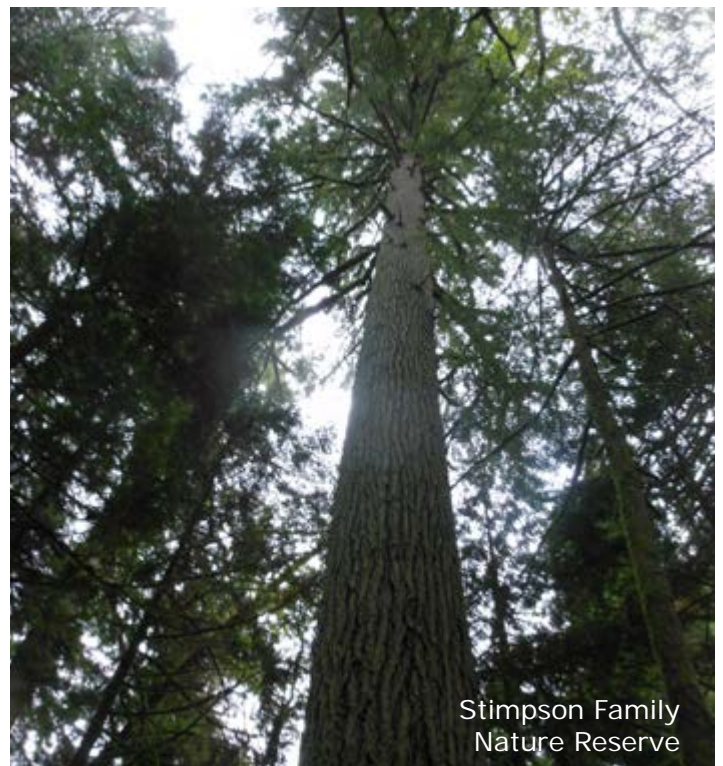
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- Whatcom County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan – August 1991
- Whatcom County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan – April 2008
- Whatcom County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan – January 2016
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan – January 2023
- Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan – August 9, 2016 (Updated June 2023)
- Whatcom County Trail Plan (revised) – January 1975
- Chuckanut Mountain Trails Master Plan – June 1996
- Lake Whatcom Management Program 2020-2024 Work Plan
- Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park Recreational Trail Plan (2016)
- Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation to Whatcom County 2015, Earth Economics



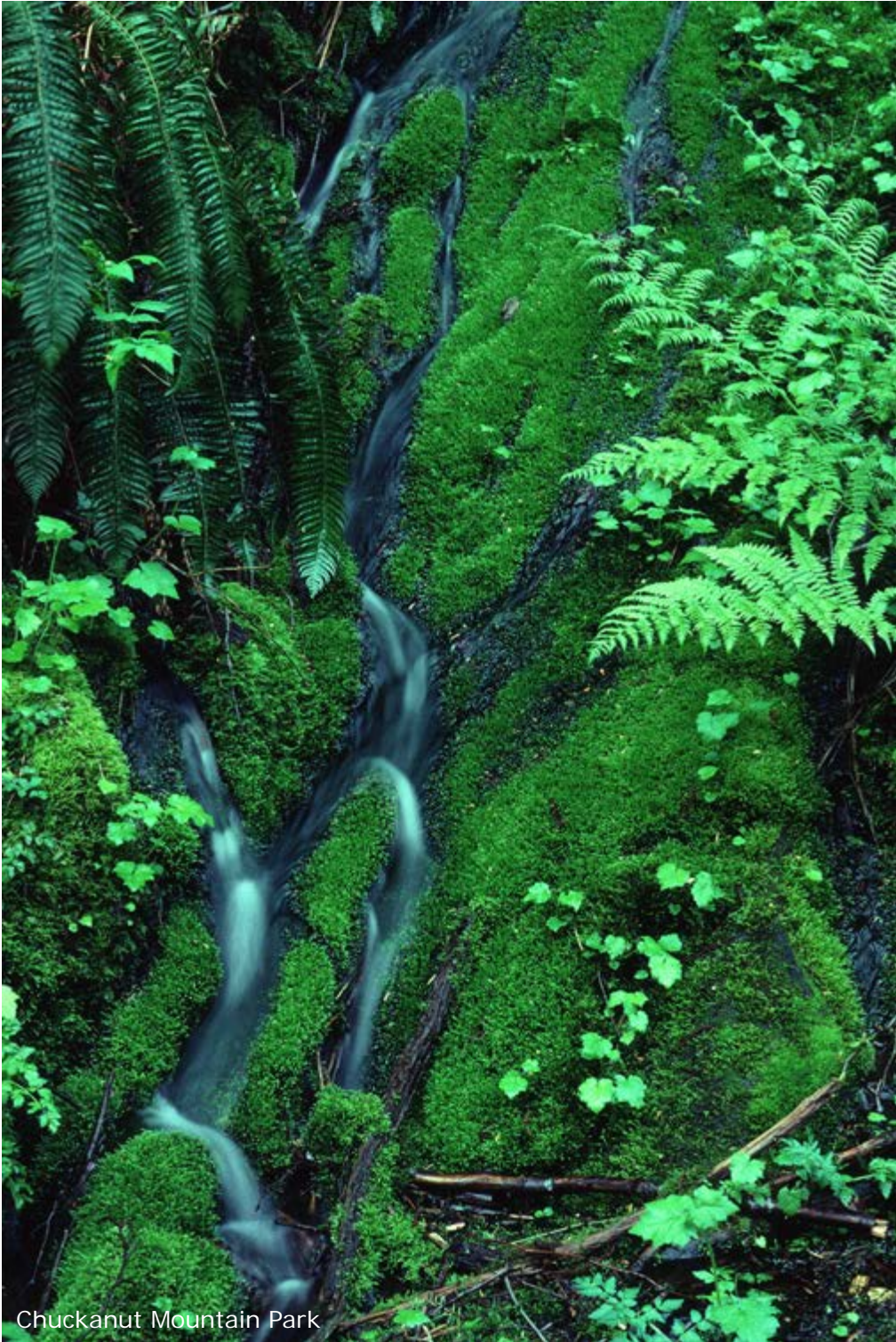
Squires Lake Park

### Tribal Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the lands and waterways described in this document are part of the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish People who have lived in the Salish Basin, throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed, from time immemorial. We want to express our deepest respect and gratitude for our indigenous neighbors, the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe, for their enduring care and protection of our shared lands and waterways.



Stimpson Family Nature Reserve



Chuckanut Mountain Park

## Acronyms

- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
- ATV – All-terrain Vehicle
- DOE – Washingtons State Department of Ecology
- DNR – Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- CIP – Capital Improvement Plan
- COB – City of Bellingham
- CPROS – Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan
- GMA – Growth Management Act
- LOS – Level of Service
- NMFS – National Marine Fisheries Service
- NPS – National Park Service
- ORV – Off-road Recreational Vehicle
- RCO – Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
- RCW – Revised Code of Washington
- SR – State Route
- USFS – United States Forest Service
- WAC – Washington Administrative Code
- WCC – Whatcom County Code
- WCCP – Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan
- WDFW – Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife
- WCPR – Whatcom County Parks & Recreation
- WLT – Whatcom Land Trust
- WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation
- WSP – Washington State Parks



Lily Point Marine Park



Tennant Lake Fragrance Garden



Semiahmoo Park



Canyon Lake Community Forest



Lake Whatcom Park



Hovander Homestead Park

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# 1. Introduction

## A. Background Context

Whatcom County residents take great pride in their parks and recreation facilities. The Community has supported a strong parks and recreation system in many ways including by providing financial support, voicing suggestions for improvements, and volunteering in support of park improvements, programming, and oversight.

The Whatcom County Parks (WCPR) system of parks, trails, preserves, and community facilities provide residents with a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities and places to maintain healthy active life styles. They play an important role in the social life of the community providing places for the community to come together for events, family gatherings, and the creation of memories. Parks are critically important community assets that can, provided equitable access, contribute substantially to the socio-emotional and physical well-being of all county residents. Parks also provide significant economic benefits through tourism and retail sales, particularly in the rural segments of the County. In Whatcom County, recreation expenditures annually amount to \$705 million in spending. Recreation supports 279 businesses employing 3,728 persons with \$508 million in revenues. County residents spend an average of 78 days a year recreating compared to the state average of 59 days annually (Source: 2015 Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation to Whatcom County, Earth Economics). Parks also play an important role in preserving the heritage, culture and history of the county through the preservation of historical sites and provide numerous environmental benefits protecting critical habitats and natural processes.

### Purpose of the Plan

This Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan (CPROS) is prepared in part as requirement by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to retain eligibility for certain funding programs. The document also guides the County and WCPR in addressing future needs of the community and progress towards achieving the mission of the Department. This plan works together with and is informed by other planning documents including the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (WCCP), Whatcom County 6-year and 20-year Capital Improvement Plans, the 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, various trails and park master plans and the County's Natural Heritage Plan.

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## Planning Process

The planning process used in this document encompassed a) review of historical plans and data, b) public participation and outreach, c) an assessment of existing facilities and lands and, d) a review of current goals, objectives and policies. Additional input to inform the plan was received from the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission; a seven-member advisory committee; Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee; Whatcom County Planning Commission; Parks & Recreation Staff; park districts and agencies; community partners and stakeholders, and the general public from participation in park planning initiatives and daily contacts with departmental staff.

This plan relies upon the 2016 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and should be considered an update of that plan. Parks & Recreation staff managed the planning process and compiled the planning document.

## B. Parks' Vision for the Future

### Our Mission and Vision

The Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department serves to *enrich the quality of life for the community and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the County through the provision of outstanding parks, trails, open space, natural areas, recreational activities and senior services.*

Our vision is a WCPR department that serves the recreation and conservation needs of our growing and increasingly diverse community commensurate with the excellence inherent in Whatcom County's natural and cultural heritage.

To effectively implement our mission and realize our vision for the future, our Department has outlined the following Core Departmental Values, the Code of Ethics that we follow, and the general Principles guiding our work.





Lily Point Marine Park

### Our Core Values – How we work together

Our core values – trust in and respect for each other as individuals; support and compassion for each other as co-workers; responsiveness to each other as internal customers; active listening and intentional and transparent communication; awareness and understanding of each other’s important roles; meaningful collaboration; a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; professional courtesy; and excellence in our work – provide a common framework for our actions as team members and our collaborative work to fulfill our mission and our vision.

### Our Ethics Code – How we serve

#### *Responsibility to Those We Serve*

1. Respect people as individuals and serves all in an equitable and fair manner.
2. Maintains professionalism at all times.

#### *Responsibility to Community*

1. Strives to improve life within the community.
2. Recognizes community needs and trends and manages positive change.

#### *Responsibility to Self*

1. Maintains relationships with associates based on mutual integrity, trust and respect.
2. Clearly separates professional from personal points of view.
3. To strive for personal and professional excellence

#### *Responsibility to Employer*

1. Cooperatively works within the structure of the department.
2. Assists in promoting the department to the community.
3. Respects policies and procedures in a professional manner.
4. Initiates positive change.

#### *Responsibility to Profession*

1. Recognizes and promotes the values of the Parks and Recreation profession.
2. Adheres to standards of personal conduct acceptable for professionals in the community.
3. Maintains professionalism at all internal and external functions.

### Our Guiding Principles – What we strive to achieve

1. Focus on long-term fiscally-sustainable departmental growth that is responsive to the public and taxpayers, is based upon and informed by open and transparent communication with the public, and prioritizes care and enhancement of existing facilities.
2. Foster, leverage, and enhance partnerships in the community (e.g., volunteer, inter-agency, co-management) that create opportunities for park users, including those around education, resource management, arts, and community events.
3. Be responsive to the needs of the entire Whatcom County community including residents of all ages, abilities, languages, genders, cultures, and income levels.
4. Proactively plan and manage park assets and infrastructure to support a diverse and varied park system that is safe and accessible and balances the community’s recreational, social, and environmental needs.
5. Maintain a high departmental focus on conservation and preservation of the natural cultural and historic resources under our care; undertake activities that make these spaces more resilient in the face of climate change; create opportunities for the public to learn about and interact with these spaces and resources.
6. Support park enhancements that enhance the role of the open space, parks, and facilities under our care connecting our community and which promote active healthy lifestyles that improve the physical, mental, and emotional health of all Whatcom County residents.
7. Improve public awareness of the department and departmental offerings and facilitate intentional public outreach that is responsive to community inquiries, actively solicits community input, and builds community trust.

## C. Plan Organization

This CPROS is organized into six chapters and 4 appendices, and are described as follows:

### Chapter 1 – Introduction

Provides an overview of the purpose of the CPROS, describes the planning process, defines the mission, vision, and values. Department code of Ethics follows and identifies how staff relate to each other, our facilities, our community and ourselves. This chapter highlights guiding principals of the department that direct and target our efforts to ensure effective delivery of recreational services to the community.

### Chapter 2 – Inventory

Provides information about the regional context, defines various park classifications and their features. Additionally, this chapter provides an overview of the department’s organizational structure, and an inventory of existing park areas and facilities. The chapter concludes with a description of the various sensitive wildlife and critical habitat areas that are characteristic of Whatcom County.

### Chapter 3 – Demand and Need Analysis

Provides information about community demographics, population growth. Summarizes community input and comments collected from various community outreach efforts, and provides a description of currently adopted Level of Service metrics adopted by Whatcom County.

### Chapter 4 – Goals and Objectives

Presents goals and objectives that will guide department strategic priorities, initiatives and improvements to WCPR facilities, operations and service delivery to the community.

### Chapter 5 – Recommendations and Implementation

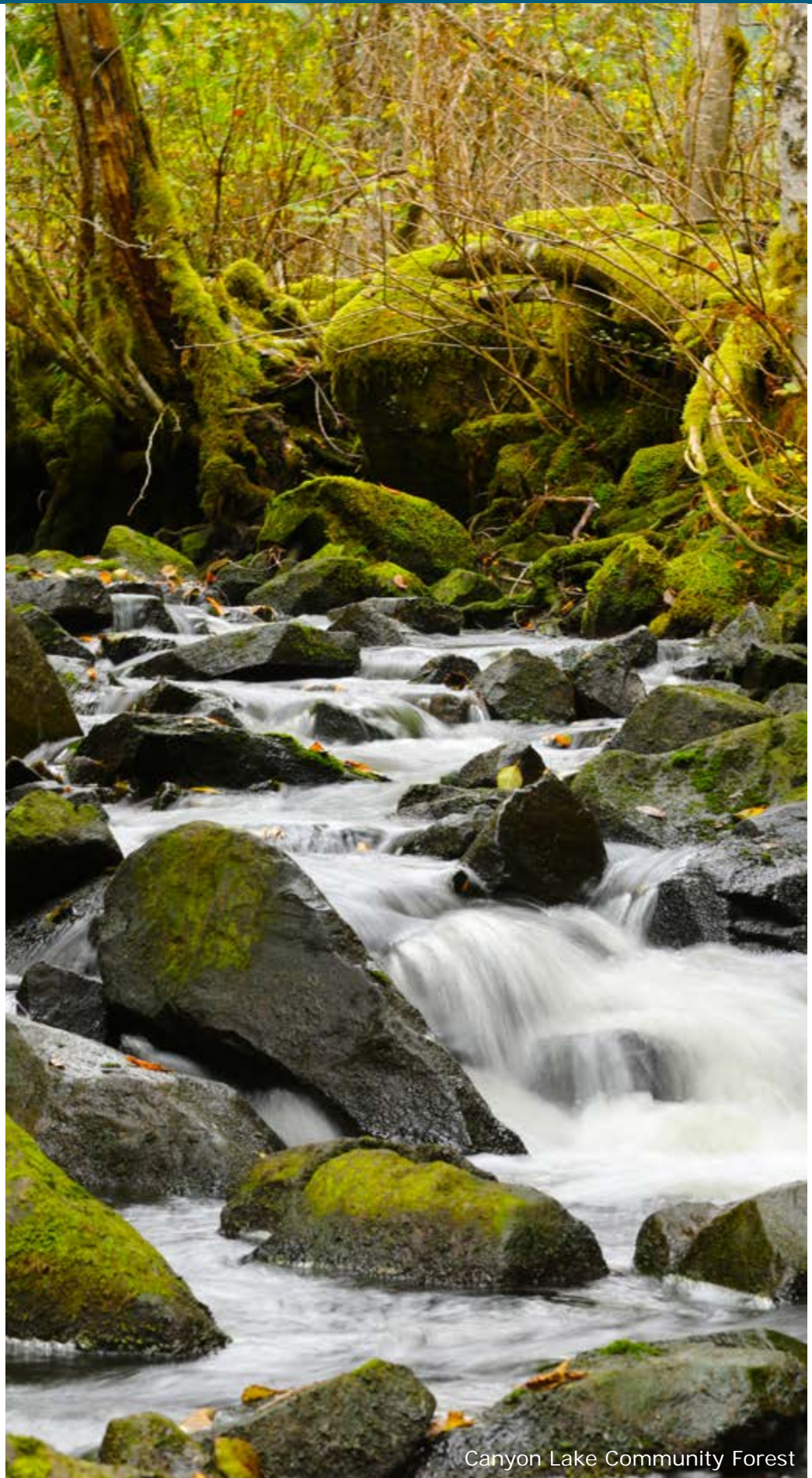
Includes recommendations or park specific projects, land acquisition, trail and pathway improvements, and maintenance and operations.

### Chapter 6 – Adoption

Resolution of the County Council formally adopting the Whatcom County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan as a departmental planning document.



Hovander Homestead Park



Canyon Lake Community Forest

## 2. Inventory



Silver Lake Park

This chapter presents information on Whatcom County's regional context, provides descriptions of the park classifications used to manage and operate recreational facilities, and an inventory of departmental recreational resources. This exploration of project area and associated recreational resources can be useful in identifying potential service delivery gaps and areas in need of improvement.

### A. Description of the Planning Area

Whatcom County is the northernmost county in the state of Washington. Whatcom County contains 2,107 square miles that border on British Columbia, Canada to the north, Okanogan County to the east, Skagit County to the south, and the Strait of Georgia to the west. Much of the county is mountainous and part of the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and North Cascades National Park. Fifty miles east of Bellingham lies the highest peak in the North Cascade mountain range, Mount Baker (10,778 feet), an ice-clad volcano, providing the state's longest ski season and world's greatest recorded snowfall in one season 1,140 inches. There are two inhabited islands, Lummi and Eliza, and one exclave, Point Roberts, in Whatcom County.

Whatcom County has one national park (North Cascades); two national recreational areas (Ross Lake and Mt. Baker); two national forests (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Okanogan); three national wilderness areas (Mt. Baker, Pasayten, Noisy Diobsud); two national scenic trails (Pacific Crest, Pacific Northwest) and two scenic byways (Mt. Baker Highway and Chuckanut Drive); three State Parks (Larrabee, Birch Bay, Peace Arch); local municipal parks in the cities of Bellingham, Everson, Lynden, Ferndale, Nooksack, Sumas and Blaine; parks and marinas operated by the Port of Bellingham; and four park and recreation districts (Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2, Columbia Valley Parks & Recreation District, Point Roberts Park and Recreation District 1, Lynden Regional Parks & Recreation District). Recreational activities also occur on Department of Natural Resources State Forest Trust lands, and

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands. While Whatcom County has a considerable amount of federal recreational land, limited accessibility and distance to these lands is a challenge for most residents. The majority of recreational use by county residents occurs in local and county parks and recreational facilities.

Other recreational opportunities within the County for residents include school district properties, private developments and parks, commercial businesses such as golf courses, riding academies, water parks, ranges, and those provided through partnerships on private lands such as the recreational easement secured by COB and WLT that covers the 2,182-acre Galbraith Mountain mountain biking area.

### B. Park Classifications

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation uses a classification system based on size, function and service area to categorize various park and recreational facilities. These classifications aid in management and can facilitate comparison against state and national databases such as the National Recreation and Park Association's Park Metrics. Park classifications can also change over time as use of a facility evolves, plans are modified or an area is annexed or incorporated into a UGA. The following are park classifications used by WCPR.

**Park:** Includes both developed and undeveloped properties such as preserves, open space, regional parks, resource and natural areas, greenways, trails, water access sites, historical sites, athletic fields, beaches and forests. Park definition is inclusive of all parklands.

**Neighborhood Park:** Neighborhood parks primarily serve the immediate neighborhood and are usually located within one quarter mile walking distance of the residents. These parks are generally smaller facilities with limited amenities and parking. Neighborhood parks are usually provided by the Cities and private residential developments. Ted Edwards and Redwood Parks are examples.

**Community Park:** Community Parks provide space for community activities and usually provide activities for both children and adults. These parks primarily serve a single community with a typical service area of less than 5 miles. They often contain both passive and active recreational components such as picnic areas, playgrounds, shelters, playfields and sport courts. These parks are often located in more urbanized incorporated areas or may serve an entire rural community. Josh VanderYacht Memorial Park is an example of a small rural Community Park.

**Regional Park:** Regional Parks are typically larger destination parks focused upon a unique feature or amenities that attract users from a broad service area. A service area of 25 miles is often used for planning purposes. Regional parks serve all county residents and often attract visitors from outside the county. These parks can have significant natural, cultural, or historical features along with multiple amenities such as boat launches, campgrounds, beaches, equestrian activities and event areas. A regional park may also serve or have elements of a community park and preserve/open space areas. Examples include Hovander Homestead and Silver Lake Parks.

**Preserve/Open Space:** Preserves and Open Space areas focus on preserving significant natural areas, wilderness, wildlife habitats, scenic views and watersheds. Preserves and Open Spaces don't have a service area component. These areas are intended to be maintained in a natural state and are managed to preserve the natural attributes of the site. Each site is individually evaluated for public access opportunities. Developed amenities are often limited to only those that are necessary to support the target level of public access to the property. Examples of preserves include the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve and Canyon Lake Community Forest.

**Water Access Site:** The primary purpose of water access sites is to provide public access to shorelines and lakes. Amenities are often limited and sites are used for a variety of purposes including swimming, beachcombing, shore fishing, launching, and shell fishing. Examples of water access sites include the Jackson Road Beach Access in Birch Bay and the Nugent's Corner River Access. These sites do not have a service area.

**Special Use Areas:** Special use areas have one dominant specialized use activity and serve a targeted user group or population. They may be located anywhere within the County and need to be of adequate size and have specialized amenities to properly serve their intended use. Examples include the Plantation Rifle Range, Northwest Soccer Fields and the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center.

**Greenways/Trails:** These are undeveloped open space natural areas, agricultural lands, recreational lands and wildlife corridors. These greenways often serve as linear parks and may have multi-use trails. The trails can serve both recreation and transportation purposes and are usually planned as part of a community trails and greenway system linking bicycle routes, parks and destinations within the community. Examples include the Interurban and Bay Crest trails.

## Distribution and Access

Based on GIS data, 99.9% of Whatcom County's population is located within 25 miles of a regional park facility or trail. This access is primarily by motorized vehicle. Hovander Homestead Park and Semiahmoo Parks are linked by community trails and WTA bus service is available to the Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. Work to provide alternative transportation options for residents and visitors to County Park areas through community trail systems and designated bicycle routes and lanes is ongoing. As Whatcom County is primarily a provider of regional park facility services, community and neighborhood parks are not listed in the service area for the County. However, those park classifications for facilities that are managed by the WCPR are shown on the service area map for reference.

## C. Organizational Structure

The Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for administration and oversight, planning, operations, and maintenance of all assigned properties and facilities. As shown by the organizational chart in Figure 2.1, the department is currently organized into three divisions: Administrative Support, Design & Development, and Operations. The Operations Division is subdivided into three regional service areas to better facilitate operations and provide staff coverage for all properties (see Figure 2.3).

In 2023, the Department had a staff of 28 full-time employees and approximately 15,800 hours of part-time extra help. It is expected that additional staff capacity may be added to the department in 2024 to support facility maintenance and address other capacity needs related to other strategic priorities

## Programming Elements

Due to budget reductions in 2008, the County significantly reduced its capacity to directly deliver programs and redirected efforts to providing venues for other community providers to deliver similar services. The Parks & Recreation Department provides programmed activities at a number of park facilities through collaboration with community partners. The department continues to directly provide firearms safety and skill classes at the Plantation Rifle Range.

Community partners currently offering public programming within the parks system include:

- Whatcom Land Trust: Interpretive programs, various locations;
- Audubon Society: Interpretive and birding programs, various locations;

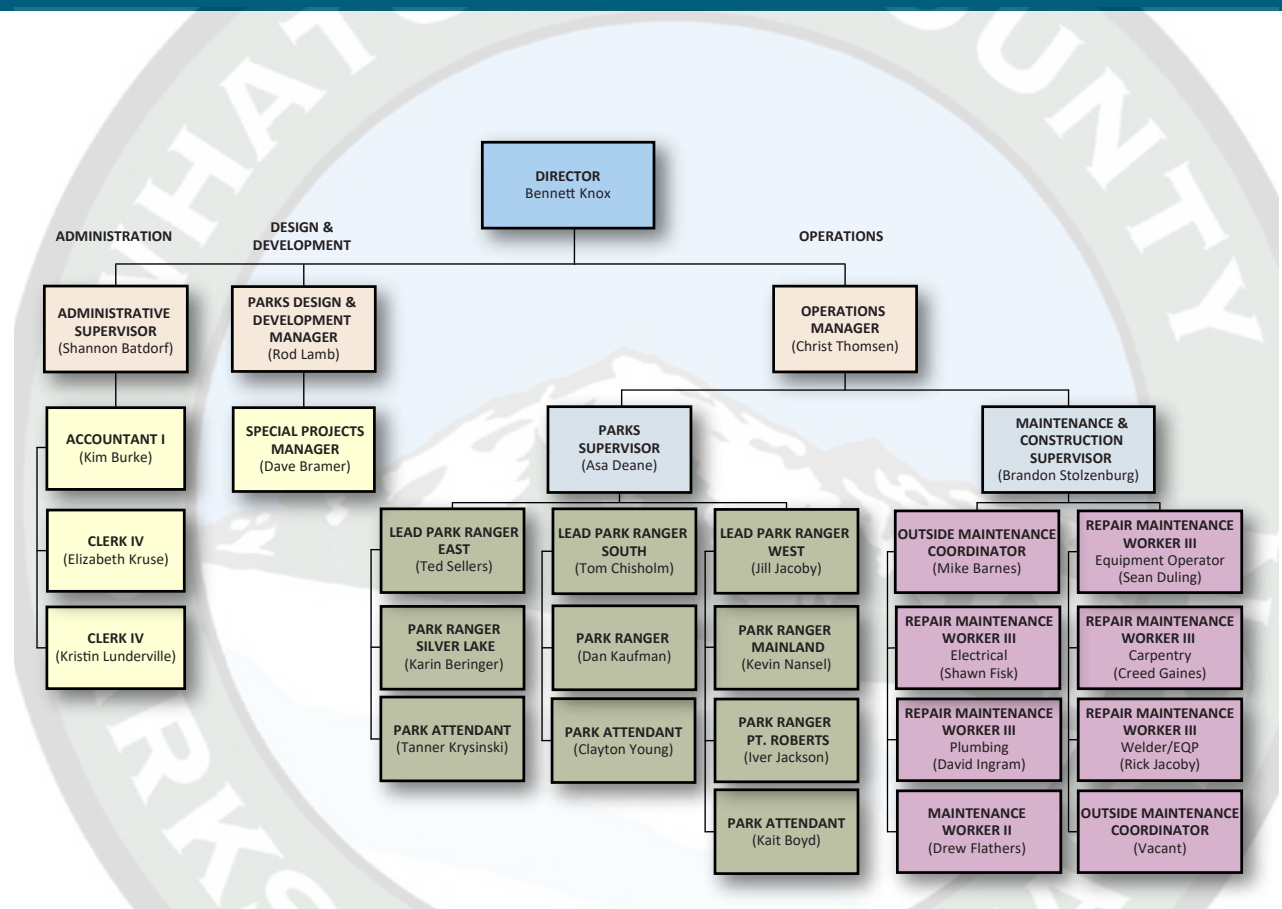


Fig. 2.1: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Organization Chart

- Drayton Harbor Maritime: Museum staffing and programs at Semiahmoo Park;
- Master Gardener’s Foundation: Programs and demonstration gardens at Hovander Homestead Park;
- Programming and classes at the Senior Activity Centers are provided by contract through non-profit organizations;
- Washington Trails Association: Volunteer trail improvements events at various parks;
- Opportunity Council and Foothills Food Bank: Offer multiple community support programming at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center; and
- Whatcom Million Trees.

**D. Existing Park and Open Space Inventory**

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation currently manages or oversees nearly 16,500 acres of property comprised of 73 properties. These include parks, gardens, natural areas, tidelands, beaches, historic buildings, special use areas and undeveloped lands. Also included in this inventory are 75 miles of trail, campgrounds, boat launches, picnic areas, day lodges, shelters and numerous other amenities.

The following is a partial inventory of lands and facilities assigned to the department, see Table 2.1 for a comprehensive list of WCPR properties.

**Regional Park Inventory**

**Bay Horizon Park:** 68.2-acre former air force radar base. Site amenities include a playground, basketball and pickleball courts, gymnasium, open fields, small picnic area and connection to the Bay Crest Trail. Buildings are leased to the Camp Horizon Foundation for operation of Camp Horizon serving disabled adults and to the Blaine-Birch Bay Parks & Recreation District 2 for community recreational programming.

**Chuckanut Mountain/Pine & Cedar Lake Access:** 987.9-acres of forestland, hiking, equestrian and mountain bike trails, 2 remote back country camp areas, boardwalk, parking area and vault toilets. Site connects and adjoins with City of Bellingham’s Arroyo Park, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Pine and Cedar Lakes and Larrabee State Park.

**Deming Eagle Homestead Park:** 33.0-acre park along a channel of the Nooksack River. Improvements include parking, picnic area and walking trail.

**Dittrich Park:** 25.2 acres of undeveloped park land located on Lake Samish. Site has three residences and is comprised of fields, wetlands and wooded shoreline.

**Hovander Homestead Park:** 333.4-acres. Multi-use park focused around a historic farmstead and Tenant Lake. Improvements include a 2,000 square foot open picnic shelter, picnic and event areas, demonstration gardens, playground, domestic animal display, historic farm buildings and equipment, historic home and furnishings, agricultural fields, multi-use trails, observation tower, boardwalk, interpretive center (currently closed), restrooms, and boat launch. Site connects and adjoins WDFW's Tennant Lake water access area.

**Jensen Family Forest Park:** 21.5-acres. Park land available for public use through a public recreation easement donated by the Jensen Family Trust. The facility has an accessible ½ mile walking trail, parking area and picnic area.

**Lake Whatcom Park:** 4,853.0-acres. Located on Smith Creek and the east shore of Lake Whatcom. Amenities include vault toilets, multi-use, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails, parking areas and shore access.

**Lighthouse Marine Park:** 20.5-acres. A fully developed park located on the southwest corner of Point Roberts, the southernmost tip of the Tsawwassen peninsula. Day-use improvements include boat launch, board walk and picnic shelters, restrooms, playground, shower building, picnic areas and shoreline trail. Overnight accommodations include a 30-site campground plus 4 group campsites, and 1 Hike/Bike/Paddle only campsite.

**Lily Point Marine Park:** 262.1-acres. A natural area park containing the remnants of a salmon cannery. Improvements include parking, restrooms, overlooks and multi-use trails and shellfish beds.

**Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve:** 4,682.8-acres. A natural themed park located on Lookout Mountain and jointly owned with the City of Bellingham. Improvements include hiking and mountain bike trails, restroom and parking area.

**Maple Creek Park:** 73.1-acre forested park area. Adjoins Maple Falls to Glacier segment of the Bay to Baker Trail.

**Monument Park:** 6.9-acre park. Park contains US/Canadian border monument and has a small parking area, walking trail and beach access.

**Samish Park:** 30.6-acres fully developed park area on the north shore of Lake Samish. Improvements include a day lodge and restrooms, changing building, swim beach, small playground, boat rentals, fishing dock, hiking trail and picnic areas.

**Semiahmoo Park:** 291.9-acres. Most of this park's acreage is tidelands. Upland improvements include parking area, trails, museum, restrooms, beach accesses, picnic areas and a day lodge.

**Silver Lake Park:** 413.4-acres. Improvements include 6,000 square foot building housing a day lodge, offices, restrooms concession area and kitchen, 6 cabins, docks, boat launch, three campground areas with 123 sites in total, restrooms, shower buildings, picnic areas and open shelters, horse stables, swimming beach, playground, open activity fields, and historic Gerdrum Home.

**South Fork Park:** 603.0-acres. Park area and trailhead with vault toilet, equestrian parking, and river access. The property consists of three historic farmstead properties, Galbraith Farm, Overby Farm, and Nessel Farm. Nessel is of particular significance because several historic structures remain on the property. Building stabilization efforts in partnership with the Nessel Foundation. Currently there is no developed trail access between the main trailhead at Galbraith Farm and Overby and Nessel to the south. WCPR is continuing to explore developing trail access between the historic properties with DNR, and Tribal representatives in addition to exploring alternate property access points.

**South Lake Whatcom:** 79.5-acres. Undeveloped park area with shore access on the southeast shore of Lake Whatcom.

**Squires Lake Park:** 90.1 acres. This park is focused around Squires Lake and includes walking trails, benches and parking area. Jointly managed by Whatcom and Skagit County Parks.

**Sunset Farm Park:** 69.5-acres. Park is programed for equestrian use and includes riding ring and course along with trails.

### Other Recreational Resources and Properties:

Lands the Parks & Recreation Department leases to other entities:

- City of Bellingham - 12.8-acres at Little Squalicum Park and 1.8 acres at Boulevard Park
- Lummi Nation – 20-acres on Haxton Way leased to the Lummi Nation
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife - Hovander Boat Launch
- South Whatcom Fire Authority - 1.4-acres
- Phillips 66 Soccer Park - Whatcom Soccer Commission – 36.6-acres
- Whatcom County Public Works leases a boat launch site on the south shore of Lake Whatcom to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Department leases land for park purposes from:

- Bertch Timberlands LLC – 60-acres at Plantation Rifle Range
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife – 140-acres at Pine & Cedar Lakes
- Puget Sound Energy - Interurban Trail and miscellaneous properties
- Washington Department of Natural Resources - miscellaneous tidelands
- Whatcom Public Works Department - through an inter departmental agreement, the Parks & Recreation Department manages the contract with the Back Country Horsemen for use of the Y-Road trailhead

The County has a reserve of 182.2 acres categorized as park and open space lands and preserved for future development and use. These include;

- Dittrich Park: 25.2-acre undeveloped property on the southeast shore of Lake Samish
- South Lake Whatcom: 79.5-acre undeveloped property on the southeast end of Lake Whatcom. The property has limited day use access and its shoreline is used for fishing, boating and diving.
- Haynie Road: 1.9-acre undeveloped former school site located corner of Haynie and Custer School Roads
- Kickerville Road: 2.6-acre undeveloped former school site located at the NW corner of Kickerville and Bay Roads

### Parks Condition

Park facilities are inspected and assessed by staff on an, at minimum, annual basis for capital and general maintenance needs. Playgrounds are inspected on a daily basis during peak use periods and at least weekly during other times of the year. Water, septic and other operating systems are inspected and tested according to local and State requirements. Because many of the major park areas were developed in the late 1960’s and 1970’s, a major portion of the capital improvement budget in the past 15 years has focused on infrastructure maintenance and upgrades such as road reconstruction, campground shower and restroom improvements, roof replacement, playgrounds, docks, and water and electrical system upgrades. Primarily through the use of real estate excise tax revenues (REET I and II), and other funding sources such as Conservation Futures and state grant funding the department has been able to complete a number of major maintenance and improvement projects over

the last decade. However, a growing backlog of capital maintenance projects has stretched current available departmental resources in both fiscal and human capacity.

The increase in use and demand during the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed limitations of the department’s aging facilities and associated infrastructure. As other recreational facility options became unavailable to the citizens of Whatcom County, public recreational facilities served as a safe and local options for the public at large. The limitations revealed supported the Department’s past focus on infrastructure maintenance and upgrades as an appropriate and important use of resources. It also reinforced that continued investment in existing facilities and infrastructure is needed. Additionally, incorporation of infrastructure repairs and maintenance, along with significant renovations, into future parks master planning efforts should be considered.

A major development since the last CPROS update has been the identification of contamination associated primarily with lead at the Plantation Rifle Range. The range has been in operation since 1971 and to resolve a legacy of lead accumulation, in early 2023 WCPR entered into an Agreed Order with the Washington Department of Ecology. Because of lead accumulation, areas associated facility’s high-power and small-bore ranges have been designated as “Dangerous Waste Management Units” required, under the Agreed Order to be remediated pursuant to relevant regulations. WCPR is in the process of characterizing the extent of contamination associated with past range operations and potential impacts to water quality. Whatcom County is required by the Agreed Order to undertake full clean-up of the site and will undertake planning to determine the character of future operations at the site.



Silver Lake Park



## E. Wildlife and Critical Habitat Conservation

Habitat conservation areas are critical to the survival of Whatcom County's diverse plant and wildlife communities. Habitats encompass a variety of areas including large parcels of contiguous undeveloped land, special areas like streams or wetlands, and structural elements like rocky shorelines or standing dead trees.

However, the ecological value of an area depends on the quantity, quality, diversity, and seasonality of the food, water, and cover that it provides wildlife species. A particular site's value also depends on proximity to other usable habitats, the presence of rare species, and the habitat classification.

Preservation and restoration of critical habitat areas is key to protecting the biological diversity of Whatcom County. Critical habitat can be lost or degraded due to urban and some rural land use activities. Critical habitat threats can be reduced with effective land use policies and regulations.

Wildlife habitats can be classified as marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial. Many wildlife species rely upon most, even all, of these habitats for survival. Whatcom County has all four types of wildlife habitat.

### Marine Habitat

Marine habitats are salt water areas that extend outward from the upper limit of wave spray on land. In Whatcom County, marine habitats extend the complete circumference of the mainland and Point Roberts, and Lummi, Portage, and Eliza Islands.

Marine habitats provide critical plant, fish, and wildlife habitat that can be greatly affected by land and water-based activities. The waters of Georgia Strait, Drayton Harbor, Birch Bay, Lummi Bay, Bellingham Bay, and Chuckanut Bay depend on the health of tideflats and the water column for primary production. Eelgrass, kelp, and phytoplankton provide the primary cornerstone for the grazing food chain, and shelter for both invertebrate and vertebrate animal species.

The deeper waters and narrow channels of Georgia Strait, Rosario Strait, and Hale Passage, as well as the shallower waters of Drayton Harbor and Birch, Lummi, Bellingham, and Chuckanut Bays produce a unique marine environment rich in nutrients hosting a remarkable diversity of fish and other animal life.

The open channels, rocky outcrops, islands, and large bays of Whatcom County provide wintering and breeding habitat for a wide variety of marine birds including loons, grebes, cormorants, gulls, ducks, geese, shorebirds and alcids.



### *Fish and Wildlife Species*

Special status/priority fish and wildlife species (or particular relationships between species and habitat) that rely on the marine habitat in Whatcom County for at least part of the year or part of their life cycle include: bald eagle, Brandt's cormorant, regular large concentrations of brant (geese), haulout areas for California sea lion, common loon, common murre, breeding concentrations of cormorants and alcids, regular concentrations of Dall's porpoise, breeding areas and regular concentrations of Dungeness crab, regular concentrations of geoduck, breeding areas for great blue heron, haulout areas for harbor seal, regular marine concentrations of harlequin duck, killer whale, regular concentrations of Manila clam, marbled murrelet, native littleneck clam; nonbreeding concentrations of Barrow's goldeneye, common goldeneye, and bufflehead; nonbreeding concentrations of loons, grebes, cormorants, and alcids; nonbreeding concentrations of plovers, sandpipers, and phalaropes; northern abalone, Olympia oyster, Pacific harbor porpoise, regular concentrations of Pacific oyster, regular concentrations of Pandalid shrimp, peregrine falcon, regular concentrations of red urchin, regular large concentrations of waterfowl, western grebe, Chinook salmon, coho salmon, chum salmon, pink salmon, sockeye salmon, bull trout, steelhead, coastal cutthroat trout, Pacific herring, Pacific sand lance, surf smelt, longfin smelt, and numerous rockfish species.

Kelp and eelgrass beds - are identified in the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance as Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs). These beds provide habitat, feeding, and rearing grounds for a large number of marine organisms including crabs, fish, and birds. Kelp are the large brown seaweeds typically found in rocky intertidal and subtidal areas. Eelgrass is a vascular plant that grows most commonly in intertidal and shallow subtidal sandy and muddy areas.



Birch Bay Conservation Area

Kelp beds provide a surface upon which other plants and animals grow. They are used as resting areas by birds and mammals including gulls, herons, waterfowl, shorebirds, and seals. Kelp beds also protect environments for intertidal plants and animals by reducing current, wave action, and inshore erosion on sand and gravel beaches. The beds provide a protected beach habitat for marine organisms that would not be present otherwise.

Eelgrass is a highly productive plant that provides trophic functions and nutrient infusions for the entire coastal zone. Eelgrass beds provide an important stopover and wintering area along the Pacific flyway for a variety of migratory birds. The eelgrass beds in Georgia Strait and Puget Sound further south have been found to be three times more productive to diving birds, for example, than non-vegetated near-shore areas.

Kelp and eelgrass beds have declined in number and overall size in Georgia Strait and Puget Sound in recent years. The decline may be due to changes in water quality and turbidity resulting from urban development and forest cutting activities, or to natural fluctuations due to storms, unusually hot weather, or an increase in the population of grazing species.

Commercial and recreational shellfish areas are identified in the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance as Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs). Shellfish inhabit the muds, sands, and rocky substrata of Georgia Strait, Drayton Harbor, and Birch, Lummi, Bellingham and Chuckanut Bays. Intertidal areas support hardshell clams including butter clams, native littleneck, manila clams, cockles, and horse clams. Geoducks typically burrow in subtidal areas up to 2 to 3 feet into the mud or soft sand. Shrimp, crab, and oysters also inhabit the shoreline areas. Dungeness crab frequent eelgrass beds, and red rock crab inhabit rocky terrain with less silt content.

Surf smelt, Pacific herring, and Pacific sand lance spawning areas - are identified in the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance as Habitat Conservation Areas (HCAs). Surf smelt inhabit marine nearshore areas year-round, and spawning may occur year-round. Significant spawning

concentrations of Pacific herring are found in the Cherry Point and Samish-Portage Bay areas. Most Pacific herring stocks spawn from late January through early April, although the Cherry Point stock (the largest in the state) spawns from early April through early June. Spawning areas for Pacific sand lance are scattered along nearshore areas in Whatcom County, with spawning in intertidal areas occurring annually from November 1 through February 15.

## Estuarine Habitat

Estuaries are semi-enclosed bodies of water that are freely connected with the open sea and within which saltwater mixes with freshwater drainage. They create transitions between marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments that support a rich and diverse variety of wildlife species. The mixture of seawater and fresh water in estuaries is called brackish water and its salinity can range from 0.5 to 35 ppt. As dynamic as the water that feeds them, salinity concentrations are highly variable from one day to the next depending tidal action, weather or other influences.

In Whatcom County, the estuarine environment extends inland for some distance where freshwater from the Nooksack and Lummi Rivers, and Dakota, California, Terrell, Squalicum, Padden, and Chuckanut Creeks mixes with saltwater tidal currents.

## Wildlife Species

Estuaries support many of the same species that are present in the marine environment described above (refer to "Fish and Wildlife Species" section under "Marine Habitat". Some species, such as oysters, are more abundant in estuaries.

## FRESHWATER HABITAT

Although they cover less than 0.01% of the planet's surface, freshwater ecosystems support more than 125,000 species worldwide. Freshwater ecosystems include lakes, rivers, creeks, wetlands, riparian areas, and all other types of water bodies not included in estuaries or marine habitat. Freshwater habitats support different wildlife than saltwater systems, and these species depend on these habitats during at least some part of their life cycle for drinking water, foraging, nesting, and migratory movements.

Riparian areas - are the vegetated corridors located along rivers, streams, and springs. Riparian corridors have free-flowing water or moist conditions that result in high water tables, certain soil characteristics, and vegetation that is transitional between freshwater and terrestrial. The transitional edges are usually defined by a change in plant composition, relative plant abundance, and the end of high soil moisture content.

Riparian corridors transport water, soil, plant seeds, and nutrients to downstream areas, and thereby serve as important migration routes for many wildlife species. Riparian areas, though small in overall size, are one of the most important sources of wildlife biodiversity in the landscape.

Riparian areas in Whatcom County are located along the Nooksack and Lummi Rivers and all stream corridors. These areas are covered with riparian vegetation and should be considered important wildlife corridors.

### Wetlands

Freshwater wetland habitats are water bodies less than 20 acres in size or less than 6 feet in depth and include marshes, swamps, bogs, seeps, wet meadows, shallow ponds, and lakes. Like riparian areas, wetlands are very productive, supporting diverse and dense populations of plants and animals. The wooded areas that are located adjacent to wetlands provide nesting areas, forage, and cover that are critical to wetland-dependent species, such as waterfowl and small mammals including beaver.

Riparian and wetland vegetation provides significant food and cover for wildlife. Generally, riparian areas and wetlands provide substantially more important wildlife habitat than drier forested areas. Riparian areas are also passageways for wildlife moving between or around developed areas. Riparian vegetation also helps maintain optimum fish spawning conditions by providing shade, bank stabilization, a breeding ground for insects, and a source of organic material for streams.

Hundreds of small ponds and wetlands are located throughout the county directly connected to rivers, streams, lakes, or the bays. The surface water area varies considerably in these systems depending on the time of year.

Wetlands perform a variety of functions including:

- providing habitat for fish and wildlife,
- maintaining water quality by filtering pollutants, removing sediments, producing oxygen and recycling nutrients,
- reducing floods, and
- recharging ground water.

Whatcom County Planning & Development Services maintains an inventory of wetlands that are distributed throughout Whatcom County. The inventory includes bogs, forested wetlands, scrub/shrub wetlands, wet meadows, shallow marsh wetlands, deep marsh wetlands, and open water wetlands (lakes or ponds).

### Lakes

Lakes are water bodies greater than 20 acres in size or more than 6 feet in depth. The deeper waters and larger surface of a lake support many fish and wildlife species. However, most species prefer to nest and forage in shallower ponds and the wetlands that adjoin larger open water bodies.

Numerous lakes are located in the central and western parts of the county, including Silver Lake, Lake Terrell, Lake Padden, Lake Samish, Squires Lake, Cain Lake, Emerald Lake, Canyon Lake, Tennant Lake, Wisser Lake, Fazon Lake, Squalicum Lake and Lake Whatcom. Ross and Baker Lakes in the eastern portion of the county were formed by impounding the Skagit River. In all there are over forty named lakes in Whatcom County.

### Wildlife species

Special status/priority wildlife species (or particular relationships between species and habitat) that rely on freshwater habitat in Whatcom County for at least part of the year or part of their life cycle include: bald eagle, Cascades frog, Columbia spotted frog, common loon, red-legged frog, tailed frog, western toad, cavity-nesting ducks, breeding areas for great blue heron, harlequin duck breeding areas, regular occurrences of mink, regular concentrations of snow geese, regular concentrations of trumpeter and tundra swans, and significant breeding areas and large wintering concentrations of all waterfowl except Canada geese in urban areas.

### Fish habitat and species

County streams provide freshwater habitat for various species of anadromous fish, including salmon and sea-run trout that live in saltwater but return to spawn in freshwater. These fish species have evolved over time to fit the specific characteristics of their stream of origin, and are uniquely imprinted compared with other members of the same species.

Anadromous fish require cool, uncontaminated water with healthy streambeds and insect populations. Vegetated riparian areas maintain stream habitats critical to fish by stabilizing water temperature, producing an insect supply, controlling erosion, and providing woody debris.

Chinook salmon (Puget Sound) and bull trout, both found in Whatcom County, are listed as Threatened Federal Species. Other special status/priority fish species that rely on freshwater habitat in Whatcom County include coho salmon, chum salmon, pink salmon, sockeye salmon, rainbow trout/steelhead, and coastal cutthroat trout.

Factors that have caused the diminishment of wild runs of anadromous fish in Whatcom County include:

- forest clearcutting and land developments - that create sediment loads which increase water turbidity and silt in gravel spawning beds;
- clearcutting tree stands in riparian areas – that remove natural shading which increases water temperatures; and
- water diversions – that restrict access to the upper reaches and spawning areas of rivers.

## TERRESTRIAL HABITAT

Terrestrial habitat includes those lands located above freshwater, estuarine, and marine habitats. These areas extend from the level lowlands that border marshes, rivers, etc., to the tops of bluffs, foothills and mountains in Whatcom County.

### Plant Communities

Natural plant communities are described in terms of broad vegetation patterns called vegetation zones. Washington plant communities are divided into three major vegetation groupings including:

- forests,
- grasslands and shrub/grass communities, and
- timberline and alpine areas.

Western Whatcom County contains three primary forested vegetation zones: the western hemlock, Pacific silver fir, and mountain hemlock zones. These zones are defined by their elevation which affects temperature and vegetation types.

Much of western Whatcom County is located within the western hemlock zone. This zone is the most extensive vegetation zone in all of western Washington, extending from the Pacific coast to an elevation of about 2,500 feet, and characterized by a mild and generally wet climate.

The western hemlock zone is the major source of commercially harvested coniferous trees including western hemlock, Douglas fir, and western red cedar. Grand fir, western white pine, and lodgepole pine also occur within this zone although on a sporadic basis.

Deciduous tree species, such as red alder, big leaf maple, and paper birch, are generally dominant on lands that have been cleared for urban and agriculture uses in Whatcom County. Black cottonwood, willow, red alder and big-leaf maple, tend to grow along major watercourses.

Understory vegetation in the western hemlock zone varies substantially depending upon soils, wetness, and other environmental factors. Some typical understory species in this zone in Whatcom County include Oregon grape, salal, vine maple, salmonberry, and sword fern.

Development in Whatcom County has substantially reduced terrestrial habitat throughout the years. However, valuable habitat still remains in undeveloped, large native forests. Some wildlife species may feed in more than one type of habitat during the day but retreat for night and seasonal cover into upland wooded areas.

Mature forests provide thermal cover during winter months allowing larger game mammals to forage up to 3,000 feet in elevation during normal seasons, or 2,000 feet during especially harsh winters.

Some previously forested portions of the county's low-lying areas are now converted to pastures and meadows which may contain agricultural crops, woody vegetation, grasses, and wildflowers. These areas provide food for migratory waterfowl and deer, habitat for birds and small mammals, and hunting grounds for predators like garter snakes, barn owls, red-tailed hawks, and coyotes.

Many wildlife species can tolerate urban development as long as some adjacent habitat and connecting migration corridors remain undisturbed, and large reserves remain connected by natural migration corridors. These corridors enable species to colonize new areas, forage for food, find mates, and exchange genes with neighboring populations.

### Wildlife Species

Special status/priority wildlife species (or particular relationships between species and habitat) that rely on terrestrial habitat in Whatcom County for at least part of the year or part of their life cycle include: bald eagle, golden eagle, marbled murrelet, northern goshawk, northern spotted owl, peregrine falcon, pileated woodpecker, purple martin, Townsend's big-eared bat, Vaux's swift, willow flycatcher, wolverine (very rare), band-tailed pigeon; roosting concentrations of big brown, Myotis and pallid bats; blue grouse, cavity-nesting ducks, regular large concentrations of /migration corridors for Columbian black-tailed deer, regular occurrences of mink and marten, breeding areas and regular concentrations of mountain goat; and regular concentrations, calving areas, and migration corridors for Roosevelt elk.

## OTHER IMPORTANT HABITATS

Whatcom County has a number of other specific habitat types that are critical to wildlife including caves, cliffs, urban natural open space, and snag-rich areas.

## Unique and threatened plant species

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Program has compiled a list of endangered, threatened and otherwise sensitive plant species in Washington State. This list is included for reference in the appendix.

## Wildlife habitat concerns

### Marine Habitat

Urban development and forest cutting practices along the shoreline can seriously impact the marine environment by increasing levels of suspended solids, pollutants, or freshwater entering marine areas. Suspended solids introduced into saltwater can reduce light penetration, increase sediment deposition, increase water temperature, and affect dissolved oxygen and pH balance, thereby affecting all forms of marine habitat.

An increase in turbidity as slight as 1% can reduce light penetration and affect kelp and eelgrass beds. An increase in sedimentation levels can smother eelgrass beds in shallow areas, as can long term exposure to sewage effluent.

Sedimentation created by natural or urban erosion can cover shellfish beds and fish spawning gravel. Shellfish beds can also be contaminated by chemical and bacterial discharge, and viruses created by agriculture practices, failing septic drainfields, sewage outfalls, and stormwater runoff. Some contaminants may not harm shellfish, but may adversely affect birds and other animals that feed on the shellfish.

Toxic contaminants contained within urban stormwater runoff or industrial discharge can poison the marine water column and sediments creating tumors and poisonous concentrations in fish and invertebrate species.

Bulkhead, dock, and other waterfront structures can reduce the natural shoreline and affect the rate of natural beach deposition resulting in loss of vegetation and loss of the shoreline and intertidal habitat that support herring, smelt, and other fish.

### Estuarine Habitat

Some estuarine areas have been filled or drained in the past, especially around developed waterfront. The remaining unaltered estuarine areas may be protected by the Shoreline Management Act, which virtually prohibits further alterations.

Among the greatest risks to estuarine areas are contaminants that may enter the saltwater from oil transportation hazards and recreational boating activity and from freshwater by way of general stormwater pollution from agriculture, septic failures, and other degradations. Water quality risks are dramatically increased where land development activities occur along freshwater streams that feed an estuary.

### Freshwater Habitat

Some freshwater habitats have been altered in the county by landfill or piped diversions. Past development activities adjacent to urban areas, particularly along the shorelines and waterfronts, have filled valuable wetland habitat areas.

Among the greatest risks to freshwater habitats are contaminants that may enter the stormwater runoff from agriculture, septic failures, and other urban land uses. Water quality risks are also dramatically increased where land development or timber clearing activities increase erosion and siltation, and where vegetation is cleared within the riparian buffer along freshwater corridors.

Development activities most adversely affect the quality of freshwater habitat by removing vegetation, and increasing silt, organic debris, and other stormwater contaminants that enter the natural drainage system. Water quality can decline when as little as 10-20% of a local watershed is paved or otherwise covered with man-made materials (e.g., parking lots, and roof tops). These impervious surfaces exclude infiltration into the ground, leading to excess runoff into streams and other water bodies. Greater runoff volumes are tied to increased pollutant loading and degradation of habitat and loss of biological diversity.

### Terrestrial Habitat

Considerable terrestrial habitat has been permanently lost by the clearing of lands for agriculture and urban land developments. Commercial forest management practices have included replanting clearcuts with single species, thereby reducing wildlife diversity and isolating habitat and migration corridors, particularly along riparian areas.

Fire suppression, particularly of naturally occurring wildfires has reduced the amount and diversity of meadowlands and other open areas necessary for foraging activities.

The greatest risk to the terrestrial habitat, however, is the continued pace of urban land conversions, particularly land development patterns that block or demolish migration corridors, log timbered areas, remove riparian cover, erode productive topsoil, and introduce urban activities - potentially including intense recreational uses - into wildlife areas.

As the most important habitats are isolated, wildlife species decline in diversity and number. Urban tolerant species, like raccoons and crows, invade the remaining habitat from the urban edges, supplanting and driving out many native species.

## Land use implications

Marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial habitats contribute to the overall biological diversity of the region and provide a number of additional environmental functions and values of interest to Whatcom County residents. Many species depend on the constant interaction of all four of these habitat systems for food, cover, nesting, and other survival requirements.

Impacts on plant, fish, and wildlife habitat can be minimized by sensitive land use patterns, innovative design concepts, and performance-oriented development standards that:

- replant native vegetation along the shoreline and tidal boundaries, within the estuarine zone, and along drainage corridors,
- remove artificial shoreline structures, barriers to the mixing of salt and freshwater, and freshwater impoundments or diversions,
- control the content and quality of stormwater runoff that enters freshwater systems and marine and estuarine environments,
- cultivate native trees and shrubs that support and retain native species, and
- cluster roadways and other improvements to preserve natural shorelines and to provide contiguous open spaces as common lands.

Within a park setting, the most intense park activities must be separated from the most sensitive habitats by creating conservancies, open space corridors, and other protected areas.

This park, recreation, and open space plan seeks to preserve and enhance critical and unique habitat areas by purchasing development rights or title for regional parks, preserves and open space.

## FLORA and FAUNA

### Flora

For a detailed list vascular plant species of concern for Whatcom County go to:  
<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPlists>

### Fauna

For a list of species on the State endangered, threatened, sensitive or candidate list by the USFWS:  
<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/species-listings-by-state?stateAbbrev=WA&stateName=Washington&statusCategory=Listed>

### *Lake Whatcom*

Lake Whatcom supports a variety of fish including native and introduced, cold and warm water species. Fish species that can be found in Lake Whatcom include Kokanee, Cutthroat trout, Largemouth Bass, Yellow Perch, amphibians, reptiles, and 125 species of birds.

For a detailed list visit the Lake Whatcom Watershed Management website at:  
<https://www.lakewhatcom.whatcomcounty.org/about-the-lake/fish-and-wildlife>

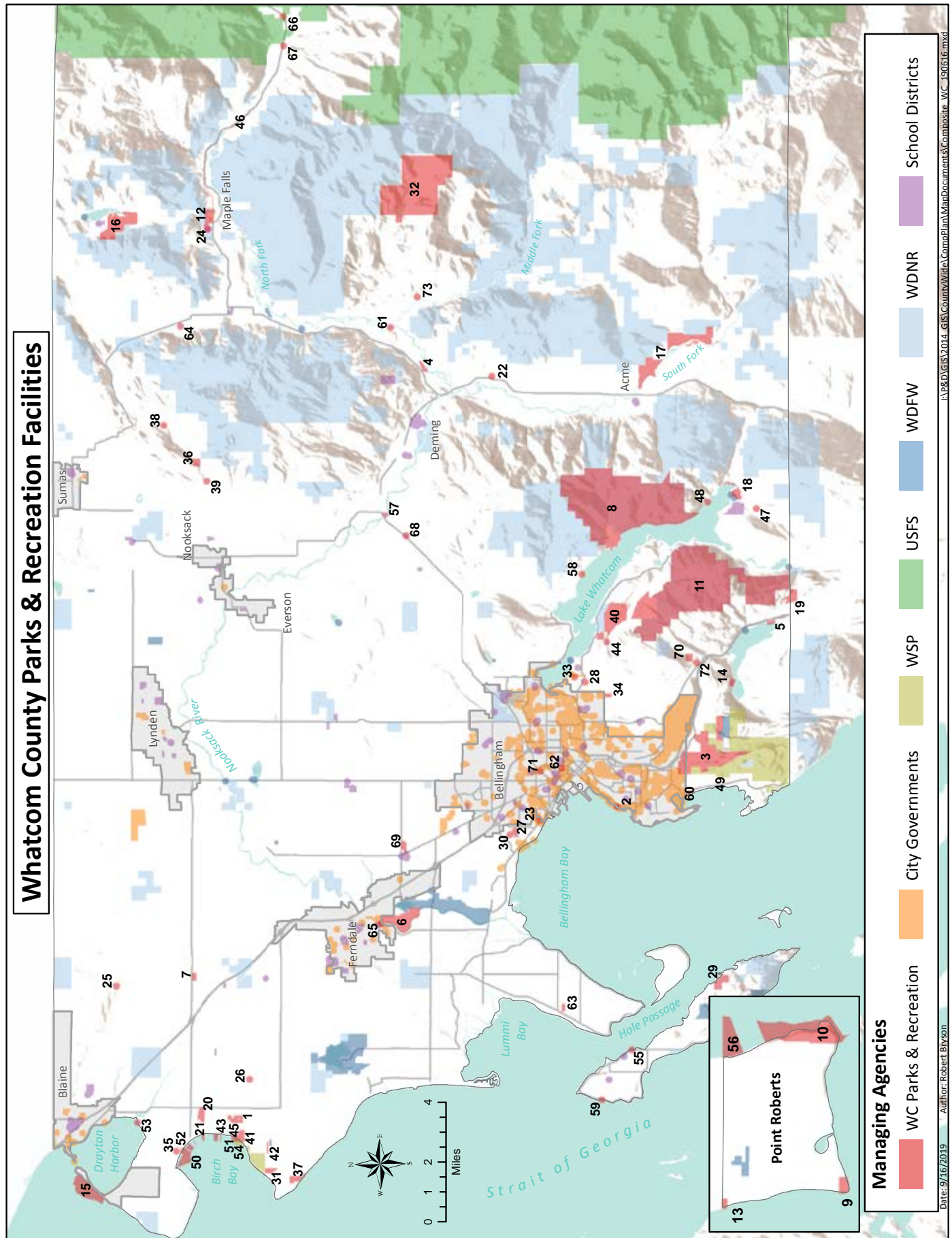


Fig. 2.2: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Facilities Map

Name	Address	Acres (Total)	Year Acquired	Classification	Developed/Undeveloped	Saltwater (ft)	Freshwater (ft)	Trails Total (mi)	Trails Multi-Use (mi)	Trails Single-Use (mi)	Roads (mi)	Parking Areas
1	Bay Horizon Park	2467 Gemini Street, Blaine, WA 98230	68.2	1938 Regional Park	Developed	0	0	0.3	0	0	0.94	1
2	Boulevard Park	671 Bayview Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225	1.4	1956 Regional Park	Developed	700	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Cloudbank Mountain Park - Pine & Cedar Lakes	745 Old Samish Road, Bellingham, WA 98229	987.9	2002 Regional Park	Developed	0	250	46.5	16.5	0	0.31	1
4	Denning Homestead Eagle Park	3155 Truck Road, Deming, WA 98244	35.0	2002 Regional Park	Developed	0	2250	0.7	0	0.7	0	1
5	Dittrich Park	319 E Lake Samish Road, Bellingham, WA 98229	25.2	1966 Regional Park	Undeveloped	0	1600	0	0	0	0.11	1
6	Hovander Homestead Park	5299 Nielsen Road, Ferndale, WA 98248	333.4	1969 Regional Park	Developed	0	19750	3.4	2.7	0.7	0.97	1
7	Jensen Family Forest Park	8051 Stein Road, Custer, WA 98240	21.5	2005 Regional Park	Developed	0	17200	8.5	8.5	0	7.88	2
8	Lake Whatcom Park	3220 Northshore Road, Bellingham, WA 98226	4853.0	1972 Regional Park	Developed	0	2250	0	0.9	0.9	0.8	1
9	Lighthouse Marine Park	811 Marine Drive, Point Roberts, WA 98281	20.5	1971 Regional Park	Developed	10150	0	2	0.9	1.1	0.18	1
10	Lily Point Marine Park	2315 A.P.A. Road, Point Roberts, WA 98281	26.1	2001 Regional Park	Developed	4682.8	0	8.1	5.5	2.6	12.81	1
11	Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve	2537 Lake Louise Road, Bellingham, WA 98229	4682.8	2001 Regional Park	Undeveloped	0	700	0	0.3	0.1	0	0
12	Maple Creek Park	7842 Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266	73.1	2007 Regional Park	Developed	460	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Monument Park	25 Marine Drive, Point Roberts, WA 98281	6.9	1971 Regional Park	Developed	0	1600	1.4	0	1.4	0.25	1
14	Samish Park	675 N Lake Samish Drive, Bellingham, WA 98229	30.6	1936 Regional Park	Developed	8700	0	1.4	1.4	0	0	1
15	Seniahmoos Park	9261 Semiahmo Parkway, Blaine, WA 98230	291.9	1980 Regional Park	Developed	0	15660	2.3	2.3	0	3.04	2
16	Silver Lake Park	9006 Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266	413.4	1966 Regional Park	Developed	0	3220	2.3	0	0	1.03	2
17	South Fork Park	1500 Mosquito Lake Road, Deming, WA 98244	609.0	1993 Regional Park	Undeveloped	0	3100	2.2	2.2	0	0.06	1
18	South Lake Whatcom	8444 S Bay Drive, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284	79.5	1973 Regional Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
19	Squires Lake Park	2510 Rutle Road, Bellingham, WA 98229	90.1	1993 Regional Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	Sunset Farm Park	7977 Blaine Road, Blaine, WA 98230	69.5	1993 Regional Park	Developed	0	0	0.8	0.8	0	0	1
		Total Undeveloped Regional Park Acres	12769.2									
		Total Undeveloped Regional Park Acres	780.8									
		Total Regional Park Acres	12947.0									
21	Birch Bay Beach Park	7950 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	13.7	2014 Community Park	Undeveloped	400	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	Josh VanderYacht Park	4106 Valley Highway, Deming, WA 98244	2.0	1970 Community Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	Little Squallicum Park	640 Marine Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225	12.7	1975 Community Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Maple Falls Community Park	7470 Second Street, Maple Falls, WA 98266	4.2	2014 Community Park	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Total Undeveloped Community Park Acres	14.7									
		Total Undeveloped Community Park Acres	18.0									
		Total Community Park Acres	32.7									
25	Havine Road	2876 Havine Road, Custer, WA 98240	1.9	1974 Neighborhood Park	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	Kickerella Road	4110 Bay Road, Ferndale, WA 98248	2.6	1977? Neighborhood Park	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Redwood Park	3310 Redwood Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98226	0.3	1993? Neighborhood Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	Tred Edwards Park	4150 Oriental Lane, Bellingham, WA 98226	3.5	1988 Neighborhood Park	Developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Total Undeveloped Neighborhood Park Acres	3.8									
		Total Undeveloped Neighborhood Park Acres	4.5									
29	Alston Preserve	1103 Beach Ave, Lummi Island, WA 98262	8.2	2016 Preserve / Open Space	Developed	3800	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	Alderwood	3479 Willow Road, Bellingham, WA 98226	113.6	2016 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31	Birch Bay Conservancy Area	8000 Point Whitehorn Road, Blaine, WA 98230	1.9	1955? Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	1500	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	Canyon Lake Community Forest	7300 Mt. Baker Highway, Deming, WA 98244	2266.0	1998 Preserve / Open Space	Developed	0	6700	7	0	7	0	1
33	Euclid Park	1570 Euclid Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98226	2.2	1966 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	50	0	0	0	0	0
34	Gullbraith Mountain Access	800 Birch Falls Drive, Bellingham, WA 98229	20.0	1993 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0
35	Halverson Park	5075 Anderson Road, Blaine, WA 98230	5.6	1982 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	Ostrom Conservation Site	4304 South Pass Road, Everson, WA 98247	38.6	1983 Preserve / Open Space	Developed	0	0	0.6	0	0.6	0	0
37	Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve	6770 Koehn Road, Blaine, WA 98230	54.1	2008 Preserve / Open Space	Developed	1950	0	0.8	0	0.8	0.11	0
38	South Pass East	0900 South Pass Road, Sumas, WA 98295	0.5	2008 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
39	South Pass West	4190 South Pass Road, Sumas, WA 98295	0.4	2008 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	Stimpson Family Nature Reserve	2076 Lake Louise Road, Bellingham, WA 98229	400.4	2000 Preserve / Open Space	Developed	0	5620	4	0	4	0	1
41	Terrill Creek Access	7417 Jackson Road, Blaine, WA 98230	0.5	2005 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	540	0	0	0	0	0
42	Terrill Creek Heron Roostery	7085 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	15.0	2005 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	270	0	0	0	0	0
43	Terrill Creek Point	7685 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	6.7	2005 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	260	0	0	0	0	0
44	Turner-Jaeger	1975 Lake Louise Road, Bellingham, WA 98226	3.8	2005 Preserve / Open Space	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Total Undeveloped Preserve / Open Space Acres	2872.6									
		Total Undeveloped Preserve / Open Space Acres	101.6									
		Total Preserve / Open Space Acres	2974.2									
45	Bay Crest Trail		0.0	2005 Greenway / Trail	Developed	0	0	0.2	0.2	0	0	0
46	Bay to Baker Trail - Maple Falls to Glacier Section		97.3	1970 Greenway / Trail	Developed	0	7500	4.5	4.5	0	0	0
47	Camp 42 Road RR ROW	3775 Camp 2 Road, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284	2.3	1999 Greenway / Trail	Undeveloped	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
48	Heag (Blue Canyon)	3845 Blue Canyon Road, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284	3.5	1990 Greenway / Trail	Undeveloped	0	1820	0	0	0	0	0
49	Interurban Trail	Chuckanut Drive	0.0	1992 Greenway / Trail	Developed	0	0	3.1	3.1	0	0	0
		Total Undeveloped Greenway / Trail Acres	97.3									
		Total Undeveloped Greenway / Trail Acres	5.8									
		Total Undeveloped Greenway / Trail Acres	105.1									
50	Birch Bay Beach & Tidelands Access	Birch Bay Drive	151.1	1936 Water Access	Undeveloped	5375	0	0	0	0	0	0
51	Broadway Beach Access	7497 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	0.1	1981 Water Access	Developed	55	0	0	0	0	0	0
52	Cottonwood Beach Access	8191 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	5.1	1932 Water Access	Developed	775	0	0	0	0	0	0
53	Dryden Harbor Tidelands		0.3	2009 Water Access	Undeveloped	270	0	0	0	0	0	0
54	Jackson Road Beach Access	7465 Birch Bay Drive, Blaine, WA 98230	0.2	Water Access	Developed	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
55	Lummi Island Beach Access	2198 N Nugent Road, Ferndale, WA 98248	0.2	1979 Water Access	Developed	1900	0	0	0	0	0	0
56	Maple Beach Tidelands		100.9	1971 Water Access	Undeveloped	1900	0	0	0	0	0	0
57	Nugent's Corner River Access	3685 Mt. Baker Highway, Everson, WA 98247	14.2	2004 Water Access	Developed	0	1500	0.5	0	0.5	0.15	1
58	Sunnyside Landing	2870 Northshore Road, Bellingham, WA 98226	6.3	2005 Water Access	Undeveloped	0	780	0	0	0	0	0
59	Sunset Beach	2580 W Shore Drive, Lummi Island, WA 98262	7.0	2008 Water Access	Developed	1340	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0
60	Teddy Bear Cove Park	1467 Chuckanut Drive, Bellingham, WA 98229	11.2	1992 Water Access	Developed	1425	0	0.3	0.3	0	0	0
61	Welcome Bridge River Access	5585 Mosquito Lake Road, Deming, WA 98244	0.6	2007 Water Access	Developed	0	150	0	0	0	0	0
		Total Undeveloped Water Access Acres	38.5									

Table 2.1: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Inventory





	Name	Campground (#sites)	Group Camp	Picnic Area	Restrooms	Gardens	Open Shelter	Day Lodge	Cabins	Swimming Area	Playground	Boat Launch	Historical Attraction /	Center
	<b>Regional Parks</b>													
1	Bay Horizon Park			x	x						x			
2	Boulevard Park													
3	Chuckanut Mountain / Pine & Cedar Lakes	3			x									
4	Deming Eagle Homestead Park			x										
5	Dittrich Park													
6	Hovander Homestead Park			x	x	x	x				x		x	
7	Jensen Family Forest Park													
8	Lake Whatcom Park				x									
9	Lighthouse Marine Park	30	x	x	x		x				x	x	x	
10	Lily Point Marine Park				x									
11	Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve				x									
12	Maple Creek Park													
13	Monument Park												x	
14	Samish Park			x	x			x			x			
15	Semiahmoo Park			x	x			x					x	
16	Silver Lake Park	122	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	
17	South Fork Park													
18	South Lake Whatcom													
19	Squires Lake Park				x									
20	Sunset Farm Park				x									
	<b>Community Park</b>													
21	Birch Bay Community Park													
22	Josh VanderYacht Park			x		x	x				x			
23	Little Squalicum Park													
24	Maple Falls Community Park													
	<b>Neighborhood Park</b>													
25	Haynie Road													
26	Kickerville Road													
27	Redwood Park													
28	Ted Edwards Park			x										
	<b>Preserve / Open Space</b>													
29	Aiston Preserve													
30	Alderwood													
31	Birch Bay Conservancy Area													
32	Canyon Lake Community Forest				x									
33	Drayton Harbor Tidelands													
34	Euclid Park													
35	Galbraith Mountain Access													
36	Halverson Park													
37	Ostrom Conservation Site													

Table 2.3: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Amenity Inventory

	Name	Campground (#sites)	Group Camp	Picnic Area	Restrooms	Gardens	Open Shelter	Day Lodge	Cabins	Swimming Area	Playground	Boat Launch	Historical Attraction /	Interactive Center
38	Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve													
39	South Pass East				x									
40	South Pass West													
41	Stimpson Family Nature Reserve													
42	Terrell Creek Access													
43	Terrell Creek Heron Rookery													
44	Turner-Jaeger													
	<b>Regional Park</b>													
44	Bay Crest Trail													
45	Bay to Baker Trail - Maple Falls to Glacier Section													
46	Camp #2 Road RR ROW													
47	Hegg (Blue Canyon)													
48	Interurban Trail													
49	Maple Falls-Glacier Trail													
	<b>Water Access</b>													
50	Birch Bay Tidelands													
51	Broadway Beach Access													
52	Cottonwood Beach Access													
53	Drayton Harbor Tidelands													
54	Drayton Road Beach Access													
55	Lummi Island Beach Access			x										
56	Maple Beach Tidelands													
57	Nugent's Corner River Access			x										
58	Sunnyside Landing													
59	Sunset Beach													
60	Teddy Bear Cove Park													
61	Welcome Bridge River Access													
	<b>Special Use Areas</b>													
62	Bellingham Senior Activity Center													
63	Cagey Road													
64	East Whatcom Regional Resource Ctr													
65	Ferrisdale Senior Activity Center													
66	Glacier Cemetery													
67	Glacier Restrooms													
68	Northwest Soccer Park													
69	Parks Headquarters													
70	Plantation Rifle Range													
71	Roeder Home													
72	Samish Way					x								
73	Welcome Senior Activity Center													

Table 2.4: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Amenity Inventory (continued)

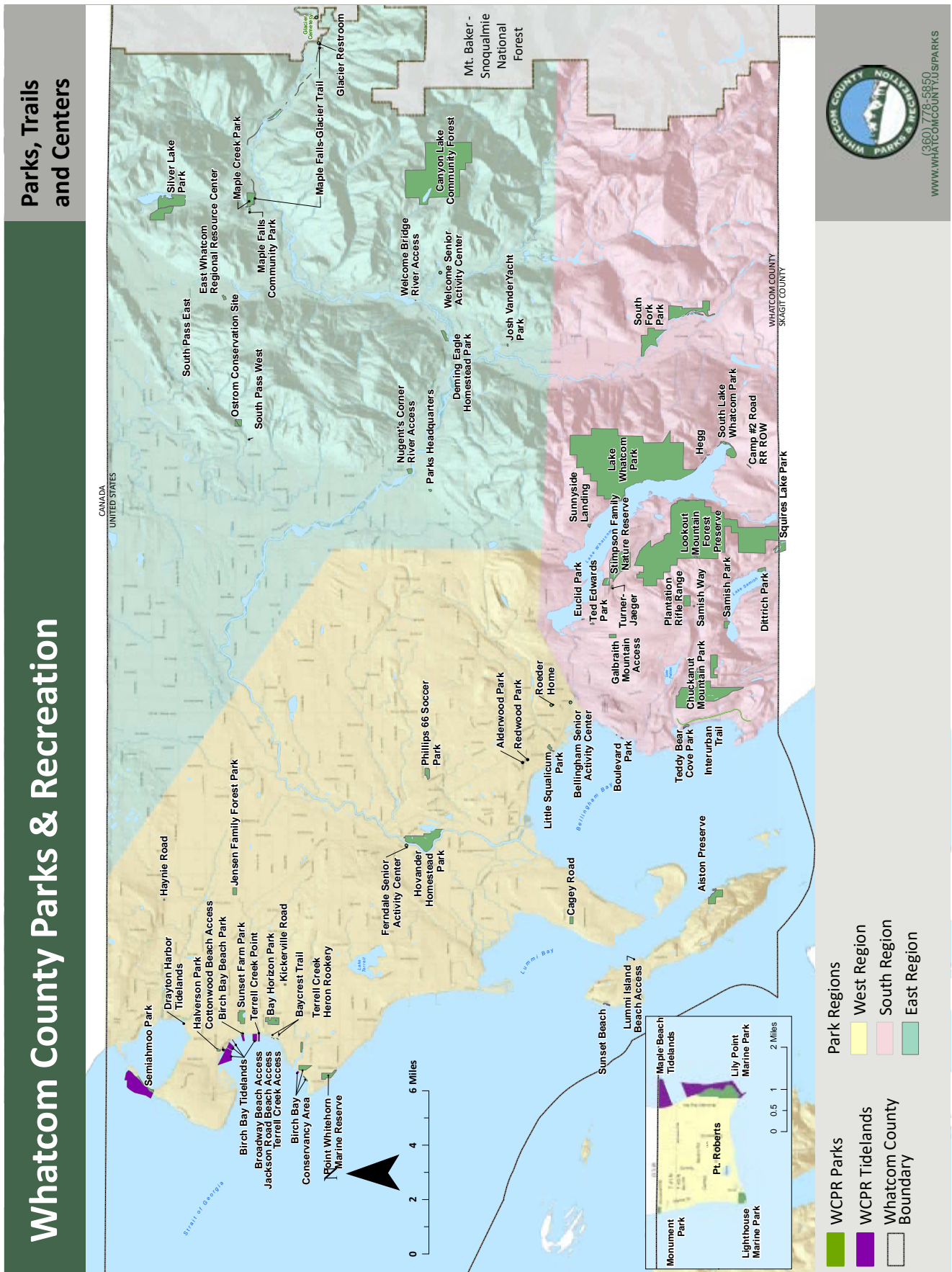


Fig. 2.3: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Park Region Map

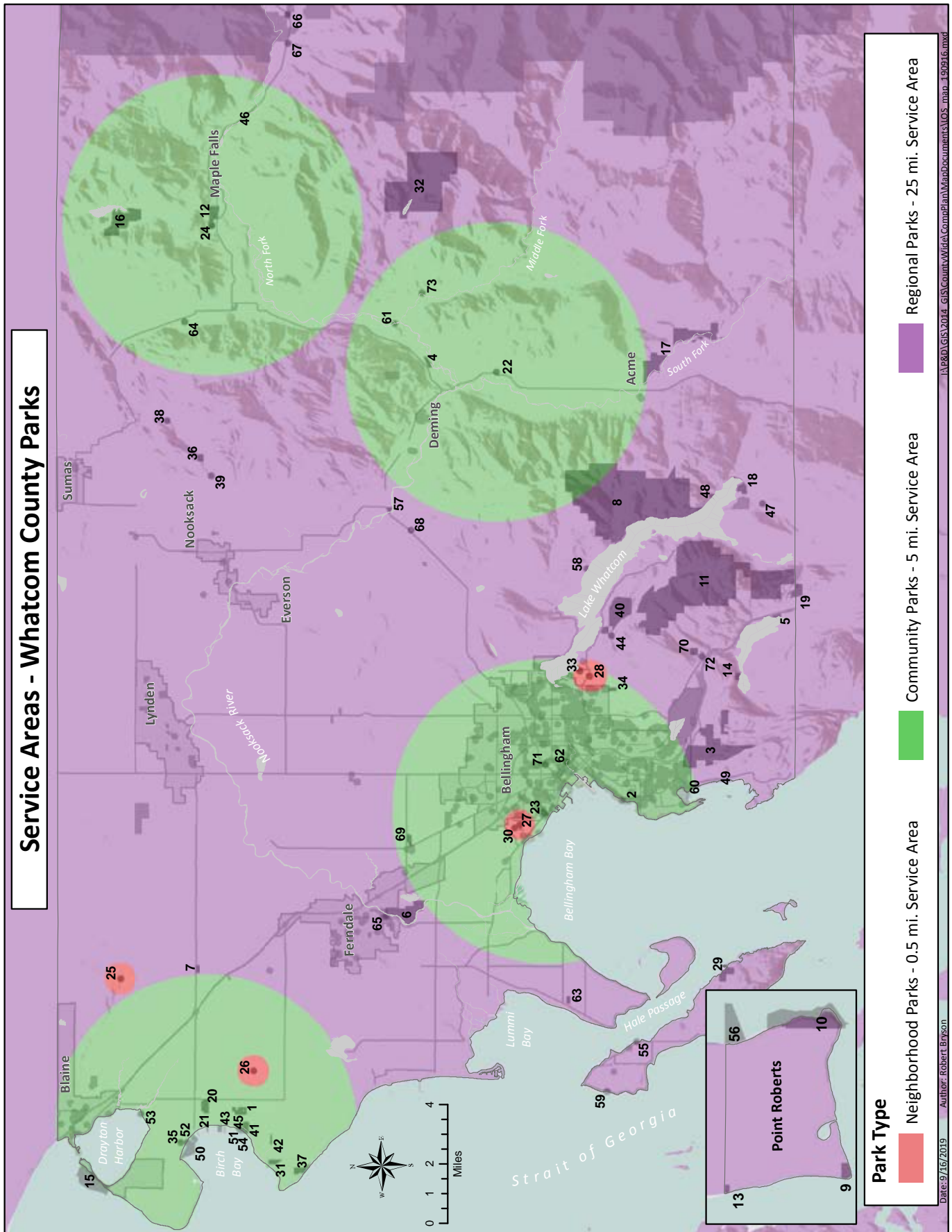


Fig. 2.4: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Park Service Area Map

# 3. Demand & Need Analysis

Park, recreation, and open space land and facility demands can be estimated using a variety of methods including population ratios, participation models, level-of-service (LOS) measurements, and/or questionnaire survey methodologies. This plan utilized a variety of methods to help determine demand and need.

## A. Population and Demographics

A necessary step in the CPROS process is understanding community demographics and evaluating how the community is served by its parks system. Analyzing the local demographic and Whatcom County's regional context clarifies opportunities and constraints influential to parks planning. The demographic profile of Whatcom County plays a crucial role in shaping the CPROS Plan. Understanding the county's population, age distribution, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic factors is essential for creating inclusive and accessible parks and open spaces that cater to the needs and preferences of the community. This summary provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics of Whatcom County.

Between 2010 and 2020, Whatcom County experienced notable population growth. In 2010, the county had a population of approximately 201,140 residents, and by 2020, this number had risen to around 228,000. a 12% increase. The county's population is expected to grow another 12% from 2020 to 2030, and nearly 17% again from 2030 to 2040, These growth rates are slightly higher than the statewide expected growth rate (10% and 14% respectively). The higher growth rates reflect the county's appeal as a place to live, work, and enjoy its natural beauty. These numbers underscore the importance of comprehensive planning to ensure that evolving community needs are met while preserving the county's unique character and natural and scenic resources.

Whatcom County is home to residents from various ethnic backgrounds. A diversity that should be celebrated and reflected in the design and programming of parks and open spaces. While the county is predominantly White, comprising 78.2% of the county population, this figure is down from 82.1% in 2010, showing racial and ethnic diversity is increasing in the county. The County should strive to create environments that celebrate cultural differences, foster cross-cultural interactions, and offer amenities that resonate with the various racial and ethnic communities. Additionally, outreach efforts should be made to engage underrepresented groups in the planning process ensuring their voices are heard and their needs considered in the development and enhancement of parks and open spaces.

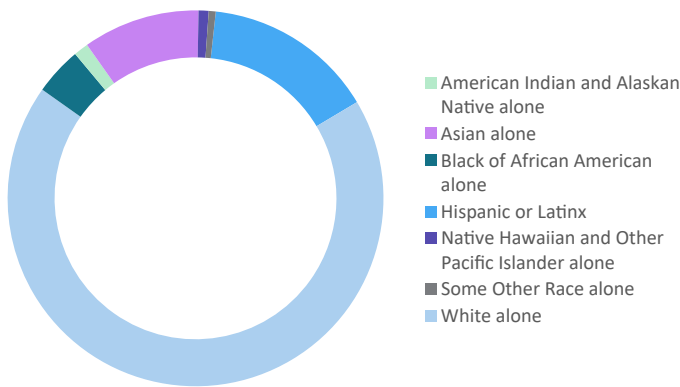


Fig. 3.1: Racial Demographics: Washington State

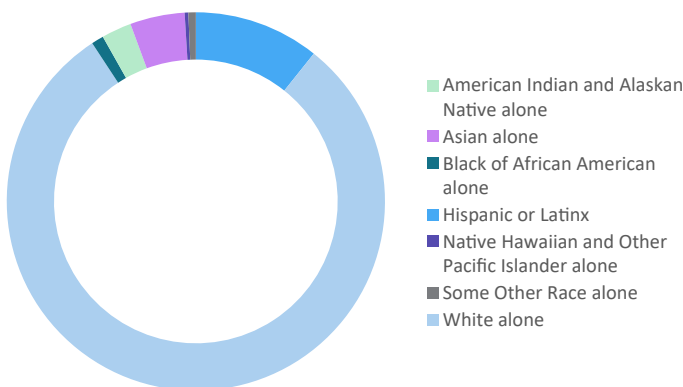


Fig. 3.2: Racial Demographics: Whatcom County

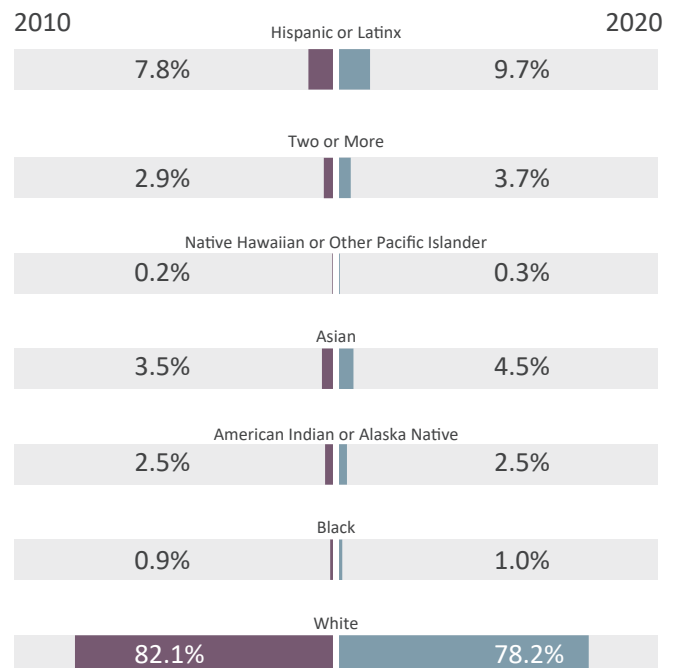


Fig 3.3: Whatcom County Racial Diversity Trend

	2020 Census Population	2021 Population Estimate	2022 Population Estimate	2025 Population Projection	2030 Population Projection	2035 Population Projection	2040 Population Projection	2045 Population Projection	2050 Population Projection
State	7,706,310	7,766,975	7,864,400	8,100,384	8,502,764	8,884,512	9,248,473	9,598,597	9,937,575
Whatcom	226,847	226,300	231,650	240,321	254,158	267,462	280,275	292,714	304,836

Table 3.1: Whatcom County Estimated Population Projection

Most of Whatcom County’s population is between the ages of 20 to 44 at 35.5%. This is followed by the group ages between 45- and 64-years accounting for 23.4%. 18.5% of the population aged 65 and older, followed by 18.3% between ages of 5 and 19. This diversity in age groups should be taken into consideration when designing parks and open spaces to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of all ages.

Whatcom County’s median household annual income is approximately \$70,011. Lower than the statewide median household income of \$77,006. Additionally, Whatcom County has a 13% poverty rate, which is also slightly higher than the statewide level of 10%. Of course, the distribution of median income is not evenly spread across the county with some areas, such as the Lummi Island, Marietta, and the Kendall community experiences significantly lower than the county’s median income. Strategies such as offering free or low-cost recreational programs and maintaining a variety of park sizes, types, and distribution can help address the socioeconomic diversity within the county.

Whatcom County’s population is not evenly distributed across its overall land area of 2108 square miles. Over half of the eastern side of the county (1125 square miles) is North Cascades National Park or Mount Baker – Snoqualmie National Forest, or Okanogan – Wenatchee National Forest land. The western half of the county features several distinct population centers, with Bellingham being the largest and most densely populated city. Additionally, there are other significant population centers such as Ferndale, Lynden, and Blaine, each having unique characteristics and recreational needs. Tailoring park development to the distinct geographic locations and populations within the county will enhance accessibility and relevance to residents.

Given the diverse demographic makeup of Whatcom County, it is vital to prioritize accessibility and inclusivity in park planning. This goes beyond simply providing ADA-compliant facilities. It requires promoting equity in access to parks and open spaces, including language accessibility in signage and information, and considering the needs of individuals of all abilities regardless socioeconomic status.

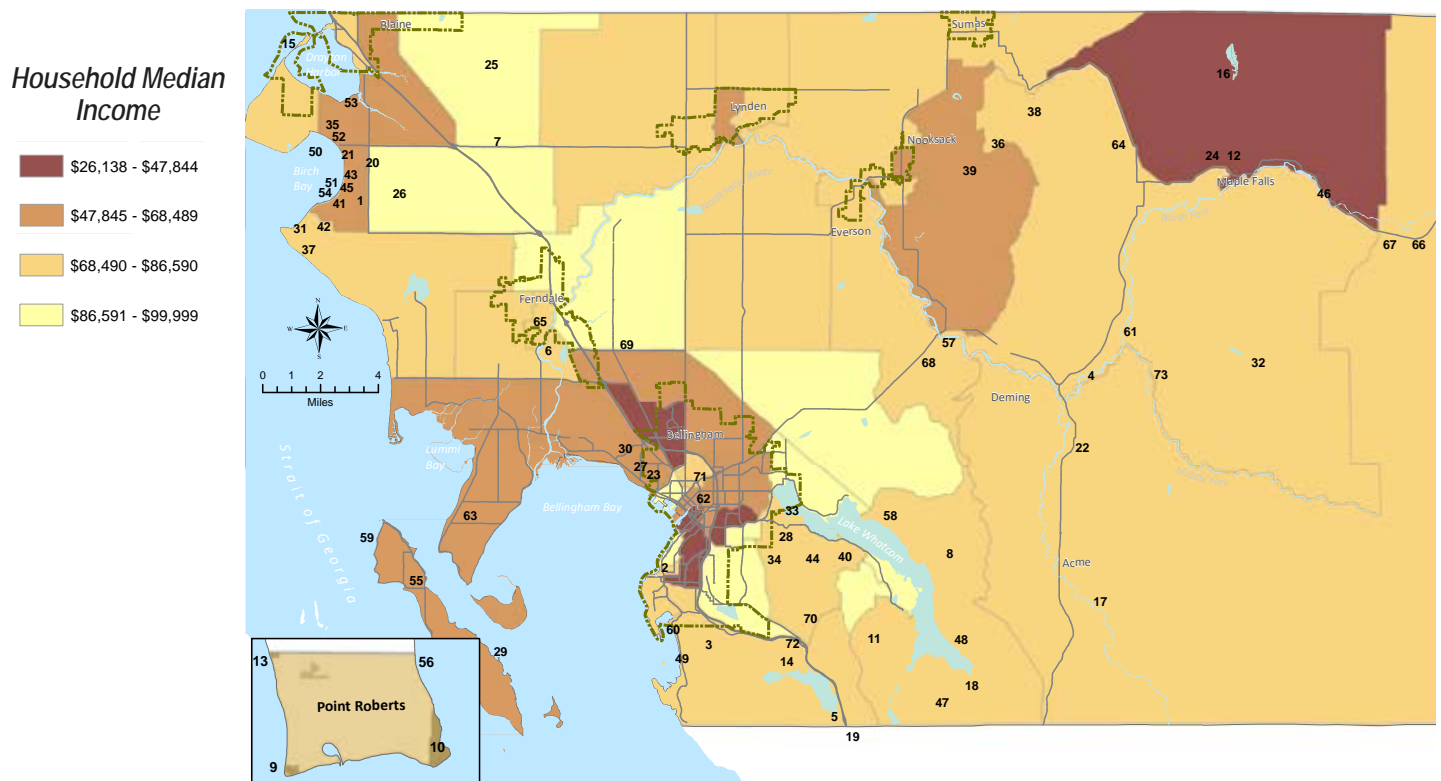


Fig 3.4: Whatcom County Household Median Income Map

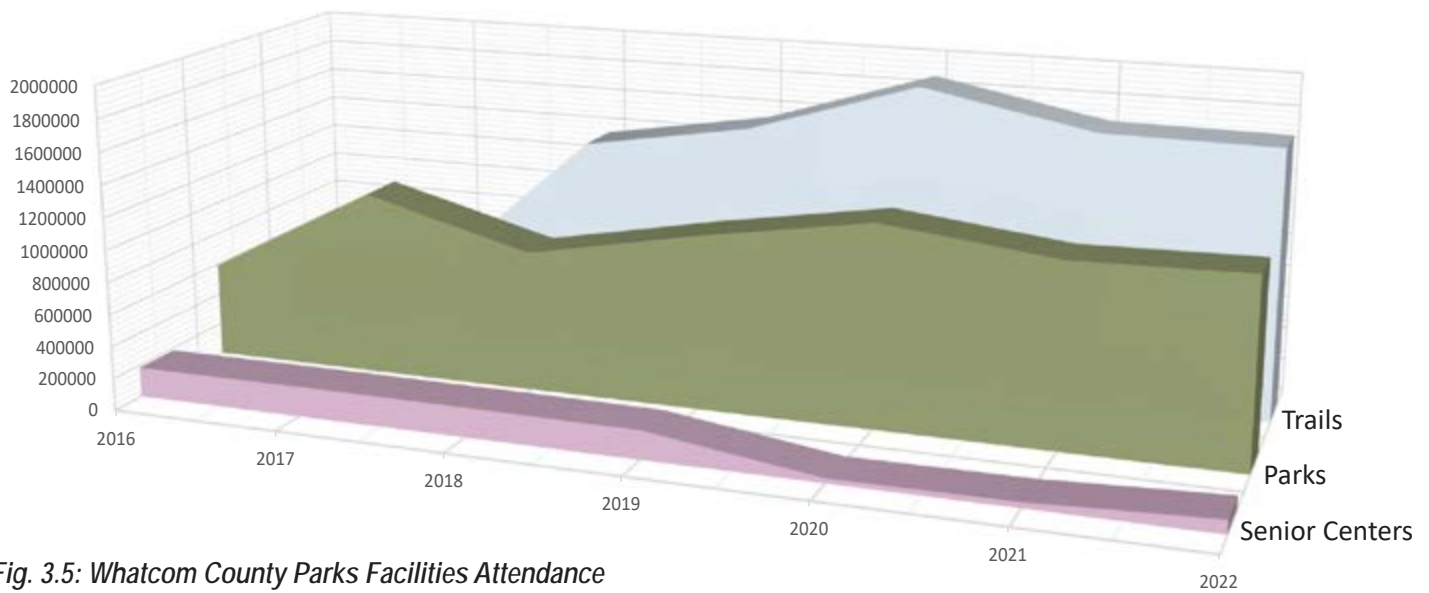


Fig. 3.5: Whatcom County Parks Facilities Attendance

### B. Park Visitation

Park use is tracked at most major trailheads and park areas. A variety of methods are used including car and trail counters, daily staff estimates, reservation data and spot counts. This information is used by staff for planning and reporting purposes and to help inform management decisions. User counts are helpful in determining the demand and capacity of park facilities and staff. Taken over time, they can show user trends and reflect responses to conditions and improvements.

Since the last update of the CPROS in 2016, there has been considerable growth in yearly visitations to WCPR facilities. For example, in 2022 WCPR had over 2,840,000 combined visitations to park and trail facilities. Breaking visitations into either parks or trails facility counts we can see that park facility visitations accounted for approximately 1,166,000 (40%) while trails accounted for 1,674,000 (60%). These numbers equate to an Annual Average Growth Rate (AAGR) of nearly 18% for parks and 45% for trails.

Evaluating visitations to Senior Centers tells a different story. In the years following the last CPROS update, visitation numbers were reliably averaging 183,000 per year. However, COVID-19, and subsequent facility closures that followed severely impacted Senior Service visitation. Facility closures consequently impacted the ability of Whatcom County and partner organization’s ability to provide the services and support this vulnerable population relies upon. Fortunately, as the community began to reopen, and the severity of the pandemic lessened visitations began to increase and appear to be moving toward previous visitation levels.

### C. Level of Service (LOS)

Whatcom County approved minimum levels of service standards in 1997 for parks, trails and activity centers. This was a joint effort between the Planning and the Parks & Recreation Departments, and these standards are adopted in the WCCP. Levels of service (LOS) are quantifiable measures of the amount of public facilities that are provided to the community. Often expressed as an average per person, these metrics have been used to compare one community’s facilities against another, as well as other agencies, and national standards. Typically, a standard LOS is calculated for each type of facility such as the number of parks or acres for every 1,000 residents. The practice of quantifying local LOS to a national standard has not proven to be beneficial or justifiable as each community’s vision, values and needs are different. The challenge of just using LOS for Parks is that it does not identify the quality of the service or facility, satisfaction of the residents with the facility or capacity and use issues.

The current LOS calculation used by the County combines athletic facilities, regional, community and neighborhood parks, preserves and open spaces, greenways, and water access sites that have parking, restrooms, trails and other developed amenities as representing developed parks. The current Park LOS is 9.6 acres for every 1,000 people in the county.

Similarly, all trails including multi use, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian are combined for the trail inventory and LOS metric. The current Trail LOS is 0.60 miles of trail for every 1,000 people in the county.

And, Senior centers, Plantation Rifle Range, East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, Roeder Home and community



halls are combined for a total count of activity centers. There is no current Activity Center LOS defined in the WCCP, instead it references a Comprehensive Plan Policy (4F-5):

*“Continue to provide and support activity centers, including senior centers, to serve the growing population of Whatcom County by the following methods, as need, which are listed in priority order: (1) implementing programming changes (2) adding space to existing centers, and/or (3) establishing new centers.”*

**Current LOS based on Adopted Standards**

2023 Population: 235,800

Developed Parks (235.8 X 9.6 = 2,263.68 acres)

Current inventory developed parks (in acres):

Regional Parks	12,769.2
Community Parks	14.7
Neighborhood	3.8
Preserve/Open Space	2,872.6
Greenway	97.3
<u>Water Access</u>	<u>38.5</u>
TOTAL	15,796.1

Trails (235.8 X .60 = 141.48 miles of trails)

Current inventory miles of trails: 75.32 miles

Based on existing inventory and population, Whatcom County is currently meeting its adopted minimum level of service for developed parks and activity centers. It currently has a trail deficit of approximately 68 miles.

**GMA and Concurrency**

One goal of the GMA is Concurrency. Concurrency refers to the timely provision of public facilities and services relative to the demand for them. To maintain concurrency means that adequate public facilities are in place to serve new development as it occurs or within a specified time period. The Growth Management Act (GMA) gives special attention to concurrency for transportation and requires

local jurisdictions have a program to correct existing deficiencies and bring existing transportation facilities and services up to locally adopted standards. If meeting adopted LOS is not feasible, local jurisdictions may need to revisit comprehensive plan goals and LOS to consider how they may be adjusted while still implementing the community’s vision.

GMA allows local jurisdictions to adopt a concurrency mechanism for other public facilities that are deemed necessary for development. WAC 365-196-840(2). These other facilities may include parks and recreational facilities, sanitary sewer systems, stormwater facilities, and schools.

When considering the adopted LOS for parks and trails for Whatcom County, one can discern a clear disconnect between what is currently provided compared to the minimum service levels defined in the WCCP. Using the LOS standard in the WCCP (initially adopted in 1997), the current LOS for developed parks in 2023 is more than 700% above the recommended service level. And inversely, the current trail LOS (adopted in 1997 and subsequently modified) is 50% below the targeted service level. The disparity suggests that these metrics are currently more an indicator of how different the recreational landscape has changed since 1997 rather than an accurate measure of how responsive current park and recreational services are to the community at large.

WCPR is planning a more robust CPROS update that prioritizes community engagement and outreach efforts in 2024 and 2025. The effort will include actively engaging the Parks and Recreation Commission in the process to evaluate LOS metrics and may result in recommendations for Whatcom County Council consideration for modified LOS metrics in the CPROS that are more responsive to current and anticipated community needs and preferences. Possible alternatives are summarized in Table 3.2.

The existing LOS standards in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan may also be re-evaluated in the 2025 update or later.

Metric	Purpose
Building square footage per capita	To evaluate if a community has enough indoor recreation space (examples include: recreation/community centers, youth and senior activity centers, or gymnasiums).
Operating expenditures per capita	To determine if adequate funding is being provided for effective operations and maintenance.
Revenue per capita	To determine if a community is recovering enough costs to meet expectations and goals.
Revenue as a percentage of operating costs	To determine if a community is recovering enough costs to meet expectations and goals.
Various sustainability / resiliency / equity metrics	Used to evaluate multiple community metrics including urban tree canopy, healthy watershed/waterways, health and wellness.

Table 3.2: Possible CPROS Alternative Level of Service Metrics

## D. Public Survey and Outreach

Community outreach efforts to solicit comment and feedback on recreational and conservation priorities included a public survey, community meetings, reviewing comment forms that are collected at specific recreational facilities, and input from WCPR front line staff that meet daily with the recreating public.

### Parks & Recreation On-line Survey

WCPR conducted an online survey in 2021. This survey was hosted on the department's website and made available to all members of the community. The survey was designed to gather a variety of perspectives about WCPR facilities, and where future investments should be targeted. Collected input ensures that recommendations of this plan address current and future needs. More than 1,000 community members completed the survey, and representation was well distributed among the communities of Whatcom County.

It should be recognized that although participation was relatively high, the survey did not completely achieve the desired county-wide representation that was desired. For example, more than two-thirds of respondents were long-term residents, residing in Whatcom County for more than a decade. 84% of respondents were homeowners, and nearly 60% were 50 or older. Lastly, Bellingham residents had the highest level of participation, accounting for more than 50% of responses. This plan recommends that future surveys employ creative strategies to improve participation from a more diversified and representative population.

#### Key Findings:

Whatcom County residents are enthusiastic about their parks and open spaces, with more than 95% having visited a park or participated in a recreation program within the last twelve months. More than 50% of responses indicated either a high or highest satisfaction with conservation and preservation efforts. Similar levels of satisfaction were identified with access to a variety of trail facilities. The high levels of satisfaction are indicative of why the community has experienced and is expected to continue to see significant growth. And although there's broad support for current recreational facilities and resources, the survey did reveal some shortcomings. Specifically, the survey indicated that:

Community members are less satisfied with existing access opportunities to the shoreline and waterfront. Survey responses revealed a strong desire to improve salt and freshwater access, especially with hand launch boat facilities.

Equestrians, and ORV enthusiasts, are less satisfied with trail opportunities than hikers and bicyclists. Additionally, there is demand for longer distance cross-country trails,

and on-road bicycle routes that connect communities and other regional attractions.

Making trails, and other recreational facilities accessible to people of all abilities is highly important to community members.

There is a need to improve access and overall conditions of specific facilities including restrooms, parking areas, picnic shelters, teen and youth activity centers, and senior centers.

There is a common understanding that the current inventory of recreational facilities will not be able to keep up with demand as the population increases, and some type of dedicated funding is necessary. The survey indicated that charging a one-time fee that was tied to housing development and exploring a Real Estate Excise Tax (REET 3) were preferred over other revenue generating options proposed.

### Meet the Director Meetings

After joining WCPR in September of 2022, Parks Director Bennett Knox conducted a series of meetings across Whatcom County to introduce himself and engage with the community. The meetings followed a Town Hall format and held at a variety of locations including the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, Hovander Homestead Park, Josh VanderYacht Memorial Park, and Point Roberts. Approximately 100 community members participated in these meetings and offered valuable insights into current facility conditions, and desired future improvements.

#### Key Findings:

Not surprisingly, comments from participants of the Director Meetings correlated closely of those of the online survey. Areas of interest and concern can be categorized into six focus areas including public engagement and outreach, maintaining and enhancing existing WCPR facilities, improving water access opportunities, enhancing programming and partnership with other service organizations, connecting communities and recreational facilities with multi-modal trail facilities, and integrating forest management and health into WCPR operational mandate. Specific examples are included:

Public engagement and outreach – Enhance public outreach opportunities to solicit community input and engagement to improve recreational services to the community. Utilize listening sessions and town hall format meetings to build trust and mutual understanding of disconnects between service offerings and community needs and desires. Attend and participate in community forums hosted by allied Whatcom County departments, especially Public Works, Planning & Development Services, and Health and Community Services.

Maintain and Enhance Existing Facilities – By making additional investments in community facilities such as improving air conditioning and ventilation and renovation efforts at community facilities like the Senior Activity Centers, East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, and Van Zandt Community Hall. Add new facilities to satisfy growing recreational demand such as off-leash dog parks, pickleball, and disk golf.

Improve Water Access - By making facility improvements to existing properties that fresh and/or saltwater natural resources such as improving fishing access at Lighthouse Marine Park, Samish Park, and Silver Lake Park.

Programming Opportunities – Restore seasonal community gatherings at special use facilities like the Roeder Home, Lighthouse Marine Park, and Hovander Park. Explore opportunities to partner with other organizations to increase community events and programs.

Multi-modal Community Connections – Expand off-road, non-motorized community trail connections especially parts of the county where pedestrian facilities are in short supply like, the Columbia Valley, Kendall and Maple Falls communities. Continue efforts to expand hiking and cross-country trail connections especially within proximity to population centers such as Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park.

Forest Management – Integrate sustainable forest management into ongoing planning and operational efforts to steward the highly valued forest resources currently managed by WCPR. This is especially critical in forested areas of the Lake Whatcom Watershed, Chuckanut Mountain Park, and Canyon Lake Community Forest. Partner with DNR and other land managers to develop a countywide wildfire prevention and response plan.

### WCPR Frontline Staff Feedback

An important source of community feedback is conveyed directly to WCPR frontline staff. They present the public face of the department and are mission critical to the success of department operations. They are first responders to a vast spectrum of issues and concerns of the visiting public, and provide invaluable insight into improving efficiencies and service delivery to customers. The following lists needs and areas that should be addressed to improve visitor experience, protection of essential infrastructure, and environmental protection.

#### Key Findings

- Need improved and/or additional restroom capacity: Silver Lake Park, Hovander Homestead Park, Lake Whatcom Park, Maple Falls Community Park, Lake Samish Park, and Birch Bay Beach Park
- Need additional surfaced parking capacity: Silver Lake Park, Hovander Homestead Park, Samish Park

and Lake Whatcom Park

- Need parking lot resurfacing efforts focused on reduction of gravel parking surfaces and improved stormwater treatment at Jensen Family Nature Reserve, Lake Whatcom Park, Lily Point Marine Park, Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve, Stimpson Family Nature Reserve, and Point Whitehorn Marine Park
- Replacement of the high-bank stairway at Point Whitehorn Marine Park
- Need entrance improvements and wider park roads: Hovander Homestead Park, Lighthouse Marine Park, and Silver Lake Park
- Need improvements to accessibility and more opportunities for older adults in the parks system due to an aging population
- Need informal youth playfields for team practice, soccer, rugby, and other open field games: Bay Horizon Park and East Whatcom Regional Resource Center
- Need youth bicycle facilities, such as pump track or skills course, at Silver Lake Park
- Need additional tournament grade fields to compliment Northwest Soccer Fields and provide additional capacity for future tournaments
- Need expansion of pickleball opportunities throughout the parks system
- Need to address E-bike rules and regulations for use of E-bikes on Department managed trails
- Improve availability of cellular network connectivity at Silver lake Park
- Enhance availability of Wi-Fi at reservable facilities and campgrounds throughout the parks system

### Whatcom County Planning Commission

On December 14, 2023, WCPR staff provided a presentation to the Planning Commission on the CPROS. The presentation included a review of the purpose of the plan, accomplishments achieved during the previous planning period, and a summary of how the plan was prepared. Following the presentation, a public hearing was opened and several members of the public spoke and provided comment. The comments received largely related to facilities associated with the Bellingham Sportsplex operated by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom Sports & Recreation partnership. However, the Planning Commission recommended that WCPR explore opportunities to expand recreational services to include indoor recreation. Similar comments submitted by email were received by Planning & Development staff prior to the Planning Commissions Meeting, and mirror comments received from the On-line Survey (Appendix B).

WCPR recognizes indoor recreation demand is growing, and concur that providing indoor recreation facilities should be part of a long-term vision of meeting recreational needs of the community. The benefits of such

facilities are self-evident, providing year-round recreational opportunities, economic development, increased tourism, and places where community members can come together and build strong social bonds.

Although WCPR views the provision of indoor recreation clearly benefiting the recreating public, existing resources are insufficient to bring such facilities on line and would require collaborative partnerships for both financial backing and ongoing operations. WCPR will explore such public and private partnerships to better understand the feasibility of developing indoor recreation facilities over this next planning period.

### E. State and Regional Recreational Trends

Every 5 years, Washington State is required develop a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to be eligible to receive federal Land & Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) for matching grants that are made available for acquisition and development of park and recreation facilities by local jurisdictions. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) completed this plan in 2023. In it, RCO includes updated information and statewide statistics on recreational participation of recreation activities, projected future demand, and recommendations that balance meeting the recreating public’s need while advancing land and water conservation priorities.

#### Participation

One tool that was used to measure participation was a random survey of Washington State residents across

a broad spectrum of outdoor recreation activities. The survey asked participants what activities they participated in and how many times they did participate in the prior 12 months. Individual activities were then categorized into 10 activity categories. The aim of the survey was to determine current recreation needs, and anticipate future recreational demand. The top 10 outdoor activities are listed in Table 3.3.

A closer evaluation of survey responses demonstrated that participation rates increased considerably over the prior recreational survey conducted in 2017, especially in activities like *Wildlife or nature viewing (+28%); Paddle sports (+28%); Visiting outdoor cultural or historical facilities (+27%); and Tent camping in undeveloped areas (+26%), and Backpacking (+25%).*

#### Experience

In addition to the participation survey, RCO conducted an Outdoor Recreation Experience Survey that focused on the quality of experience while investigating motivation, barriers, ease of access, and other issues that influence the quality of recreational experience.

The survey indicated that residents ranked Washington State’s ability to provide adequate areas for outdoor recreation quite favorably with 75% of respondents indicating a 4 or 5 star rating out of a 5-star scale. Additional summary information and survey methods and results can be reviewed online at: <https://wa-rco-scorp-2023-wa-rco.hub.arcgis.com/>

TOP 10 OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN WASHINGTON STATE			
<i>By participation rate - % of population, N = number of responses</i>			
ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CATEGORY	%	N
Walking or Using Mobility Device on Roads or Sidewalks	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	91	5390
Walking or Day Hiking or Using Mobility Device on Trails	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	90	5331
Wildlife and Nature Viewing	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	85	4812
Scenic Driving (Sightseeing)	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	85	4767
Hanging Out	Leisure Activities in Parks	70	3679
Picnic, Barbecue, or Cookout	Leisure Activities in Parks	68	3639
Community Garden or Farmers’ Market	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	66	3556
Visiting Outdoor Cultural or Historical Facility, - Includes Attending Cultural Events	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	62	3413
Swimming in Natural Settings	Water-Based Activities	61	3374
Paddle Sports (Whitewater, Canoes, Kayaks, Stand-Up Paddle Boards, Rowing)	Water-Based Activities	52	2910

Table 3.3: Washington State Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities



Teddy Bear Cove

## 4. Goals & Objectives



Maple Creek Park

### A. Comprehensive Planning

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (WCCP) is reviewed every 8 years and was last updated and adopted by the County Council in 2016, and is currently undergoing a series of updates and is scheduled for adoption in 2025. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide growth in unincorporated areas for the next 20 years in coordination with city comprehensive plans. The fundamental purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a framework of goals and policies to guide growth, land use, capital facility and transportation planning, and environmental protection.

WCCP was developed pursuant to the Growth Management Act (GMA) Planning Goals (RCW 36.70.020). Under GMA, goals were adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations of those counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040. The following GMA planning goals pertain to parks, recreation and open space:

#### Transportation

Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

#### Economic Development

Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, and within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

#### 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 water, and discourage incompatible uses.

#### 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.

#### Community Participation and Coordination

Encourage the involvement of the community in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

#### 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.

#### Historic Preservation

Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance

## B. Adopted Goals and Policies

Within the Comprehensive plan there are chapters which include goals, objectives, and associated policies that apply to park, recreation and open space activities (see also Appendix D). These include but are not limited to the following:

### CHAPTER 4 – CAPITAL FACILITEIS

Achieve level of service targets for park and recreational facilities. Support objectives and priorities identified in the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan, in the Natural Heritage Plan, and in this plan.

Ensure that capital facilities provide protection for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species.

### CHAPTER 6 - TRANSPORTATION

Develop a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that encourages enhanced community access and promotes healthy lifestyles and supports the recreational segments of our economy.

### CHAPTER 7 - ECONOMICS

Support increased public/private sector partnering among all entities involved with economic development.

Ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business development and evolving technology.

Coordinate economic development with environmental, resource, and other comprehensive land use and open space policies and measures to enhance the community's overall quality of life.

Enable a geographic balance for economic growth within the capacities of the county's natural resources, natural systems, public services, and public facilities.

### CHAPTER 8 – RESOURCE LANDS

Preserve and enhance the cultural heritage that is related to agriculture

Support the Department of Natural Resources to ensure forest practices avoid adverse impacts to the habitat of threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species and to marine waters that support shellfish resources.

Conserve and enhance Whatcom County's marine land base for the long-term and sustainable production of commercial and recreational economic activities.

## CHAPTER 9 - RECREATION

Address county-wide recreational needs by adequate provision of regional parks.

Provide multi-use camping parks to serve county resident needs as well as provide a tourism draw.

Expand outdoor recreation opportunities for county residents by providing enjoyable trails for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, walking, boating, and other trail activities in a safe environment.

Provide specialized recreation areas taking advantage of unique opportunities to serve both county residents and visitors.

Recognize the shoreline as one of Whatcom County's unique assets and provide adequate physical and visual access for present and future generations.

Coordinate with the DNR to provide ORV opportunities.

Encourage multi-use indoor activity centers to meet the needs of the population using public and private partnerships where possible.

As economically feasible, continue to implement the Whatcom County Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space (CPROS Plan) goals and policies through adoption of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

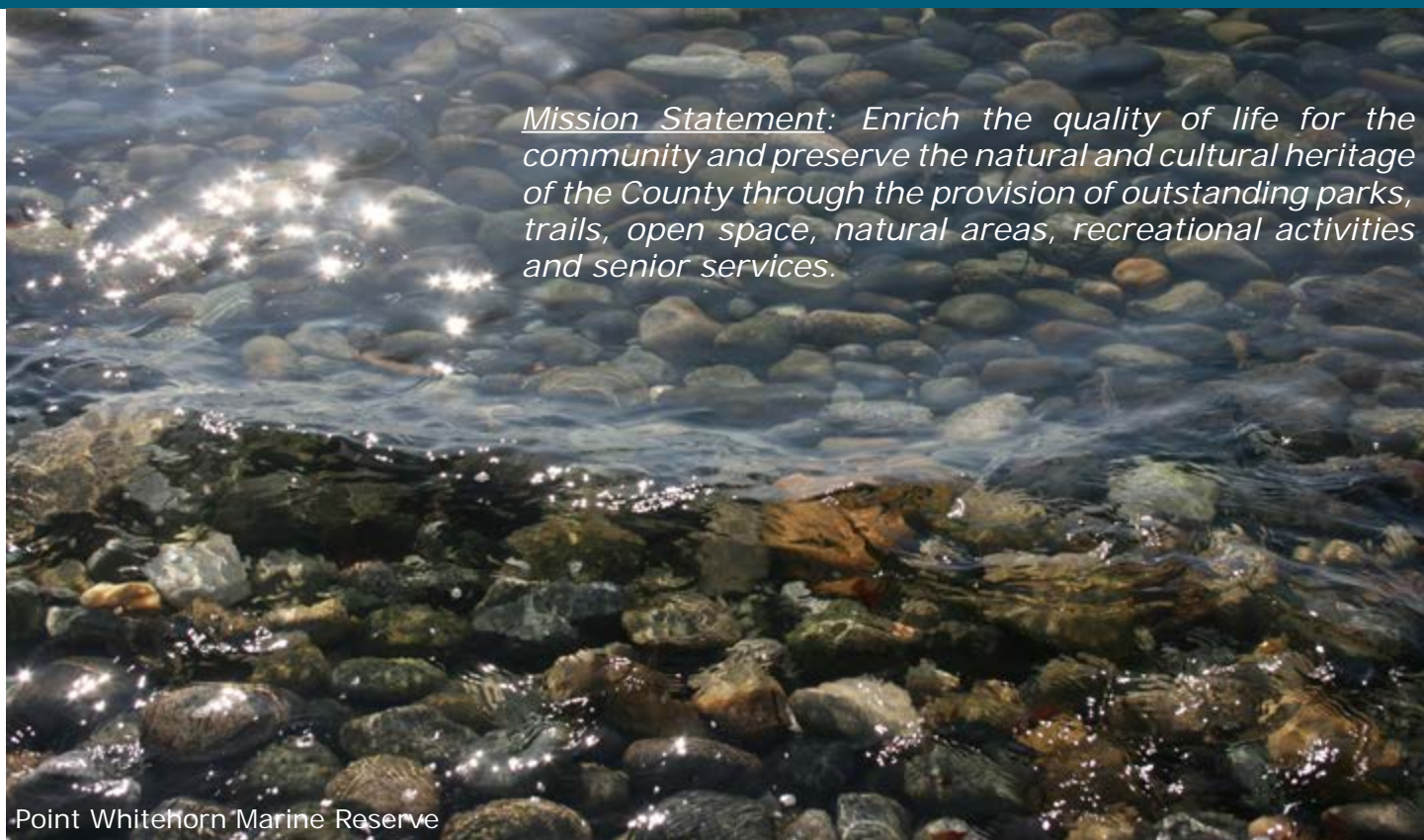
Develop a stronger financial base for recreational services.

To view the complete WCCP, and associated goals, objectives and policies, the current WCCP can be accessed online at:

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1171/Current-Comprehensive-Plan>



Samish Park



*Mission Statement: Enrich the quality of life for the community and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the County through the provision of outstanding parks, trails, open space, natural areas, recreational activities and senior services.*

Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve

### C. CPROS Goals and Objectives

Recognizing that there are multiple entities and jurisdictions within Whatcom County providing park and recreation services, including city park and recreation agencies and local park and recreation districts authorized under RCW Chapter 36, WCPR has, heretofore, adopted a “modified strategic approach” to regional or countywide services whereby Whatcom County endeavors to assume responsibility for functions no other agency or organization can provide, and helps coordinate or support those functions and activities that have other viable sponsors and partners.

In principle, for example, WCPR may provide central information and coordination services for open space, trail, park facilities and recreational programs on a countywide basis. Furthermore, WCPR may provide planning and development assistance when there are no other designated agencies or organization who can; the activity involves siting controversies or environmental consequences that may not be equitably resolved otherwise within the Whatcom County urban growth or community planning areas, or proposed developments will be within city urban growth areas and thus potentially annexed into corporate limits but currently subject to Whatcom County authority.

As a further example, WCPR may further develop, operate and maintain open space, trails, or park facilities and recreational programs when:

- the facility will have broad benefits for a large proportion of the countywide population and financed using resident approved methods,
- facility development and operating costs will be recaptured from direct charges of the populations who use the facility, or
- facility development and operating costs will be compensated in some manner through inter-local agreements with the using agency, area or benefiting user group, particularly where the demands will originate from a regional service requirement, or
- the facility will generate economic benefits for the area, or
- the site or facility has intrinsic value apart from traditional operation and maintenance needs, like a passive natural area or wetland preservation.

The following CPROS goals, objectives and actions are longer-term and aspirational and remain relevant today. They were developed as part of the 2008 CPROS planning process and minimally updated in 2016. They are based on a strategic approach to regional or countywide services, an analysis of existing open space, trail, park, and recreation conditions, and the results of workshop planning sessions and surveys. These expand upon and compliment those goals outlined in the WCCP, and referenced here to provide additional direction and departmental guidance.



**PRESERVES AND OPEN SPACE**

**Goal:**

Provide protection for a diversified system of significant and critical habitats and environmental areas that protect threatened species, watersheds, migration corridors, forestlands, tidelands, open spaces and scenic areas.

**Objectives:**

Assume a major responsibility for the planning, coordination, and preservation of unique environmental areas, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, open spaces, agricultural lands, forestlands, and scenic areas.

Work with all other public and private agencies, particularly the cities, Port of Bellingham, Washington State Departments of Fish & Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Transportation, and Whatcom County and Lummi Island Land Trusts, among others, to create an effective approach to the following regional conservation issues and proposals.

*Wildlife habitat*

a: Identify and conserve critical wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developing urban areas – such as the Terrell Creek Heron Colony and Tennant Lake Wildlife Area.

b: Preserve sensitive habitat sites that support threatened species and urban wildlife habitat - including the saltwater shorelines of Birch, Lummi and Bellingham Bays, Drayton Harbor, and Chuckanut Bay, and the freshwater shorelines of Silver Lake, Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish, and the Nooksack and Lummi Rivers.

*Natural areas*

a: Preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, open spaces, woodlands, shorelines, waterfronts and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect Whatcom County’s resource heritage – especially including the valleys of the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Nooksack River.

b: Provide public access to environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to Whatcom County – especially including Drayton Harbor, Bellingham Bay, Chuckanut Bay, and Lummi and Portage Islands.

*Forestlands*

a: Identify and protect forest resources in Whatcom County – including public and private forestlands that can provide productive timber and other wood products. Develop and utilize protective forest resource zoning districts and designations, special tax incentives, public land ownership and management, and other measures to preserve this valuable resource.

b: Identify and conserve forest cover and the scenic

attributes woodlands provide between rural and urban land uses especially including the viewsapes along the Interstate 5/Lake Samish and SR-9 corridors and between the Twin Sisters and Chuckanut Mountains (North Cascades Corridor)

c: Identify and preserve prime examples of heritage forestlands in Whatcom County – such as the old growth forests in and around Canyon Lake Community Forest and the extensive woodlands on Chuckanut, Lookout and Stewart and Sumas Mountains.

*Farmlands*

a: Identify and protect agricultural resources in Whatcom County including lands and soils that can provide productive crop, livestock, and other agricultural products. Develop and utilize protective farm resource zoning districts and designations, special tax incentives, development rights, public land ownership and management, and other measures to preserve this valuable resource.

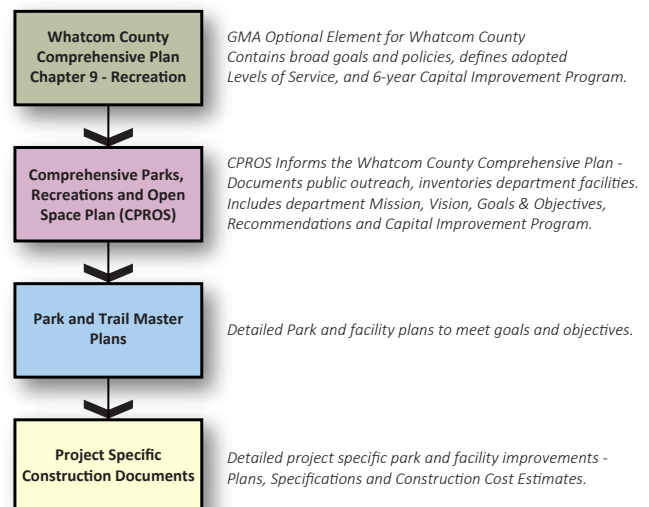
b: Identify and conserve farmlands and the scenic attributes agriculture provides between rural and urban land uses – especially including the rural farm landscapes in the valleys around Lynden, Sumas, and Nooksack.

c: Identify and preserve prime examples of heritage farmsteads in Whatcom County – such as the Hovander and Nessel Farms.

*Open spaces*

a: Define and establish a system of open space corridors or separators to provide definition between natural areas and urban land uses within Whatcom County’s emerging urban centers especially including the Nooksack River corridor and delta, and the Interstate 5 and Lake Samish corridor.

b: Increase natural area and open space linkages within the developing urban areas - particularly along the current and former UP, NP, BN&SF, BB&BC, and BB&E Railroad corridors.



**Fig 4.1: CPROS Relation to Other Planning Documents**

*Urban growth preserves and set-asides*

a: Cooperate with other public and private agencies, and with private landowners to set-aside land and resources necessary to provide high quality, convenient open space, trail, and park facilities before the most suitable sites are lost to development – particularly the lands around Stewart, Lookout, and Chuckanut Mountains.

b: Preserve unique environmental features or areas in future land developments and increase public use and access. Cooperate with other public and private agencies, and with private landowners to set aside unique features or areas as publicly accessible resources – including lands adjacent to Birch Bay State Park, Semiahmoo Spit, Bellingham Airport, and Larrabee State Park.

**HISTORICAL RESOURCES****Goal:**

Assume a major responsibility for the planning, coordination, and preservation of unique archaeological, historical, cultural, scenic, and man-made places, sites, landmarks, and vistas.

**Objectives:**

Work with all other public and private agencies, particularly the cities, Port of Bellingham, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, Whatcom County and Lummi Island Land Trusts, Whatcom County and Washington State Historical Societies, among others, to create an effective approach to the following regional resource conservation issues and proposals.

*Historical features and interests:*

a: Identify, preserve, and enhance Whatcom County's multicultural heritage, traditions, and cultural features including historical sites, buildings, artworks, views, and monuments within park sites and historical districts.

b: Identify and incorporate significant historical and cultural lands, sites, artifacts, and facilities into the open space, trail, and park system to preserve these interests and provide a balanced social experience – especially including important Native American, railroad, mining, logging, and shipping sites and places of interest.

c: Work with Washington State and Whatcom County Historical Societies, and other archaeological and cultural groups to incorporate historical and cultural activities into park developments and recreational programs.

*Manmade environments and features*

a: Incorporate interesting manmade environments, structures, activities, and areas into the open space, trail, and park system to preserve these features and provide a balanced recreational experience – especially including Military Road and Guide Meridian, the UP, NP, BB&BC, BB&E Railroads and Interurban Trolley, Steamer and

Mosquito Fleet landings, and sawmills and mines.

b: Work with property and facility owners to increase public access and utilization of these special sites and features.

**TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND SCENIC BYWAYS****Goal:**

Plan, develop and operate a system of on and off-road regional trails. Regional trail facilities may include fresh and saltwater trails, off-road hike, bike, and horse trails, on-road bicycle touring routes and scenic drives, and cross-country ski and snowmobile trails that are directly related to environmental resources that are of most interest to county residents.

**Objectives:**

Work with all other public and private agencies, particularly the cities, Port of Bellingham, Washington State Departments of Fish & Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Transportation, Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission, US Forest Service, and National Park Service, to develop and maintain the following integrated system of regional trails.

*Water trails – non-motorized craft*

a: Incorporate and extend the Cascade Marine Trail, a saltwater trail network for hand-carry or car-top craft including canoes and kayaks, extending from British Columbia and through Puget Sound, with launch sites into Drayton Harbor, Birch, Lummi, Bellingham, and Chuckanut Bays, with access to Lummi and Portage Islands.

b: Develop a freshwater trail network for hand-carry or car-top craft including launch sites for canoes and kayaks that extends the length of the Nooksack River from Maple Falls and Deming to Bellingham Bay, and Lake Whatcom.

c: Designate appropriate bad weather pull ins and overnight camping locations along the major saltwater trail routes – including Lighthouse Marine Park, Semiahmoo Spit, Birch Bay State Park, Cherry Point, Lummi and Portage Islands, and Larrabee State Park, among others. Designate overnight camping locations along the major freshwater route on the Nooksack River - including Deming, Nugent's Corner River Access, Lynden, Hovander Homestead Park, among others, and along the shoreline of Lake Whatcom.

d: Develop and operate canoe, kayak, crew, and other non-motorized craft instruction, rental, and storage facilities at major freshwater locations – including Silver and Samish Lakes and Lake Whatcom.

*On-road rural and scenic byways – vehicles and bicycle touring*

a: Identify a countywide system of rural and backcountry scenic driving routes and byways that access and highlight the scenic, environmental, farmland, and historical attributes of Whatcom County – especially

including Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay, Lummi Island and Bellingham Bay, Chuckanut, Lake Samish, and Lake Whatcom Drives, South Pass Road, SR-9 and the Mount Baker Highway. Integrate the countywide system with other state and federal byways through the North Cascades, Skagit and Island Counties.

b: Develop a series of roadside rest stops, viewpoints, interpretive exhibits, and byway signage systems that integrate the scenic routes with specific historical, cultural, environmental, and scenic points of interest – such as Semiahmoo Spit in Drayton Harbor, Sandy Point in Lummi Bay, Lummi Island and Chuckanut Island in Chuckanut Bay, among others.

c: Integrate byway routes and points of interest to access parks, public facilities, museums and historical sites, and business districts – especially in Blaine, Ferndale, Bellingham, Lynden, Nooksack, Sumas, Kendall, and the Mount Baker Highway.

d: For bicycle touring enthusiasts, designate appropriate overnight bicycle camping locations along the major routes and byways – such as Lighthouse Marine Park, Hovander Homestead Park, Silver Lake Park, Birch Bay State Park, and Larrabee State Park, among others.

#### *Off-road trail systems*

a: Create a comprehensive system of off-road hike, bike, and horse trails that access scenic, environmental, historical, and open space attributes of Whatcom County – especially including the Nooksack River, original UP, NP, BB&BC, BB&E railroad corridors, old logging and mining roads, and where appropriate, within the road rights-of way, as well as across cooperating private properties where appropriate.

b: Develop a series of trailheads, trailside rest stops, viewpoints, interpretive exhibits, and trail signage systems that integrate the off-road hike, bike, and horse trails with specific historical, cultural, environmental, and scenic points of interest – such as former steam boat landings, fish traps, sawmills, mining sites, farmsteads, railroads, and roads, among others.

c: Integrate continuous off-road trail corridors and local spur or loop routes with parks, public facilities, museums and historical sites, and business districts in cities.

d: For overnight trail users, develop appropriate overnight camping locations along the major trail corridors – such as Hovander Homestead Park, Silver Lake Park, Birch Bay State Park, and Larrabee State Park, among others.

e: Furnish off-road trails with appropriate supporting trailhead improvements that include interpretive and directory signage systems, rest stops, restrooms, parking and loading areas, water, and other services.

f: Where appropriate, locate trailheads at or in conjunction with park sites, schools, and other community facilities to increase local area access to countywide trail systems and reduce duplication of supporting improvements.

g: Where appropriate, install telephones, emergency call

boxes, or other means by which trail users can summon fire, emergency aid, police, and other safety and security personnel should the need arise.

h: Develop trail improvements of a design and development standard that is easy to maintain and access by maintenance, security, and other appropriate personnel, equipment, and vehicles.

#### *Winter trails*

a: Designate a system of appropriate winter cross-country skiing and snowmobiling trails that access safe and secure back roads, trail corridors, parks, and public and private lands in Whatcom County – including Black Mountain Ranch, Canyon Lake, and Skookum Creek. Link the county winter trails system with the more extensive winter trails networks designated on US Forest Service and National Park Service lands in the Mount Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest and North Cascades National Park.

#### *Off-road vehicle and ATV*

a: Identify, and when and where appropriate, provide coordination for off-road motorcycle, ATV, and 4-wheel drive vehicle riding courses, trails, and areas in Whatcom County.

## REGIONAL PARKS AND WATER ACCESS

### Goal:

Plan, develop, manage and operate a system of Regional Parks. These facilities may include resource-oriented activities including fishing sites, boat access ramps, swimming beaches, picnicking areas, and campgrounds that are directly related to environmental and historical resources that are of countywide interest to residents.

### Objectives:

Work with all other public and private agencies, particularly the Port of Bellingham, Washington State Departments of Fish & Wildlife and Natural Resources, Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission, US Forest Service, and National Park Service, to develop and operate the following appropriate resource park facilities.

#### *Waterfront access and facilities*

a: Acquire and develop additional salt and freshwater shoreline access for waterfront fishing, beachcombing, wading, swimming, and other related recreational activities and pursuits – especially including sites on Drayton Harbor, Birch, Lummi, and Bellingham Bays, Silver Lake, Lake Whatcom, Lake Samish, and the Nooksack River.  
b: Develop a mixture of salt and freshwater non-motorized and powerboat access opportunities – especially including additional sites and improvements to existing properties on Drayton Harbor, Lummi Island, Birch and Bellingham Bays, Lake Whatcom and Samish, and the Nooksack River.

### *Picnicking and day-use activities*

a: Acquire and develop additional countywide picnic sites, shelters, and day-use group picnic grounds and camps at major resource parks and along major off-road trail corridors throughout Whatcom County – especially including sites on Point Roberts, Semiahmoo Spit, Birch Bay, Cherry Point, Lummi Island, Lake Whatcom and Samish, South Pass, and at intervals along the Nooksack River including Hovander Homestead Park.

### *Campgrounds and retreats*

a: Acquire and develop a countywide system of tent, recreational vehicle, yurt, cabin, lodge, and retreat facilities at major resource parks and along major off-road trail corridors throughout Whatcom County – especially including sites on Point Roberts, Cherry Point, Lakes Whatcom and Samish, Acme, and at intervals along the Nooksack River.

## SPECIAL USE AREAS AND FACILITIES

### Goal:

Assist with the planning of special use areas such as athletic parks, community centers. These facilities may include competitive soccer, softball, and baseball, rugby and La Crosse fields, meeting and activity centers and special enterprises that are of countywide interest.

### Objectives:

Help coordinate and assist other public and private agencies cities, school and park districts, nonprofits and sports leagues and commissions. Such coordination will seek to site and sponsor development of major competitive outdoor athletic facilities, centers and facilities for all age and skill groups within reasonable geographic service areas of major population centers.

### *Athletic fields*

a: Identify and help plan a network of sites that can be developed (such as soccer, softball, and baseball fields) that meet the highest quality competitive practice and playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests – including new possible sites at Bay Horizon Park, East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, Ferndale and Mt Baker Highway/Nooksack.

### *Community centers*

a: Designate a network of multipurpose community centers that can be developed to provide arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities, eating and health care, daycare, latch key, and other spaces for all age groups including preschool, youth, teens, and seniors on a year-round basis.  
b: Support the continued development and diversification

by the Whatcom County school districts and other organizations of special meeting, assembly, and other community facilities that provide general support to school age populations and the community-at-large at elementary, middle, and high schools within Whatcom County urban growth and community planning areas.  
c: Develop special outdoor cultural and performing arts facilities that enhance and expand music, dance, drama, cultural and historical interpretations, and other audience and participatory opportunities for the county-at-large – including a festival events area at Hovander Homestead Park.

### *Special enterprises*

a: Where appropriate and economically feasible (self-supporting), designate and support operation of specialized and special interest recreational facilities like canoe and crew houses, equestrian centers, gun ranges, historical museums and exhibits, retreats and conference centers for these interests in the general population.  
b: Where appropriate, initiate joint planning and operating programs with other public and private agencies to determine and provide for special activities like marinas, ATV and off-road vehicle courses, and camping on a regional basis.

## RECREATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

### Goal:

Coordinate, assist, and when feasible, program and operate recreational and interpretive programs and outreach activities of special interest to or benefit for county residents at county park sites and community centers.

### Objectives:

Coordinate, promote, and link an integrated recreational program system with other public, non-profit, and for-profit agencies, organizations, and vendors. Such programs may include athletic leagues and sports, teen and senior age groups, and special populations where these activities are of major interest and benefit to county residents of all ages.

### *Recreational and interpretive programs*

a: Organize and sponsor the operation of environmental, historical, cultural, and recreational programs providing instruction, volunteerism, and participation in habitat restoration, water-based recreation, trail development and security, interpretation programs, summer and day-camps, maintenance, and other site-specific activities at Whatcom County parks sites and properties.  
b: Create a central access point and clearinghouse for arts and crafts, classroom instruction in music and dance, physical conditioning and health care, meeting facilities,

daycare, latch key, and other program activities for all cultural, age, physical and mental capability, and income groups in Whatcom County by all agencies and vendors including the county.

c: Designate and land bank appropriate sites, and help facilitate development agreements and clearinghouse access to user and league organizations to operate basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and other instruction and participatory programs for all age, skill level, and income groups in Whatcom County.

d: Assist historical and cultural societies to develop and display artifacts, reports, and exhibits; and conduct lectures, classes, and other programs that document and develop awareness of Whatcom County's heritage at county park sites and properties.

## CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAMS

### Goal:

Help facilitate, organize, coordinate, and selectively develop high quality, diversified cultural arts facilities and programs that increase awareness, attendance, and participation opportunities at Whatcom County parks and properties.

### Objectives:

#### Programs

a: Support successful collaborations between public agencies, the business community, service groups, schools, arts patrons, and artists that optimally utilize artistic resources and talents at Whatcom County parks and properties.

#### Artworks

a: Where appropriate, incorporate public artworks including paintings, sculptures, exhibits, and other media for indoor and outdoor display to expand resident access and appropriately furnish public places in Whatcom County parks and properties.

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

### Goal:

Design and develop facilities that are accessible, safe, and sustainable with life cycle features that account for long-term costs and benefits.

### Objectives:

#### Accessibility

a: Design outdoor picnic areas, trails, playgrounds, courts, fields, parking lots, restrooms, and other active and supporting facilities to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income, and activity interests.

b: Design indoor facility spaces, activity rooms, restrooms, hallways, parking lots, and other active and supporting spaces and improvements to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income, and activity interests.

#### Maintenance

a: Design, retrofit, and develop facilities that are of low maintenance and high capacity design to reduce overall facility maintenance and operation requirements and costs.

b: Where appropriate, incorporate low maintenance materials, settings or other value engineering considerations that reduce care and security requirements, and retain natural conditions and experiences.

#### Security and safety

a: Implement the provisions and requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and other design and development standards that improve park facility safety and security features for park users, department personnel, and the public-at-large.

b: Develop and implement safety standards, procedures, and programs that provide proper training and awareness for department personnel.

c: Define and enforce rules and regulations concerning park activities and operations that protect user groups, department personnel, and the general public-at large.

d: Where appropriate, use adopt-a-park programs, park watches, park police patrols, technology and other innovative programs that increase safety and security awareness and visibility.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND COORDINATION

### Goal:

Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining Whatcom County facilities and programs that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests.

### Objectives:

#### Finance

a: Investigate innovative available methods, such as growth impact fees, land set-a-side or fee-in-lieu-of-donation ordinances, and inter-local agreements, for the financing of facility development, maintenance, and operating needs in order to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, and increase facility services.

b: Consider joint ventures with other public and private agencies including the cities, school districts, regional, state, federal, and other public and private agencies including for-profit concessionaires, where feasible and desirable.

*Public and private resource coordination*

- a: Create a comprehensive, balanced open space, trail, park, and recreation system that integrates Whatcom County facilities and services with resources available from the cities, school districts, and other regional, state, federal, and private park and recreational lands and facilities in a manner that will best serve and provide for Whatcom County resident interests.
- b: Cooperate with the cities, school districts, regional, state, and federal, and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, reduce costs, and represent resident area interests through joint planning and development efforts.

*Cost/benefit assessment*

- a: Define existing and proposed land and facility levels-of-service (ELOS PLOS) that differentiate requirements due to population growth impacts versus improved facility standards, regional versus local nexus of benefit, county versus the combination of city, county, school, and other provider agency efforts in order to effectively plan and program open space, trails, parks, and recreation needs within Whatcom County.
- b: Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining open space, trail, park, and recreational facilities in manners that accurately



Nesset Farm

- distribute costs and benefits to public and private user interests - including the application of growth impact fees where new developments impact potential level of-service (ELOS) standards inside urban growth and community planning areas.
- c: Develop and operate recreational programs that serve the broadest needs of the population recovering program and operating costs with a combination of registration fees, user fees, grants, sponsorships, donations, scholarships, volunteer efforts, and the use of general funding.
- d: Where appropriate, provide recreational programs, like equestrian centers, boating facilities, gun ranges, and retreat and conference facilities for those interested groups who are willing to finance the cost through user fees, registration fees, volunteer efforts, or other means and methods.

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Goal:**  
Develop, train, and support a professional open space, trail, park, and recreation staff that effectively serves Whatcom County in the realization of the above listed goals and objectives.

**Objectives:**

*Personnel*

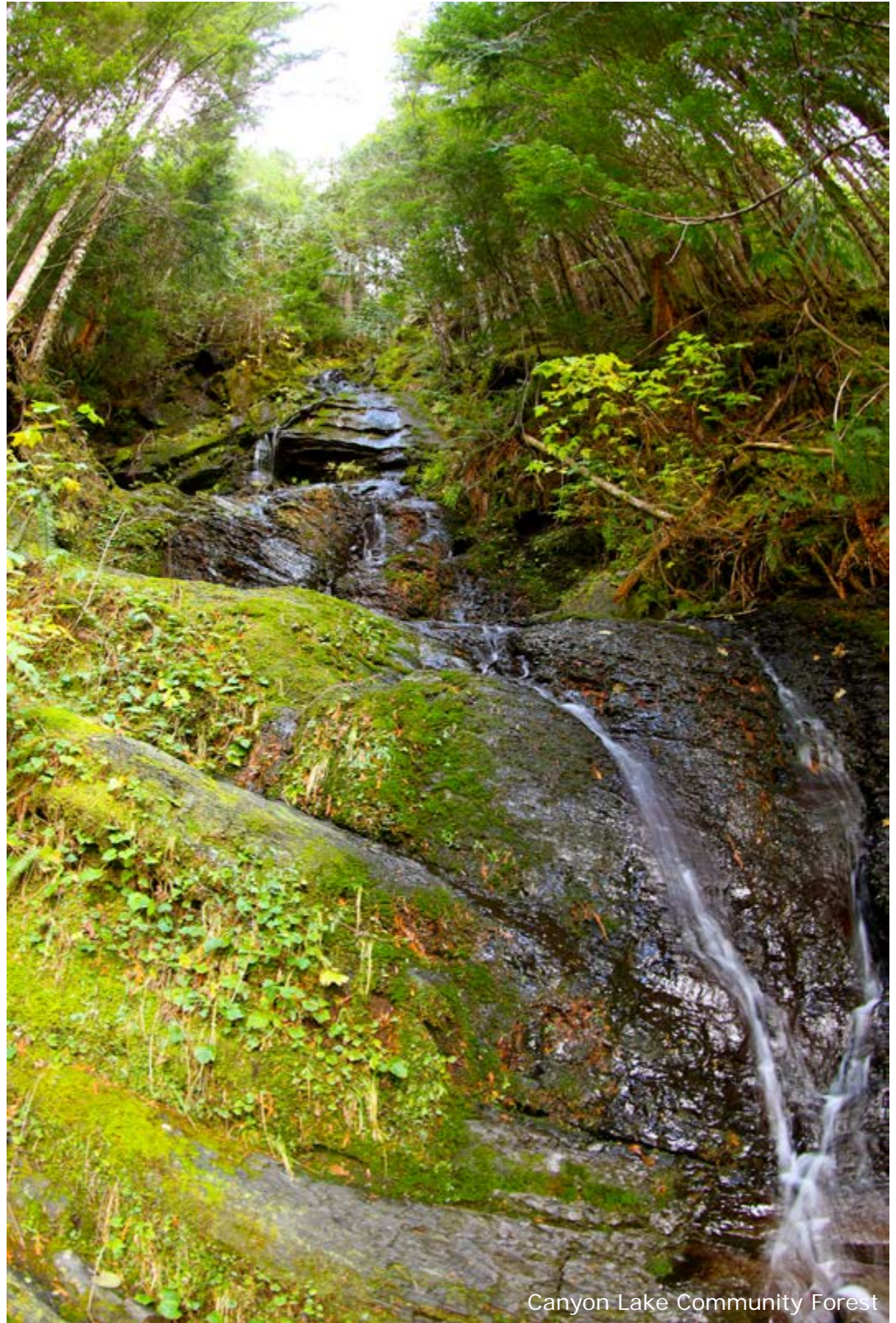
- a: Employ a diverse, well-trained work force that is motivated to achieve department and countywide goals.
- b: Encourage teamwork through communications, creativity, positive image, risk taking, sharing of resources, and cooperation toward common goals.
- c: Where appropriate, provide staff with education, training, technology, equipment and supplies to increase personal productivity, efficiency, and pride.

**LOCAL PARKS**

**Goal:**  
Recognizing the fact that local parks such as neighborhood and Community parks are primarily the responsibility of the Cities and Park Districts, Whatcom County will continue to assist local and rural communities in the development of these park areas when resources permit.

**Objectives:**

- a. County will not add any neighborhood parks to it inventory.
- b. Neighborhood and Community parks in the current inventory will be transferred to the cities upon annexation.
- c. County will continue to work with rural communities and UGA's in development of community parks when community sponsorship and cost sharing for development and maintenance is a major component.



Canyon Lake Community Forest

# 5. Recommendations & Implementation

The period following adoption of the 2016 CPROS update was one of tremendous change for the WCPR beginning with the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in the spring of 2019 and through a period of significant management-level staff vacancies that was not resolved until the spring of 2023. Key vacancies included the Department’s Design and Development Supervisor (nineteen months), a Regional Parks Supervisor (one year), and the Department Director (three months). During this period, the Department experienced a significant increase in visitation and demands for park services stemming from changing recreation patterns as a result of COVID-19. And, as a result of staffing deficiencies, the Department fell significantly behind on capital project completion and planning efforts, including a timely update of the Department’s CPROS plan.

In response to Departmental staffing needs identified during this period, in 2023, two additional positions were created and filled. These included a Parks Project Manager intended to support capital project implementation and a Parks Supervisor to support regional park operations. Entering calendar year 2024, the Department has made progress to alleviate its backlog of capital construction and repair projects; has adjusted the schedule of planned capital project and park planning efforts identified in the Department’s Capital Improvement Plan; and has identified potential department capacity and organizational structure needs to address care of existing facilities while positioning to face emerging strategic priorities. Emerging priorities include improving community engagement, undertaking forest management planning and implementation, and advancing multi-modal regional trail projects.

With the support of the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Advisory Council, the WCPR is undertaking a

two-step process in the short- to mid-term to 1) update the Department’s lapsed CPROS plan to reflect shorter-term objectives and to renew eligibility for relevant RCO grant application and 2) to lay the ground work for a subsequent and more substantial CPROS plan renewal that includes a robust and thorough inventory and analysis that focuses on communitywide outreach efforts especially targeting underrepresented communities well in advance of the required 6-year renewal term.

## A. Projects Completed Since 2016 CPROS Plan Approval

Before discussion of present needs and recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the progress WCPR has made in completing priority projects that were identified in the last CPROS plan (January 2016). These efforts included planning initiatives and capital facility improvements. Below is a brief summary of projects completed during the previous planning period.

### Planning Initiatives

Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park Recreational Trail Plan (2016)

Birch Bay Beach Park Master Plan (2017)

### Capital Construction Projects

**Silver Lake Park** – Beginning in 2016, a major park improvement and rehabilitation effort has been underway. Department staff evaluated existing conditions and prioritized a suite of capital projects. To date the following projects have been completed:

- Park entrance road and day-use parking reconstruction (2018)
- Maple Creek Campground Renovation (2019)
- Red Mountain Campground Shower & Restroom Improvements (2021)
- Maple Creek Campground Shower & Restroom Facility (2023)

**Samish Park** – Playground Renovation (2016)

**Lighthouse Marine Park** – Playground Renovation (2019), Boardwalk Renovation (2018)

**Maple Creek Park** – Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement (2018)

**Lummi Island Overlook** – Deck and Shoreline Access Stair Improvements (2018)

**Nesset Farm** – Farmhouse Foundation and Structure Stabilization (2017)



Hovander Park



**Semiahmoo Park** – Restroom and Concession Building Improvements (2018)

**Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve** - Trail and Construction and Wayfinding Signage Improvement Project (2018)

**Lake Whatcom Park** – Trail and Construction and Wayfinding Signage Improvement Project (2019)

## B. Needs and Recommendations

The following recommendations and needs have been determined through a combination of interactive processes which included public participation in planning charrettes, community and web-based and customer surveys, staff and stakeholder input, public comment and input received during past planning efforts.

### System-wide or Regional Initiatives

The following are system-wide or regional level needs that have been identified through the plan's Inventory, and Demand & Need analysis:

1. Maintain and improve existing parks, facilities and trails
2. Provide more and better restrooms throughout the parks system
3. Provide better road, way finding and trail signage throughout parks system
4. Complete planning and trail development of reconveyance areas
5. Provide better trail connectivity (existing parks, trails and communities)
6. Provide activities, play fields and facilities for youth in East County
7. Continue efforts working with community partners to develop major multi-use trails
8. Leverage road ends and available key properties throughout Whatcom County to improve water access opportunities
9. Improve accessibility at existing parks and trails and provide less strenuous activities for older adults
10. Provide more opportunities for Mountain Biking within the parks system
11. Increase Public access to the shoreline (saltwater and freshwater)
12. Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)
13. Develop capacity to address forest management, particularly within the Lake Whatcom watershed
14. Develop policies to address emerging issues (e.g., electric bikes, non-sanctioned trail construction, forest fire response).

## Site-Specific Recommended Improvements

Appendix C contains an extensive list of site-specific needs categorized by park facility, which is subject to continued modification and refinement. The list of identified needs is substantial. Prioritization is required and should focus on protection of existing facilities.

### Capital Improvement Program

Figure 5.1 presents the approved 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Parks, Trails, and Activity Centers (adopted Jun 20, 2023). This approved CIP includes some projects that were not completed as scheduled in 2022 and have therefore moved forward into 2023/2024. These include the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve parking improvements, Lighthouse Marine Parks siding and roofing repairs as well as HVAC replacement and upgrade at the WCPR headquarters. It is also expected that the Silver Lake Lodge roof replacement will necessarily move forward to be completed in 2024.

The CIP includes the following strategic park improvement projects through 2028:

- Complete HVAC replacement and upgrade, and remediation of Plantation Rifle Range;
- Continuation of improvements to Silver Lake Park including, but not limited to, the next phase of restroom/shower improvements at Cedar Campground, Group Camp, and improvements to the cabins and day lodge facilities;
- Repairs to the Lookout Mountain road system resulting from past storm damage;
- Replacement and upgrade of the HVAC system at the Bellingham Senior Center, in coordination with facility visioning being spearheaded by the Council on Aging;
- Improvements associated with South Fork Park (including Nessel Farm) pending tribal consultation and discussions with other key stakeholders, including DNR and the Nessel Foundation;
- Implementation of trail and trailhead improvements outlined in the 2016 Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park Recreational Trail Plan;
- Renovation of the Van Zandt Community Hall;
- Implementation of phase I of Birch Bay Beach Park development.

The CIP includes a number of other strategic planning projects. These include an allocation for the first phase of forest management planning for County-owned properties

Adopted June 20, 2023

Six-Year CIP

Table 4. Park, Trail, and Activity Center Projects

Project # and Name	Funding							Totals
	Source	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
1 Plantation Range Lead Reclamation & Stormwater	1, 7	700,000	655,500					1,355,500
2 Silver Lake Shower & Restroom Buildings	1	1,850,000	200,000	1,000,000	1,150,000			4,200,000
3 Silver Lake Park - Lodge Roof Replacement	1	231,000						231,000
4 Hovander Barn Paintworks	1	147,400						147,400
5 Lookout Mountain - Road System Storm Damage Repairs	1, 2, 3, 4	100,016	560,000					660,016
6 Silver Lake Residence Demolition	1	61,800						61,800
7 Hovander Residence Demolition	1	55,500						55,500
8 Bellingham Senior Center HVAC Replace & Upgrade	1, 5	94,000	772,000					866,000
9 Aiston Preserve Access Improvements	1		50,000					50,000
10 Lookout Mtn Forest Preserve Parking Improvements	1		124,100					124,100
11 Bay Horizon Hostel Demolition	1		493,000					493,000
12 Silver Lake Cabin & Lodge Renovations	1		121,242	62,458				183,700
13 Hovander Picnic Shelters	1			66,700	374,050			440,750
14 Parks Headquarters Parking & Pedestrian Improvements	1		77,300	295,100				372,400
15 Hovander - Flood Repair & Mitigation Improvements	1			80,000	182,000			262,000
16 Tennant Lk Interpretive Ctr Remodel & Flood Mitigation	1, 2			67,000	437,500			504,500
17 South Fork Park Bridges & Connector Trail	1			132,500	149,200	306,800	273,800	862,300
18 Lily Point Marine Park Parking Improvements	1			254,900				254,900
19 Lake Whatcom Trail Development	1			392,150	264,500	241,500	189,750	1,087,900
20 Lake Whatcom Park Trailhead	1			500,000	3,339,000			3,839,000
21 Nessel Farm Improvements	5			152,500	845,000			997,500
22 Hovander Park Access Improvements	1			250,000	225,000	1,925,000		2,400,000
23 Hertz Trail Capital Maintenance	1				353,500			353,500
24 Ferndale Senior Center HVAC Replace & Upgrade	1				335,000			335,000
25 Maple Falls Park Trailhead	1					200,000	825,000	1,025,000
26 Samish Park Parking/Vehicular Circulation Improvements	1					75,000	250,000	325,000
27 South Fork Park Loop Trail Improvements	1						276,600	276,600
28 Birch Bay Beach Park Development	1, 3, 5, 6, 7			260,000	5,105,000			5,365,000
29 Parks Construction Supervisor	1	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	300,000
30 Bellingham Senior Center - Sewer Line Replacement	1	50,000						50,000
31 Semiahmoo Park Sewage Pump Replacement	1	50,000						50,000
32 Hovander Rental Property Conversion to Maintenance Shop	1	65,000	65,000					130,000
33 Forest Management Plan	3	25,000	75,000					100,000
34 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, Open Space Plan Update	1		50,000	50,000				100,000
35 Van Zandt Community Hall Renovation	1, 7		100,000	452,000				552,000
36 Plantation Indoor Range Targeting System Replacement	7	100,000	360,000					460,000
37 Canyon Lake Community Forest Access-related Improvements	1	100,000	50,000					150,000
38 Miscellaneous Parks Capital Improvements	1	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	600,000
39 Sumas Senior Center - Roof Replacement	1	25,000						25,000
40 Stimpson Family Nature Reserve Parking Lot Improvements	1	92,086						92,086
41 Lighthouse Marine Park Siding and Roofing	1	168,350						168,350
42 Hovander Park Master Plan	1		275,000					275,000
43 Parks Admin Office HVAC Replacement & Upgrade	1	93,623						93,623
<b>Parks Totals</b>		<b>4,158,775</b>	<b>4,178,142</b>	<b>4,165,308</b>	<b>12,909,750</b>	<b>2,898,300</b>	<b>1,965,150</b>	<b>30,275,425</b>

Funding Sources:

1. Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
2. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
3. Parks Special Revenue Fund
4. Conservation Futures Funds
5. Donations
6. Lodging Tax (Hotel-Motel Tax)
7. Grants

Figure 5.1: Capital Improvement Program - Park, Trail and Activity Center

in the Lake Whatcom watershed (e.g., Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park). This work is scheduled to commence in 2024. The CIP also includes funding for development of a master plan for Hovander Park and Tennant Lake. This effort is a strategic priority for the WCPR given the current number of projects identified at Hovander Park and the need to ensure they are considered in conjunction with other Park and community goals that may be served by improvements to Hovander and Tennant Lake facilities. The CIP also includes as a priority reestablishing public access to Canyon Lake Community Forest following a prolonged period where public access has been unavailable. Finally, as referenced in the introduction to this Chapter, the CIP includes preparation of a more robust CPROS update for the Department in the 2024-2025 timeframe.

### Community-focused Park Planning

Moving forward, WCPR will seek to improve its focus on park planning that incorporates more robust and intentional public outreach and stakeholder engagement. Such an approach, while requiring more effort, promises to result in better decision making and ultimately better use of public resources. The WCCP Six-year CIP includes projects located within communities such as Birch Bay, Point Roberts, east county (Kendall, Maple Falls, Glacier), Acme Valley, Lake Whatcom, Ferndale, and Bellingham. Each of these communities has unique needs and concerns as well as unique stakeholders. Planning undertaken by WCPR should support broader community goals related to protection of cultural and natural resources, tourism and economic development, health and wellness, and equity and should also be informed by the needs of these specific communities. WCPR planning should involve local community stakeholders and be complementary and supportive of other planning efforts otherwise impacting these communities.

A priority for WCPR during the next six years is to advance a number of planning efforts associated with Regional Park assets. These efforts should include robust stakeholder and public engagement and include early engagement with Tribal representatives. With staff capacity limitations, certain planning efforts such as the future CPROS update, Hovander Park Master Plan, Plantation Rifle Range redevelopment, Lake Whatcom watershed Forest Management Plan, Lake Whatcom Lighthouse Marine Park, Dittrich Park/Samish Park, and Lake Whatcom Trailhead development are envisioned to be consultant supported. Other planning efforts, which are more conceptual in nature, may be facilitated solely by WCPR planning staff, depending upon availability and capacity. These include planning associated with regional trail development (e.g., Nooksack Loop (potential rail-trail), Bay to Baker connections in east county, and South Fork Park/Nesset Farm trail connections).

### Major Planning Initiatives

The following is a list of the major planning initiatives for WCPR over the short- to mid-term (with estimated start date, if available):

1. Hovander Homestead Park Master Plan- (2024)
2. Lake Whatcom Watershed Forest Management Plan (2024)
3. Comprehensive Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan (2025)
4. Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 9 Recreation) 2025
5. Lake Whatcom Park Trailhead Improvement Final Design (2025)
6. Birch Bay Beach Park Phase I Final Design (2025)
7. Dittrich Park/Samish Park Master Plan (TBD)
8. South Fork Park/Nesset Farm trail connections (TBD)
9. East County Bay to Baker Trail Connections (TBD)

### Major Acquisitions Identified

In addition to the planning initiatives identified above, the following are priority acquisitions that WCPR should pursue should opportunities and resources be available.

1. Acquire remaining 14 acres at South end of Hertz Trail to link with Blue Canyon Road
2. Provide more public access to fresh and saltwater, Nooksack River and area beaches
3. Acquire critical habitats, watersheds and historical sites of special concern to the County
4. Acquire a small boat launch access on Lummi Island
5. Acquire a regional park in the north central area of the County
6. Acquire Plantation Rifle Range property and buffer area
7. Acquire public trail easements/trailheads for Bay to Baker, Nooksack, Nooksack Loop and Coast Millennium Trails, Bellingham to Baker.
8. Acquire easements for key connectors on existing trail systems
9. Acquire public access at Cherry Point
10. Acquire DNR commercial property adjoining Stimpson Family Nature Reserve
11. Acquire DNR property or public easement on Nooksack River for a designated raft take out area- Maple Falls
12. Work with WLT to acquire and develop Governor's Point

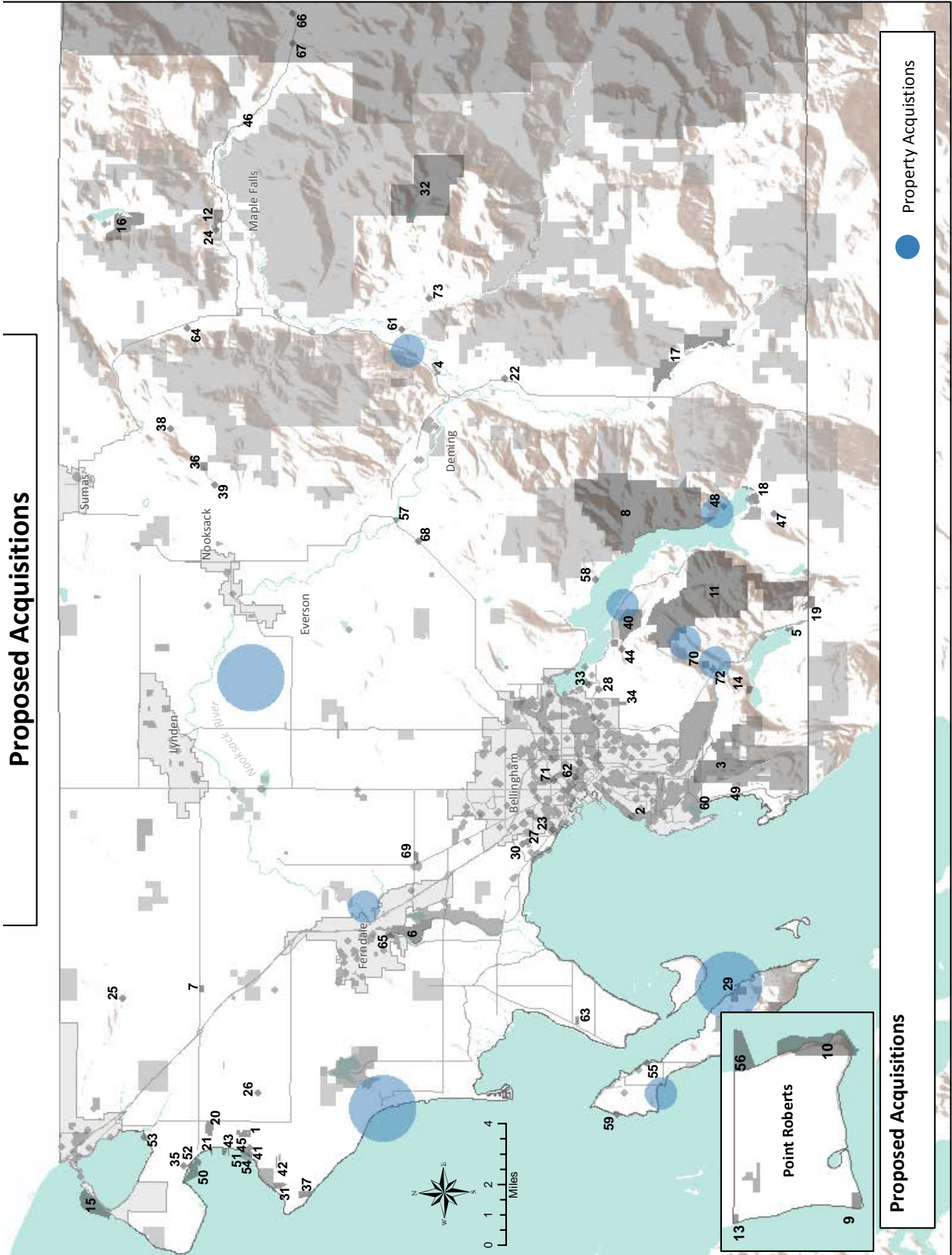


Figure 5.2: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Proposed Acquisition Map

### C. Funding Sources

Successful implementation of this plan will require community buy in, partnerships, and dedicated funding resources. WCPR does currently have some dedicated funding sources that are leveraged to purchase lands, make capital improvements, and used as matching dollars for some forms of grant funding. These funding sources include:

- REET I: Used for funding improvements projects in parks and non-park facilities such as senior activity centers and Plantation Rifle Range.
- REET II: Used for capital improvement projects in the parks.
- Conservation Futures Fund: Used for acquisition of parks and natural areas.
- Parks Special Revenue: Used for restricted and committed revenues used to fund maintenance , operation, and parks improvements;
- Nessel Foundation: Private foundation holding funds for the restoration, improvement and operation of the Nessel Farm located at South Fork Park.
- Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation: Private foundation holding funds from donations used for various park improvements and programs.

Grant funding sources include:

- State: Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Recreation and Conservation Office
- Federal (may be administered through state agencies or the Whatcom Council of Governments): Coastal Management, Federal Highway Administration (Transportation Alternatives), National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Other funding sources that may be considered to implement recommendations in this plan are: 1) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster relief reimbursement funds and 2) the Lodging and Hotel Tax which is a special assessment allowed in RCW 67.28.1816 that allows imposing a tax on overnight stays within the established Whatcom County Tourism Promotion Area (TPA).

Maintenance and operations are achieved through a variety of sources and strategies which include general funds, user fees, cooperative agreements, volunteers, private/public partnerships and licenses. Additionally, a portion of the Conservation Futures Fund is used to maintain eligible properties that are eligible (e.g., those properties that were purchased using Conservation Funds).



Roeder Home

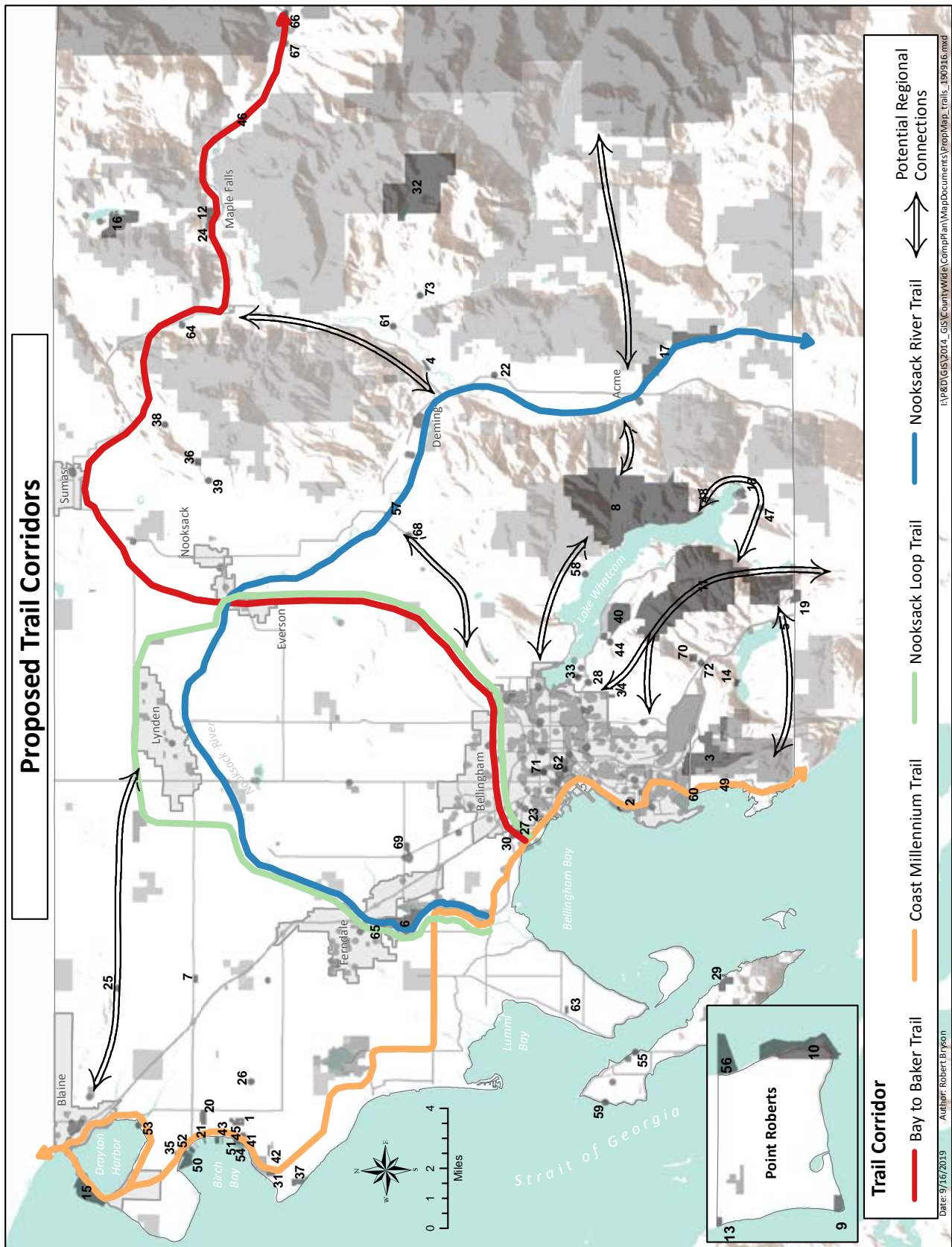


Figure 5.3: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Proposed Trail Corridor Route Map

## D. Strategic Partnerships

In addition to financial resources, strategic partnerships can and should be leveraged to the maximum extent possible to accomplish the priorities and recommendations contained in this CPROS. Fortunately, WCPR has established healthy working relationships with multiple partner agencies, community service organizations, and recreational groups. These groups can play a big part in improving recreational service delivery to our community by:

Assisting in community outreach efforts, to reach those communities that face significant barriers to WCPR facilities.

Provide volunteer assistance in maintaining, improving and expanding recreational facilities.

Generate community support for WCPR improvement initiatives

Partner in expanding recreational programming and educational opportunities in the community.



Chuckanut Mountain Park

## 6. Plan Adoption

This Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was adopted by the Whatcom County Council on January 23, 2024 by Resolution 2024-xxx. Copies of the resolution are available at the Council Office's website: <https://whatcom.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>  
Or by contacting Whatcom County Parks & Recreation at

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation  
3373 Mt Baker Hwy  
Bellingham, WA 98226  
Phone: 360.778.5850  
Email: [parks@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:parks@co.whatcom.wa.us)



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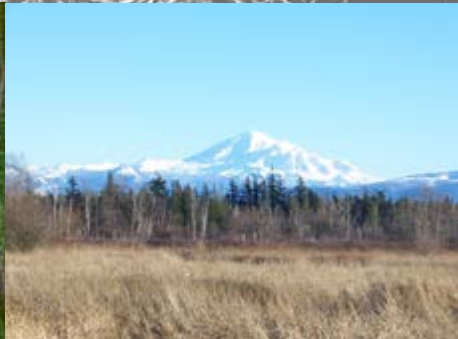
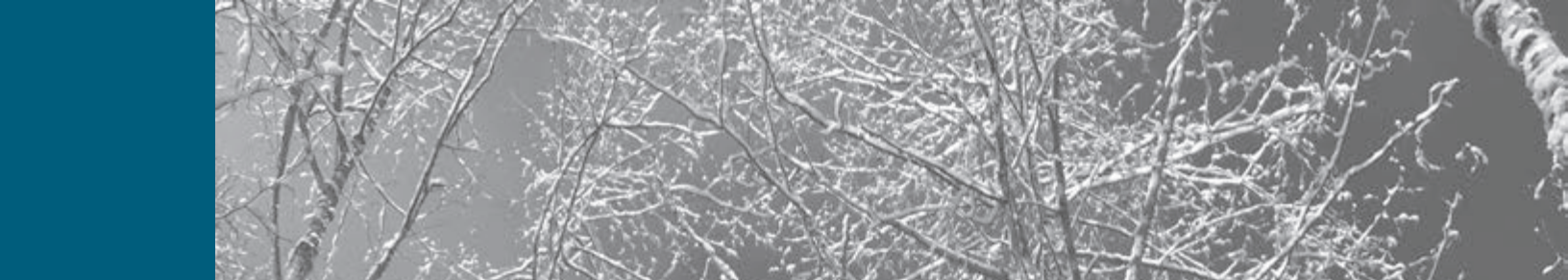
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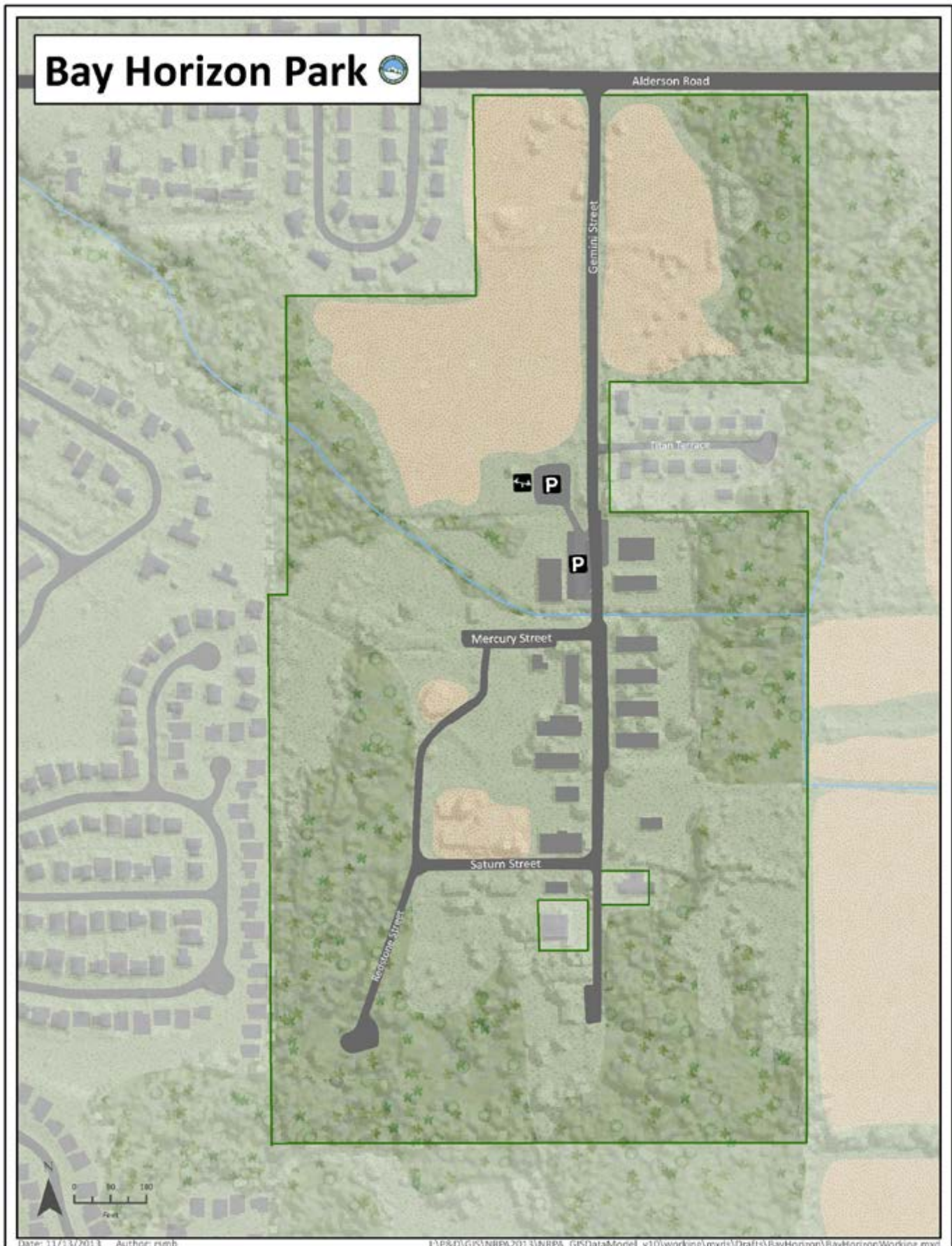
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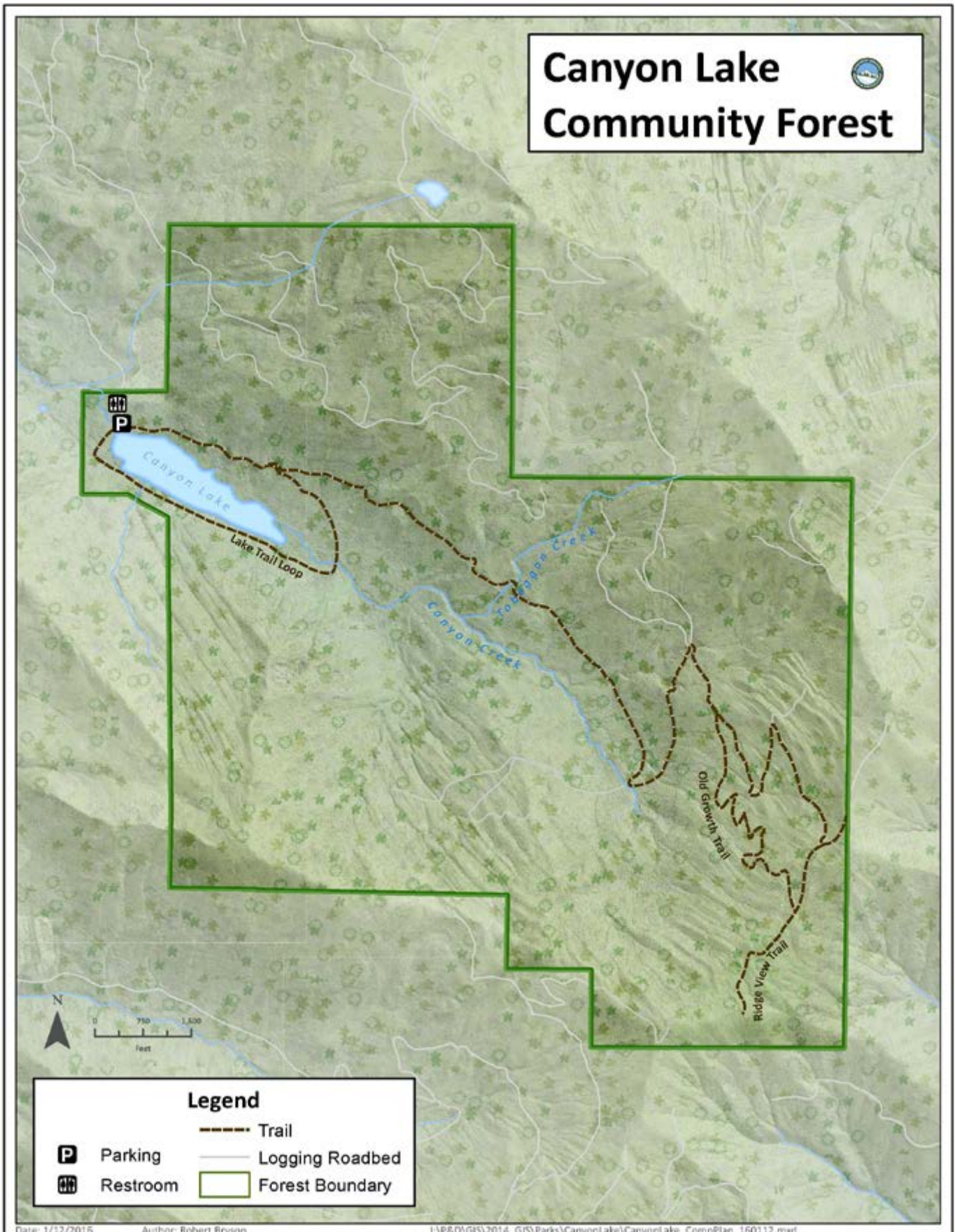
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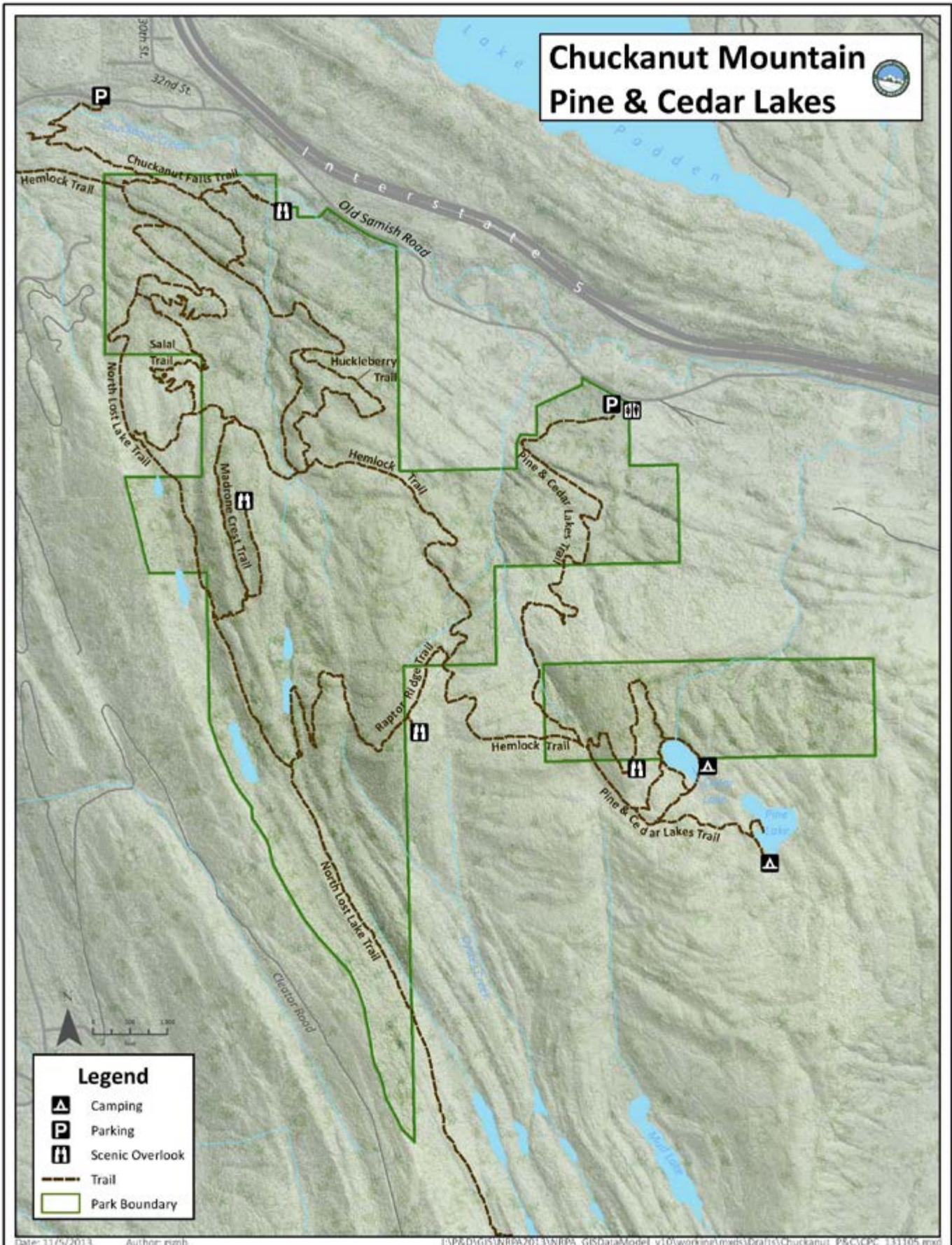
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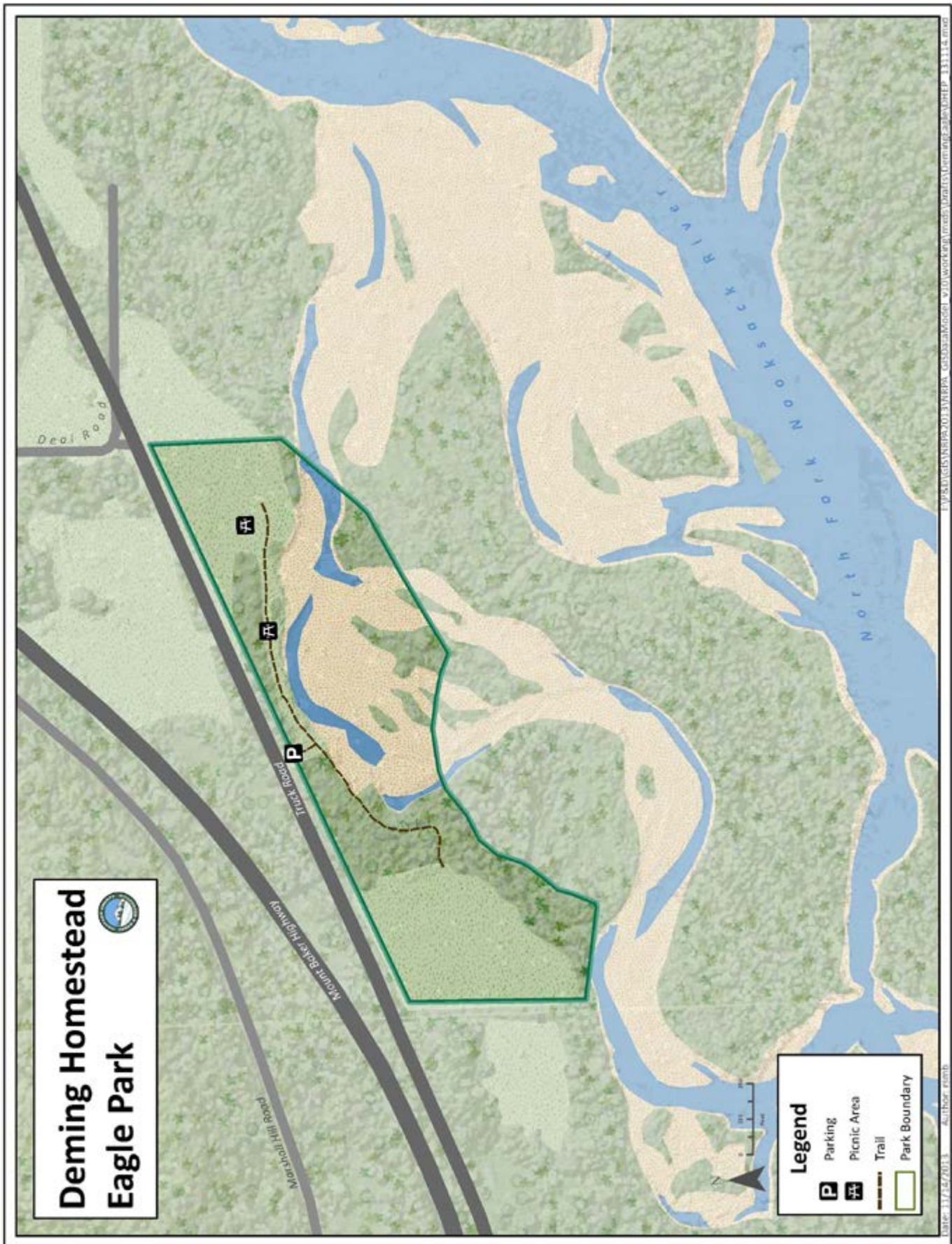


## ***Appendix A: Park Maps***



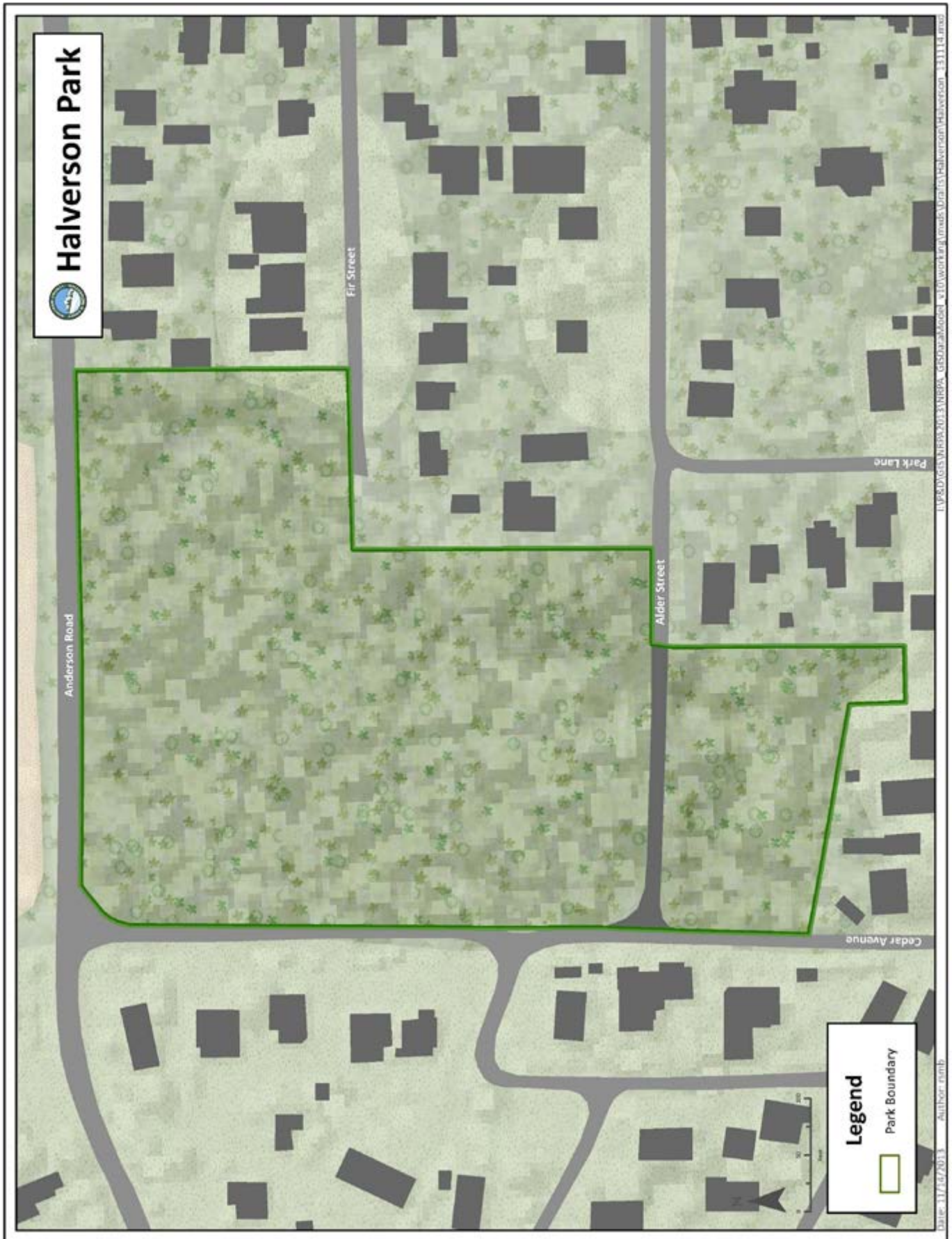


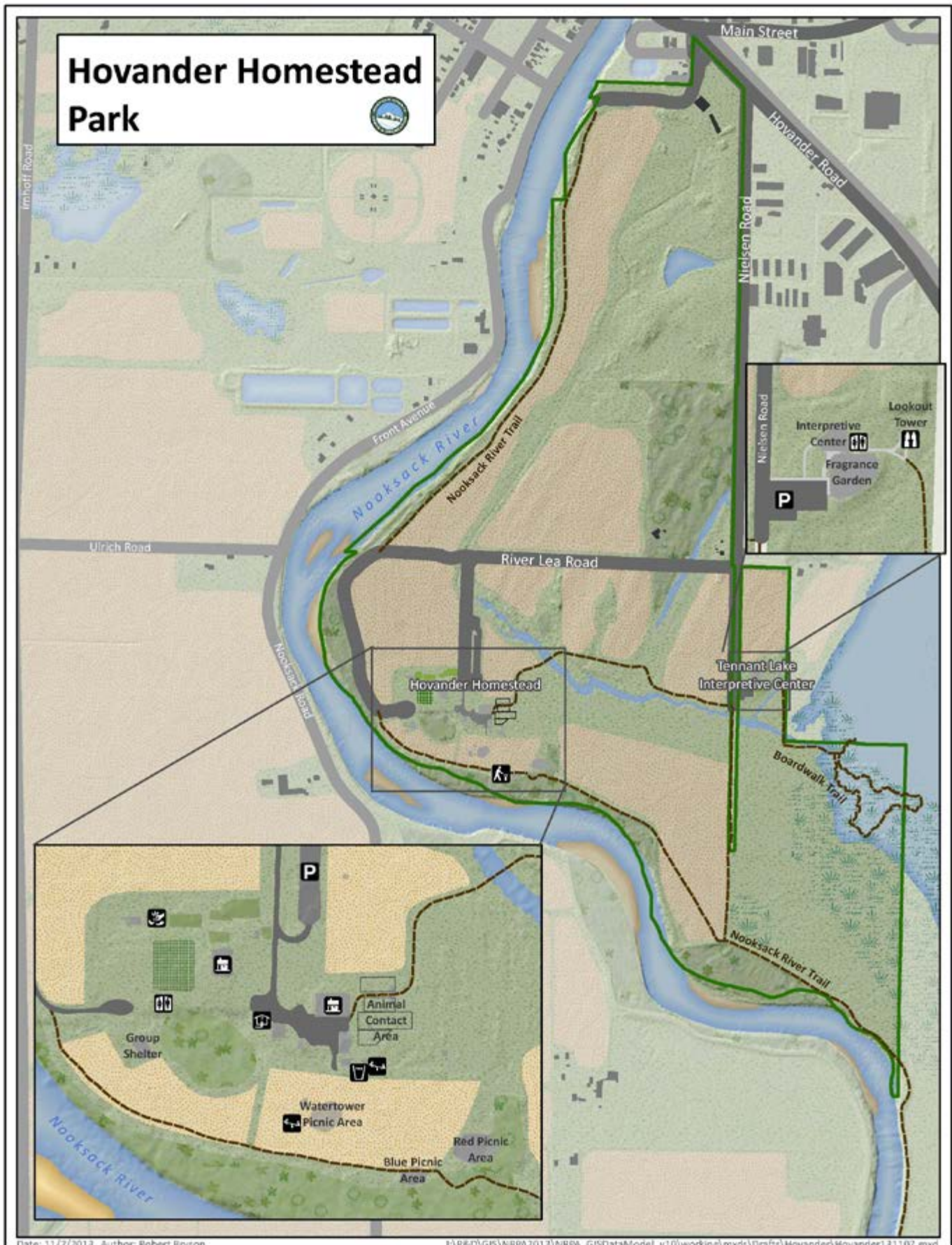








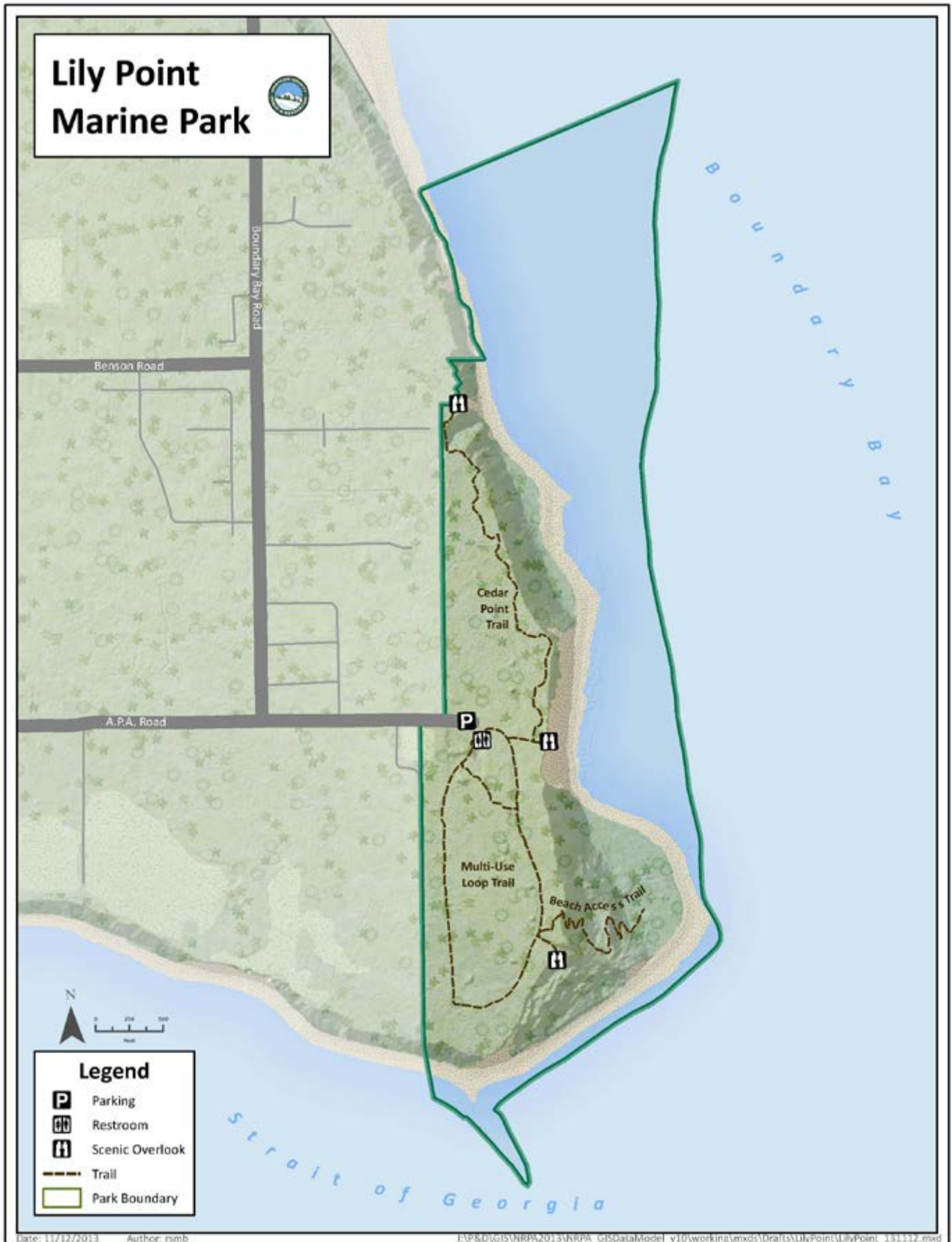


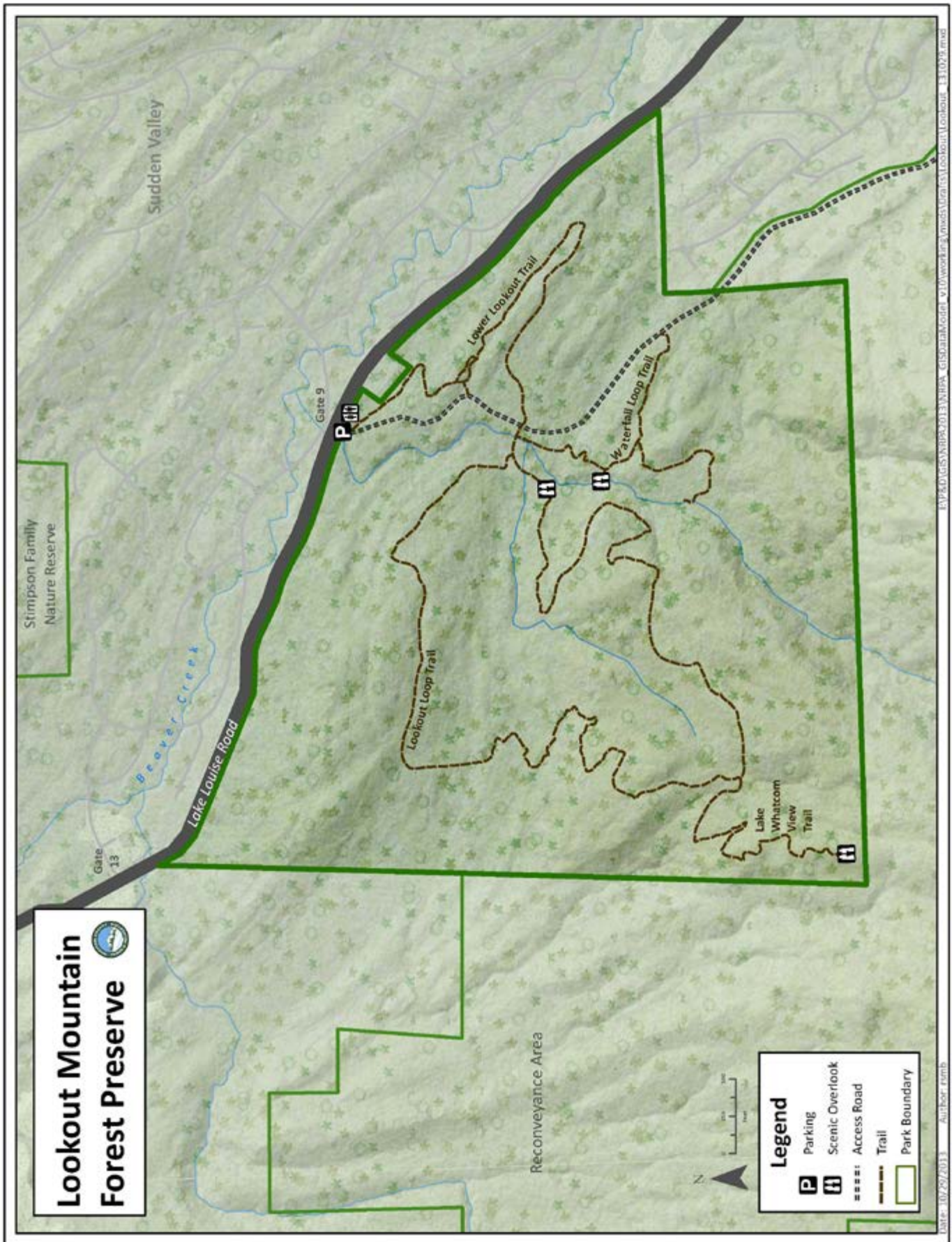














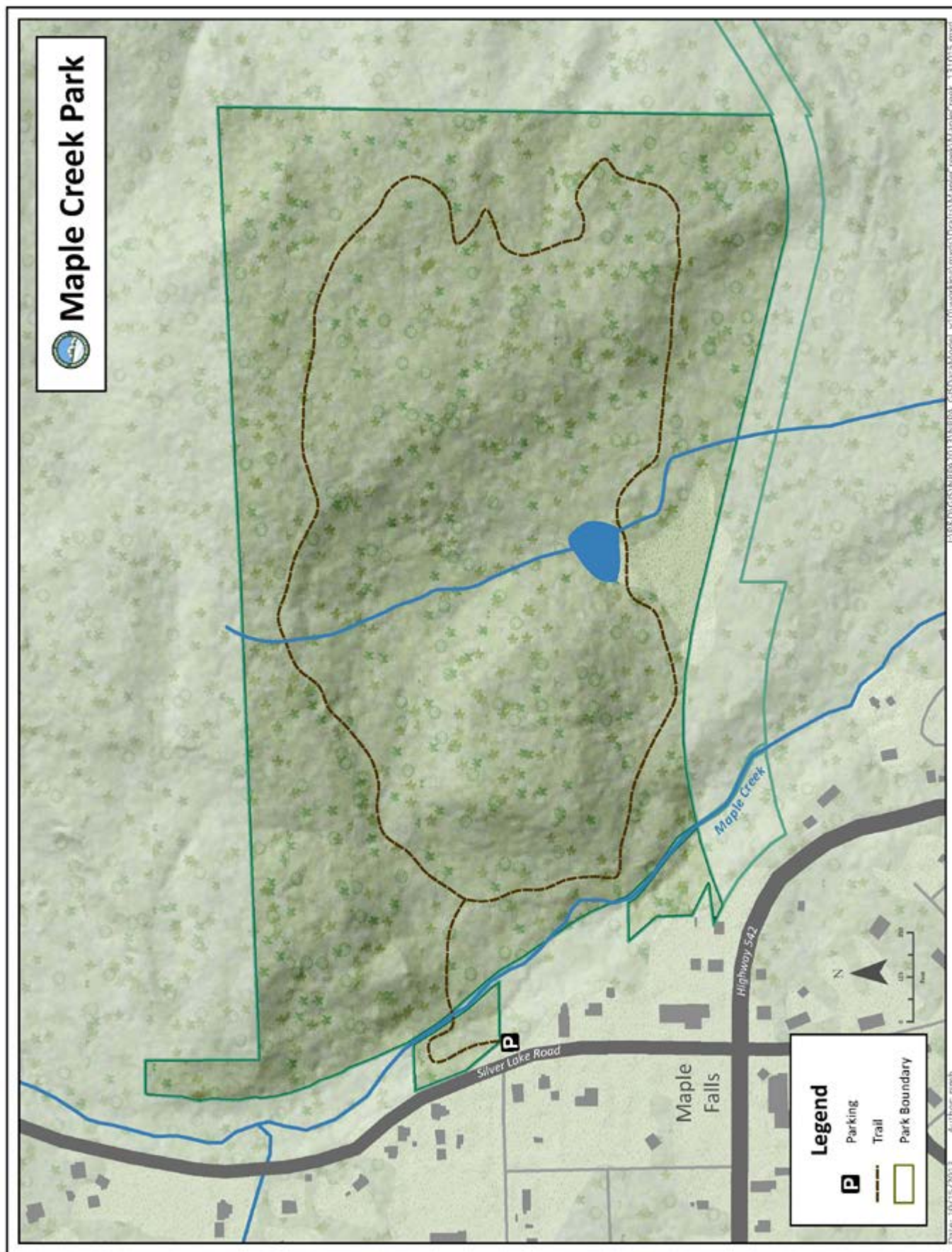
# Lookout Mountain Reconveyance West Area

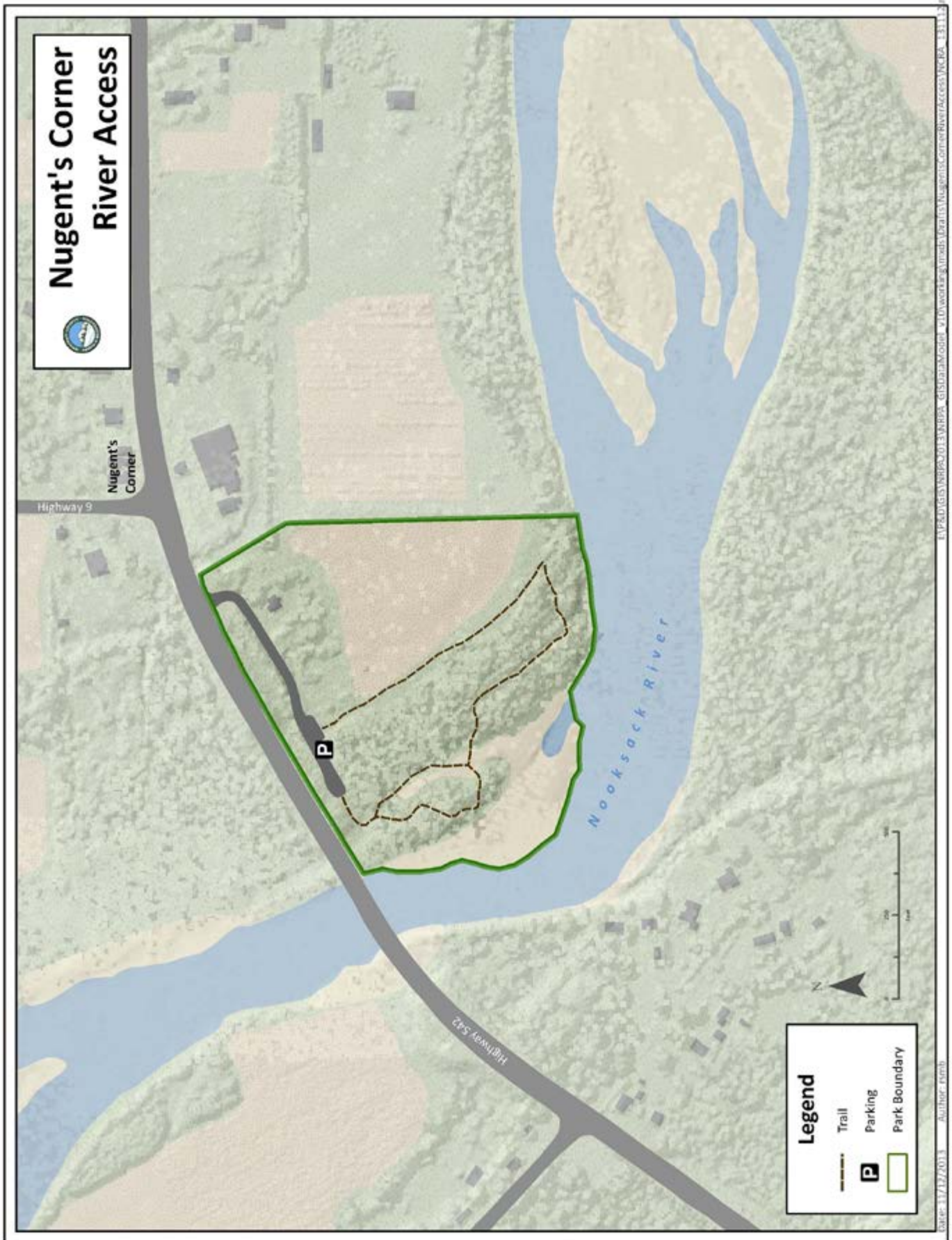


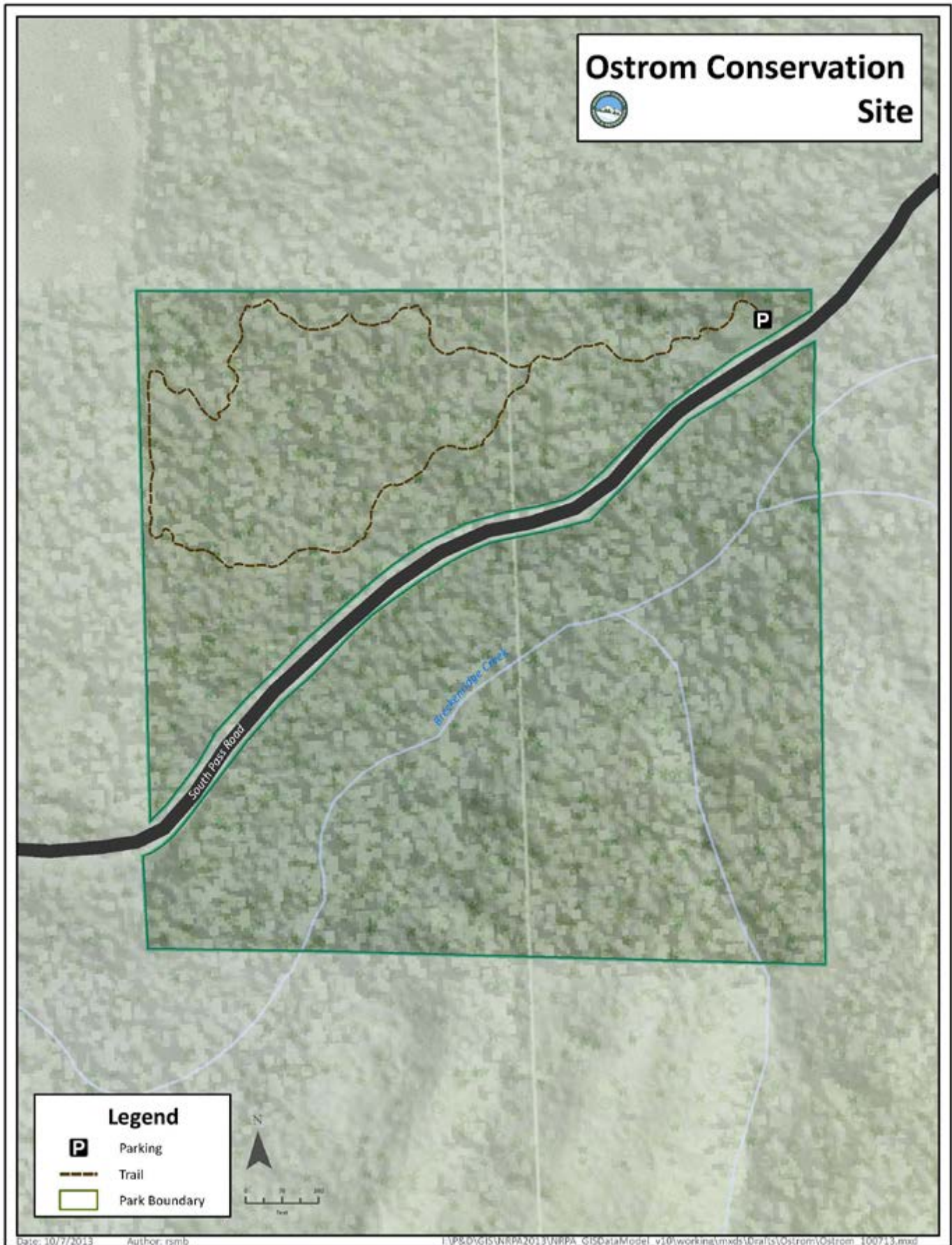
# Lake Whatcom Park Reconveyance East Area

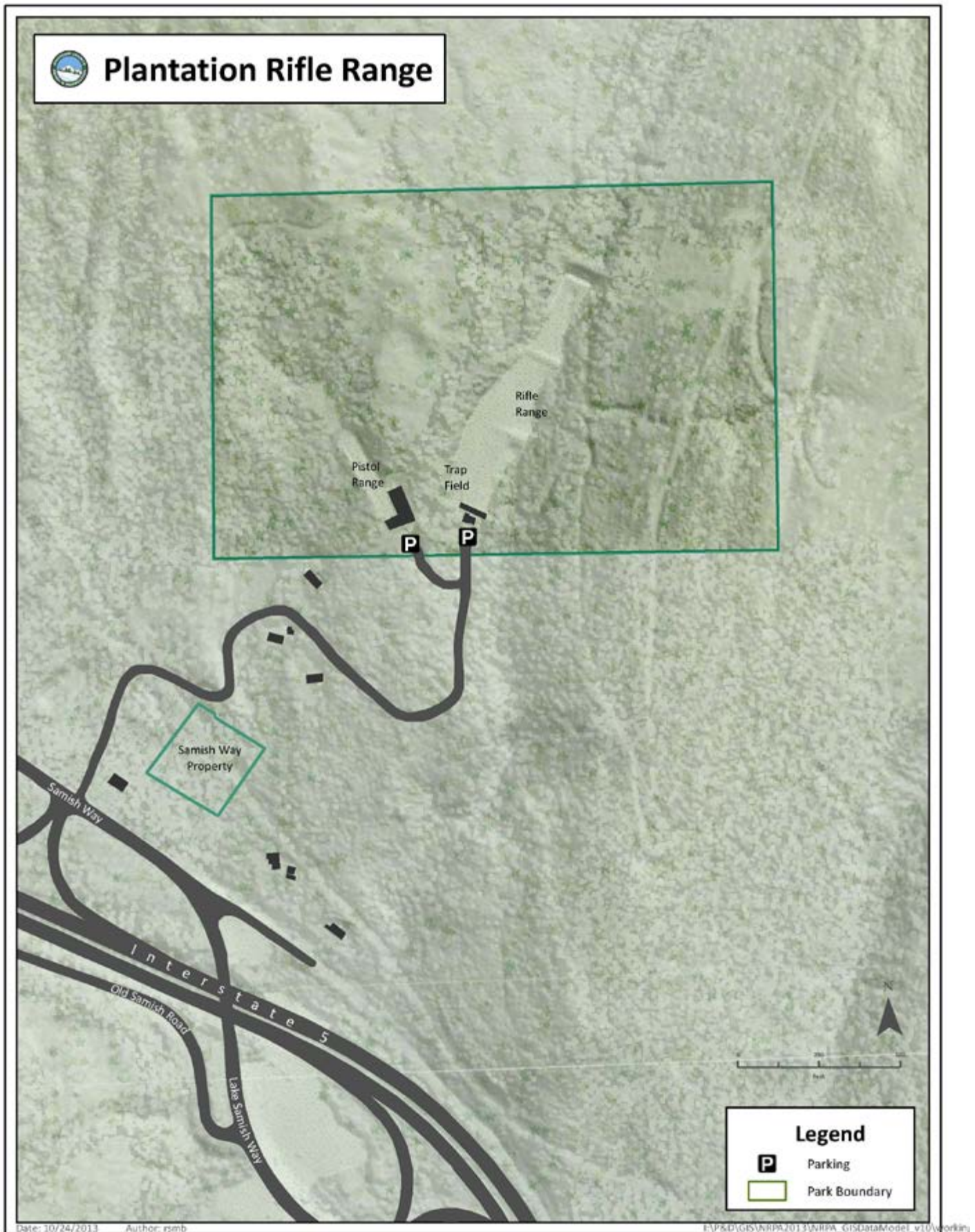


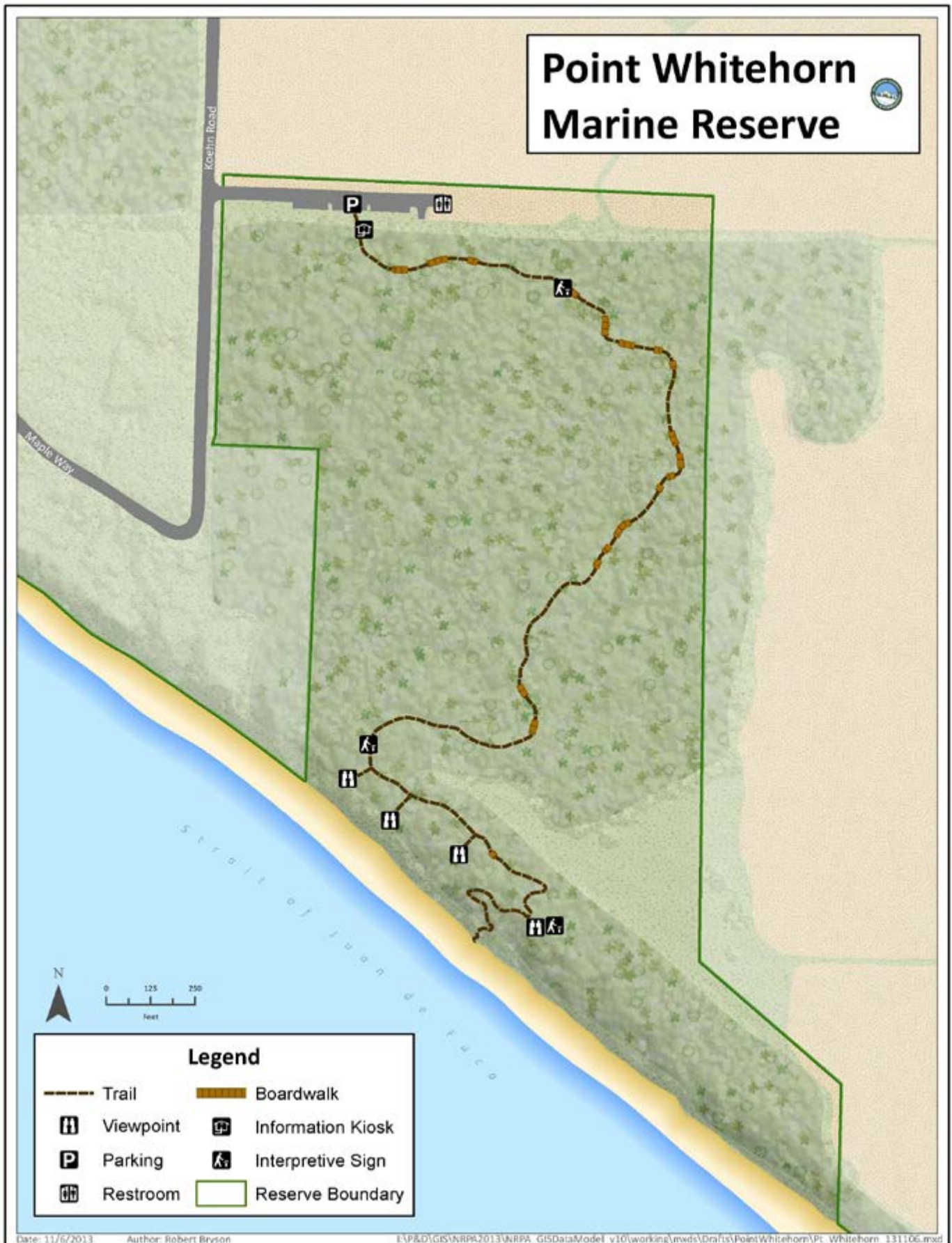




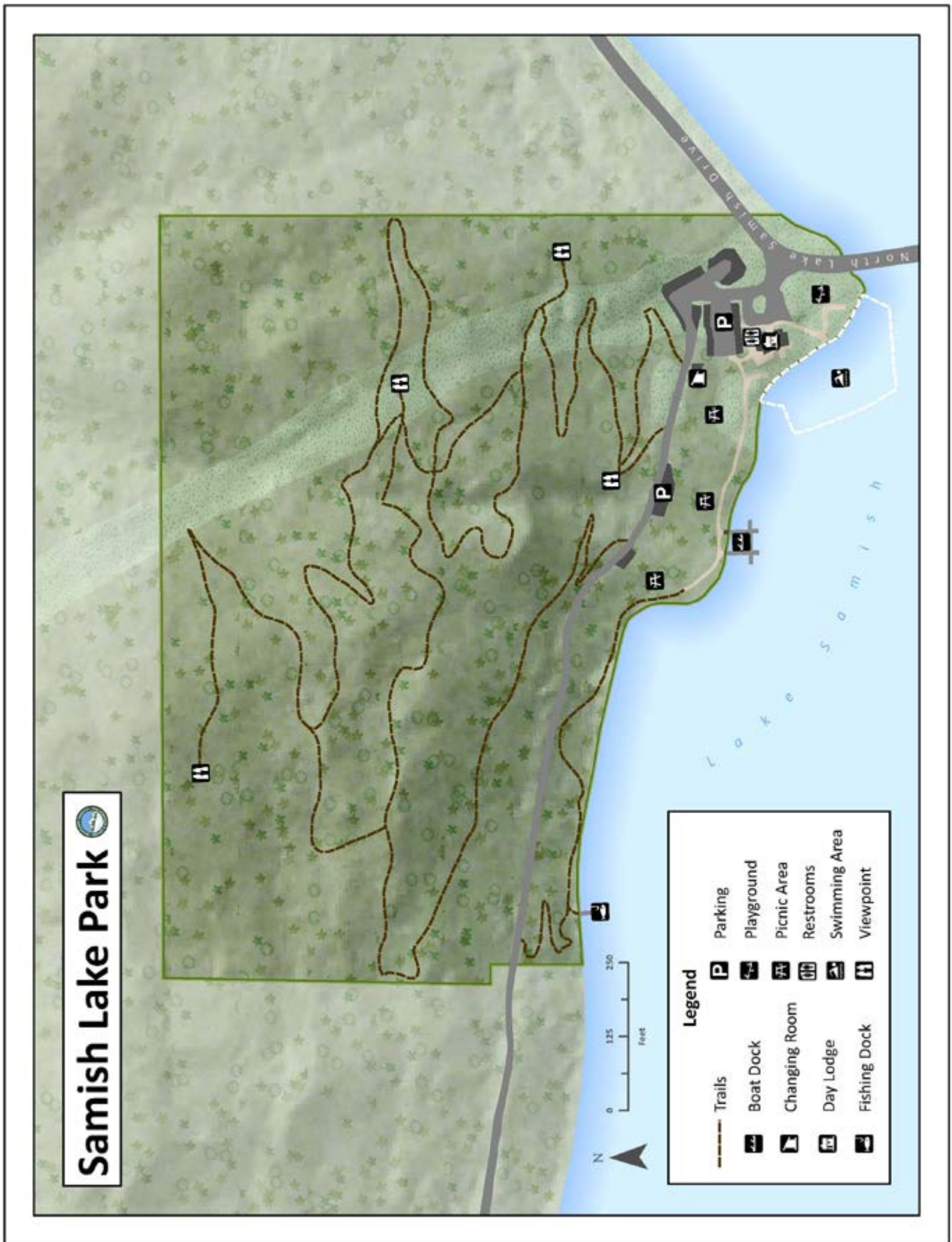


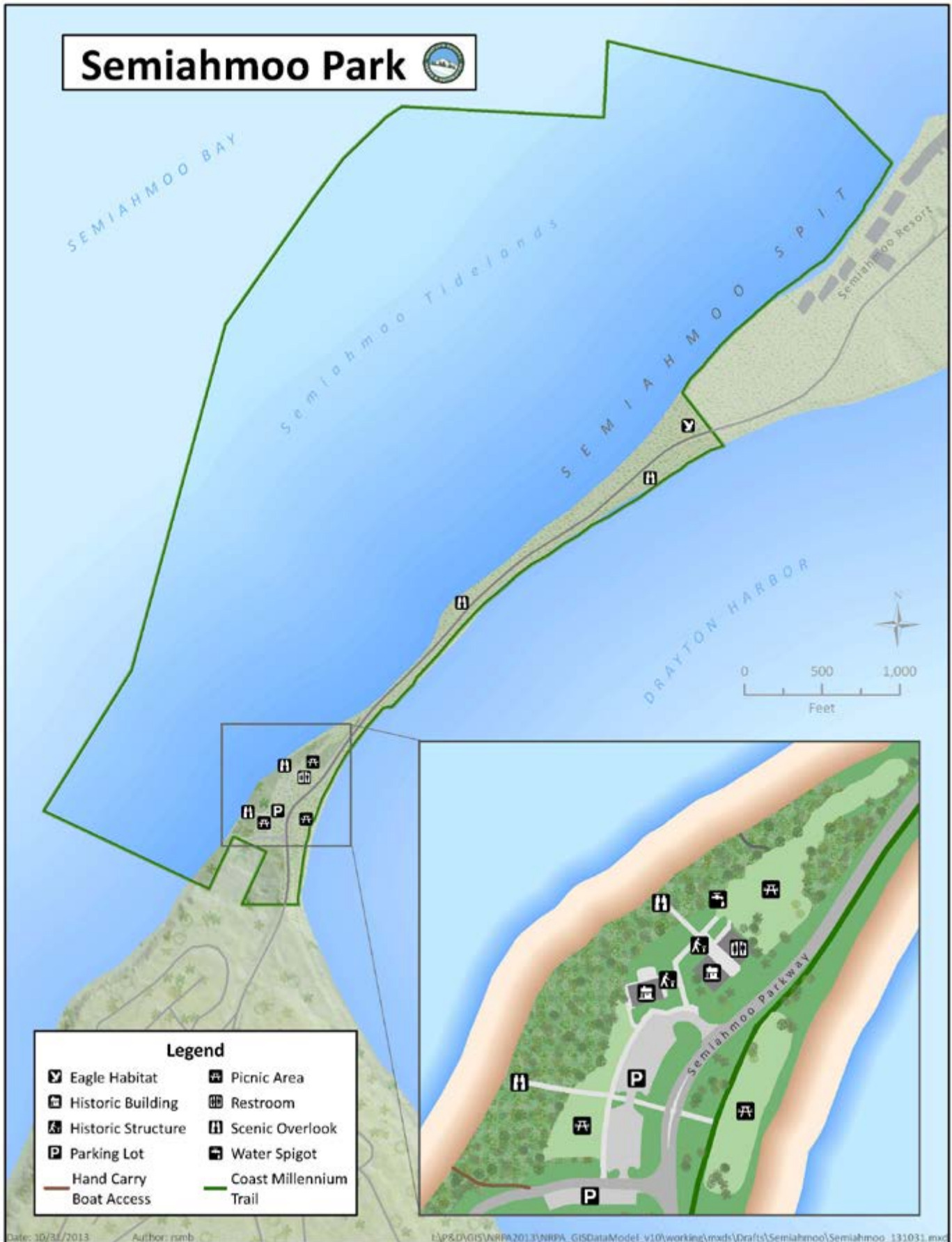


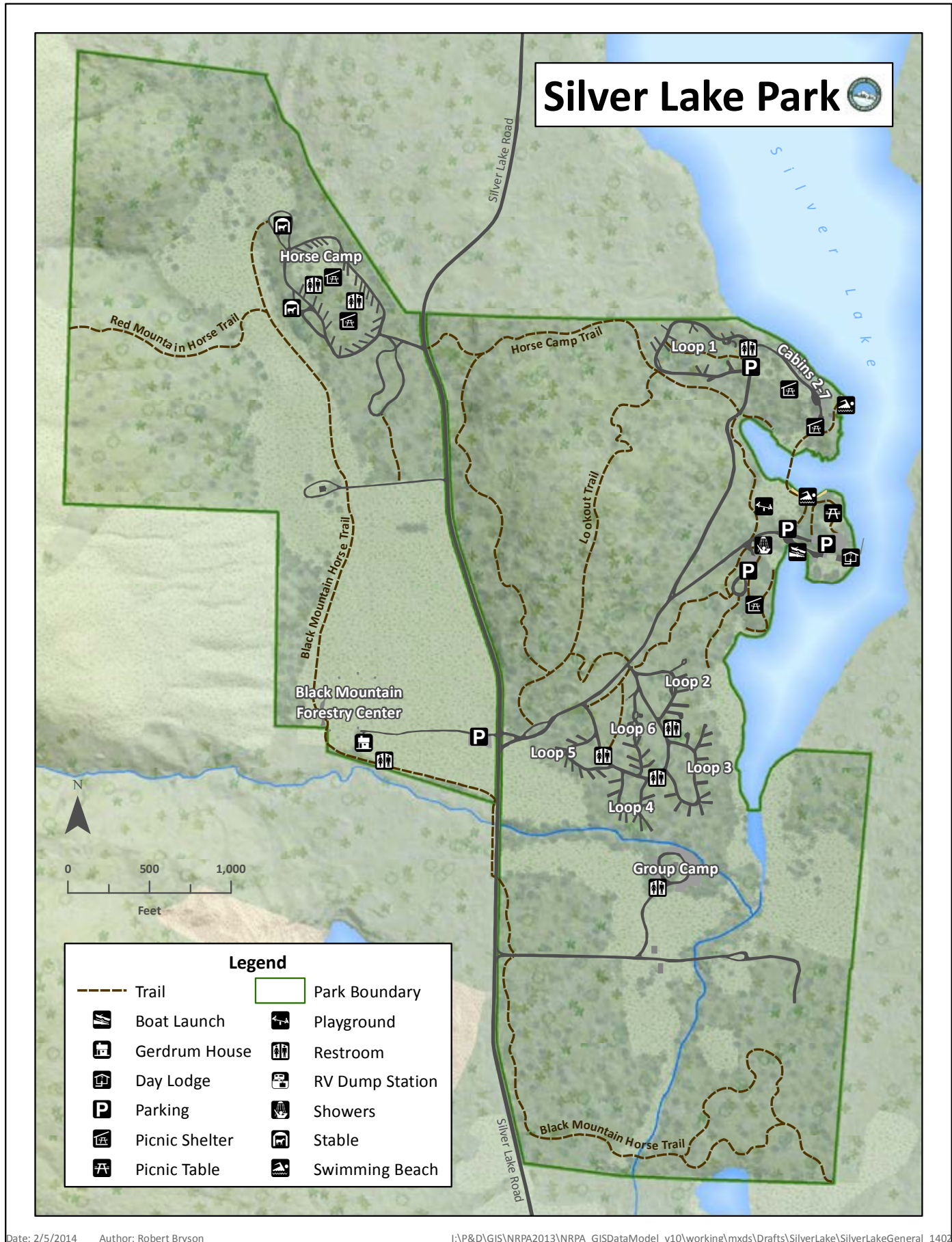








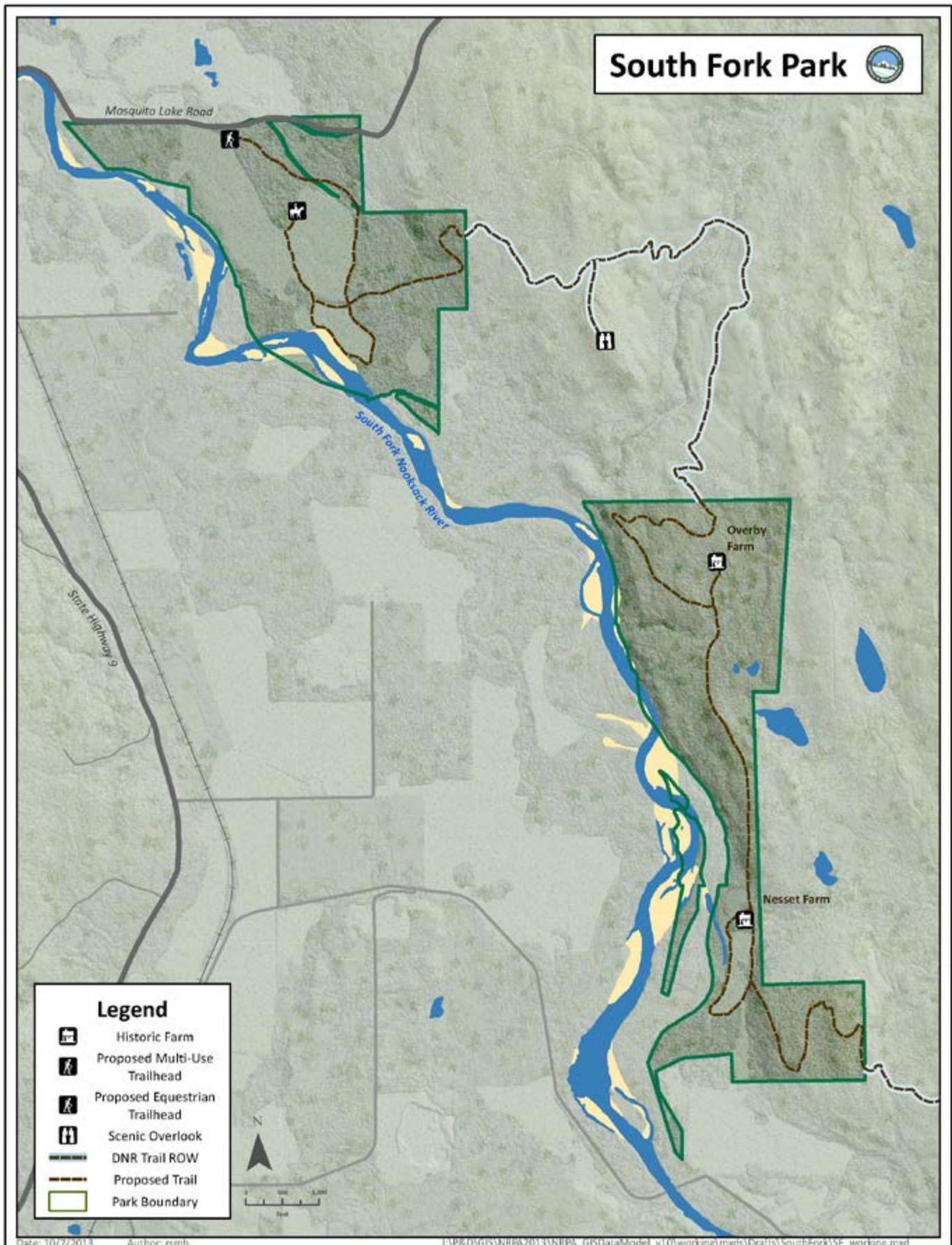


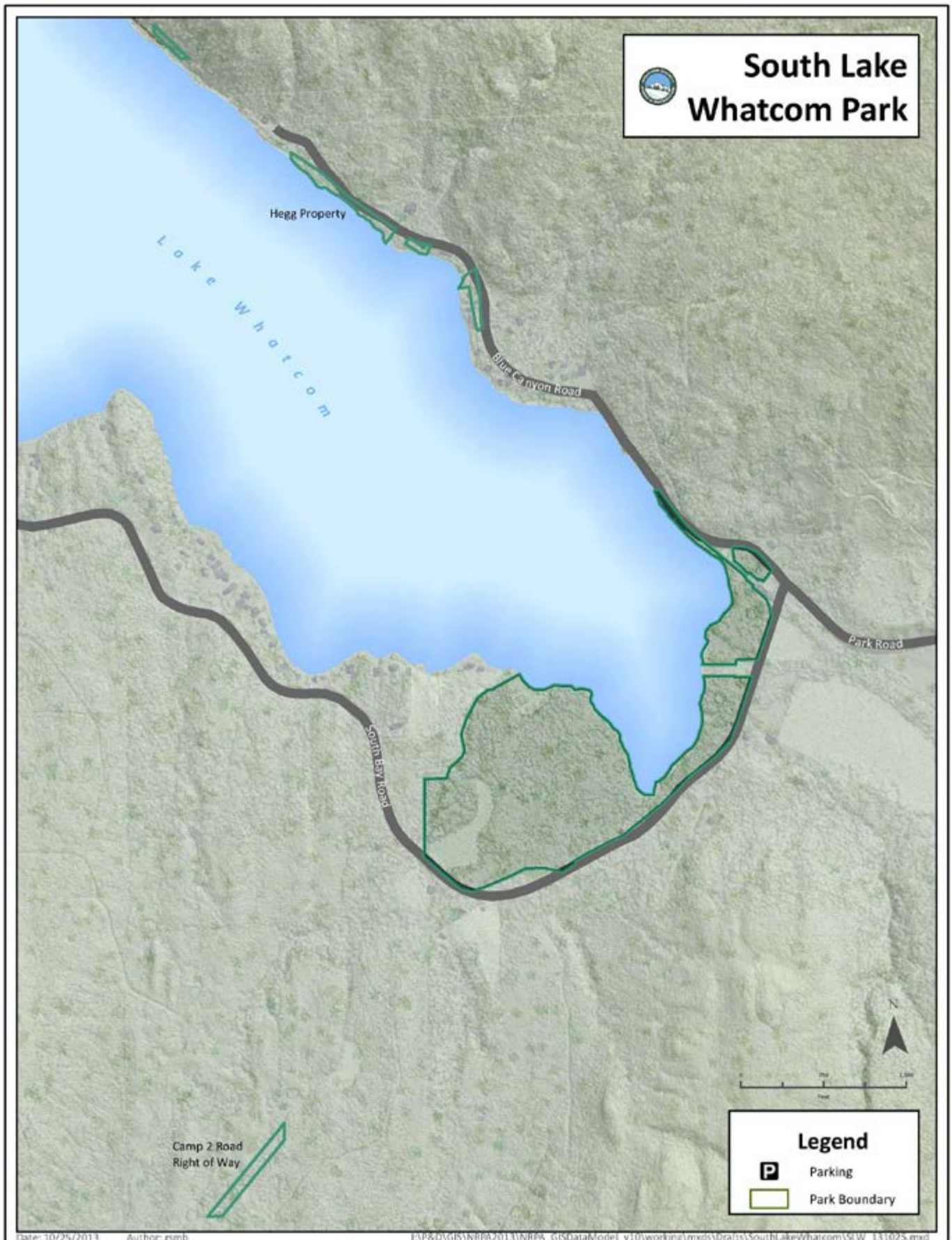


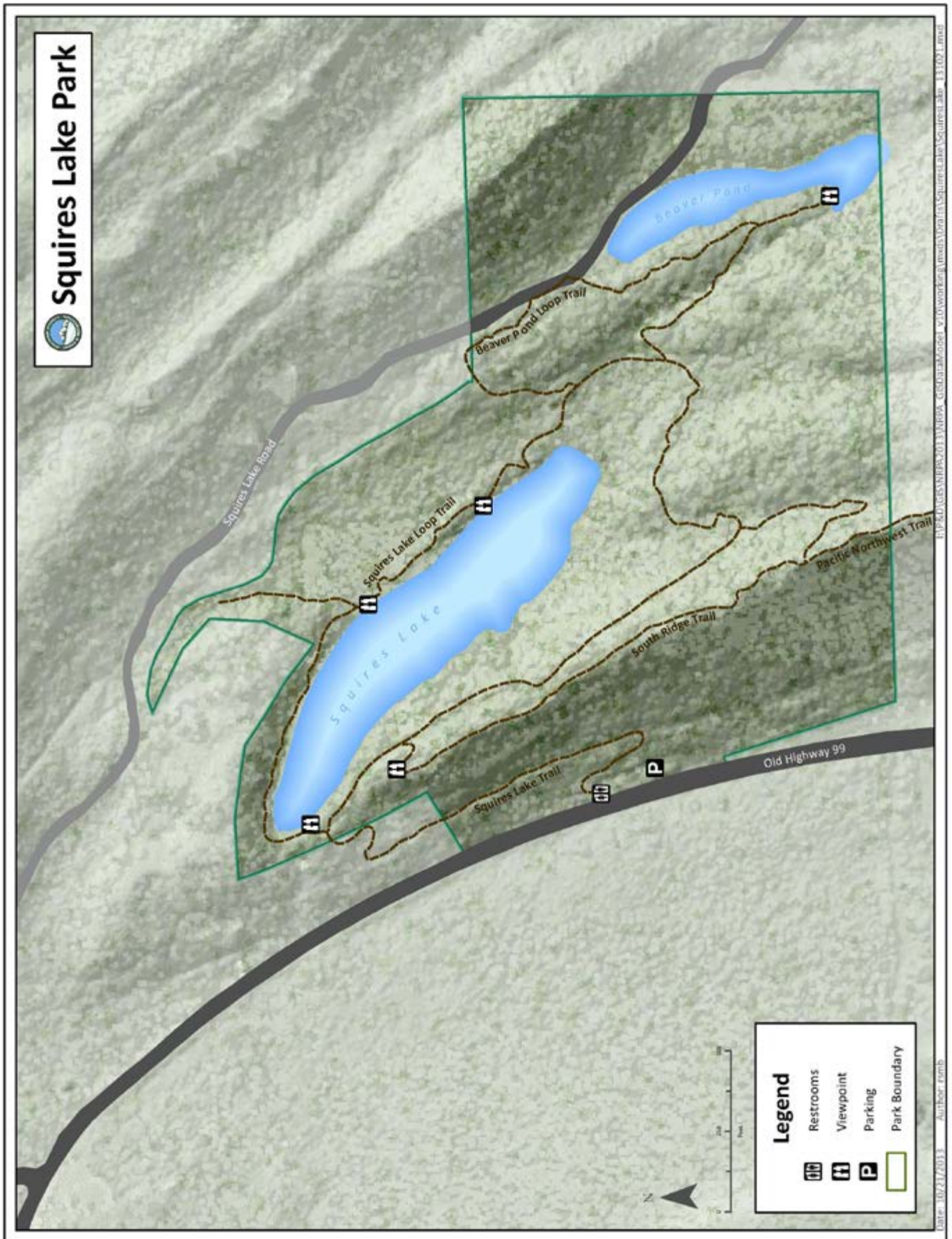
Date: 2/5/2014 Author: Robert Bryson

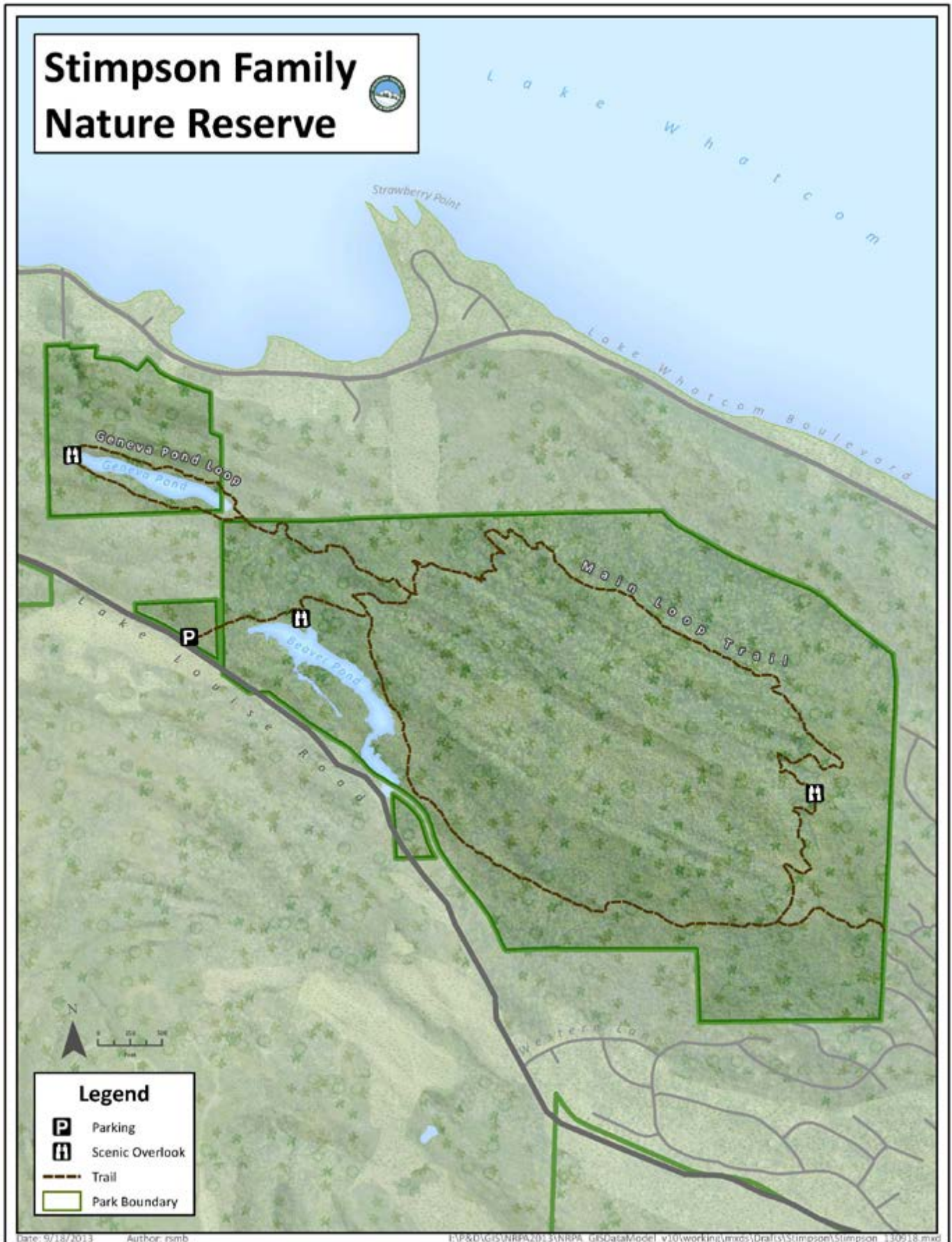
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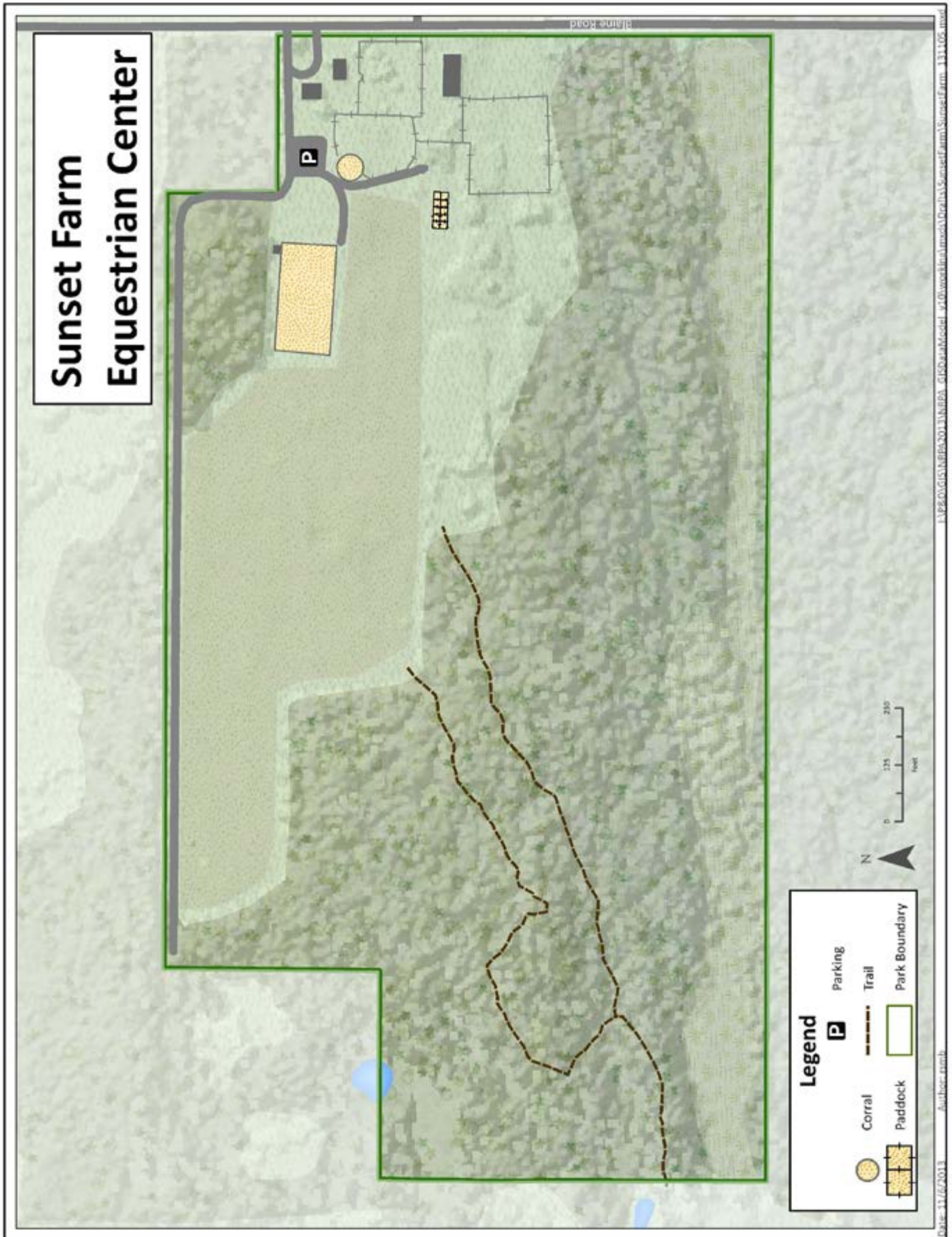


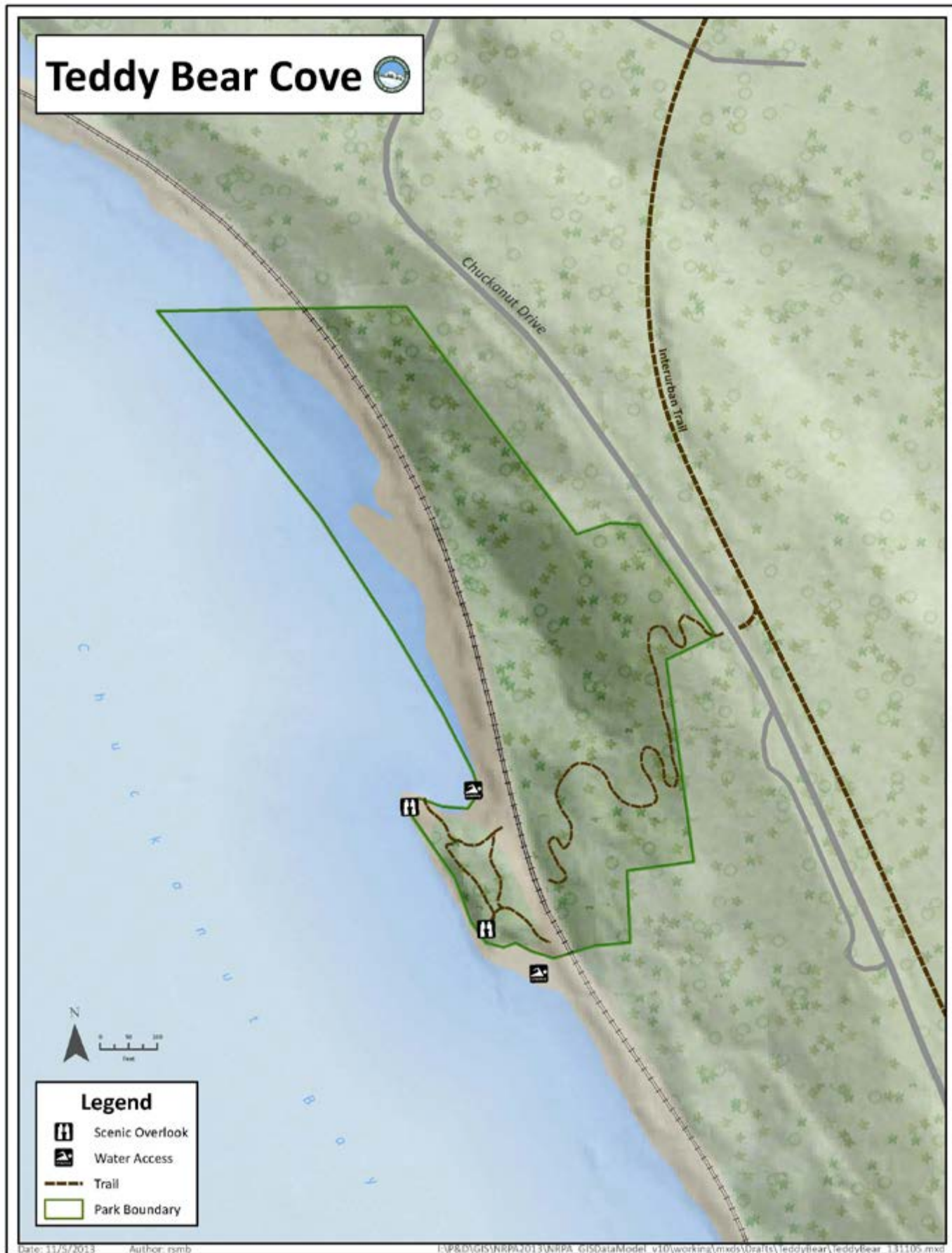












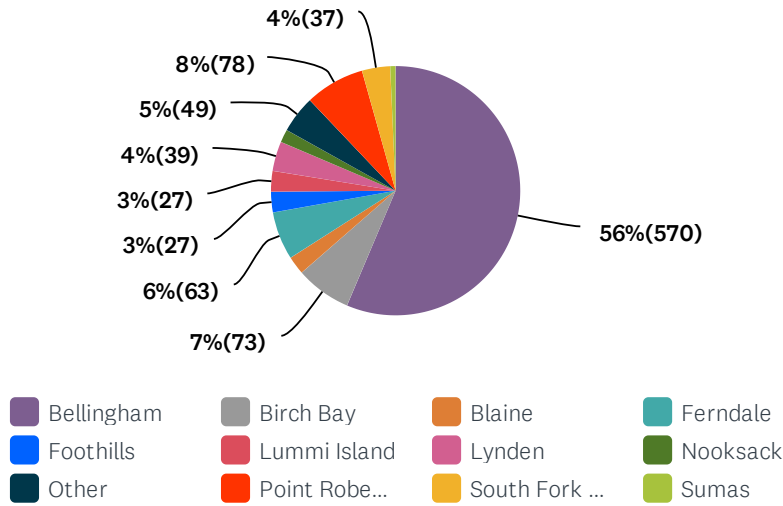


***Appendix B:  
Whatcom County Parks & Recreation  
On-line Survey & Results***

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q1 Which area of the county do you live in?

Answered: 1,011 Skipped: 1

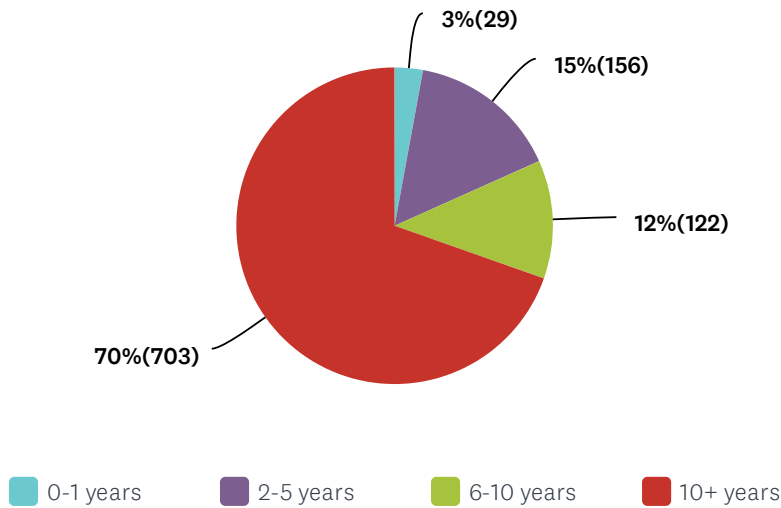


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bellingham	56%	570
Birch Bay	7%	73
Blaine	2%	24
Ferndale	6%	63
Foothills	3%	27
Lummi Island	3%	27
Lynden	4%	39
Nooksack	2%	17
Other	5%	49
Point Roberts	8%	78
South Fork Valley	4%	37
Sumas	1%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,011</b>

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

## Q2 How long have you lived in Whatcom County?

Answered: 1,010 Skipped: 2

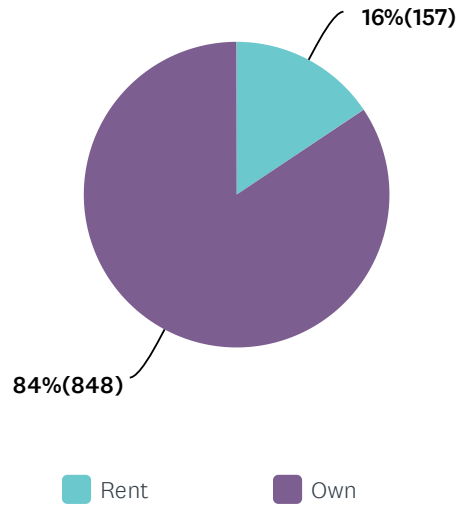


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-1 years	3%	29
2-5 years	15%	156
6-10 years	12%	122
10+ years	70%	703
TOTAL		1,010

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q3 Do you rent or own your home?

Answered: 1,005 Skipped: 7



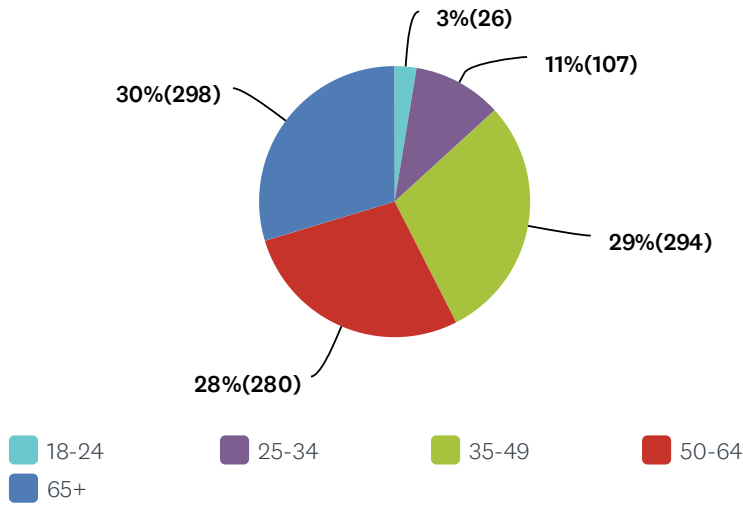
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	16%	157
Own	84%	848
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,005</b>



Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q4 What age group are you in?

Answered: 1,005 Skipped: 7

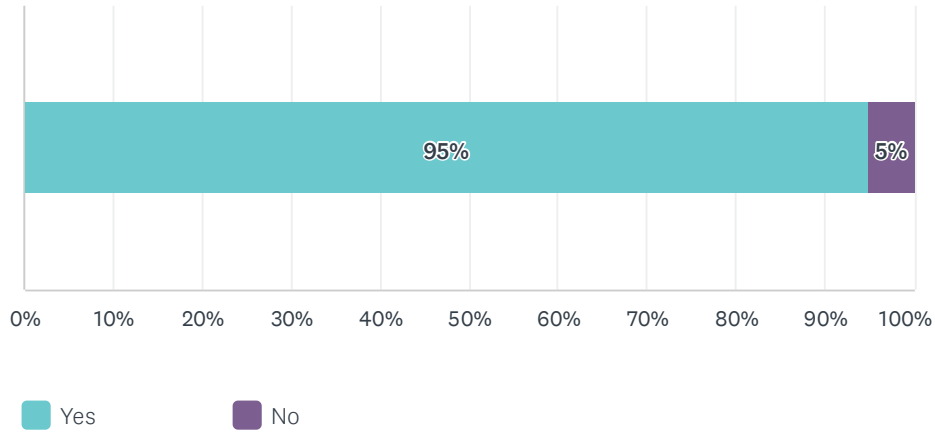


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-24	3%	26
25-34	11%	107
35-49	29%	294
50-64	28%	280
65+	30%	298
TOTAL		1,005

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q5 Have any household members used recreational programs, parks, or trails provided by Whatcom County in the last year?

Answered: 1,000 Skipped: 12

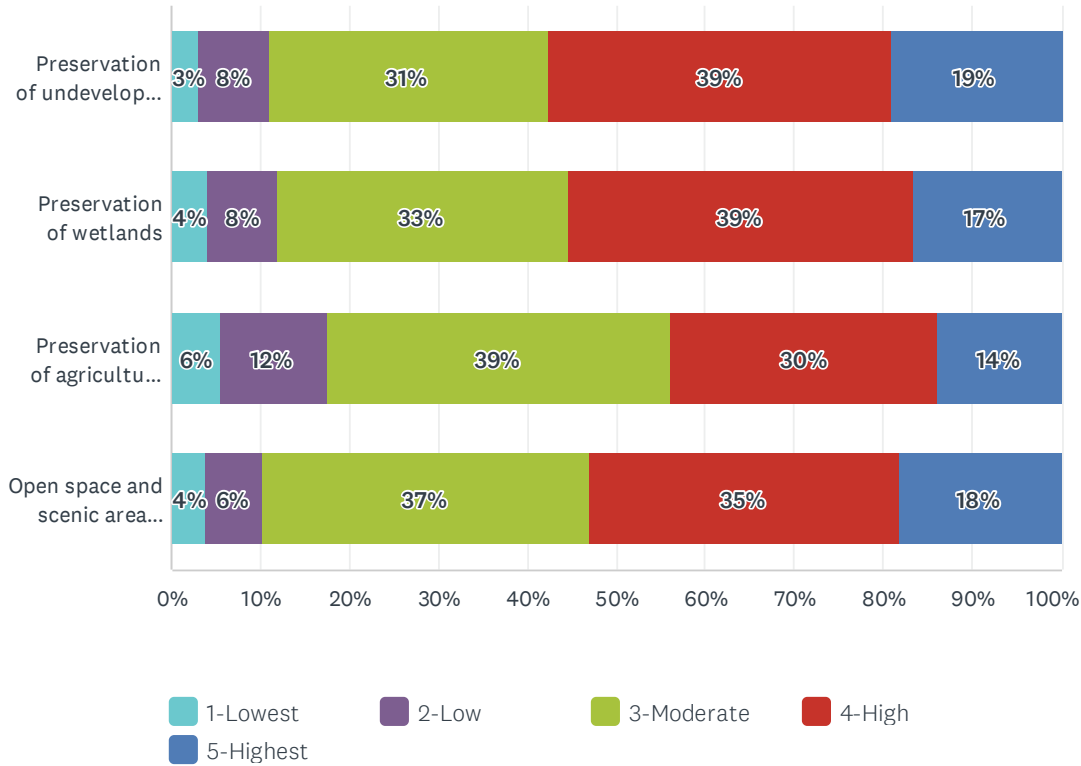


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95%	948
No	5%	52
TOTAL		1,000

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q6 Conservation and Preservation of Natural Resources - Please rate your satisfaction with the following:

Answered: 741 Skipped: 271

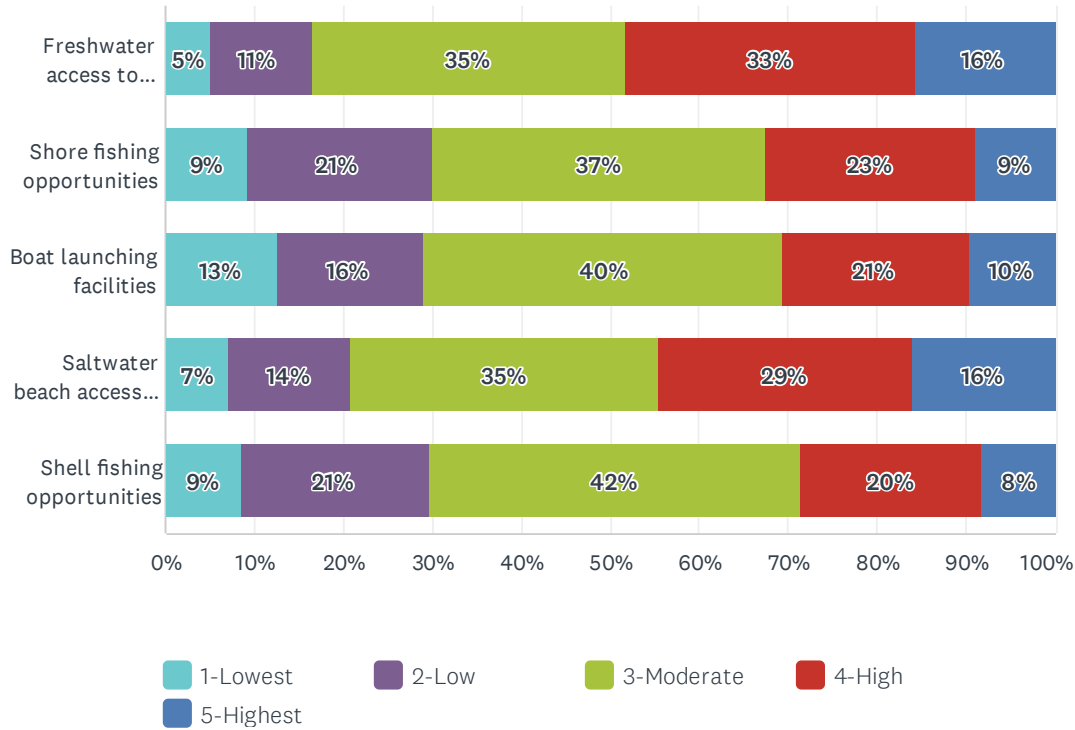


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Preservation of undeveloped natural areas and forests	3%	8%	31%	39%	19%	739
	23	58	232	286	140	
Preservation of wetlands	4%	8%	33%	39%	17%	729
	30	57	238	283	121	
Preservation of agricultural land	6%	12%	39%	30%	14%	709
	39	85	273	213	99	
Open space and scenic area preservation	4%	6%	37%	35%	18%	733
	28	47	270	255	133	

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q7 Shoreline and Waterfront - Please rate your satisfaction with the following:

Answered: 728 Skipped: 284

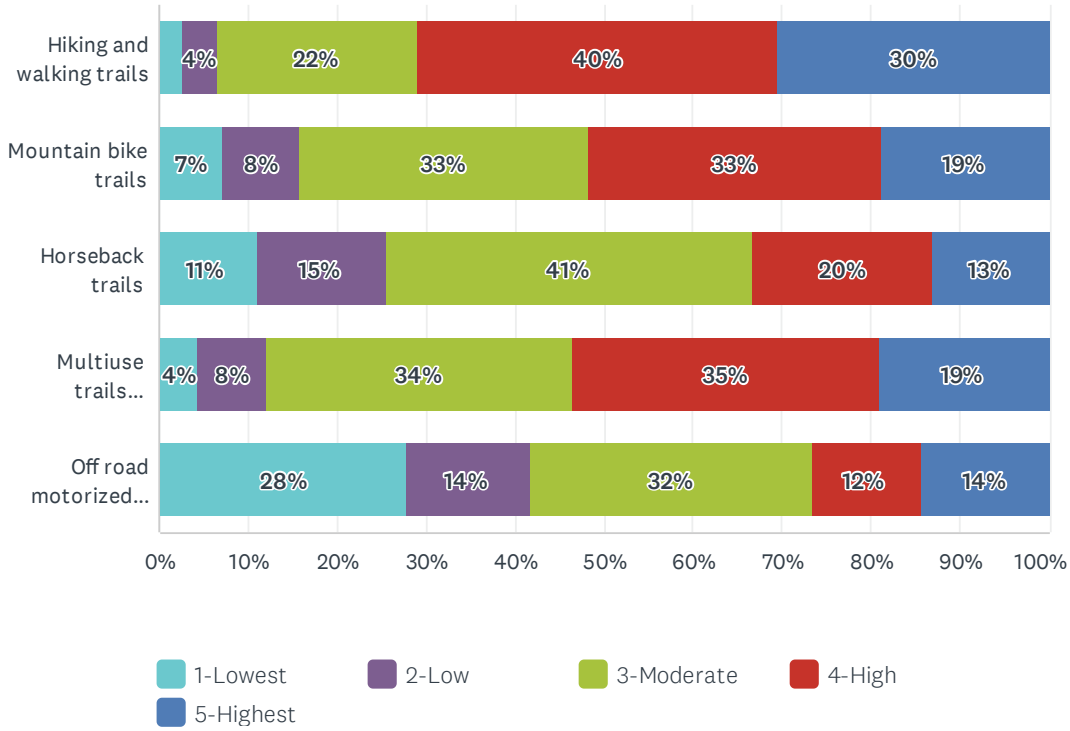


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Freshwater access to lakes, rivers, and streams	5% 37	11% 82	35% 251	33% 233	16% 113	716
Shore fishing opportunities	9% 61	21% 138	37% 247	23% 155	9% 60	661
Boat launching facilities	13% 85	16% 111	40% 270	21% 143	10% 64	673
Saltwater beach access and beach combing	7% 50	14% 98	35% 245	29% 202	16% 113	708
Shell fishing opportunities	9% 57	21% 138	42% 274	20% 134	8% 54	657

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q8 Trails:

Answered: 742 Skipped: 270

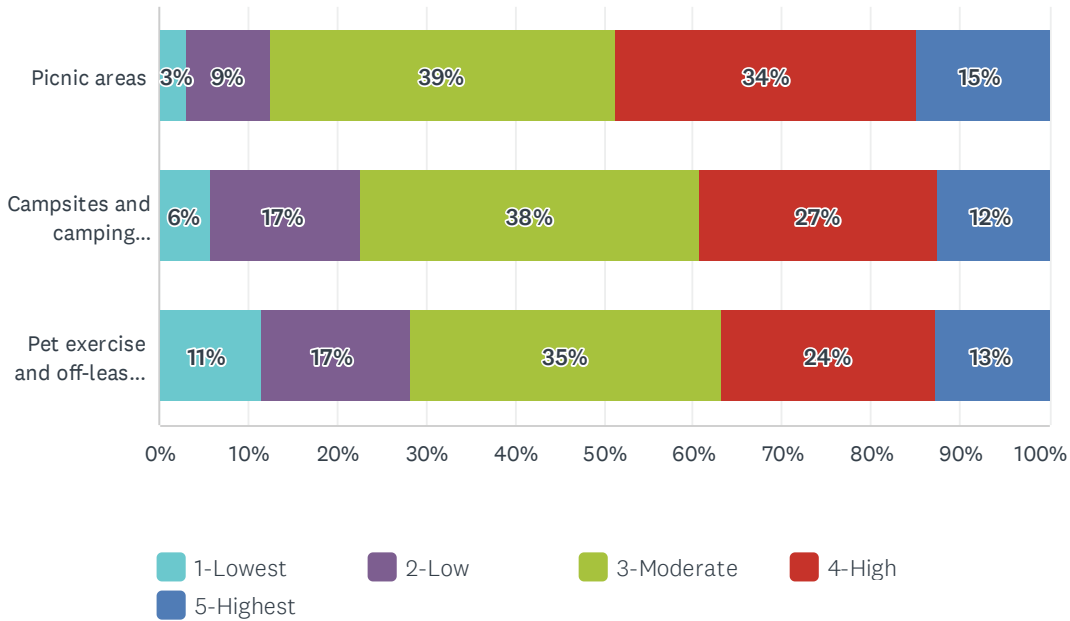


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Hiking and walking trails	3% 19	4% 30	22% 166	40% 299	30% 225	739
Mountain bike trails	7% 47	8% 55	33% 212	33% 214	19% 122	650
Horseback trails	11% 66	15% 88	41% 248	20% 122	13% 79	603
Multiuse trails (bicycle, walking)	4% 31	8% 55	34% 242	35% 245	19% 134	707
Off road motorized opportunities	28% 168	14% 84	32% 191	12% 74	14% 86	603

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q9 Picnicking, Camping, and Pet Exercise Areas:

Answered: 719 Skipped: 293

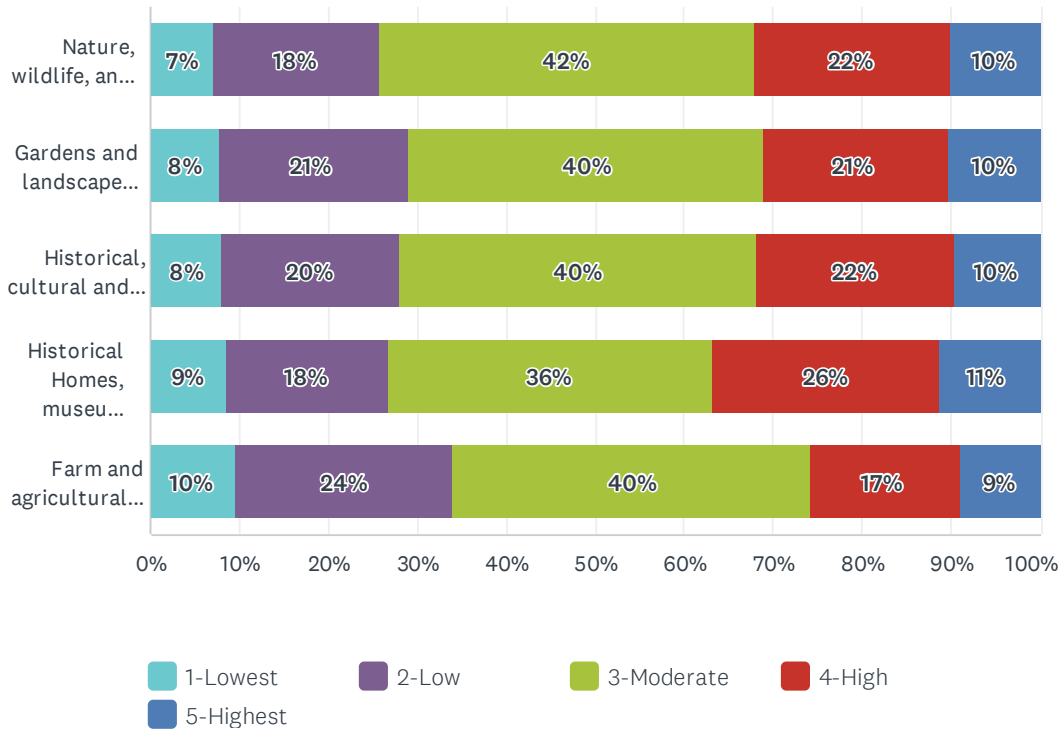


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Picnic areas	3%	9%	39%	34%	15%	702
Campsites and camping opportunities	6%	17%	38%	27%	12%	685
Pet exercise and off-leash areas	11%	17%	35%	24%	13%	675

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q10 Interpretive Programs:

Answered: 695 Skipped: 317

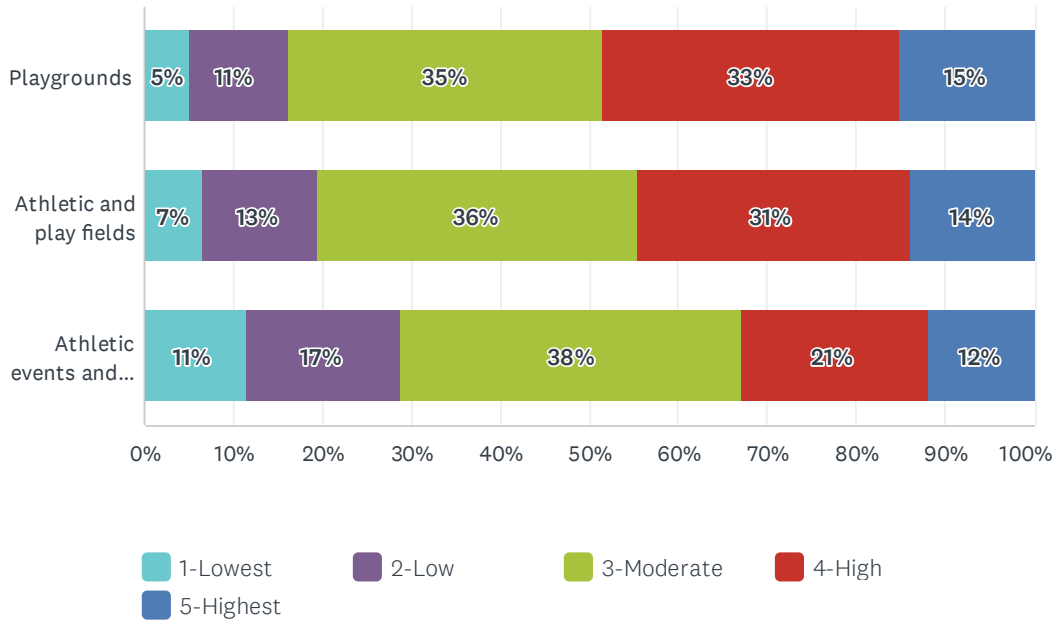


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Nature, wildlife, and environmental exhibits, centers, walks, programs, and events	7% 48	18% 123	42% 280	22% 148	10% 66	665
Gardens and landscape exhibits, programs, and events	8% 51	21% 141	40% 263	21% 138	10% 68	661
Historical, cultural and heritage exhibits, walks, programs, and events	8% 54	20% 134	40% 269	22% 150	10% 65	672
Historical Homes, museums, and farms	9% 57	18% 122	36% 242	26% 171	11% 75	667
Farm and agricultural exhibits, programs, and events	10% 63	24% 158	40% 261	17% 110	9% 58	650

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q11 Athletic Courts and Fields:

Answered: 682 Skipped: 330



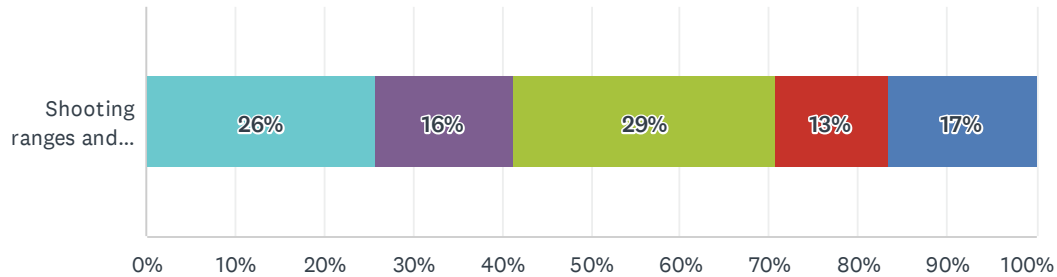
	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Playgrounds	5% 34	11% 74	35% 235	33% 221	15% 101	665
Athletic and play fields	7% 44	13% 85	36% 240	31% 204	14% 92	665
Athletic events and tournaments	11% 73	17% 110	38% 244	21% 134	12% 75	636



Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q12 Firearms:

Answered: 592 Skipped: 420

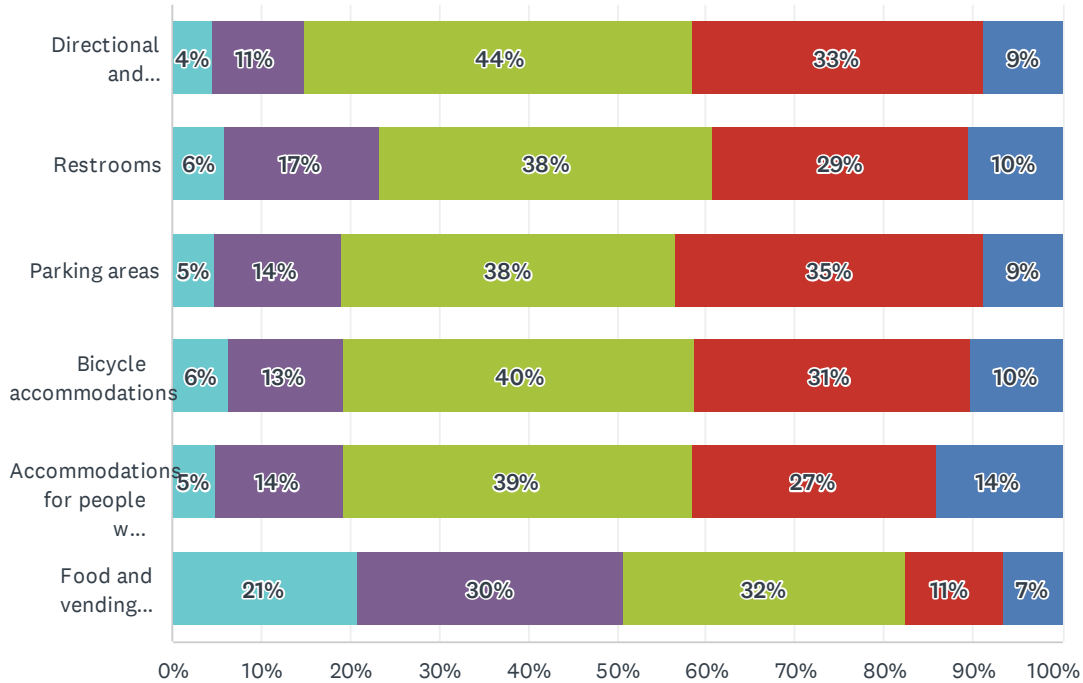


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Shooting ranges and areas	26% 152	16% 93	29% 174	13% 75	17% 98	592	2.79

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q13 Supporting Services and Facilities:

Answered: 725 Skipped: 287



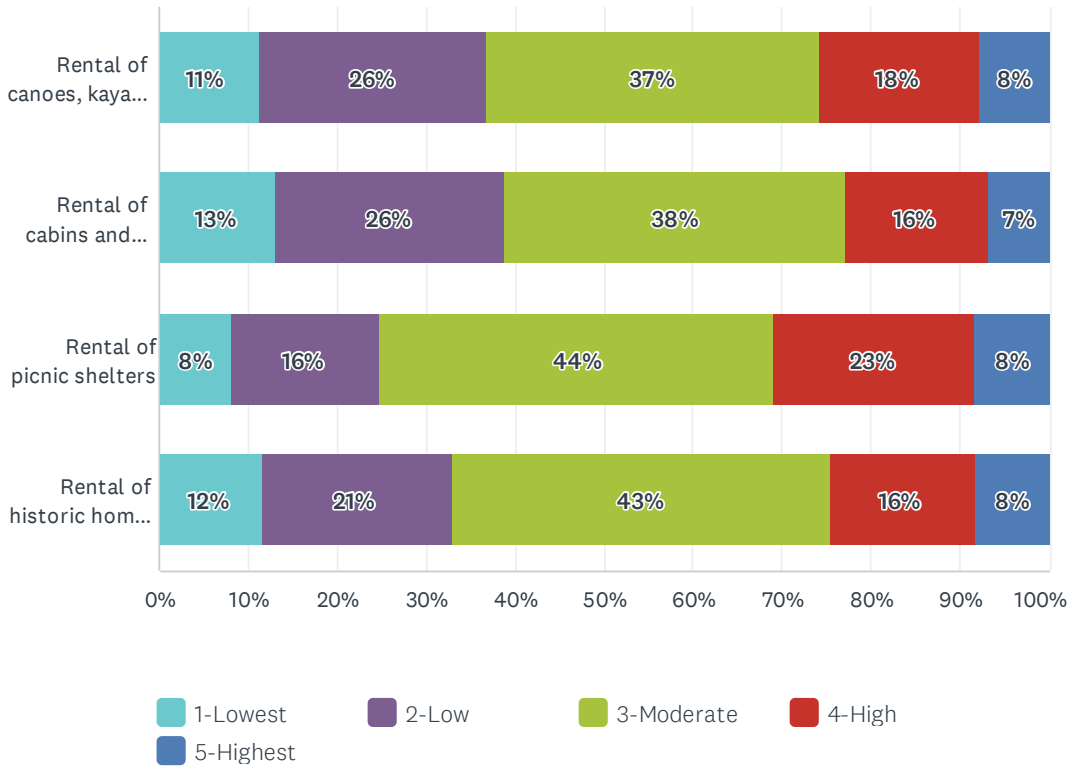
■ 1-Lowest    
 ■ 2-Low    
 ■ 3-Moderate    
 ■ 4-High  
■ 5-Highest

	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Directional and informational signage	4% 31	11% 74	44% 306	33% 229	9% 62	702
Restrooms	6% 43	17% 124	38% 269	29% 206	10% 75	717
Parking areas	5% 33	14% 101	38% 265	35% 244	9% 62	705
Bicycle accommodations	6% 42	13% 84	40% 260	31% 204	10% 67	657
Accommodations for people with disabilities	5% 31	14% 89	39% 247	27% 171	14% 89	627
Food and vending concessions	21% 134	30% 192	32% 204	11% 71	7% 42	643

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q14 Rental Facilities:

Answered: 655 Skipped: 357

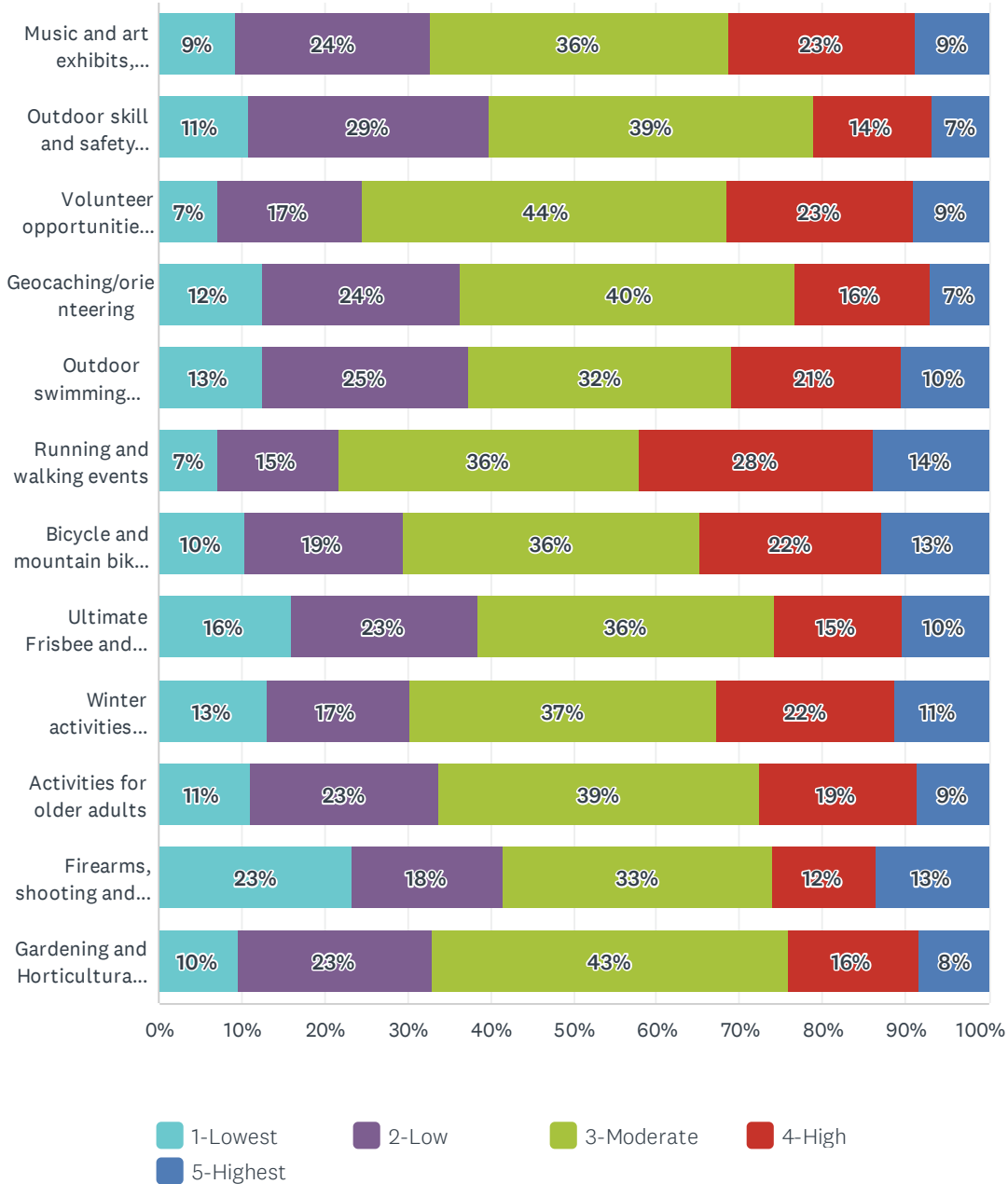


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Rental of canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, and paddle boards	11% 72	26% 164	37% 239	18% 115	8% 50	640
Rental of cabins and overnight lodges	13% 82	26% 163	38% 240	16% 101	7% 43	629
Rental of picnic shelters	8% 52	16% 104	44% 280	23% 142	8% 53	631
Rental of historic homes, activity centers and similar facilities for weddings, retreats, meetings, and events	12% 71	21% 128	43% 258	16% 99	8% 49	605

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q15 Activities and Events:

Answered: 701 Skipped: 311



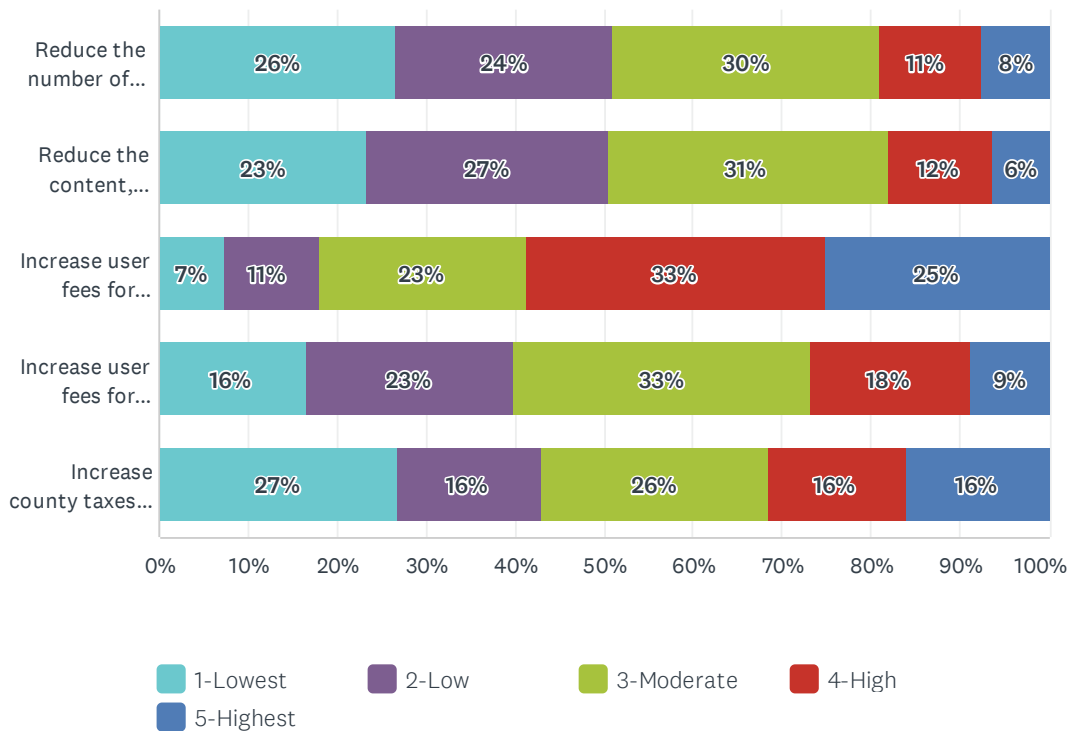
## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

	1- LOWEST	2- LOW	3- MODERATE	4- HIGH	5- HIGHEST	TOTAL
Music and art exhibits, concerts, and events	9% 60	24% 154	36% 234	23% 147	9% 57	652
Outdoor skill and safety instructions (backcountry camping, first-aid, bicycling, and horseback riding)	11% 68	29% 180	39% 243	14% 89	7% 42	622
Volunteer opportunities in the parks	7% 44	17% 107	44% 272	23% 139	9% 55	617
Geocaching/orienteering	12% 71	24% 138	40% 230	16% 94	7% 40	573
Outdoor swimming opportunities	13% 81	25% 161	32% 206	21% 133	10% 67	648
Running and walking events	7% 45	15% 92	36% 228	28% 178	14% 87	630
Bicycle and mountain bike rides and events	10% 64	19% 116	36% 219	22% 134	13% 79	612
Ultimate Frisbee and disc golf opportunities	16% 95	23% 135	36% 213	15% 92	10% 62	597
Winter activities snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling	13% 82	17% 107	37% 230	22% 134	11% 70	623
Activities for older adults	11% 68	23% 141	39% 238	19% 118	9% 53	618
Firearms, shooting and hunter's safety classes	23% 132	18% 102	33% 184	12% 70	13% 76	564
Gardening and Horticultural classes	10% 58	23% 140	43% 260	16% 95	8% 50	603

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q16 If providing future recreation programs requires more money than can be budgeted from Whatcom County resources, how would you rate the following methods of paying for them on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is least desirable and 5 is most desirable?

Answered: 685 Skipped: 327

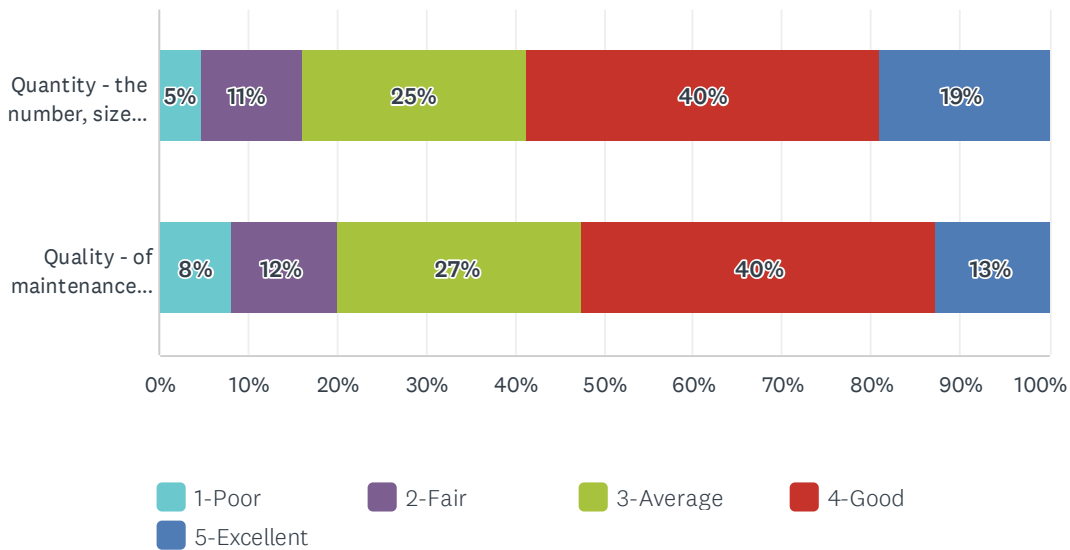


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Reduce the number of programs to control costs	26% 177	24% 163	30% 201	11% 76	8% 51	668
Reduce the content, variety, and duration of programs to control costs	23% 155	27% 180	31% 209	12% 78	6% 42	664
Increase user fees for non-residents to finance program services	7% 50	11% 72	23% 158	33% 227	25% 171	678
Increase user fees for everyone to finance program services	16% 111	23% 158	33% 224	18% 122	9% 59	674
Increase county taxes to finance needed program services	27% 181	16% 109	26% 173	16% 105	16% 107	675

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q17 How would you rate the existing inventory of all park, recreation, and open space facilities provided in Whatcom County by the county, cities, school districts, port, state, and other park providers on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the poor and 5 excellent?

Answered: 666 Skipped: 346

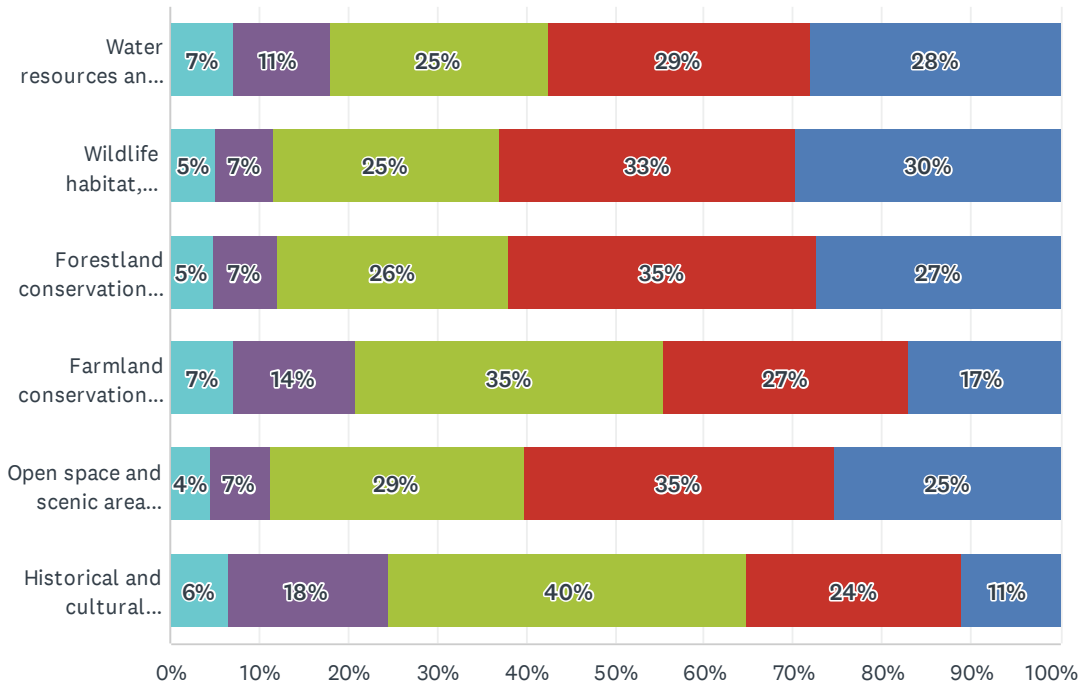


	1- POOR	2- FAIR	3- AVERAGE	4- GOOD	5- EXCELLENT	TOTAL
Quantity - the number, size and location of existing park and trail sites to serve the existing population	5% 31	11% 76	25% 167	40% 264	19% 126	664
Quality - of maintenance conditions and furnishings including parking, restrooms, trails, campsites, shelters, cabins, and other facilities in existing parks	8% 54	12% 79	27% 182	40% 264	13% 84	663

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q18 Conservation Needs

Answered: 608 Skipped: 404



■ 1-Lowest    
 ■ 2-Low    
 ■ 3-Moderate    
 ■ 4-High  
■ 5-Highest

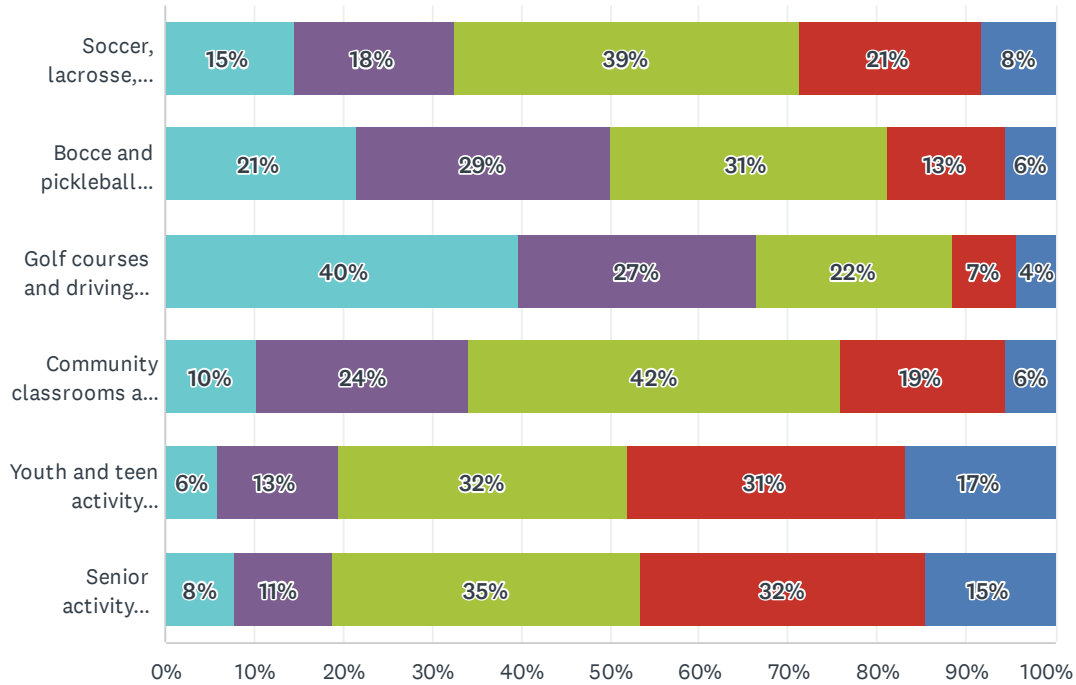
	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Water resources and watershed protection areas	7% 43	11% 65	25% 147	29% 176	28% 168	599
Wildlife habitat, conservation, and natural areas	5% 31	7% 40	25% 152	33% 202	30% 179	604
Forestland conservation areas	5% 29	7% 43	26% 155	35% 206	27% 164	597
Farmland conservation areas	7% 42	14% 82	35% 205	27% 163	17% 101	593
Open space and scenic area preservation	4% 27	7% 41	29% 173	35% 210	25% 153	604
Historical and cultural buildings and sites	6% 39	18% 109	40% 242	24% 145	11% 66	601



Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q19 Recreational Facility Needs:

Answered: 602 Skipped: 410



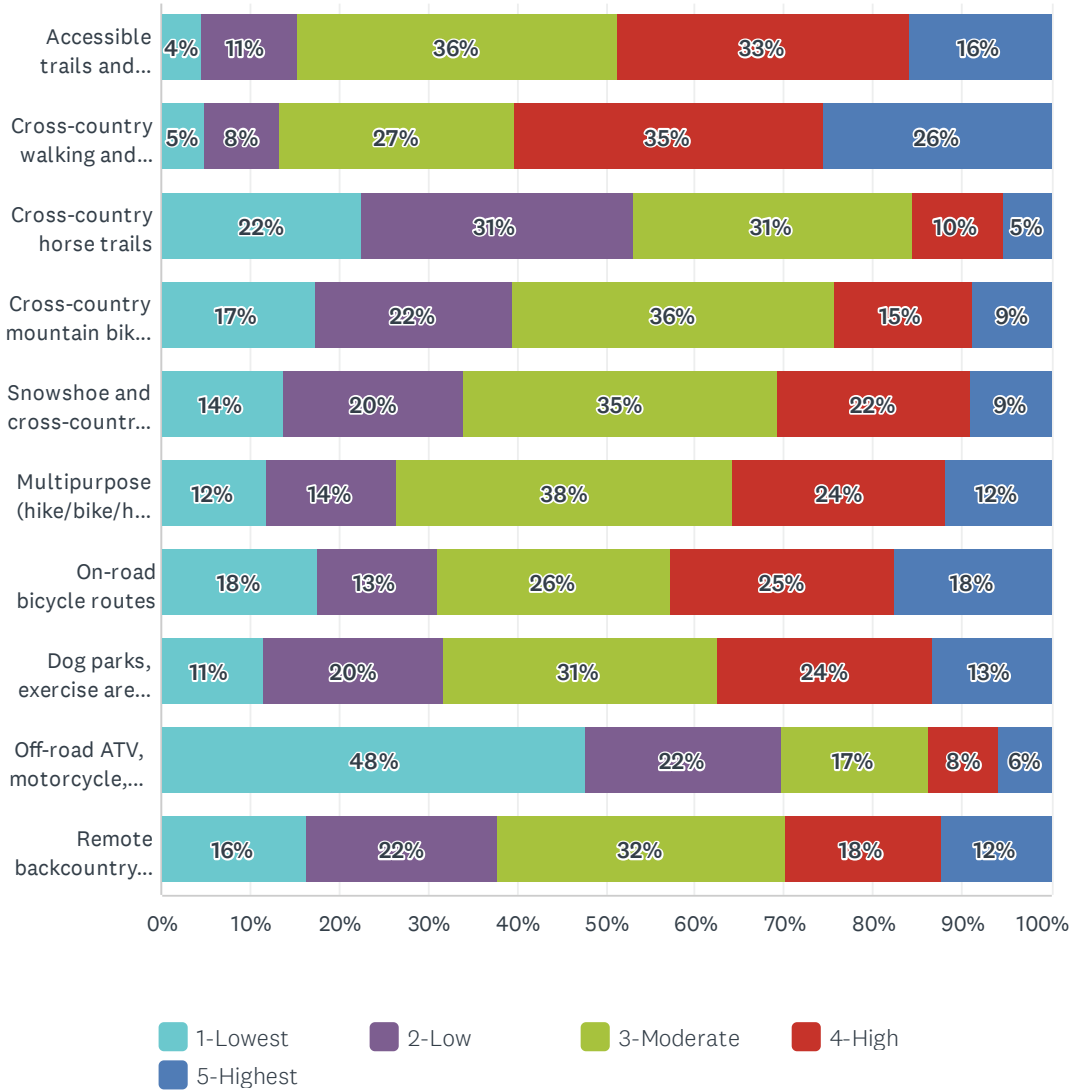
■ 1-Lowest    
 ■ 2-Low    
 ■ 3-Moderate    
 ■ 4-High  
■ 5-Highest

	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball, and athletic fields	15% 86	18% 105	39% 229	21% 121	8% 48	589
Bocce and pickleball courts	21% 126	29% 168	31% 183	13% 77	6% 33	587
Golf courses and driving ranges	40% 235	27% 158	22% 130	7% 43	4% 25	591
Community classrooms and meeting facilities	10% 60	24% 142	42% 246	19% 110	6% 33	591
Youth and teen activity centers	6% 35	13% 79	32% 191	31% 185	17% 98	588
Senior activity centers	8% 46	11% 66	35% 205	32% 190	15% 86	593

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q20 Trail Needs:

Answered: 614 Skipped: 398



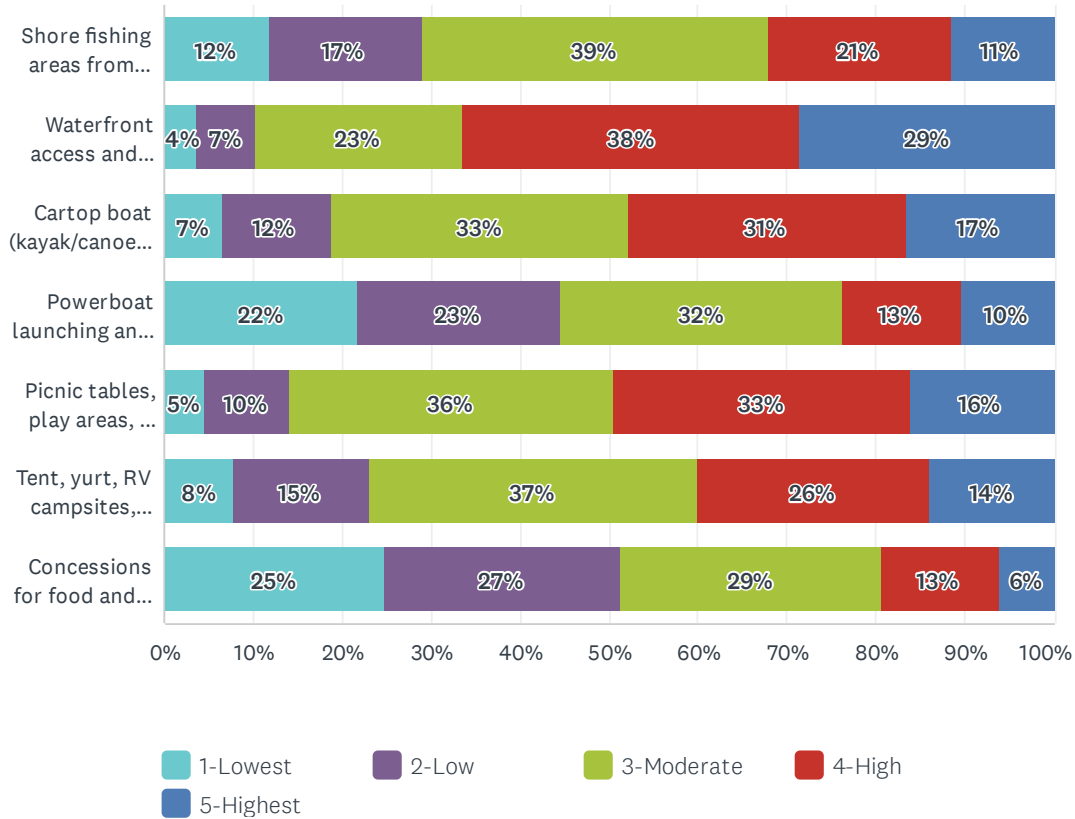
Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

	1- LOWEST	2- LOW	3- MODERATE	4- HIGH	5- HIGHEST	TOTAL
Accessible trails and facilities within parks for people with disabilities	4% 27	11% 66	36% 217	33% 198	16% 96	604
Cross-country walking and hiking trails	5% 30	8% 50	27% 161	35% 210	26% 155	606
Cross-country horse trails	22% 129	31% 177	31% 180	10% 59	5% 31	576
Cross-country mountain bike trails	17% 102	22% 130	36% 213	15% 91	9% 52	588
Snowshoe and cross-country skiing trails	14% 81	20% 119	35% 208	22% 128	9% 53	589
Multipurpose (hike/bike/horse) trails	12% 70	14% 85	38% 222	24% 140	12% 70	587
On-road bicycle routes	18% 103	13% 78	26% 153	25% 147	18% 103	584
Dog parks, exercise areas, and trails	11% 67	20% 118	31% 181	24% 140	13% 78	584
Off-road ATV, motorcycle, snowmobile trails, and ORV parks	48% 276	22% 129	17% 96	8% 45	6% 34	580
Remote backcountry campsites	16% 96	22% 126	32% 189	18% 103	12% 72	586

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q21 Regional Park Needs:

Answered: 612 Skipped: 400

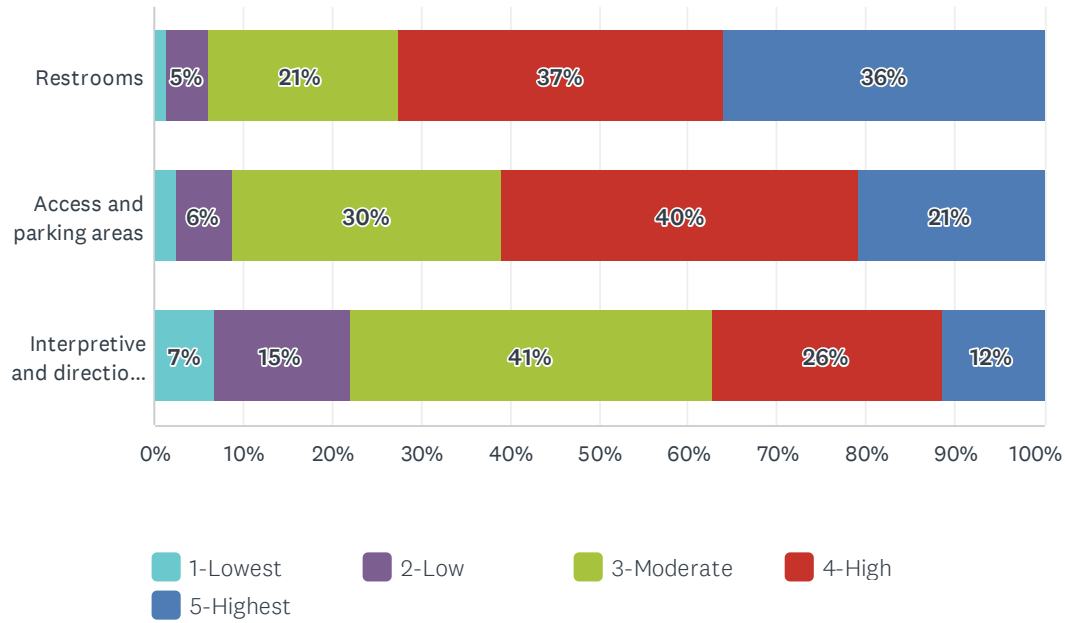


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Shore fishing areas from docks	12% 68	17% 99	39% 223	21% 118	11% 66	574
Waterfront access and beach use sites	4% 22	7% 39	23% 140	38% 226	29% 172	599
Cartop boat (kayak/canoe) launch sites	7% 38	12% 72	33% 194	31% 183	17% 97	584
Powerboat launching and moorage facilities	22% 126	23% 133	32% 184	13% 77	10% 60	580
Picnic tables, play areas, and shelters	5% 27	10% 57	36% 217	33% 199	16% 96	596
Tent, yurt, RV campsites, group camps, and cabins	8% 46	15% 91	37% 218	26% 155	14% 82	592
Concessions for food and beverage, bait sales, etc.	25% 145	27% 157	29% 172	13% 78	6% 36	588

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q22 Supporting Facility Needs:

Answered: 610 Skipped: 402

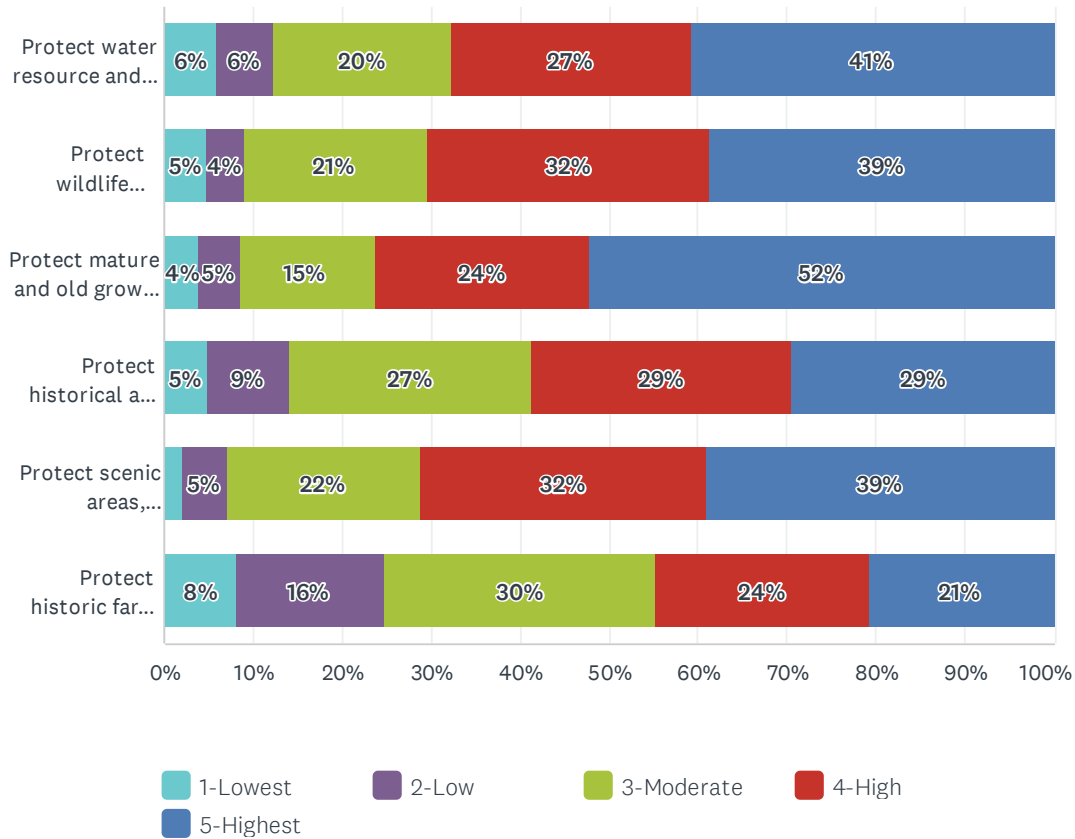


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Restrooms	1% 8	5% 29	21% 127	37% 220	36% 215	599
Access and parking areas	3% 15	6% 37	30% 181	40% 240	21% 125	598
Interpretive and directional signage	7% 40	15% 92	41% 244	26% 154	12% 69	599

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q23 Conservation Proposals:

Answered: 569 Skipped: 443

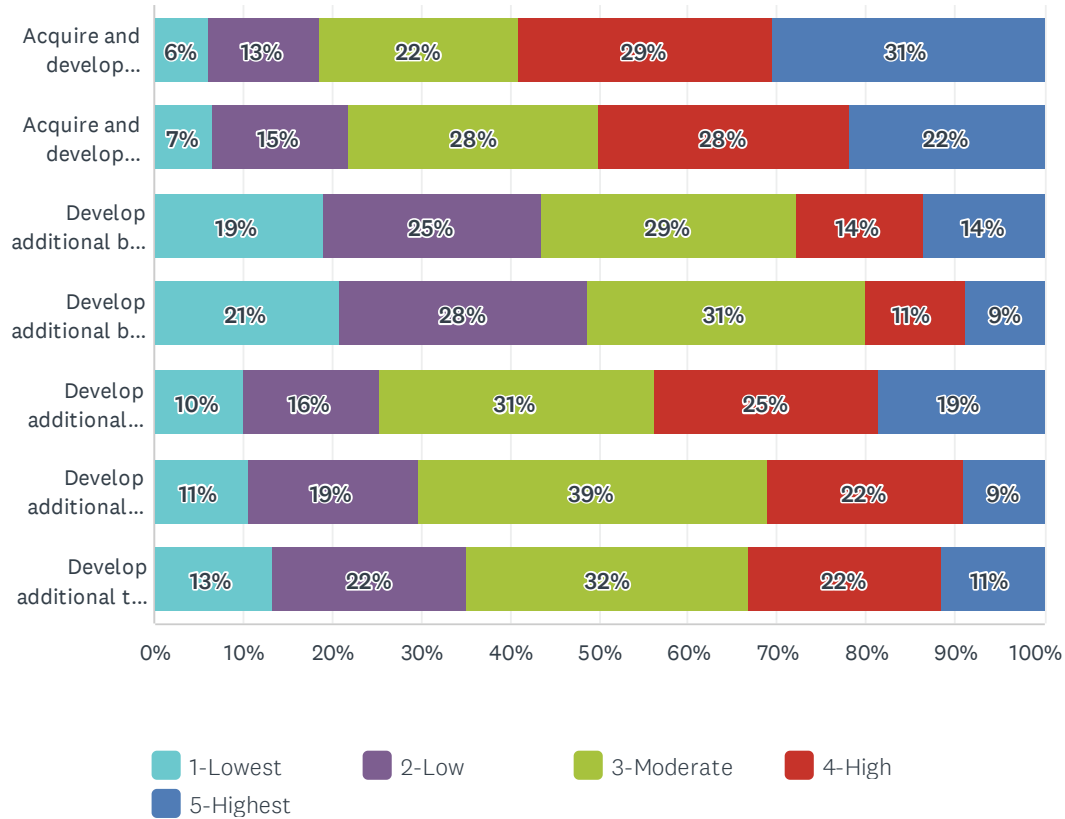


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Protect water resource and watershed areas of the county	6% 34	6% 35	20% 113	27% 152	41% 230	564
Protect wildlife habitat areas of the county in and around fresh and saltwater areas, wetlands, and woodland areas	5% 27	4% 24	21% 117	32% 179	39% 219	566
Protect mature and old growth forested areas of the county from logging in and around urbanizing areas and in backcountry sites	4% 22	5% 27	15% 85	24% 136	52% 295	565
Protect historical and productive farmlands of the county from subdivision and development	5% 28	9% 52	27% 153	29% 164	29% 166	563
Protect scenic areas, viewpoints, and vistas of the county along fresh and saltwater shorelines, farmlands, and wooded hilltops and ridgelines	2% 12	5% 29	22% 122	32% 182	39% 221	566
Protect historic farms, sawmills, railroads, mines, and other heritage sites from demolition and development	8% 46	16% 93	30% 172	24% 137	21% 116	564

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q24 Regional Park Proposals:

Answered: 570 Skipped: 442

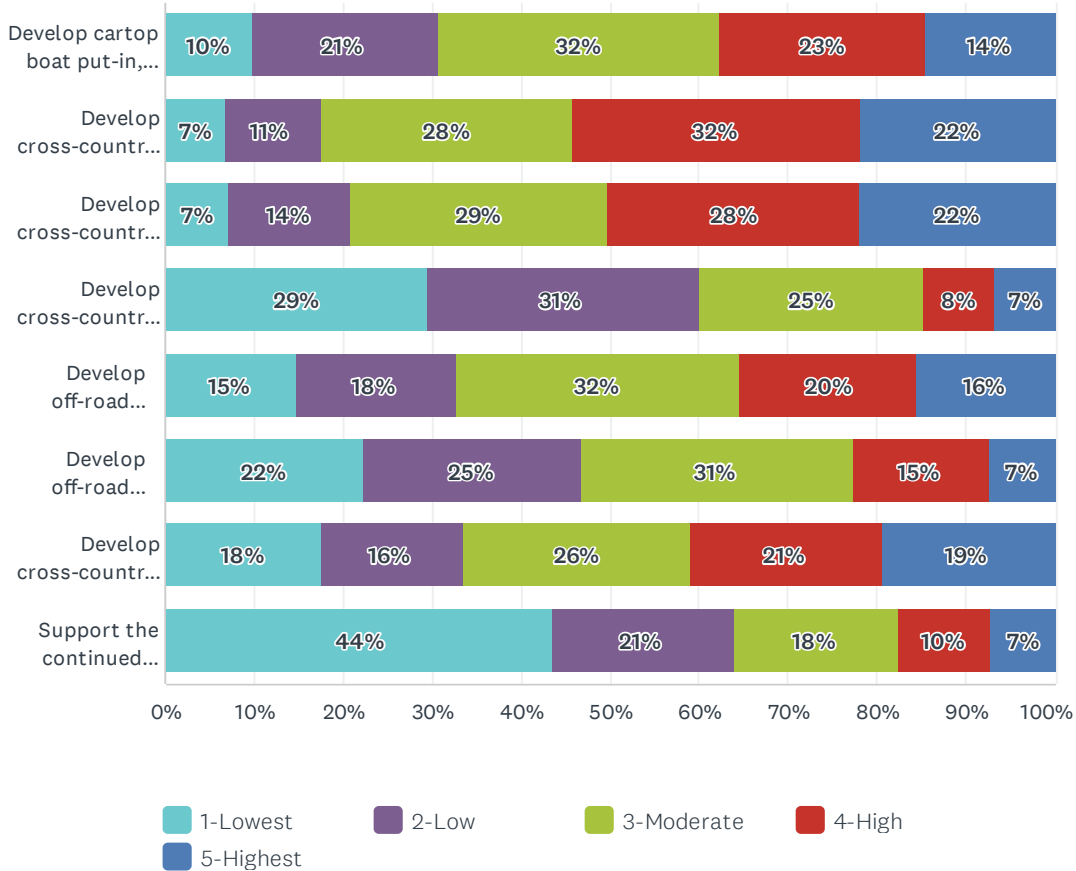


	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Acquire and develop additional saltwater access sites for fishing, beachcombing, and walking	6% 34	13% 70	22% 125	29% 160	31% 171	560
Acquire and develop additional freshwater access sites for fishing, swimming, and boating	7% 37	15% 85	28% 156	28% 157	22% 122	557
Develop additional boat launching facilities at saltwater sites	19% 105	25% 136	29% 158	14% 79	14% 75	553
Develop additional boat launching facilities at freshwater sites	21% 115	28% 152	31% 172	11% 62	9% 48	549
Develop additional non-motorized cartop (kayak / canoe) launching facilities at salt and freshwater sites	10% 55	16% 86	31% 171	25% 139	19% 103	554
Develop additional picnic shelters and group picnic facilities at major regional park sites	11% 59	19% 106	39% 218	22% 123	9% 50	556
Develop additional tent and RV campsites, yurts, cabins, and group camp sites at major regional park sites	13% 74	22% 121	32% 175	22% 120	11% 63	553

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

### Q25 Trail System Proposals:

Answered: 565 Skipped: 447



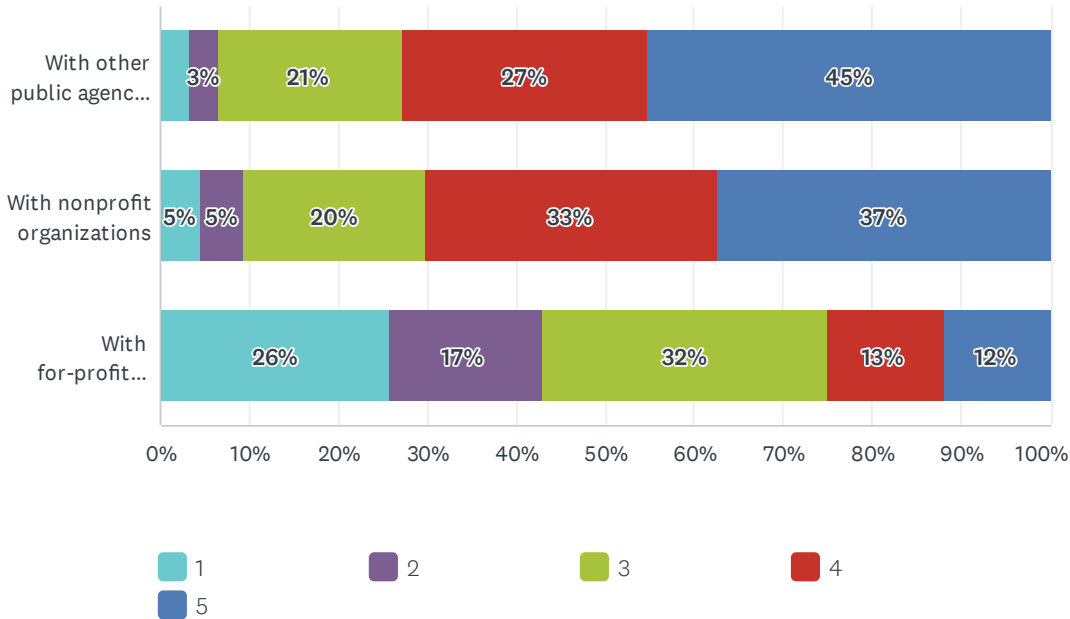
	1-LOWEST	2-LOW	3-MODERATE	4-HIGH	5-HIGHEST	TOTAL
Develop cartop boat put-in, take-out, and overnight campsites along navigable salt and freshwater paddling routes	10% 54	21% 114	32% 173	23% 127	14% 79	547
Develop cross-country network of saltwater beach and shoreline walking areas and trails	7% 37	11% 60	28% 156	32% 179	22% 121	553
Develop cross-country network of on and off-road day and backpacking hiking trails	7% 40	14% 75	29% 160	28% 157	22% 121	553
Develop cross-country network of horse stables, riding areas, and trails	29% 159	31% 166	25% 135	8% 44	7% 36	540
Develop off-road cross-country network of hike, bike, and horse trails	15% 80	18% 98	32% 174	20% 108	16% 85	545
Develop off-road cross-country network of snowshoe, skiing and snowmobile trails	22% 121	25% 134	31% 166	15% 83	7% 40	544
Develop cross-country system of on-road bicycle routes using road shoulders and designated bike lanes	18% 97	16% 87	26% 140	21% 118	19% 107	549
Support the continued private party operation of ATV/Motorcycle riding areas	44% 238	21% 112	18% 100	10% 57	7% 39	546



Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q26 How would you rate joint ventures projects for park facility development and/or programming with the following organizations where 1 is the least desirable and 5 is the most desirable?

Answered: 531 Skipped: 481

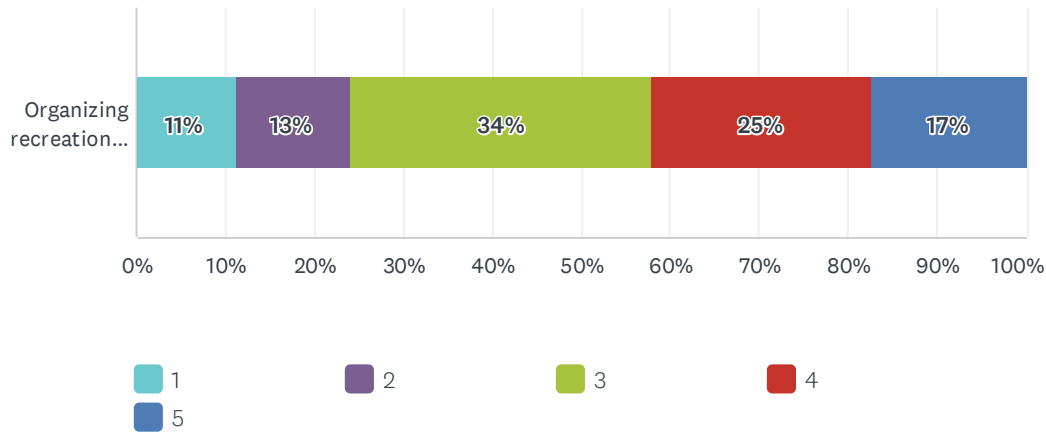


	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
With other public agencies (cities, school districts, the port)	3% 17	3% 18	21% 109	27% 145	45% 239	528
With nonprofit organizations	5% 24	5% 26	20% 108	33% 173	37% 198	529
With for-profit organizations	26% 134	17% 89	32% 167	13% 68	12% 62	520

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q27 How would you rate the following recreation service area method where 1 is the least desirable and 5 the most desirable?

Answered: 515 Skipped: 497



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Organizing recreation service areas to finance specific facilities, programs, and land acquisitions such as the preservation of scenic areas	11%	13%	34%	25%	17%	515
	58	66	174	128	89	

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

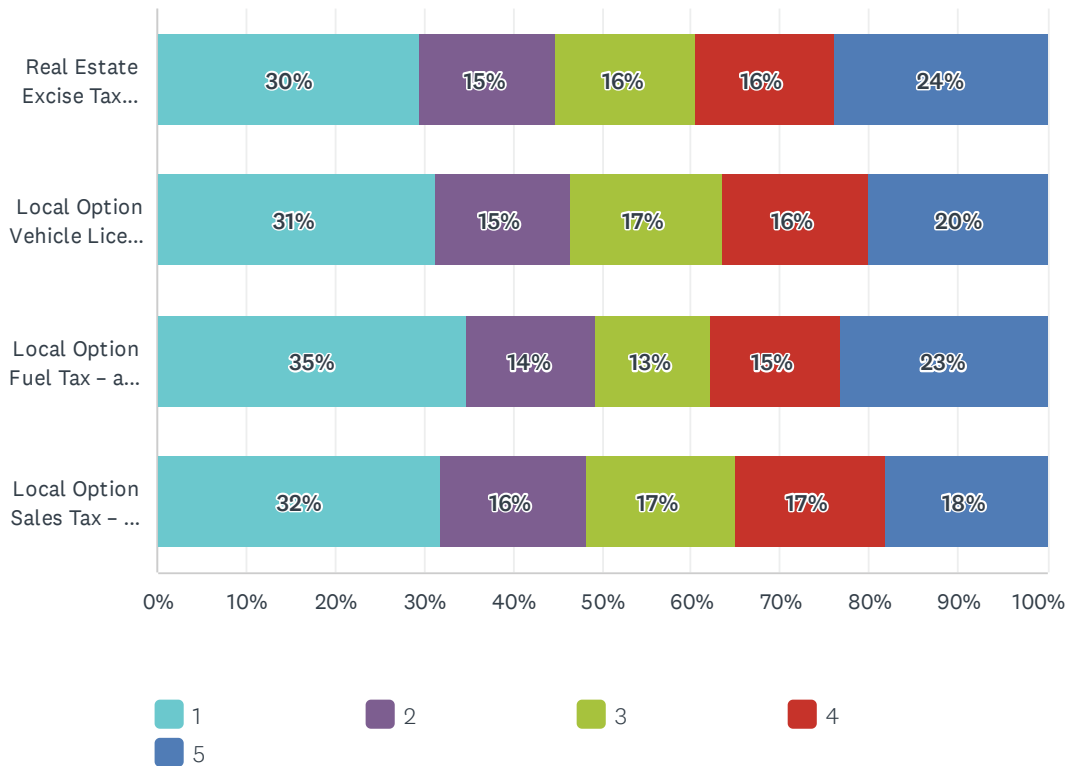
Q28 If a levy were to be put on the ballot to finance local park facilities and programs, and land acquisitions within your local area, how much, if anything, would your household be willing to pay per year for this source of funding Annual amount: \$

Answered: 470 Skipped: 542

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q29 How would you rate each of the following optional dedicated fees and taxes, where 1 is the least desirable and 5 the most desirable?

Answered: 526 Skipped: 486



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Real Estate Excise Tax (REET 3) – an additional 0.25% assessment of the sales price of all real estate property (equal to \$250 per \$100,000 of sale price) paid by the purchaser to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of park and open space	30% 154	15% 80	16% 82	16% 81	24% 125	522
Local Option Vehicle License Fee – an additional \$15.00 per vehicle license registered in the county to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of trail improvements	31% 164	15% 80	17% 90	16% 86	20% 105	525
Local Option Fuel Tax – an additional \$0.023 per gallon sales tax to be paid by residents and tourists to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of trail improvements	35% 182	14% 75	13% 67	15% 77	23% 121	522
Local Option Sales Tax – an additional 0.1% sales tax (equal to \$0.10 for a \$100 purchase) to be paid by residents and tourists to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of park and open space	32% 167	16% 85	17% 88	17% 88	18% 95	523

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

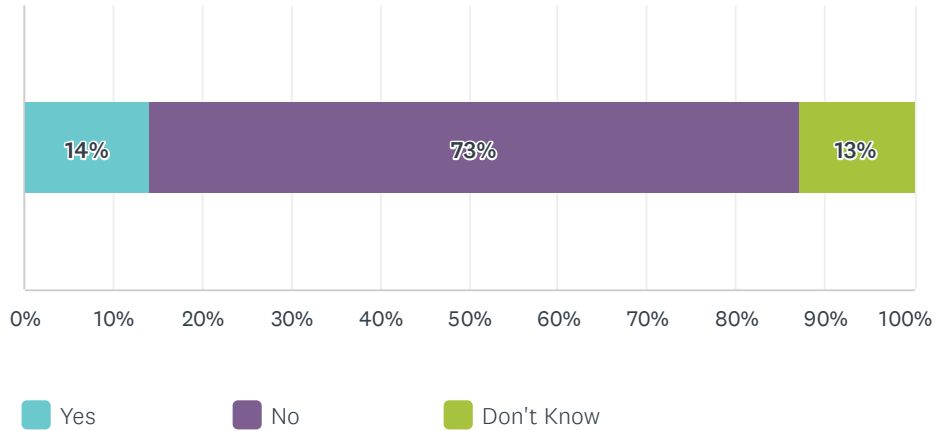
Q30 If a bond were to be put on the ballot to finance regional recreational and open space improvements, how much, if anything, would your household be willing to pay per year for this source of funding? Amount per year: \$

Answered: 443 Skipped: 569

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q31 In your opinion, will existing park and recreation facilities within the county, cities, and school districts be enough to provide for this population increase?

Answered: 539 Skipped: 473

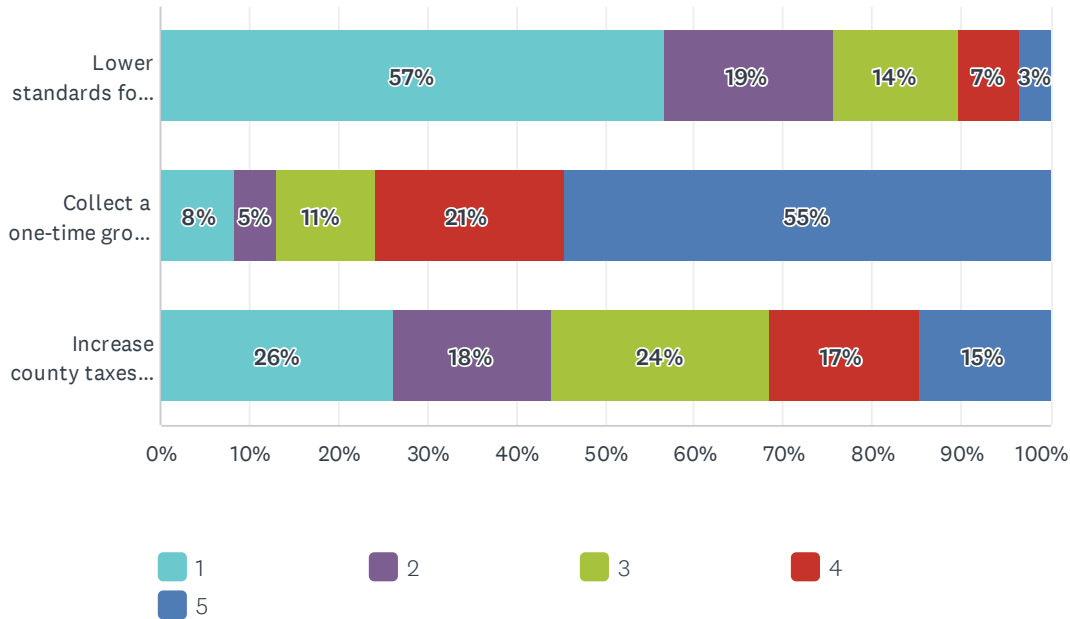


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	14%	76
No	73%	394
Don't Know	13%	69
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>539</b>

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q32 How would you rate the following methods for dealing with the impact of new population growth on parks on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is least desirable and 5 is most desirable?

Answered: 536 Skipped: 476



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Lower standards for the number of park facilities provided to future populations	57% 295	19% 99	14% 74	7% 35	3% 18	521
Collect a one-time growth impact fee from new housing development projects to pay for park improvements	8% 45	5% 25	11% 59	21% 113	55% 291	533
Increase county taxes to acquire and develop park facilities to offset population growth impacts	26% 139	18% 94	24% 129	17% 89	15% 78	529

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q33 If a park growth impact fee were to be collected from new housing development projects, what percent of this cost would you recommend be charged for every new single-family house to be developed in the county? (The county does not currently charge growth impact fees.)Percentage of cost:

Answered: 400 Skipped: 612

RESPONSES OMITTED DUE TO ERROR IN SURVEY WEBPAGE.



Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

Q34 Do you have any specific comments or recommendations to make about the proposed park plan or this survey?Comments:

Answered: 290 Skipped: 722

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR RESPONSES.

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

### Q34 Do you have any specific comments or recommendations to make about the proposed park plan or this survey? Comments:

Answered: 290 Skipped: 722

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I am very impressed with the hiking and walking trails in the areas and all of the beautiful parks. Thank you!	5/23/2021 8:37 AM
2	The survey is very long and some questions seemed redundant. My feedback on the parks is that the signs telling people to mask their children outside has made most families decide to not use parks, because that is a personal medical decision that the Parks Department should NOT be advising. Masking children under 5 is a serious health risk. Advising people to mask children over age 2 puts children at risk for multiple reasons and I have been very disappointed to see the Parks Department support such baseless and careless "requirements". There is also the potential for lawsuits if a child is injured FROM wearing a mask because of your signs. You might want to budget for upcoming claims against Whatcom County Parks and Recreation.	5/21/2021 11:12 AM
3	I couldn't figure out how to enter amounts our household would be willing to pay. It's difficult to quantify, partly because we are able to pay, whereas many others are not. I would like to see payment options that tax higher income brackets rather than people who are struggling. Everyone pays gas tax, excise tax on property, etc. How can we get more wealthy people to pay more??	5/20/2021 11:35 PM
4	More off leash dog trails like the one at Hovander please! Would be great to have the pump track in Ferndale cleaned up/upgrades. Would love a multi use park in Ferndale up on church hill- so many houses and not many walkable parks.	5/19/2021 9:42 PM
5	Before any new parks or facilities are open, our existing ones need to be maintained. I can refer specifically to Hovander park, where the animal area and fences are in disrepair. Silver lake, where the floating foot bridge is degrading quickly, and Tennant lake interpretative center has been closed for years. I do notice the improvements, and appreciate them., but to add more work by adding more facilities, makes it more unlikely that these things will get fixed.	5/19/2021 6:48 PM
6	I did not answer parts of the survey where I have no experience (eg horseriding, soccer fields) . I hope you will consider waivers for low-income home owners and also try to reduce the impact of fees on low income renters.	5/19/2021 9:59 AM
7	Love the county parks. Crucial to keep restrooms clean.	5/19/2021 6:07 AM
8	Keep the parks safe for families and the elderly who pay taxes, keep the homeless out of the parks. If needed a % of the park budget can be used to help house the homeless in shelters and programs that promote health and recovery.	5/18/2021 7:35 PM
9	Much too confusing! Hard to figure out just what I think you're doing well. Much easier to say what I think priorities should be. Thank you.	5/18/2021 2:43 PM
10	There needs to be changing tables in the men's bathrooms. I know this is a minor issue and more handled by the maintenance team than planning but it is 2021 and men do change diapers and if there are changing tables in the women's bathroom, there better be some in the men's.	5/18/2021 2:28 PM
11	No	5/18/2021 1:14 PM
12	Once taxes are increased they just NEVER go away or decrease (percentage-wise) even if the aggregate amount collected increases due to population growth or inflation.	5/18/2021 12:26 PM
13	I believe that as fast as the growth and building is happening in this area, we need to immediately accomplish plans to include saving the out of doors for our future generations.	5/17/2021 3:35 PM
14	Improve communication of programs to the public as well to Local Distric Organizations.	5/13/2021 10:38 AM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

15	Instead of taxing single family homes could a tax be levied on developers? For each proposed development site? Commercial and residential? They should consider how their proposals impact the community and lack of open space. We would be happy to pay more taxes for the parks but can hardly afford our property taxes as is.	5/13/2021 7:10 AM
16	Fairly good survey. My problem with any tax applied in any format, is that regardless of intent in it's imposition, the monies DO NOT end up applied for the projects that the tax was intended for.	5/7/2021 5:43 AM
17	No	5/6/2021 7:35 PM
18	I notice much more focus on parks in more urban areas like Bellingham and the parks out in the county feel much more neglected. It would be nice to see more parks and playground development out in the county. As Whatcom county continues to grow, those numbers will also be reflected in our rural neighborhoods. In particular I think the park at the Van Zandt community center could use a big revamp. There's a huge community out in that area and no where for children to play unless they are able to go to Bellingham for a nice park.	5/6/2021 2:46 PM
19	Government needs to live within its means. We should cut other parts of the government if we want more parks.	5/6/2021 2:32 PM
20	Please make efforts towards creating a north-south pedestrian/bicycle corridor in the south fork valley, from Deming to skagit county line. Thank you considering this	5/6/2021 2:17 PM
21	Picnic tables were removed from the deck on the service building at Silver Lake Park when it was refurbished. Some additional seating (benches) should be added so a person can sit and enjoy the view from the deck. The department needs to be pro active in advertising facilities to the residents.	5/3/2021 9:20 AM
22	Your consideration of services for youth and seniors is good to see.	4/30/2021 2:14 PM
23	Please not increase in taxes. We are being taxed out of our homes.	4/28/2021 5:48 AM
24	Save more forests, like Stimpson Reserve. More walking trails that exclude bikes and dogs.	4/27/2021 11:02 PM
25	Finish what is started ex horse trail south fork park. Very disappointed in this park no place to good	4/27/2021 8:30 PM
26	This survey is a bit wordy in some places, had to read the question twice, often. You guys need to do a little more self promotion. There are many things mentioned that I have no clue what the park actually has, or offers. For example, wetland conservation areas? Additionally, I would like to see further development for local users in South fork Park. Picnic tables, benches along the trail, further hiking trail development along the river would be nice. Few people use this park because little is offered. We therefore have lots of drug activity and two deaths in the parks short existence. Please make this a place locals will use, and not just a dumping ground for societal trash.	4/27/2021 5:35 PM
27	The parks department cannot adequately take care of what they already have; active monitoring for security and crime. Why would I encourage the parks dept to grow or increase services when the basic element of locking up parks or making regular rounds to deter crime isn't being done?	4/27/2021 5:25 AM
28	The need for more trail development is evident in most multi use areas. Bikers, hikers, and horseback riders are starting to pile up in most areas and the lack of variety and quantity of trails is to blame. It will just continue to get worse	4/26/2021 9:26 PM
29	Focus on connectivity with other public or conserved land. Fragments habitat between development will only decrease wildlife and biodiversity over time. Increase taxes proportional to the amount of land developed, with large housing developments paying the highest taxes for maintaining and acquiring land for conservation and recreation.	4/26/2021 9:04 PM
30	Over 1/2 of the land in Whatcom County is undeveloped wilderness, recreation area or national forest (fallow open space). That provides enough hiking and horseback riding and mtn biking opportunities. Make more campgrounds and quit promoting bike use of paved roads.	4/26/2021 9:01 PM
31	Preserving 10-20 acre farm parcels with a building right	4/26/2021 8:44 PM
32	Please look into motorized off road opportunities. There are NONE in this county	4/26/2021 7:45 PM
33	Survey the Foothills and you'll see how visitor pressure has increased here during Covid. We	4/26/2021 7:08 PM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

need logging road access for recreation, parking, alternatives to the Discover Pass for the poor.

34	The citizens of the South Fork Valley are tasked with the maintenance and operation costs of the Van Zandt Community Hall and Josh Vander Yacht Memorial Park. These venues are essential to the Valley, but neither the County nor the Parks Dept. is willing to step up and help out. The cost to the County/Parks would be minimal, and the return in terms of community-building would be immense. The South Fork Valley needs your help.	4/26/2021 6:13 PM
35	One of the things I love most about living here is the accessibility to parks, beaches, and trails. It's also becoming extremely difficult to afford to live here. I'm afraid raising taxes for existing residents will continue to make it more difficult to afford to live here.	4/26/2021 9:27 AM
36	The portions left blank resulted from my pitiful lack of knowledge about existing services and resources.	4/24/2021 5:22 PM
37	The questions didn't allow me to express how grateful I am for the beautiful parks, trails, and natural areas the county provides. I love our parks and natural areas and hope the county can preserve more of our natural treasures from development. Thanks to the staff and employees who take such good care of our parks and natural areas!	4/24/2021 2:18 PM
38	Please do not increase taxes. Use growth fees and allocate existing revenues more effectively	4/22/2021 1:09 PM
39	I would support a tax on new Property Owners homeowners it must also include those who purchase Condominiums	4/22/2021 7:25 AM
40	I would like to see the Birch Bay Beach Park property prioritized for development now that the Pedestrian facility is finished. There will be a dramatic need for restrooms and parking in the days ahead as the shoreline "Promenade" becomes a popular destination in Whatcom County!	4/21/2021 11:11 AM
41	Whatcom county spends millions on parks and property acquisition. Our population is already totally tapped out financially so to even suggest taxes, levies or bonds is a joke. Our Star Park is 100% community paid for in Ferndale. Start doing fundraising and have donor and volunteer events instead of pushing us further into the poor house for the sake of recreation. We have everything we could need for it and more except county water parks.	4/20/2021 8:45 AM
42	I don't want to pay anymore taxes, I can barely afford to live in the town I grew up in. Work on getting the homeless out of our parks and open space areas. We pay enough in homeless and affordable housing this should not be a probation Bellingham/whatcom county!!	4/20/2021 8:17 AM
43	Hopefully park management will continue to support and improve all of the parks they have been entrusted to care for. Something needs to be done about Lake Samish Park parking situation. I would love to visit this park but I will not due to the terrible parking. Bulldozing the old rangers cabin could provide a lot more parking spaces. Also want to mention how much my family love visiting Hovander Park. Have been taking them there forever and we love to visit the animals, wish there were more and of course the gardens are fantastic.	4/20/2021 3:41 AM
44	A few suggestions: 1) The county needs more disc golf opportunities on City of Bellingham and Whatcom County property! 2) Funds for land acquisition for conservation and recreation should be borne predominantly by developers. The new population growth should pay for its impact. Thanks!	4/15/2021 4:06 PM
45	keep military training out of WA parks	4/15/2021 12:37 PM
46	Survey to long and no one wants more taxes	4/13/2021 8:30 PM
47	KEEP MILITARY TRAINING OPERATIONS OUT OF WASHINGTON PARKS!	4/13/2021 9:29 AM
48	Hard for me to answer some questions. A "don't know" option might have been nice on some questions.	4/13/2021 8:28 AM
49	We are seniors who moved here recently. We are very impressed with the hiking trail system and use it frequently. But very disappointed in the road biking opportunities. We were avid road bikers and came from an area of the midwest that was honeycombed with safe, dedicated road bike trails and found virtually none here. We are not interested in riding on the side of a road.	4/12/2021 9:51 AM
50	BRING THE ANIMALS BACK TO HOVANDER! It is a farm park and it needs the farm animals	4/12/2021 8:15 AM
51	The trails at Lake Samish Park are deteriorating and need some attention. I heard that mountain bikes aren't allowed on those trails, and they are there are the time. How about some	4/11/2021 12:00 PM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

signs saying so? They are chewing up the trail that is too fragile, steep, and narrow for mountain bikes. Thx.

52	If they would stop building high rise housing, it would slow the growth rate. Perhaps we are as big as we need to be. If there isn't housing find somewhere else to live. It's not that hard.	4/11/2021 11:08 AM
53	Yes, this survey is terrible.	4/11/2021 12:06 AM
54	I just want to look at the possibility of the county buying more land by point whitehorn- large tracts are just getting absorbed for real estate with very a short term, narrow minded perspective toward maintaining a balance between a health ecosystem and housing.	4/10/2021 3:00 PM
55	I don't know who the target is for this survey but I didn't feel the survey was well written. It seems to assume that the person filling out the survey participates in all types of recreation (water sports, Hiking, Biking, ATV, etc) and has an appreciation of all of them. It also assumes the person understands the amount of the particular taxes and the financials concerning the purchase of the land and then for the improvements and maintenance of this land. Although I am a enthusiastic proponent of the Parks and Recreation and wish to support it, I don't have the depth of information or knowledge to answer many of these questions.	4/10/2021 11:58 AM
56	The last question on impact fees was not well stated so I suspect many will not understand what the percentage was related to. Should have been an option to reduce spending on roads and transition that money toward bike/walking trails between neighborhoods and communities	4/10/2021 8:19 AM
57	Many of the questions in the beginning of the survey were difficult to answer because I don't participate in all of the categories mentioned.	4/9/2021 10:43 PM
58	My comment is regarding your survey. There are many questions for which I have no experience or opinion (for example, disc golf opportunities). Your data will be useless without an option for people to select "Not applicable" or "No opinion".	4/9/2021 5:36 PM
59	We NEED waterfront access for horses, there are currently no places to take a horse in the water to swim. I miss it. Yeah, I'm certain you haven't gotten this comment before.	4/9/2021 3:57 PM
60	Make lake terrell and Archery Range officially horse accessible. Allow for trailer parking.	4/9/2021 11:48 AM
61	Would be nice to have dual use parks for horses, as well as trails to the beaches for them. Opening up the lake Terrell resource would be a inexpensive way to start. Working with intalco to bet beach access via their wildlife area also.	4/9/2021 11:35 AM
62	Reduce the number of new homes, apartments, condos being built. Fewer people, less need for new recreation areas.	4/9/2021 11:33 AM
63	We need more water access, fresh and salt water. As much fun as the horse and ATV trails could be, they are not reaching the majority of residents. Both of those activities are expensive and not accessible to most people. They should be considered, but at a much lower priority than walking, hiking, and biking trails.	4/9/2021 10:03 AM
64	I think it's very important to make sure that recreational activities for youth and families are still accessible thru our population growth. I think we may need an additional pool, and I think it's important that the burden of paying for facilities does not fall on our low income neighbors. I would love to see a tax on homes above a certain valuation - whether that's at the time of sale or yearly.	4/9/2021 9:25 AM
65	Thank you for planning for growth. It's happening now and the impact is being felt.	4/9/2021 9:16 AM
66	New multi family and multi use buildings should pay more than current or new single family. Those buildings have significantly more impact on the land and population	4/9/2021 8:48 AM
67	we need more salt water access and fresh water swim areas	4/9/2021 8:17 AM
68	Recreational amenities are a major draw for new residents so aiming their direction for revenue seems fair.	4/9/2021 8:11 AM
69	What about working with current landowners that may own land that is suitable for parks or recreation. You could always provide tax credits for those who choose to use there land for public access. Sort of like the Open Space was supposed to be. Providing land owners tax breaks or other assistance for putting in there own "parks and camping spots" and even trails or water access that is open to others. Assisting them with the permitting process or other processes necessary to make them "legal". I think more people would be willing to allow others	4/9/2021 8:05 AM

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

to use their land, but the liabilities and regulations for such use are overwhelming. Think of all the people who want to do something as simple as HIPCAMP or HARVEST HOST or a basic VBRO / AIRB&B and all the hoops and regulations are very discouraging. Adjusting some of the regulations would only encourage people to share their land. This would take alot of pressure of local government to have to provide all our recreation opportunities. I would love to talk with someone in this area as we are wanting to do HIPCAMP on our 110 acres. If there is any one interested in assisting us, you can contact me at ratherbridin2@netzero.net I think private owned parks and camp area is the new way to go. This helps both the land owner by providing extra income and the government because it takes the burden and pressure off them.

70	More trails, no homeless camps.	4/9/2021 7:58 AM
71	The parks have sufficient facilities and far too few staff for effective maintenance and historical/ educational programming. I support low-impact trail programs with few off-leash dogs, off-road bikes and ATVs. I would like to see the Roeder Home again offer community programming and have been alarmed at the insurance requirements that have driven community groups such as the Highland Games and Bluegrass Festival away from the parks. Partnerships with Ag are desirable and historical programming should be strengthened. Look to the Boulder County Colorado model (similar in geography without the shorelines and in demographics including ag) for a picture of community engagement and success.	4/9/2021 7:23 AM
72	Finish the toxic waste site area next to Boulevard Park as soon as possible,	4/9/2021 6:39 AM
73	I keep hoping we will see plans for a new pool facility for swim lessons. It is so hard to get our kids into swim lessons now. Just think when there are even more people.	4/8/2021 9:29 PM
74	Please please please expand Disc Golf in Bellingham. With the population growth of Bellingham and the sport of Disc Golf growing so fast we are in need for a new course. Cornwall is over used and crowded to the point I don't enjoy playing disc golf.	4/8/2021 7:37 PM
75	For current facilities, maintain high quality. To maintain quality, a reservation system, such as at Silver Lake may be needed for new facilities.	4/8/2021 4:46 PM
76	If the county made more backcountry sites, they could collect smaller fees but usage would increase. Especially if you provided 4x4 opportunity as well. You could charge for a 4x4 permit also	4/8/2021 1:08 PM
77	tax the rich!	4/8/2021 12:26 PM
78	Manage what we have now well, enhance what we have, do not expand programs or put new taxes in place.	4/8/2021 9:37 AM
79	Clearly mountain biking is a major draw for our area, and continues to attract visitors and new residents to Whatcom county. Continued development of multi-use trail infrastructure to support a growing population is critical. Also, we need an 18-hole disc golf course in Bellingham- somewhere other than Cornwall Park. I urge the county to look at options for building a world-class disc golf course in the woods at Whatcom Falls Park, Lake Padden, in the Chuckanuts, or other wooded county or city parkland near town. Additionally, the county parks should consider a recreational easement or property acquisition to allow development of the popular disc golf course in Glacier, WA. Thanks for making Whatcom county the best place to live in Washington!	4/8/2021 7:36 AM
80	The parks need more outreach and educational programs to help even more people understand the value of these special places	4/8/2021 4:23 AM
81	We need more disc golf in and around where people live. This means Bellingham. Cornwall (city park, I know) is bursting at the seams. There has been such an incredible growth in disc golf the past year, a great disc golf course would bring in big tourism and would be in constant daily use year-round. Also, disc golf has the effect of cleaning up parks, bringing foot traffic to corners of parks that previously hosted undesirable behaviors. (Look at Cornwall's trajectory, for a long time it was a cruising hotspot, and hangout for gang members. Now it's one of the most family friendly parks there is! No needles, no camping, very little sketchy behavior.) County Parks would be showered with love and appreciation by the disc golf community! The Whatcom Disc Golf Club is almost 500 strong and has a really energetic core of passionate disc golfers willing to chip in and help make improvements at the drop of a hat!	4/6/2021 7:54 PM
82	In general I have a great time using and accessing the wide variety of activities available in our county and very much appreciate the work you do. Having started disc golfing about a year	4/5/2021 4:05 PM

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

ago, I would love to see additional options for the sport. I'm aware that I am part of a huge boom in the sport, and although places like Cornwall Park and the Mossy Rock course are great spots, on busy days they get quite crowded and can be hard to play. The course in Blaine is also quite fun, but could use some more consistent management in terms of upkeep as it is way too easy to lose a disc when those holes get overgrown. Seeing the course at Cornwall expanded to an 18 hole course or perhaps developing a new course all together would be awesome. Especially during this strange past year, disc golf has been an amazing way to hangout with friends/family while doing a safe, distanced, outdoor activity and I don't know what I would have done without it! I've seen people as young as 4 and as old as 75 out playing, and it's an awesome way to get a diverse amount of people out to enjoy the beautiful city that we live in! I would love to see the facilities supporting this sport continue to grow with the large number of new players I continue to see and meet on the courses! Thank you so much!

83	More support towards youth hockey	4/4/2021 11:06 PM
84	We need a rec center/events center, including an ice arena. With the new NHL team coming to the region this year, there will be an explosion in demand for Hockey and other ice related sports. I witnessed this growth in Colorado after the NHL came to the region.	3/31/2021 11:09 PM
85	The disc golf courses have become very crowded. More disc golf courses please!	3/31/2021 2:04 PM
86	Birch Bay DESPERATELY needs public restrooms. Maybe even multiple restrooms as there is a lot of public beach!	3/31/2021 12:39 PM
87	The city needs more indoor soccer fields and an updated ice arena to support hockey and skating growth	3/30/2021 5:52 PM
88	this survey was too long	3/30/2021 4:56 PM
89	With the impending interest in hockey to surge as a result of the new Seattle Kraken hockey team launching, our facilities for ice will be seriously under serviced and certainly outdated.. I recommend improving, redeveloping, and at least preparing for the demand. Combining with indoor soccer/ lacrosse for a vibrant and fiscally efficient mixed use facility makes sense as well.	3/30/2021 9:19 AM
90	Please don't put a tax on the ballot for parks right now. We need to pass our tax for getting our Birch Bay library built. Meanwhile, please open our Birch Bay park and put in the restrooms.	3/30/2021 5:49 AM
91	It was too long to think about each question in detail	3/29/2021 3:45 PM
92	Bathrooms in Birch Bay and to provide more picnic space and parks for events.	3/29/2021 3:36 PM
93	Every new park we should TRY to connect to a bike TRAIL (not just a lane but a TRAIL) so you don't have to build as much parking.	3/29/2021 3:07 PM
94	survey too long to keep most people's attention	3/29/2021 2:44 PM
95	Reduce bureaucracy and be smart about how you spend money. Do not harass property owners regarding their ability to drill private wells. Use the private sector to help you build and don't run up costs due to crazy ideas.....keep in budget and make sure people are doing their jobs....reward good workers and get rid of those who have unnecessary jobs or are not working hard....	3/29/2021 2:26 PM
96	Ensure for equitable restrooms - even now you have far more fixtures for men than women. Move towards single occupant type toilet rooms. Better for potty parity.	3/29/2021 2:20 PM
97	POINT ROBERTS NEED HELP... the parks there are just sad. Need for more facilities that are kept up. The boat launch should really be a top priority it is not is good working order.. need a certain car to even attempt to launch boat there	3/29/2021 1:24 PM
98	Yes, I noticed that improving or building new infrastructure for ice hockey is not part of any of the recreation plans. This sport will certainly grow in our county as the Seattle Kraken generate excitement around ice hockey with more kids becoming interested in learning and playing. More fans will generate more sources of income as well to pay for new infrastructure.	3/29/2021 10:01 AM
99	Charge for a Trail pass like in Okanagan County, Teton County, ID and other areas.	3/28/2021 4:49 PM
100	With the growing interest in hockey, the proximity to the canada border and the new Seattle team, we need to redesign the sports Plex to accommodate an improved rink and the	3/28/2021 4:07 PM

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	installation of additional rinks.	
101	We need to improve/add more sheets of ice to the area. The local hockey association has been growing at a rapid pace for years and the current facility is just not good enough. With the Seattle Kraken coming this fall the interest in hockey is only going to grow. This community needs to recognize how important this sport is to the county.	3/28/2021 1:43 PM
102	We need more and better ice rinks for hockey and skating. Renton has a nice facility with a full sized and a smaller rink housed together. This would be wonderful to have here in Whatcom county.	3/28/2021 12:16 PM
103	I think the county should considered the impact of having a new nhl team. It would nice to see a new ice facility and outdoor rinks that could be used for roller hockey and lacrosse.	3/28/2021 11:54 AM
104	Please continue to support and grow disc golf facilities across Whatcom County.	3/28/2021 11:31 AM
105	When will the city improve the Sportsplex? The city is a disrespectful landlord by allowing the building to deteriorate.	3/28/2021 11:16 AM
106	Many of the questions had no relevance to me and NR was not a choice. There is no information about going back to change a response. The questions about \$ were practically plucked out of thin air although I use the parks and trails almost daily and they are one of the most important reasons I moved here (I am retired). Cornwall Park gets tons of use. Maybe we need more like that for the new developement. I really dont like the current fad of meandering sidewalks and think most of the new construction in town is extemely ugly and practically unlivable.	3/28/2021 11:10 AM
107	There needs to be more field space for youth sports besides soccer. This town is over run by soccer fields and there is a need for lacrosse, flag football fields. Astro turf would be preferred as we get so much rain. We should think about offering tax incentives for people to donate to building astroturf fields whether in someone's will or as a yearly donation, the Sportsplex is a declining mess it should be redone somehow. If we don't invest in our young people how will we survive as a thriving community long term? What about assessing a tax on local businesses to fund youth parks? Thank you!	3/28/2021 11:09 AM
108	I would request more resources for indoor ice surface activities. A new or expansion to ice skating rink will be necessary, in my opinion. When WWU and Blazers return post covid, and with an increase in interest and demand for ice time as a byproduct of the soon to be formed Seattle Kraken hockey team, the single ice surface in Bellingham could become overburdened. Youth hockey will need available resources to continue growth and affordable opportunities to be more inclusive to all demographics.	3/28/2021 11:06 AM
109	There should be a "no opinion" or "not applicable" button. And a way to indicate I am interested but I don't have enough information to judge.	3/27/2021 9:54 AM
110	There are many outdoor recreation areas already here and they don't seem to be crowded.	3/26/2021 11:46 PM
111	Disc golf has been rapidly expanding in Bellingham and Whatcom county. The current parks supported disc golf opportunities are not adequate for the area or the population. The WDGC has done an excellent job improving access to disc golf for the community and should be further partnered with and invested in. A disc golf course should be a priority for the upcoming development of King mountain area parks. With the king mountain neighborhood expanding so rapidly, park and trail access in this area needs to be a priority.	3/26/2021 5:37 PM
112	Add more disc golf courses. Cornwall is packed with people all the time and Mossy Roc is getting much busier. Huge increase in use in the past couple years.	3/26/2021 10:38 AM
113	no	3/26/2021 9:14 AM
114	Hoping for a county disc golf course. The Whatcom County Disc Golf Club has around 450 current members + all the other folks that enjoy playing a round of disc golf. Disc golf is an increasingly popular sport and another course in this area would be a welcome edition for the local golfing community. Thank you.	3/25/2021 8:14 PM
115	Please develop more beach access and facilities for cartop boat launch. Outdoor shower, foot washers, hoses. Marine park is lovely but parking is often not viable. Glass beach needs improvements. Larrabee boat launch could use outdoor shower, foot washer, hoses.	3/25/2021 7:25 PM
116	As a mountain biker and disc golfer, Bellingham leads the way in mountain bike infrastructure.	3/25/2021 6:39 PM



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The amount of trails, pumtracks, and the general community is amazing. However, Bellingham is severely lagging behind in disc golf options. Disc golf is one of the fastest growing sports in the country and Bellingham has the natural resources to become a top destination for players. Kayak Point in Stanwood is an example of how quickly the sport is growing, they have built a world class complex and players come from all around the Puget Sound to pay to play. Thank You

117	Very long may discourage people from filling it out all the way	3/25/2021 4:23 PM
118	Some of the park services listed at the front of the survey I do not use. There should have maybe been a N/A Option. Also, based on the recent conversation at the Whatcom County Council Finance meeting, I do not support parks budgets supporting firing ranges.	3/25/2021 3:12 PM
119	I am one of many multi generation households (grandparents raising grandchildren) and would love more sheltered seating areas in parks as well as areas for Bocci ball, croquet. We love the glow in the dark croquet game in Ferndale the water "fight" as well.	3/25/2021 8:39 AM
120	Whatcom county needs more disc golf options. It's one of the fastest growing sports, and has a very low cost and environmental impact.	3/25/2021 6:37 AM
121	Thank you for the survey. The choice and quality of outdoor hiking and forest areas is what drew me to this community. I am will to pay for expanding and maintaining them. I am not in favor of funding any recreation involving motorized equipment of any kind.	3/25/2021 6:29 AM
122	I would love to see more access to lake whatcom and lake samish. Too many people and very small amount of place to be able to enjoy these areas during the summer. Would also like to see more parking at our trailheads and moto trails in the city.	3/24/2021 11:35 PM
123	Mountain Biking is overrunning traditional hiking trails. Many out of area mountain bikers leave no room to park at trailheads. Mountain Bikers are endangering hikers in multi-use areas. I prefer removing mountain bike access to Chuckanuts except along Interurban. Also, people are leaving dog poop bags on trails. Improved signage reminding people is needed. I also favor leash laws but feel people need to be educated as to why it is significant. I'd support funding an ethics educational program. Leave no trace, safety, right of way, pet control and first aid.	3/24/2021 9:37 PM
124	More disc golf. Acquisition of struggling existing ball golf courses is a prime example of win-win thinking, particularly in light of the growth demographics around the sport. Existing examples are Kayak Point Disc Golf Resort (managed by Snohomish County), Tall Firs Disc Golf Course (in Monroe), and many others across the nation. Most of these sites are pre-developed, making adaptation to disc golf's much smaller footprint and far lower operational costs extremely attractive.	3/24/2021 6:45 PM
125	Disc golf is currently underserved by both the city of Bellingham and Whatcom County. We need more 18 hole courses, allowing for more people to enjoy this lovely sport and allowing a market for all things related to blossom.	3/24/2021 5:42 PM
126	In Point Roberts, the loss of the dock at Lighthouse Park has been very detrimental to the community. The original design failed, but that does not mean that it is impossible to build such a facility. The ability to safely launch boats at the park, or at least somewhere in the community is important to the tourist industry. In the case of PR, a non-resident fee would severely negatively impact the use of any boat ramp. If anyone is exempted from user fees, it should be all the property owners, since many of the people who would be using the facilities would be Canadians who own vacation properties.	3/24/2021 3:07 PM
127	Need more of road parks for 4x4	3/24/2021 1:31 PM
128	Disc Golf is a rapidly growing sport that is underserved in both bellingham and whatcom county. The course is Ferndale is poorly laid out with tee pads on only a few holes. This course could be expanded to add additional holes. The course at Cornwall park is only 9 holes long which results in it being overcrowded. Cornwall is a beautiful park/course, but it would be nice to add additional holes in order to spread out players more effectively. In a sport growing as fast as disc golf is, it would be nice to see whatcom county parks recognize that and make the necessary and appropriate improvements to better serve the community. Disc golf is great because anyone can play it and enjoy it, from 10 year olds to 80+ year olds. It's a fun and competitive sport environment that promotes exercise and sportsmanship. Please consider allocating more funds to building our whatcom county disc golf community. Thank you!	3/24/2021 12:31 PM
129	Plan does not address indoor sports, most obvious missing component being ice hockey and	3/24/2021 11:47 AM

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ice sports. Hockey is growing here and will bust open when the Seattle NHL team starts playing, and hockey facilities in the county are woefully inadequate at present.

130	We need more Disc Golf courses! There are only two 18 hole courses within the county and none of them are within Bellingham city limits. The Cornwall Park course is a great beginner course, but is getting far too crowded during after work hours. Disc Golf is a quickly growing sport with hundreds of members of the Whatcom Disc Golf Club. It has provided a great way for members of the community to take part in a safe, socially distanced activity during this last year of the pandemic.	3/24/2021 10:16 AM
131	Disc golf courses are becoming very popular and unfortunately are getting overcrowded. I'd love to see another disc golf course added in the county.	3/24/2021 9:52 AM
132	Point Roberts needs a public dock. Lighthouse camp ground needs to be open this summer so the locals can use it, like a lot of us do every year. Boundary Bay needs some attention, trash cans at the seawall, parking signs, clean up.	3/24/2021 9:39 AM
133	Please develop more disc golf options. The number of players has exploded during the pandemic, and the current public options (most notably Cornwall) are constantly crowded. Adding another 9 holes to Cornwall would at least spread that out, and adding another course that caters to players of a similar skill level would help even more. Improvement of the Fairhaven course so that it isn't perpetually swampy with any recent rain would make it more playable and spread players out as well.	3/24/2021 9:12 AM
134	Add more Disc Golf courses and ask questions specifically about Disc Golf to the next survey. Also, please increase road bike accessibility as much as possible. Thanks!	3/24/2021 8:53 AM
135	Disc golf is underrepresented in Whatcom county and the increase in popularity will be too much to maintain the crowds that come to Cornwall.	3/24/2021 8:46 AM
136	Would love to see additional disc golf infrastructure put into the Bellingham area.	3/24/2021 8:34 AM
137	There needs to be a network of scenic trails connecting Whatcom County Communities. This could be achieved through cooperation with Farmers and Land owners through right of ways for walking along property lines. Similar to those found in the European Countries such as Ireland, Scotland, and England. This system of trails allows for more active regular movement for pleasure and discovery of the County by simply "rambling" through the countryside. The walkability of our county is appalling. Steps need to be taken to create an extensive network of simple walking paths and gates to get around without motorized vehicles. In addition, Disc golf is currently underserved by both the city of Bellingham and Whatcom County.	3/24/2021 8:21 AM
138	It's too long to expect most people to finish it. A few of the questions were ambiguous. With the Kraken starting up this fall, demand for ice hockey, figure skating and public skating is going to have a huge increase in demand. I'm surprised that wasn't even mentioned in the survey.	3/24/2021 12:15 AM
139	Fix homelessness	3/23/2021 10:17 PM
140	This was way too long. A place to rollerblade would be nice.	3/23/2021 10:14 PM
141	Out of county visitors/tourist numbers will most likely continue to increase and put a large burden on existing parks and trails. Funding by way of taxing new development and/or lodging or fuel tax makes a lot of sense. Some motorized dirt bike trails could be easily incorporated in the vast forest areas within the county and be done in a low environmental harm manner, no worse than existing multiuser trails, let alone clear cutting. Thank you!	3/23/2021 9:43 PM
142	Our property taxes keep getting increased; our sales tax was just approved to be increased; the cost of living in this area has been skyrocketing; all of these while our income does not and has not increased. We are suffocating - we can not pay more. The county must understand that we are still in a pandemic, we have an 18% unemployment rate! You can't squeeze any more out of us. We are taxed out and you have to come up with other ideas - think outside of the box for a change and get creative rather than forcing us to pay more in taxes & fees. How about increasing the property taxes of those with income levels above \$300K?	3/23/2021 9:03 PM
143	More disc golf courses to handle the increase of disc golfers in the area. It's a fast growing sport.	3/23/2021 8:28 PM
144	If the County is interested in acquiring more outdoor recreation facilities and land, then please create a plan that will allow the Sudden Valley HOA to successfully disband, allowing us to	3/23/2021 8:09 PM

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simply be County constituents without additional layers of management and expense of maintaining and insuring facilities and lands already used by the public. I'm sure the majority of residents would be more than happy to sign over those facilities, sports fields, marina, golf course, campground area, dog parks, trails.. heck, you can take the 2 pools, and the building. we "lease" for pennies to house the Whatcom County Library This would save the County the expense of acquiring and building new facilities and you would be rescuing 8,000 constituents from the nightmare of living in a large HOA in WA - where legislation is written by lobbyists for the Community Association Institute and our Senators' votes go to the biggest pockets. You could even levy a small tax for roads to cover additional expenses (it would still be less than the HOA assessments). County constituents flock to this area daily for the recreational opportunities, including those within Sudden Valley which are all 100% funded and maintained by homeowners HOA fees. And, we pay higher taxes than County constituents that live within the BHam city limits. It's time to re-evaluate your relationship with Sudden Valley.

145	We need more disc golf courses. It is the fastest growing sport. Silver lake would be a awesome place for a course . Camping fishing disc golf doesn't get much better than that.	3/23/2021 4:35 PM
146	Bellingham is in need of another disc golf course within city limits. We currently only have a 9 hole course at Cornwall but it gets crowded and congested. The growth of the sport could support another 9 hole course or even an 18. Also the disc golf community will do ALL of the work from getting funds for the baskets to maintaining the course when it's done. All we need is space and permission.	3/23/2021 12:52 PM
147	The county needs a disc golf course or multiple. It's an inexpensive way to get people of all ages using the land and facilities. The whatcom disc golf club has helped with the installation of courses. Costs are for tee pads, baskets, parking, restroom, maybe a shelter.	3/23/2021 12:38 PM
148	I'm sure you'll get a lot of specific requests, so here's mine. There's a strong disc golf community here and I'm sure they'd be happy to raise funds and do the labor to add an additional course or two. There's plenty of room, especially in the new park on Cordata. Thanks!	3/23/2021 11:35 AM
149	The survey is slanted towards expansion--buying more property. Adding amenities to existing properties and making better use of these is a higher priority to me than adding more property. Also, a \$250 per \$100k in assessed value property tax is far too much, especially if the money is only going to buy land.	3/23/2021 11:08 AM
150	Developers buy into existing infrastructure and need to pay for the same in their developments.	3/23/2021 9:38 AM
151	More kayak launching locations, an 18 hole disc golf course and more additional parks would be nice. Thank you!	3/23/2021 9:22 AM
152	Whatcom county is severely lacking disc golf opportunities. The Whatcom Disc Golf Club currently has over 460 members and is growing exponentially. This significant user group is undeserved in Whatcom county. Disc Golf is one of the fastest growing activities and Whatcom County needs to provide a quality 18 hole course.	3/23/2021 9:04 AM
153	Divert money from homeless to pay for parks	3/23/2021 7:01 AM
154	Land and development costs are lower now than they ever will be. Act promptly.	3/23/2021 6:57 AM
155	Please add more shoreline access for freshwater and saltwater areas for walking. Thank you!	3/23/2021 5:01 AM
156	These ideas seem old and outdated. Why are they using better technology to save money? There should be solar panels powering every shelter and park office. Need new blood and diversity in upper management. A female executive would be a great start. Parks management are a bunch of old white men looking after their good ol boy network covering each other's asses. Clean house already	3/22/2021 10:35 PM
157	If able purchase land that will benefit the majority of citizens. With each new purchase have a maintenance management plan in place to secure funding for on going maintenance. Also provide more funding to the department to pay for existing park staff for maintenance & hire new staff to spread the load.	3/22/2021 9:20 PM
158	Thanks for asking for our input. Federal transportation funds are also available for some trails. I think there's a difference between transportation trails (paved/along roads) and recreation trails (soft surface) that wasn't distinguished in the survey. Not sure how BC funds recreation and trails, but they do have some of the best parks, trails and well maintained. The footing is amazing for the wet conditions. Equestrian sporting and recreation activity in Langley BC	3/22/2021 6:41 PM

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across the border is plentiful but yet almost non-existent here. Equestrian activities is symbiotic with the preservation of open space, farms and outdoor recreation. Not to mention brings in a lot of jobs, tax revenue and businesses. Something Whatcom Co might want to consider for return on investment.

159	Love the parks, but we are already taxed a ton for space we can't use without a use permit. That model makes no sense.	3/22/2021 5:16 PM
160	Whatcom County has much higher than typical canoe, kayak, SUP, etc. demographic. The existing fresh and saltwater access for "pedestrian" launch of these craft is increasingly crowded/overused. There is more and more conflict with motorized boat launch useage.	3/22/2021 3:52 PM
161	Please look at replacing or fixing the sea wall at Maple Beach. The footings are exposed and the road has been undermined. (Point Roberts)	3/22/2021 3:20 PM
162	Yes. Point Roberts has been paying taxes to the county and not receiving the benefits in terms of park maintenance or investment in improving the parks. For this reason I have answered \$0 at every opportunity with regard to additional investments required by Point Roberts residents for improvements. We have already been paying for improvements and maintenance that isn't happening, so I adamantly oppose further taxation for this purpose. I have tried to answer your survey with a view to the entire county, but I find myself utterly unable to divorce the Point Roberts experience from the financing questions.	3/22/2021 2:33 PM
163	Adopt a place program. Incl parks, trails, etc	3/22/2021 1:37 PM
164	My family are very disappointed with the erosion of amenities at Lighthouse Park in Point Roberts. There used to be an interesting Orca display center, a great lookout tower, a floating dock, a large slide and many swings in the children's playground. All of these have sadly disappeared. The boat launch ramp is frequently covered with debris from the ocean. It requires regular clearing. Lighthouse Park lacks a lighthouse. A few years ago a couple offered to donate \$500 000 towards the construction of a working lighthouse, but the offer was turned down. This park was a focal point in Pt. Roberts for homeowners and visitors, young and old. Today Lighthouse Park is a mere skeleton of its former self!	3/22/2021 12:38 PM
165	Point Roberts needs a boat launch, a dock and lighthouse at LIGHTHOUSE park.	3/22/2021 11:22 AM
166	Please try to provide these services for people who are less able to afford additional spending. Nature and recreation should be available to everyone. Subsidize hiking, playgrounds, and family activities, not golfing, shooting, and horseback riding!	3/22/2021 11:21 AM
167	It might be nice if you added some questions about degrees of personal usage of different facilities.	3/22/2021 10:44 AM
168	no	3/22/2021 10:16 AM
169	Due to the homeless camps and rampant crime in our parks, I do not feel safe using them. So I do not use them. The answer is not more parks—maintain and secure the ones we have!	3/22/2021 8:11 AM
170	YES! Point Roberts needs its dock back! Just because the engineers who built the last dock didn't engineer it to withstand the ocean at Lighthouse Park site, doesn't mean we shouldn't have a dock! It's completely unfair! Our dock is what makes the park fun. It's a travesty that our community wasn't allowed to rebuild our own dock if you can't supply us with one. PLEASE brings us a new viable dock or allow us to construct one. Thank you!	3/22/2021 7:59 AM
171	Parks are for families to enjoy. A place to take children or grandchildren and feel reasonably safe. Homeless encampments should be removed immediately	3/22/2021 5:26 AM
172	thank you for soliciting citizens opinions	3/22/2021 5:20 AM
173	My concerns are all focused on Point Roberts, specifically Maple Beach. It would be great to have Parks people around, to have some garbage collection along the beach and more county support for the existing parks and public spaces. Lighthouse Park needs upgrades and washroom facilities. The road tax that is collected in Point Roberts by gas stations should stay in Point Roberts and be put towards proper road systems and BIKE LANES!!! The tar and gravel used to repave all the roads a couple of years ago is awful. It's terrible to cycle on, to rollerblade on, to skateboard on... It absolutely does not lend itself to a family friendly or visitor friendly road system. Please consider redoing this job with asphalt.	3/21/2021 6:58 PM
174	Point Roberts has not been treated fairly by Whatcom County Parks and Rec...you need to	3/21/2021 6:46 PM

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have a representative from Point Roberts added to the committee..example is the dock and shelters and lighthouse Park...we do not have an off leash dog park here and it is sorely needed...our tax dollars are not utilized properly for our area.

175	Point Roberts LIGHTHOUSE	3/21/2021 5:14 PM
176	For the Maple Beach Park at Point Roberts - there needs to be garbage cans supplied by the Parks Department - they say that they cant go on the road because that is not park so they can be installed on the Sea Side of the seawall for the summer time - and they need to address the smooth seawall that does not stop water momentum	3/21/2021 4:43 PM
177	Point Roberts Needs a public Dock and Boat launch	3/21/2021 4:36 PM
178	>Thanks for the awesome parks and trails! We love them. >Question 33 should apply to all residential units, not just single family homes. >Since city parks were mentioned, how about getting the city mayor to enforce the no-camping law. That would be a huge improvement for allowing the general public to enjoy their local parks. >Can't end on that note. The city and county parks significantly add to the quality of life here in the Bellingham area and help folks lead a healthy lifestyle. The health savings alone justify any of the small public costs. Keep up the great work!	3/21/2021 1:38 PM
179	I think the least expensive route would be to improve access and amenities on land you already own. Create access points at lakes and beaches from land already owned by city or county. Increase parking and shuttle opportunities on land already owned. Don't allow overcrowded parks to ruin the surrounding neighborhoods by allowing guest from outside the community to park on and destroy private property. People leave trash everywhere and park all over yards, it is not fair to neighbors of parks to have to do all the cleanup after park goers.	3/21/2021 12:20 PM
180	Limit downhill biking on hiking trails. TOO DANGEROUS	3/21/2021 11:59 AM
181	A few questions asked for choices regarding programs, classes and events. WCPR cut out classes years ago, programs too and the Highland games. Besides Ski to Sea, what else @ WCPR is applicable to those questions? We recognize the important need for WCPR to have more money to continue their high standards caring for our parks. Tossing out an increase of \$250. per \$1000. is a huge jump from what we currently pay to support WCPR. We recommend a more modest increase and yes we'd accept an increase.	3/21/2021 11:56 AM
182	There were no questions about actually using the parks and the quality of the experience. Too many of the parks are becoming less usable and scary to go to because of the number of homeless, the drug users, the trash. There are places we don't go to anymore because of it. Sunset Pond, Cornwall Park, Post Point and areas of Fairhaven Park. Please consider some sort of safety measures for those who want to use these beautiful parks legitimately in your planning efforts. Realistically I know this is a problem everywhere.	3/21/2021 11:27 AM
183	More attention to the Point Roberts area. We have Lighthouse Park with no lighthouse and a deplorable boat launch. A park at Maple Beach with no facilities...not even a garbage can. As well as a cement erosion barrier that is failing.	3/21/2021 10:57 AM
184	Please build a Lighthouse at Lighthouse Park in Point Roberts.	3/21/2021 10:24 AM
185	This is a terrible survey. The questions are vague and not detailed enough to express my views	3/21/2021 9:45 AM
186	Tax the hell out of any new development. Every building. That's how creeping sprawl happens.	3/21/2021 9:38 AM
187	Get rid of the invasive species taking over	3/21/2021 9:14 AM
188	We need a dock for boat launching in Point Roberts! It ridiculous that we still don't have one. Use the area next to the marina and or create a public/private boat launch using Port/Park/Marina entity. I believe the County owns the land next to the Marina/ breakwater.	3/21/2021 9:14 AM
189	Point Roberts needs a proper boat launch at Lighthouse Park. The previous floating dock was a complete failure. RV sewer dump at campground is also desirable. No tax increases please. We are already struggling to pay our property tax as is. Point Roberts suffers from high taxation with very little benefit for our community. We have extremely limited access to county facilities outside of Point Roberts.	3/21/2021 9:01 AM
190	take care of lighthouse Park amenities as this park is valuable asset for both residents and visitors, boat ramp a must and a viable floating dock too, fire your dock engineers our old float	3/21/2021 8:10 AM

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	system lasted 16 years. maintain the whale cener and observation stations.	
191	dock and launch ramp in Pint Roberts	3/21/2021 7:16 AM
192	County Parks has dramatically reduced the facilities at Lighthouse Park in Point Roberts, creating a source of considerable frustration to residents and visitors. The dock, Orca Center, whale-watching platform, and much of the boardwalk & picnic area have been removed, compromising people's ability to make full use of the park. Washrooms are locked and outdoor spigots disabled much of the time. At minimum, the dock should be replaced. It was used for boat launches, fishing, and just children hanging out. What we have left is a pathetic ghost of what we once had.	3/21/2021 6:59 AM
193	Please please do NOT raise taxes in any capacity or formula to pay for more parks!!! Reduce expenses if changes must be made. The parks are great and we as a community CANNOT stand more taxes on anything. Families are already greatly suffering under so many massive ways in which we are taxed. If you continue to tax us to death this county will be destroyed of economic diversity. You will be left with a fully gentrified elite community and also an increasingly impoverished one.	3/21/2021 1:50 AM
194	Consider Point Roberts as a stand alone project. /. Area .gas tax % goes to parks and trail. ESP. Washrooms on the beach..	3/20/2021 11:50 PM
195	Start being more fiscally responsible with the tax money you are currently using.politicians should have to sign a contract so that they are responsible for the promises they have made to get elected	3/20/2021 11:44 PM
196	1. No added accommodations for motorized vehicles, bicycles, or horse trails that are used by hikers. 2. No added accommodations for motorized water craft. 3. County population growth and services for same to be paid from new residential and commercial construction diverse fees, levies, taxes. 4. Additional funding from gas taxes for all, but no increased use fees for parks which would deter same from being a travel and stay destination for tourism income for all businesses and not just income from park use.	3/20/2021 8:13 PM
197	More and more people are getting in to fishing and hunting. Most are bank fishermen. There's definitely not enough bank/ dock fishing spaces in Whatcom County. Lake Terrell is a prime example. The one fishing dock fills up so quick every day and it's very hard to get a spot to fish. One to 2 more socks with access astound that lake would be great. Lake Samish has really no bank fishing access. The rocky bank that runs by I-5 doesn't have safe or good open areas to fish.	3/20/2021 7:14 PM
198	It was very long and there were some terms I was unfamiliar with, such as farmland conservation and general obligation bond, that could have used more explanation.	3/20/2021 7:01 PM
199	Single family homes are not the problem; the giant rental buildings including the lower income buildings are the issue. These tenants do not contribute anything to the tax base. The single-family home owner is paying an exorbitant amount of taxes to cover the use of Park facilities by renters. A tax should be placed on renters or rental buildings to pay for the additional use and additional creation of Parks.	3/20/2021 6:59 PM
200	Point Roberts needs a new and safe small boat launch facility The breakwater at marina would help shelter landings and launching. An all weather dock at lighthouse park would also greatly increase access and fishing opportunities.	3/20/2021 5:53 PM
201	There are a lot of rental apartments going up built by outside investors. There are a lot of out of town day use especially Chuckanut, northshore. There should be more pay to play options. Taxing single family homes already stretched thin should not be an option. When are renters paying in their subsidized housing? City should be taxing the large developments who get tax breaks. Parks should be charging out of county user fees. Offer less access for out of town so locals can enjoy local access. Stop the homeless encampments and destruction of our parks that tax payers have to pay to clean up.	3/20/2021 5:19 PM
202	I answered the survey based on where in the county I live, the facilities that I know are important to my neighbors and me, while still trying to keep the big picture and environmental issues in mind.	3/20/2021 5:17 PM
203	A Fishing wharf,Breakwater and launching ramp are desperately needed in Point Roberts paid for by user fees,tax increases or bond issue. Get it done!!!	3/20/2021 5:06 PM
204	We need a functional boat launch and more public access to our beaches	3/20/2021 5:05 PM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

205	Biggest issue for me and many others in Point Roberts is a small boat dock.	3/20/2021 4:33 PM
206	Please build a safe boat launch at the Point Roberts Marina where the boat launch was suppose to be built. We have public parks access there. It is safe from wave action behind the break water in the entrance. We also need a Walking/fishing pier with end ramp to seasonal dock for boat access Lighthouse Park Point Roberts. but the safe boat ramp is the most important	3/20/2021 4:28 PM
207	Whatcom County has not met current obligations to provide a boat launch at Lighthouse park. The previous design failed and the residents are in need to sustain the viability of this place. We already pay high taxes, can Whatcom County Parks please explain what will be done to proceed with a public boat launch at Lighthouse Park, or at the Marina.. Thank you! J Katz 360-945-2383	3/20/2021 4:16 PM
208	Boat launch facility Point Roberts. As part of any multi family/commercial development shoreline project require beach access. Institute growth management fees and require projects to pay proportional share impact on existing and proposed park master plan facilities.	3/20/2021 3:47 PM
209	none	3/20/2021 3:41 PM
210	Survey too long	3/20/2021 3:16 PM
211	We don't need superficial cosmetic improvements such as a new lighthouse. We need infrastructure for the post pandemic era to make our community financially independent. A good place to start would be investing in a 3D printer to develop affordable housing, public work spaces equipped with high speed internet so people can work remotely, and tourist accommodation, investment into renewable energy such as wind and water turbines for our shoreline. 3D printed buildings are a fraction of the cost of traditional construction so the equipment pays for itself. For more information see this video. <a href="https://youtu.be/kA4DFv4IU7Q">https://youtu.be/kA4DFv4IU7Q</a>	3/20/2021 3:11 PM
212	Land acquisition is woeful in Point Roberts. All inland forest areas here have trails and I've seen no effort to acquire these relatively inexpensive tracts. The inland forest areas and wetlands could be acquired for what will look like tiny amounts in the future. Land acquisition and easements should be prioritized because once it's gone, it's gone. Programs and facilities can come later. People of all ages already use these lands and treasure them. The vast majority of people that I meet, who aren't seeking to profit from development, would prefer that we retain our forests and landscapes to additional programs and facilities. I know this because I talk to people about it. It's why people come here and like to live here. Save these lands now. 50 acres of forest land with trails that are heavily used by the community sold recently for a bit over one million dollars. No public access was sought (or at least made public) for the even more heavily used Reno Ranch beaches when that enormous stretch of coastal land adjacent to Monument Park was bought and subdivided. The loudest voices here are the pro-development ones who try to shame the majority based on their own personal financial interests. They are a small minority who are largely responsible for slowly killing what most people love about this place.	3/20/2021 3:06 PM
213	no	3/20/2021 2:34 PM
214	Point Roberts badly needs a dock. In the last few years, the quality/quantity of facilities at Lighthouse Park has seriously deteriorated. We lost our beloved dock that was in constant use, and the picnic area and boardwalk was seriously downsized. It is depressing to remember the wonderful park that was in place when we moved here. What's more, Lily Point parking area is in constant need of repair. The holes often get humongous. The person who works there now is doing her best, but we need a lot more gravel to fix it.	3/20/2021 2:31 PM
215	There needs to be a way to register no opinion. For example, I do not own or ride horses, so I have no opinion about supporting them. ATVs are in another category though, because they rip up trails and cause pollution (including noise and litter) which has an adverse affect on me and the environment. Some of the questions here were ambiguous, which left me guessing at meanings.	3/20/2021 2:23 PM
216	The county and cities have overspent budgets building and maintaining parks used by a small percentage of actual taxpayers. Increasing user fees is only reasonable. Enough with the land buys. We are starting to vote no on all taxes if you don't start showing some restraint.	3/20/2021 2:11 PM
217	Need more splash pads, pool & easy walking trails.	3/20/2021 1:56 PM
218	There should be a n/a or a no interest section in some of the answers as I have no opinion (or	3/20/2021 1:54 PM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

a negative opinion) on some uses such as mountain bikes, ATVs or horses.

219	Point Roberts property owners pay somewhere between \$5 and 6 million annually in property taxes and yet the county parks are substandard by any measure. Lighthouse Marine Park has only an ugly rusty steel light (no lighthouse in sight) and nether park has a dock. The LH campground is tiny and the facilities are bare bones, The trails at Lily Point Park have fallen into disrepair because of erosion. Considering that the PR's economy is solely based on tourism, the lack of attention from Whatcom County to the two parks is a disgrace.	3/20/2021 1:35 PM
220	Concerned about the use of parks for non-recreational purposes. Safety factors based on lack of security of inner city parks and non-enforcement of rules.	3/20/2021 1:08 PM
221	No need to spend more money for recreational facilities to be taken over by the homeless until we reclaim for the general public what we already have. I do not want to spend for current or new recreation facilities for myself or my grandkids when the ones we have have become dangerous homeless campgrounds and drug distribution .sights	3/20/2021 1:02 PM
222	Point Roberts feels like a forgotten child in all the county plans. For the live of God, can someone pay attention to us and fix the dock? Fix Lighthouse Park? It's like a death by a thousand cuts over the last 20 years here....and proportionately it's hard to see where all the taxes collected from Canadian and USA property owners get invested back in the Point. Please please please pay attention to us.	3/20/2021 1:01 PM
223	please remember that Point Roberts is here and part of whatcom county...we have no easy access for boats or kayakes ....we need a boat dock.	3/20/2021 12:54 PM
224	Willing to pay more tax or levy for a dock at lighthouse park. Each town should pay for their own facilities	3/20/2021 12:29 PM
225	Point Roberts lost a lot of park amenities at Lighthouse park: boardwalk space, whale lookout, dock, even the boat launch is now substandard. I would like to see a pier built using the existing (newish) pilings at Lighthouse Park. It seems engineering isn't able to create a suitable dock, so maybe a pier (non-floating) would be feasible.	3/20/2021 12:06 PM
226	Point Roberts needs a public boat dock for launching and docking small watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, fishing boats and sailboats	3/20/2021 11:58 AM
227	Put more money into the County Parks in Point Roberts -- with input from the local popluation. Build a fishing dock in Point Roberts.	3/20/2021 11:56 AM
228	We love using the parks in this county and hope that it will be a big draw to people moving here in the future. However Bellingham needs to get a grip on the homeless situation because it would be a very sad situation to put money into the parks to have it become a homeless camp and not a place that families and other people can enjoy. We moved here from California and know that Whatcom county impressed us with its parks And I hope that others that visit or move here will continue to love our park system as much as we do.	3/20/2021 11:43 AM
229	Point Roberts raised funds for a lighthouse to be built but at Lighthouse Marine Park, but the County refused based on "maintenance cost." Crazy. We need a lighthouse and a system to cover maintenance. #2. All dog waste disposal bags provided by County should be FULLY and rapidly BIODEGRADABLE please. Trailside bags and bag "escapes from pockets" show up everywhere, including on beach and in the sea. Easy remedy and good public education move.	3/20/2021 11:21 AM
230	Remove the homeless so we can enjoy the parks again! My family can no longer use the parks in the city of Bellingham due to the trash, needles and unstable people who are milling around. My families safety in parks is my #1 priority, we are forced to go to Ferndale or Lynden to enjoy parks.	3/20/2021 10:27 AM
231	Parks are overcrowded, trail etiquette becoming a huge problem. We need more dedicated space, more public access of ocean and lake shorelines. Trails are being overused and inappropriately used causing damage. There is too much competition for parking and camp sites and backcountry access. Fee increases are justified but marginalized communities should be able to access for free. We live next to Gailbraith Mountain and have seen a huge influx this year and problems with overcrowding and lack of respectfulness on the trails and to others that tried to share access.	3/20/2021 8:58 AM
232	Keep up the good work !	3/20/2021 8:57 AM
233	Keep and acquire as much natural property such as what the Whatcom Land Trust does as a	3/20/2021 7:56 AM



## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

	legacy for the future.	
234	Keep parks and recreation areas free from squatters	3/20/2021 6:59 AM
235	Less mtn bike trails, enforce off leash dog and dog cleanup rules, support water access sites	3/20/2021 5:20 AM
236	I would like to see some type of a "speed limit" on trails that are used by both walkers and bikers.	3/19/2021 11:45 PM
237	You should have a N/A button to hit.	3/19/2021 10:07 PM
238	We need to be aggressive and prioritize preserving natural space, creating new parks, and recreation opportunities. Keep Whatcom Green, keep our quality of life high. Don't allow over development and degradation of our environment.	3/19/2021 9:53 PM
239	Encourage non-motorized, conservation-oriented use of trails, parks, etc.	3/19/2021 9:25 PM
240	There is a huge over reach in projected Lake Whatcom park development. Campsites near the highest levels of the Bonneville Power lines will cause summer forest fires. Who will pay for those mistakes. Bikes and hiking trails mixed together just don't work. Parking permits should be required. And boat launch areas should require shoreline development permits.	3/19/2021 8:24 PM
241	More money spent on parking and trail maintenance on highly used Stimpson Family Nature Preserve and Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve. Parking is horrible at Stimpson park, for example, and is under urgent need of improvement.	3/19/2021 8:08 PM
242	no	3/19/2021 7:48 PM
243	No.	3/19/2021 7:42 PM
244	Too many grouped items many would find mutually exclusive (e.g. cross country ski trails and snowmobile trails). I feel the goal should be primarily on acquiring and preserving opens space now and I developing and improving later. It's gonna be impossible soon.	3/19/2021 7:35 PM
245	Having bathrooms open year round would be extremely helpful to families with children. My family would love to see another dedicated swimming area in the county (with good parking). Thanks!	3/19/2021 7:14 PM
246	Wilderness/Open Space doesn't come back. Future generations won't thank us for the buildings and roads. They will thank us for the things we refused to destroy.	3/19/2021 7:10 PM
247	No	3/19/2021 6:28 PM
248	Please do more to enforce park rules Dogs are off leash everywhere Patrons pollute and leave trash at the parks Homeless people occupy the parks full time My wife will not go alone to any park in Bellingham Shameful	3/19/2021 6:22 PM
249	I do not feel safe in our current parks or trails due to the homeless/drugs.	3/19/2021 6:16 PM
250	Do not add any new taxes	3/19/2021 5:45 PM
251	More and different parks are always great!	3/19/2021 5:29 PM
252	Lake Padden and Lake Whatcom need public boathouses for human powered boats. Monthly or annual rental by users.	3/19/2021 5:14 PM
253	consider "user pays" - for children in athletic programs or using sports fields, there could be "business" sponsors to make it affordable for some families (biking, snow sports etc should all be "user pays") - and BTW, several parks I used to take my grandchildren too can no longer be used due to being taken over by those unhoused.... this will be an ongoing and likely growing problem. This survey doesn't represent the reality of that problem.	3/19/2021 5:12 PM
254	In an effort to respond to all the questions, I picked "3" when I didn't have enough information.	3/19/2021 4:49 PM
255	Please. Protect and Add to open space. Preserve land now before it is ruined by greedy developers. Just because people want to move here doesn't mean they can. Dont ruin this beautiful land with density. Please preserve! Also separate dog trails from hiker trails. The dogs are way out of control, off leash, and they leave feces everywhere. Dog owners are increasingly irresponsible for their pet poop. Multipurpose trails are having more and more problems. No dogs allowed on trails for hikers.	3/19/2021 3:18 PM
256	We need more natural space and parks to keep a good quality of life. Thanks for your work.	3/19/2021 2:49 PM

## Whatcom County Parks, Recreation &amp; Open Space Plan Survey

257	You should have other options for people's satisfaction with facilities, eg, "I don't use these" or "no opinion"	3/19/2021 12:54 PM
258	If you want surveys like this to accurately represent residents, make it a lot shorter and a lot more clear.	3/19/2021 11:55 AM
259	Mixed use trails for mountain bikers and hikers can sometimes create hazards for both.	3/19/2021 10:21 AM
260	No thank you	3/18/2021 8:09 PM
261	Our country has minimal options for motorized use (dirt bikes, atv, snowmobile, etc) and this is a topic that really needs reevaluated and addressed.	3/18/2021 7:30 PM
262	stop development, make more green space.	3/18/2021 6:26 PM
263	The online reservation system is terrible. Canadians and people out of the area should not be able to reserve campsites etc at the same time as walkham County residents. Welcome County residents should have priority. Canadians and out of county residents should have to pay more. Do not let the homeless population take over our parks.	3/17/2021 4:56 PM
264	Too much undeveloped waterfront property held by all local jurisdictions not yet developed for needed recreation.	3/17/2021 4:21 PM
265	Survey difficult to answer as familiarity is driven by park or parks used. Observed deterioration of standards, dog leash enforcement and landscape due to park users refusal to follow the law at Hovander. You need more personnel there to uphold the law and make the park safe again.	3/17/2021 1:30 PM
266	More Garbage cans!	3/17/2021 7:05 AM
267	Doing well everywhere except motorized off road options. Doesn't seem Whatcom county has any at all.	3/17/2021 4:00 AM
268	We live in a beautiful area with areas that should be protected and available for the enjoyment of residents.	3/16/2021 10:24 PM
269	Please build more disc golf courses near where people live (Bellingham). The courses that exist are extremely popular and busy. If you build it, we will come (and we'll help take care and develop parkland). And more places for swimming! More people/more heat=explosion of anger and terrible health outcomes, especially for poor people.	3/16/2021 10:18 PM
270	More outdoor/indoor swimming options and off leash fenced dog areas please!	3/16/2021 10:17 PM
271	Maintain what exists - no new taxes.	3/16/2021 8:25 PM
272	Not once was aquatics mentioned in this survey. We don't need more trails or parks, we NEED more pools. We are surrounded by water and we have one pool for our region. This is irresponsible. People in Whatcom County should not have to go to Skagit County or Canada to swim or get their kids swim lessons. Stop ig boring the aquatics community! Our pools are over subscribed and run down.	3/16/2021 8:19 PM
273	Keep homeless drug addicts out of parks	3/16/2021 8:00 PM
274	Survey is not very well done. When asking me how I feel about things you should be finding out if I use the facility/do the activity first. This information along with what I would support is actually giving you better data about what the community wants. Would also be good to ask what parks or trail areas I use the most.	3/16/2021 7:19 PM
275	no	3/16/2021 7:07 PM
276	The people in this county cannot afford more taxes, more fees, etc. We have a very high-risk poverty population and the outdoors are their only escape. Please do not over tax citizens. The money is there - you just have to stop wasting it!	3/16/2021 6:12 PM
277	We need public swimming pools in Bellingham.	3/16/2021 5:42 PM
278	I would prefer not to have additional regressive taxes like gas or vehicle licensing or park access fees implemented. Property taxes here are at least half, if not a third of the area I moved here from. We were lucky enough to be able to afford a home and would be happy to pay a little more to support the community. Frankly, we bought because we could not prove to the three rental companies that own this town that we could afford to pay rent on a one or two	3/16/2021 5:23 PM

Whatcom County Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan Survey

bedroom apartment but were able to get approved for a mortgage of 500,000 with a lower monthly cost than those apartments. After moving to Bellingham (admittedly not very long ago) we noticed there is a tension between land preservation and equitable housing. I have heard many long term residents (of Bellingham) call for increased development because of the skyrocketing housing costs while others admonish development for preservation purposes. I would encourage Bellingham City officials to consider reforms to the rental monopolies in town (not allowing pets, increasing rents exponentially, requiring 4 times rent to prove you can live there, etc). That may relieve some of the tension between the strong feelings about development vs. preservation. This may not be the right place, but since this asked for comments I figured I would share.

279	You were missing collaboration and consultation with local Native Tribes. You are under treaty obligations to consult with the Lummi Nation and other communities whose lands and sacred sites were stolen. Especially since you discussed fishing and water access.	3/16/2021 5:17 PM
280	There needs to be more playgrounds in the Puget St area, there is nothing within walking distance. The Samish Crest trail system should be expanded and protected.	3/16/2021 5:11 PM
281	It might be beneficial to look into a tiered system for real estate tax. We are seeing an increase in housing prices and some are being boxed out of the system. If we could tax living in houses 1million or above a different rate than those under 500k that would be beneficial to those locals who are having a hard time finding a home.	3/16/2021 4:16 PM
282	Keep it simple. No special programs. Parks, trails restrooms, parking.	3/16/2021 12:28 PM
283	Please prioritize protecting our natural and open spaces! I would advocate for the county prioritizing more land acquisitions if necessary to mitigate for potential development encroachment.	3/16/2021 12:54 AM
284	The urban already developed areas are being ignored. As density increases, insufficient parks are being set aside for everyone to have outdoor space. All new urban development should required new park space and every resident should have a balcony for urban outdoor space.	3/15/2021 10:42 PM
285	The county needs more mountain bike and multi-use trail systems to exist. This cannot be at the expense of moving equestrian or moto users. We have so much land at our disposal and very few trails.	3/15/2021 8:36 PM
286	Trail connectivity is a high priority.	3/15/2021 7:00 PM
287	We invest WAY too much in Football, Baseball type sports facilities ( and the upkeep in those facilities) - when those sports are actively played by only a minor fraction of our population. We need to support activities available ( not spectated) by the largest proportions of our residents. More ( many more) cabins, yurts, alpine huts, etc will get folks out and about. I mourn, still, the loss of Kulshan Cabin - for example. Also, food service and supplies at Silver Lake, Samish Lake. Etc will reduce travel/carbon and increase satisfaction. FYI / the su age on Shehome hill is wrong. You spent a lot of money on the new tower, but not a dime on updating the map. It's that kind of lack of detail and care that is frustrating. The project manager should have updated the way finding ( yes - it's COB, I know, please tell them )	3/15/2021 6:53 PM
288	There needs to be a shoulder on the roads going around north lake Whatcom for runners and cyclists safety.	3/15/2021 6:22 PM
289	Our parks are wonderful and varied in the landscapes they protect and services they provide. Parks will be more and more important as the population grows.	3/15/2021 5:57 PM
290	Provide more dog bag dispensers, and trash cans to put it in. Then enforce the law better. What good is new trails, or parks, when you see dog poo, or used dog bags on the ground or hanging in the trees.	3/15/2021 5:21 PM

***Appendix C:  
Master Capital Improvements List***

10/4/2023

DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN  
MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED	
												TOTAL	D
0_Countywide	All	Misc. Parks Capital Improvements	TBD	REET	\$600,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	
0_Countywide	All	Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan	Develop departmental planning and guidance document (6 year planning period)	REET	\$100,000	\$50,000		\$50,000				\$0	
0_Countywide	All	Misc. Parks Capital Improvements	TBD	REET	\$600,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	
0_Countywide	All	Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan	Develop departmental planning and guidance document (6 year planning period)	REET	\$100,000	\$50,000		\$50,000				\$0	
0_Countywide	All	Forest Management Plan	Develop forest management plan for all departmental forested properties, including Lake Whatcom Park, Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve, and Canyon Lake Community Forest	REET	\$100,000	\$25,000	\$75,000					\$0	
Aiston Preserve	West	Day use improvements	Assist Lummi Island Heritage Trust with facility improvements	REET	\$50,000	\$50,000						\$0	
Alderson Beach Access	West	Day use improvements	Day use parking, restroom, and beach access improvements	REET, LTAC	TBD								
Bay Horizon Park	West	Development	Playfields, multi-use trail, repave parking areas and improve ADA accessibility. Install directional/informational signage	Grants, REET, NW Park District, Donation	\$815,000							\$815,000	X
Bay Horizon Park	West	Development	Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)	Grants, REET, NW Park District, Donation	\$500,000							\$500,000	x
Bay Horizon Park	West	Demolition	Remove Hostel Building at Bay Horizon Park, restore area to multi-purpose playfield	Grants, REET, NW Park District, Donation	\$493,000			\$493,000				\$0	
Bay to Baker Trail-Maple Falls to Glacier	East	Planning	Develop master trail corridor plan linking recreational and community assets	REET, LTAC, Grants, Donation	TBD								X

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10/4/2023

DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN  
MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK/FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget					NOT SCHEDULED	TOTAL		
					2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			2028	
Bay to Baker Trail-Maple Falls to Glacier	East	Development	Improve restroom & parking facilities, reconstruct bridges, boardwalk and install wayfinding signage, tread upgrades and re-establish degraded trail sections	REET, Grants, Donation	\$470,000							X	\$470,000
Bellingham Senior Activity Center	West	Development	Improve ADA accessibility, upgrade interior lighting (Code compliance), Energy efficiency upgrades (e.g. insulated windows, roof-replacement, HVAC, solar array, etc.), investigate subgrade conditions for long-term building stabilization	Grants, REET, Donation	\$866,000	\$772,000						X	\$0
Bellingham Senior Activity Center	West	Utilities	Replace aging and damaged sewer line	REET	\$50,000								\$0
Birch Bay Beach Park	West	Development	Develop Parking & Restroom Facilities (Phase 1-3 Costs per Master Plan)	REET, LTAC, Parks District, Grants, Donation	\$5,365,000		\$5,105,000						\$0
Canyon Lake Community Forest	East	Restoration	Alternate Access Agreement	REET	\$150,000	\$50,000							\$0
Canyon Lake Community Forest	East	Development	Develop expanded trailhead facility, (asphalt parking, CXT Toilet, improve pedestrian circulation, install directional/informational signage)	Grants, REET, Donation	\$625,000							X	\$625,000
Canyon Lake Community Forest	East	Restoration	Reconstruct Bridges (2-20 foot bridges, and 3-40 foot bridges), Trail rehabilitation with partner service organizations.	REET, Conservation Futures, Donations	\$275,000							X	\$275,000
Cherry Point Beach Access	West	Development	Parking, Beach Access, Signage	REET, Grants, Mitigation	\$375,000							X	\$375,000
Chuckanut Mtn. Park	South	Samish Park connector trail	Evaluate regional trails connectivity, including 2.7 miles connecting Samish Park	Grants, Donation	\$20,000							X	\$20,000
Chuckanut Mtn. Park	South	Pine & Cedar Trailhead improvements	Install restroom, kiosk, signage and parking improvements	REET, Grants, Donation	\$625,000							X	\$625,000

East Region
South Region
West Region

10/4/2023

DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN  
MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED	
												D	TOTAL
Denning Eagle Homestead Park	East	Development	Install CXT toilet, improve accessibility, (walking paths, parking, picnic areas).	REET, Grants, Donation	\$625,000							X	\$625,000
Dittrich Park	South	Development	Develop regional park master plan that considers both Dittrich and Samish Parks in the context of providing appropriate recreational access that is sensitive to existing land use patterns, site limitations and facility demand, and opportunities for regional connectivity	REET, Grants, Donation	TBD							X	
Dittrich Park & Samish Park	South	Development	Develop park master plan, for new day-use facility, (Parking, restrooms, picnic area, water access).	REET, Grants, Donation	\$3,250,000							X	\$3,250,000
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center	East	HVAC	Evaluate existing boiler efficiency and serviceability	REET	\$134,770								\$0
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center	East	Commercial Kitchen	Upgrade appliances, and accessories to upgrade facility to commercial kitchen status	Grants	\$150,000		\$150,000						\$0
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center	East	Vehicle and Pedestrian Paving	Remove and replace damaged and degraded pavement and curbing	REET, Grants	TBD								
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center	East	Day use improvements	Construct play fields and covered court	REET, Grants, Donation	\$660,000							X	\$660,000
Ferdale Senior Activity Center	West	HVAC	Replace/upgrade heating and ventilation system	REET	\$335,000				\$335,000				\$0

Table Key
East Region
South Region
West Region

10/4/2023

DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN  
MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK/FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED		
												D	TOTAL	
Headquarters Complex	East	Administrative Campus Renovation	Renovate administrative office, add staff restroom, public meeting space, entry & gallery. Expand staff office space into adjacent administrative building. Construct new department maintenance shop, convert existing facility to office space and dry-storage. Renovate public parking area, pedestrian walkways, and informational signage.	REET	\$1,500,000								x	\$1,500,000
Headquarters Complex	East	Administrative Office HVAC	Replace/upgrade heating and ventilation system	REET	\$93,623								x	\$0
Headquarters Complex	East	Administrative Campus Renovation	Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)	REET	\$500,000								x	\$500,000
Headquarters Complex	East	Service Building	Electrical service upgrade & shop floor	REET	\$165,000								X	\$165,000
Headquarters Complex	East	Parking and pedestrian improvements	Improve ADA accessibility, replace deteriorating and uneven paved surfaces, etc.	REET	\$372,400	\$77,300	\$295,100							\$0
Headquarters Complex	East	Utilities	Water Service & Distribution - Phase II	REET	\$81,411									\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Planning	Develop park master plan addressing current capital projects (restrooms, picnic shelters, road and parking, maintenance facility, animal contact area, etc.), community connections, improvement opportunities and operations plan.	REET	\$275,000	\$275,000								\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Day use area	Construct 3 picnic shelters	REET	\$440,750			\$374,050						\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Animal Contact area	Improve accessibility, pens and features	Donation	\$260,000								X	\$260,000
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Maintenance building	Construct shop / equipment storage building	REET	\$130,000	\$65,000	\$65,000							\$0

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DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN  
MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED		TOTAL
												D	X	
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Getz Barn recreational development	Parking, trailhead and restoration of old dairy construction	REET, Grants	\$500,000								X	\$500,000
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Road, entry, parking & utility Improvements	Surface / construct parking lots and improve access roads. Construct new restrooms and renovate existing restroom facility.	REET, Grants	\$2,400,000			\$250,000	\$225,000	\$1,925,000				\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Development	Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)	REET, Grants	\$500,000								X	\$500,000
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Hovander Barn	Exterior paint, weather proofing	REET, Grants	\$147,000									
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Interpretive Center	Remodel interior for Multi-use, and replace septic system.	REET, Grants, Donations	\$504,500			\$67,000	\$437,500					\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Bridge	Replace bridge over slough between Tennant Lk & Animal Contact Area	REET	\$250,000								x	\$250,000
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Flood repair and mitigation improvements	Restore gravel roadway surfaces, damage to structures, and identify flood reduction/mitigation opportunities such as improving stormwater conveyance structures (e.g., culvert at hand launch facility)	REET	\$262,000			\$80,000	\$182,000				X	\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	Rental residence	Structure demolition and site rehabilitation	REET	\$55,500									\$0
Hovander Park - Tennant Lake	West	New restroom building	install new restroom building in park core	REET	\$1,350,000								X	\$1,350,000
Interurban Trail	South	Trail improvements	Resurface trail, (e.g. upgrade pavement surface from gravel to asphalt). Improve wayfinding and interpretive signage	REET, LTAC, Donations	\$250,000								X	\$250,000
Jensen Family Nature Reserve	West	Parking Improvements	Asphalt pavement, concrete curbing, striping and improved drainage facilities	REET, Grants	\$225,000								X	\$225,000

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PARK/FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget					NOT SCHEDULE D	TOTAL	
					2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			2028
Josh VanderYacht	East	Van Zandt Community Hall	Renovate community hall facility to improve ADA access, and increase occupancy	REET, Grants	\$100,000	\$452,000						\$0
Josh VanderYacht	East	Day-use Improvements	Replace wood play structure, surfacing, edging and fall-protection. Resurface sports courts.	Grants, REET, Donations							X	\$325,000
Lake Whatcom Park	South	Hertz Trail	Capital maintenance program	REET			\$353,500					\$0
Lake Whatcom Park	South	Parking & day-use improvements	Expand parking and trailhead facility, drainage improvements, Day-Use area, shelter, and restrooms. Relocate existing single stall vault to midway point on Hertz Trail	REET, Grants, Donation		\$500,000	\$3,339,000					\$0
Lake Whatcom Park	South	Mooring Dock	Construct small boat docks	REET, Grants							X	\$500,000
Lake Whatcom Park	South	Hertz Trail Extension	1 mile multi-use trail	REET, Grants							X	\$117,000
Lake Whatcom Park	South	South Lake Whatcom	Develop vehicle access and trailhead, day use amenities	REET, Grants							X	\$1,500,000
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Planning	Initiate regional Pt Roberts regional recreation master plan. Evaluate facility connectivity, capacity, and development/redevelopment of park amenities, for example opportunities for an off-leash dog park, observation platform, and/or boat launch facility	REET								
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Park Office & Rental	Replace siding and roofing	REET				\$168,350				\$0
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Walkway improvements	Surface, widen and connect 0.5 mile walkway for accessibility	REET, Grants							X	\$30,000

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PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED	
												TOTAL	D
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Development	Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)	Grants, REET, NW Park District, Donation	\$500,000							X	\$500,000
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Campground Improvements	Reconstruct campground roads, campsites, camp-furnishings, shelters, and utilities (water, electric, septic). Construct new restroom facility near group camp, install directional/informational signage.	REET	\$175,000							X	\$175,000
Lighthouse Marine Park	West	Parking Improvements	Asphalt pavement, concrete curbing, striping and improved drainage facilities	REET	\$254,900			\$254,900				X	\$0
Lily Point Marine Park	West	Parking Improvements	Install asphalt pavement over existing gravel parking area.	REET	\$241,136			\$241,136					\$0
Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve	South	Road repairs	Repair 2021 storm damage	REET	\$660,016	\$100,016	\$560,000						\$0
Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve	South	Parking Improvements	Install asphalt pavement over existing gravel parking area.	REET	\$124,000		\$124,000						\$0
Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve and Lake Whatcom Park	South	Trail system improvements	Develop 98 miles of trails and auxiliary trailhead facilities	REET, Force account, Grants, Donation	\$1,087,900			\$392,150	\$264,500	\$241,500	\$189,750	x	\$0
Lummi Island	West	Water access	Evaluate feasibility of locating and developing a boat and water access facility	REET	\$103,450	\$103,450							\$0
Maple Falls Community Park	East	Development	Service building stabilization (roof replacement), Parking, restroom and information kiosk. Improvements to also serve as trailhead for Maple Creek Park	REET, Grants, Donation	\$1,025,000					\$200,000	\$825,000		\$0
Nugent's Corner River Access	East	Day-use Improvements	Expand & improve parking, pedestrian walkways, CXT toilet, directional/informational signage.	REET, grants, donations	\$625,000							X	\$625,000
Phillips 66 Soccer Park	West	Walking Trail	Surface 1.0 mile trail	REET	\$140,000							X	\$140,000

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PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget										NOT SCHEDULED		
					2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	D	TOTAL					
Plantation Rifle Range	South	Indoor Range Improvements	Replace target carrier system replacement, remodel facility interior.	Grants	\$460,000	\$360,000											\$0
Plantation Rifle Range	South	Outdoor range improvements (RECLAMATION)	Renovate outdoor range facilities, (facility improvements, and enhanced environmental protection measures).	REET I	\$1,355,500	\$655,500											\$0
Point Whitehorn	West	Beach access/bridges	Bridge replacement	REET	\$150,000										X		\$150,000
Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve	West	Parking & Day-Use Improvements	CXT Toilet, Asphalt pavement, concrete curbing, striping and improved drainage facilities	REET	\$250,000										X		\$250,000
Samish Park	South	Water Supply Upgrade SCOPE	Replace water system	REET	\$50,000												\$0
Samish Park	South	Boat rental facilities	Construct concession facility to improve customer service, and operational efficiencies, (Dockside rental kiosk, and support infrastructure)	REET											x		
Samish Park	South	Lodge Renovation	Renovate lodge, (restrooms, concessions, office space, etc.)	Grants, REET, Donations	TBD										x		
Samish Park	South	Parking and walkway improvements	Replace concrete walkways, improve ADA access, picnic area improvements, parking and drainage improvements, and trail upgrades	REET	\$325,000		\$75,000										\$0
Samish Park	South	Structure Demolition	Structure demolition and site rehabilitation	REET	\$50,000												\$0
Semiahmoo Park	West	Restroom Building	Reconstruct restroom sewer connection to City of Blaine sewer system	REET	\$50,000										x		\$0
Semiahmoo Park	West	Interpretive Signage	Remove and replace existing interpretive signage	REET	TBD												

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PARK/FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	NOT SCHEDULED		
												D	TOTAL	
Silver Lake Park	East	Park Programming	Evaluate potential programming opportunities to improve recreational services. Engage staff to identify potential expansion opportunities (e.g., living history at Gerdrum, and Black Mt. Forestry, campfire talks, and skill share events)	REET	TBD								X	
Silver Lake Park	East	Lagoon Bridge walk replacement	Replacement of 300' of boardwalk	REET	TBD								X	
Silver Lake Park	East	Beach and picnic area improvements	Terraced lawn day use improvements, walkway and stair replacement, sand volleyball, replace lagoon walk	REET	\$435,000								X	\$435,000
Silver Lake Park	East	Renovate Bath House	Eliminate showers, remodel interior to expand toilet facilities and other plumbing fixtures. Renovate facility to accommodate four-season use.	Grants, REET	TBD								X	
Silver Lake Park	East	Red Mt Campground, Group Camp & Cedar Campground Improvements	Reconstruct site utilities (water & electric), renovate campsites, camp furnishings, roads & driveways.	Grants, REET, Donations	TBD								X	
Silver Lake Park	East	Development	Install energy systems upgrade, (e.g. rooftop solar arrays, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)	Grants, REET, NW Park District, Donation	TBD								X	
Silver Lake Park	East	Renovate cabins: scope each one	Renovate cabins, indoor plumbing, flooring & insulation	REET	\$183,700		\$121,242	\$62,458						\$0
Silver Lake Park	East	Cabin area parking improvements	repave cabin access road and cabin parking area	REET									X	\$0
Silver Lake Park	East	Rental Cabins	install new rental cabin structures		\$175,000								X	\$175,000
Silver Lake Park	East	Restroom building	Construct new restroom building in Group Campground	REET	\$2,150,000			\$1,000,000	\$1,150,000					\$0

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MASTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS LIST

PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget					NOT SCHEDULE D	TOTAL			
					2023	2024	2025	2026	2027			2028		
Silver Lake Park	East	Maintenance building	Renovate and expand existing shop, (restrooms, breakroom, work area, and associated parking and security facilities).	REET								x		
Silver Lake Park	East	Trail improvements	Construct new 2 mile multi-use connector trails, expanding loop opportunities.	Grants, REET, Donations									x	
Silver Lake Park	East	Restroom & Shower building	Construct new shower and restroom building near cabins & cedar camp	REET	\$2,050,000	\$200,000								\$0
Silver Lake Park	East	Day-use improvements	Reconfigure and surface Day-use parking, (Lodge, Boat Launch, Playground, and Gerdrum).	REET									X	\$0
Silver Lake Park	East	Picnic Shelters	Renovate or replace existing picnic shelters	REET										
Silver Lake Park	East	Campground playgrounds	Install playgrounds in 2 campgrounds	REET	\$110,000								X	\$110,000
Silver Lake Park	East	Lodge Renovation	Upgrade concessions, ADA upgrades to restrooms and deck & dock areas, and install fire suppression system, and roof replacement.	REET	\$231,000								X	\$0
Silver Lake Park	East	Ranger's Residence	Structure demolition and site rehabilitation	REET	\$61,800									
South Fork Park	East	Trail development	Construct 4.25 mile multi use trail	REET, Grants	\$862,300		\$132,500	\$149,200	\$306,800	\$273,800				\$0
South Fork Park	East	Nesset Farm	Develop trailhead and access route from Saxon Rd	REET, Grants	TBD									
South Fork Park	East	Nesset Farm	Care taker residence condition assessment											
South Fork Park	East	Restore Nesset Farm buildings	Renovate interior of historic farmhouse SCOPE	Donation, Nesset Foundation	\$997,500		\$152,500	\$845,000						\$0
South Fork Park	East	Loop trail improvements	gravel surface existing soft surface trail at trailhead facility	REET	\$276,600					\$276,600				\$0
South Fork Park	East	Nesset Farm Restroom	Install new public restroom and replace bridge @ Nesset Creek	Donation, Nesset Foundation	\$175,000	\$110,000								\$0
Stimpson Family Nature Reserve	South	Parking Improvements	Asphalt pavement, concrete curbing, striping and improved drainage facilities	REET, Donations	\$80,075									\$0
Sumas Senior Center	East	Building stabilization	Roof replacement	REET	\$25,000									\$0

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PARK FACILITY	REGION	PROJECT	SCOPE	FUNDING SOURCE	Project Budget	NOT SCHEDULED					TOTAL		
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027		2028	D
Sunnyside Landing	South	Trail development	Construct picnic/rest area and 700 feet of multiuse trail and convert trestle	REET, Grants, Donation	\$268,000	\$92,086						X	\$175,914
Sunset Farm	West	Barn Stabilization	Restore historic barn	REET, Grants, Donation								x	
Sunset Farm	West	Trail development	Improve 0.5 mile trail and connect to community trail system. Repair stable structure	REET, Grants, Donation	\$33,000							X	\$33,000
Welcome Senior Activity Center	East	Building & Infrastructure renovation	Renovate exterior & interior (siding, roofing, windows, etc.). Replace septic system, HVAC, and energy systems upgrade, (solar array).	REET, Grants, Donation								X	
<b>Yearly Total=</b>						<b>\$4,511,281</b>	<b>\$3,745,042</b>	<b>\$4,458,308</b>	<b>\$13,075,886</b>	<b>\$2,923,300</b>	<b>\$1,565,150</b>		<b>\$18,980,914</b>

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***Appendix D:  
Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan  
Goals and Policies related to Parks &  
Recreation***



## POLICY FOUNDATION

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is reviewed every 8 years, and was last updated and adopted by the County Council in 2016. The Comprehensive Plan provides broad guidance for Whatcom County activities. The following Whatcom County County-Wide Planning Policies (Adopted April 1993 and revised 3/11/1997, 1/25/2005, & 2/9/2021) are taken from the County's Comprehensive Plan and pertain to parks and recreation:

### H. Open Space/Greenbelt Corridors

1. Adequate open space is vital to the quality of life and sense of place in Whatcom County. The county, cities, Port of Bellingham, and other appropriate jurisdictions should coordinate protection of linked greenbelts, within and between Urban Growth Areas, parks, and open space to protect wildlife corridors and to enhance recreational opportunities, public access and trail development.
2. The county and the cities shall plan for greenbelts and open space in their Comprehensive Planning processes and coordinate with each other. Open space systems should include lands which contain natural areas, habitat lands, natural drainage features, and/or other environmental, cultural and scenic resources. With increased residential densities, jurisdictions also should ensure provision of adequate neighborhood parks and play areas within safe bicycling and walking distance for children.
3. The county and the cities shall encourage, to the extent it is feasible, separation of Urban Growth Areas through planning, zoning, development regulations, open space purchase, conservation easements and other mechanisms which may be appropriate. Also, an array of incentives such as density bonuses, design flexibility and transferable development rights shall be offered to affected land owners.
4. The County and Cities should work cooperatively to protect and restore stream corridors within Urban Growth Areas that support anadromous fish.

### J. County-Wide Transportation Facilities and Strategies

7. Priorities shall be established and expenditures coordinated for county-wide bicycle and trail corridors. Bicycle and pedestrian-specific trails and other facilities shall be included during project planning and review. Coordinated corridors and cost sharing should be explored among all responsible and interested parties.

### L. Impact Fees

1. The county and the cities are encouraged to adopt fair and reasonable impact and/or mitigation fee ordinances to ensure that new growth pays its fair share of the cost of capital facilities, such as transportation improvements, parks, and schools.

Within the Comprehensive plan there are chapters which include goals, objectives, and associated policies that apply to park, recreation and open space activities. These include but are not limited to the following:

## CHAPTER 4 – Capital Facilities

**Goal 4F: Achieve level of service targets for park and recreational facilities identified in this chapter. Support objectives and priorities identified in the *Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan*, in the *Natural Heritage Plan*, and in this plan.**

**Policy 4F-1:** The following level of service standards are adopted for parks and trails:

Developed parks	9.6 acres per 1,000 population
Trails	0.60 of mile per 1,000 population

**Policy 4F-2:** Seek non-capital opportunities to acquire, enhance and maintain park lands, trails, and other recreational facilities. Consider partnering with cities, school districts, park & recreation districts and others when planning and implementing park and trail projects

**Policy 4F-3:** Include acquisition and development costs in the six-year CIP for future trails projects.

**Policy 4F-4:** Place a high priority on improvements to existing county recreational sites and facilities and using them to their full potential, including those outlined in the *Whatcom County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan*, before investing capital in the acquisition and development of new facilities.

**Policy 4F-5:** Continue to provide and support activity centers, including senior centers, to serve the growing population of Whatcom County by the following methods, as needed, which are listed in priority order: (1) implementing programming changes, (2) adding space to existing centers, and/or (3) establishing new centers.

**Goal 4I: Consider alternative funding sources to assure levels of service adopted in the plan.**

**Policy 4I-1:** After all other financing options have been exhausted, consider the use of bonded indebtedness to finance major capital investments in infrastructure.

**Policy 4I-2:** Identify and promote public private partnerships to provide and enhance the provision of necessary services.

**Goal 4J: Ensure that capital facilities provide protection for threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species.**

**Policy 4J-1:** Fish and wildlife habitat should be carefully considered when selecting projects for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program.

**Policy 4J-2:** Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program shall not degrade habitat for threatened and endangered species.

**Policy 4J-3:** Projects selected for the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program should strive to restore degraded habitat for threatened and endangered species, when the projects are in direct contact with such habitat. The County Council will determine when such restoration is financially feasible through adoption of the six-year capital improvement program and the County budget.

## CHAPTER 6 - Transportation

**Goal 6F: Develop a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that encourages enhanced community access and promotes healthy lifestyles and supports the recreational segments of our economy.**

**Policy 6F-1:** Planning and design shall emphasize connectivity to the greatest extent possible, creating regional networks of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Regional networks include both an on-road bicycle facility and walkway network and a regional multi-use path network. These networks should be interconnected; for example, walkways connect seamlessly with pedestrian paths and bike lanes connect to shared-roadway bike routes. The networks should also be coordinated with public transportation hubs and activity centers to enable multimodal trips of longer distances.

**Policy 6F-2:** Provide safe pedestrian facilities in all new construction and reconstruction transportation projects where there is the potential for significant use, unless physically or financially impracticable. An example of such a location would be in a traffic corridor within one mile of a school or community center that links residents to such facilities. Traditional curb/gutter/sidewalk designs may not always be the ideal approach for projects since they require large impervious surfaces and may detract from the rural atmosphere. Other separated walkway designs should be considered that provide a physical barrier from motorized traffic.

**Policy 6F-3:** An effective bicycle and pedestrian system for Whatcom County will require facilities for both regional connectivity and local access. Regional connectivity can be defined as transportation routes connecting major activity centers, towns, and cities within the region. A good example of a regional facility would be the proposed Nooksack Loop Trail or the existing bike route along Hannegan Road.

**Policy 6F-4:** Coordinate with local community organizations, associations, or other governing structures in designing and implementing improvements, such as safety improvements and infrastructure. Identify, analyze, and prioritize pedestrian and bicycle projects based on the following criteria:

- safety improvements are needed
- serves a residential or relatively high density rural or urban population area
- serves a location frequently traveled by seniors, children, or people with disabilities
- leads to a school or is part of a school route
- provides access to a recreational facility or park
- functions as a key network link for the regional nonmotorized network
- offers economic development potential for an underserved area
- ease of implementation due to low cost, public ownership, or other feature

## CHAPTER 7 – Economics

**Goal 7C: Ensure adequate infrastructure to support existing and future business development and evolving technology.**

**Policy 7C-7:** Recognize the importance of governmental services and facilities to support economic development. Update capital facility plans and appropriate adequate funding for public facility upgrade or expansion necessary to serve projected population and business growth.

**Policy 7C-10:** Develop plans and prioritize facilities for the County to become internationally recognized as a “Trail-Town” tourist destination (one that offers 100 miles or more of contiguous walking/hiking trails) by 2027.

**Goal 7E: Enhance the economic trade, tourism and industrial siting advantages of the county’s location adjacent to the Canadian border.**

**Policy 7E-1:** Support attractions for Canadians and other visitors so they will remain in the community longer and distribute their spending throughout the community. Some of the examples would include support for such items as the following:

- Events such as the “Ski to Sea” race and festival.
- The Whatcom Museum, Mount Baker Theater, other historic and cultural centers, and community revitalization efforts.
- Parks and open spaces.
- The Bellingham Festival of Music.
- The Mount Baker outdoor recreation area.
- Farmers markets and other natural resource-based activities.
- Projects, events and activities of unincorporated areas such as Point Roberts, Birch Bay and East County.

**Goal 7G: Coordinate economic development with environmental, resource, and other comprehensive land use and open space policies and measures to enhance the community's overall quality of life.**

**Policy 7G-1:** Recognize the natural environment as a major asset and manage environmental resources accordingly. We need both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

**Policy 7G-3:** Provide support to Whatcom County's tourist industry to maintain and enhance a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the local quality of life.

**Policy 7G-5:** Coordinate environmental and economic planning efforts.

**Goal 7H: To promote economic diversity, continue to support the resource industries as significant elements of the local economy including the employment base.**

**Policy 7H-2:** Work with other agencies and groups to improve the condition of the fishery resource, including habitat maintenance and enhancement, especially for habitats utilized by threatened and endangered fish species.

**Policy 7H-7:** Encourage growth of tourism, recreational activities, and businesses that provide for diversity of the natural resource industry, provided that they comply with the County regulations and, when located in a rural area, preserve the rural character.

**Goal 7K: Enable a geographic balance for economic growth within the capacities of the county's natural resources, natural systems, public services, and public facilities.**

**Policy 7K-4:** Encourage resource and tourism based recreational, commercial, and cottage industry uses to create economic opportunity in the rural areas of the county.

## CHAPTER 8 – Resource Lands

**Goal 8D: Reduce land use conflicts between Whatcom County's agriculture and non-agricultural landowners.**

**Policy 8D-9:** Encourage low intensity recreational activities that help sustain and are compatible with agricultural uses.

**Goal 8J:** Support the Department of Natural Resources to ensure forest practices avoid adverse impacts to the habitat of threatened and endangered fish and wildlife species and to marine waters that support shellfish resources.

**Policy 8J-1:** Ensure that adequate riparian buffers, based on best available science, are maintained along rivers and streams.

**Policy 8J-2:** Minimize sedimentation to rivers and streams, to the greatest extent possible, using BMP's.

## CHAPTER 9 - Recreation

**Goal 9A: Address county-wide recreational needs by adequate provision of day use parks.**

**Policy 9A-1:** Because the cities currently provide the highly developed urban parks, the County's role should be to provide rural regional parks that are centered around a unique feature or recreation opportunity.

**Policy 9A-2:** Because of the unique features of the site, location within the county is not as important as good road access.

**Policy 9A-3:** Development standards will vary according to the use intended. For the intensive use park areas, all facilities and improvements should be built to a high standard and designed to be easily maintained.

**Policy 9A-4:** All parks must be designed to create a minimal impact upon surrounding property and to the site itself.

**Policy 9A-5:** Day use parks should be designed with one entrance and control point so that entrance fees can be charged.

**Policy 9A-6:** If possible, regional parks should be located on existing or proposed trail routes and ideally should enhance countywide trail system connectivity.

**Policy 9A-7:** The parks should be designed to accommodate a range of age groups, accessibility and interests.

**Policy 9A-8:** The County should only accept sites that meet the above standards.

**Goal 9B: Provide multi-use camping parks to serve county resident needs as well as provide a tourism draw.**

**Policy 9B-1:** All the policy statements and design standards for regional parks should also apply to multi-use camping parks.

**Policy 9B-2:** Because camping parks will attract many non-county residents, they should be recognized for their tourism value but at the same time county residents should not subsidize the cost of camping. Camping fees should pay for campsite expenses.

**Policy 9B-3:** A wide variety of camping types should be offered including primitive sites, tent sites, full-service RV sites and group camping areas.

**Policy 9B-4:** The camping areas should be physically separated from the other parts of the park with the ability to be closed off during winter months.

**Policy 9B-5:** Most large camping areas should be designed to a high standard with full-service hookups, flush toilets and rest rooms, showers, laundry and other support facilities.

**Policy 9B-6:** Future Park development should consider the financial ability of the County, and should focus on existing park lands before considering further acquisition.

**Goal 9C: Expand outdoor recreation opportunities for county residents by providing enjoyable trails for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, walking, boating, and other trail activities in a safe environment.**

**Policy 9C-1:** Trails should be interesting and attractive. Trails which follow natural water courses, pass significant natural resources, traverse interesting scenery or cross areas of outstanding beauty provide interesting and enjoyable experiences for the trail user.

**Policy 9C-2:** Incorporate existing and proposed trails into a comprehensive and integrated system of looped and interconnected trails which give users a wide choice of routes and environments.

**Policy 9C-3:** Trails should link other recreational uses in the Foothills area and connect to existing trail systems in the National Forest and state land.

**Policy 9C-4:** The wet climate of Whatcom County may preclude extensive multi-use of some trails or require seasonal limitations. Trail routes should take into account soil conditions, steep slopes, surface drainage and other physical limitations that could impact the areas from overuse.

**Policy 9C-5:** Bicycle trails should provide opportunities for the recreational rider as well as the touring and commuter bicyclist.

**Policy 9C-6:** Bicycle routes and paths should minimize the conflicts between motorists and bicyclists.

- Policy 9C-7:** Hiking trails should have a variety of lengths and grades for the casual stroller as well as the serious hiker and when practicable, be accessible.
- Policy 9C-8:** Hiking trails should reach areas of natural beauty with the purpose of permitting hikers to seek areas of solitude and get away from the built environment, especially noise and other pollution.
- Policy 9C-9:** Equestrian trails should be accessible most of the year. Some equestrian trails should be close to the urban areas.
- Policy 9C-10:** Adequate parking, signage, trash receptacles, and toilet facilities should be provided at all major trailheads.
- Policy 9C-11:** Where public funds are used to construct or maintain dikes, levees or revetments, public access should be encouraged for trail purposes, where appropriate.
- Policy 9C-12:** Water trails for non-motorized boats should be identified with provisions made for parking, launching areas, and places of interest along the water route where boats can land.
- Policy 9C-13:** Work toward partnering with other agencies and the public to accomplish recreational goals.
- Policy 9C-14:** Investigate multi-solutions that will accommodate several county goals, such as recreation, water retention, and flood prevention measures, utilizing a similar piece of property.
- Policy 9C-15:** Sharing of corridors for major utilities, trails and other transportation rights of way is encouraged when not in conflict with goals to protect wildlife, public health and safety.
- Policy 9C-16:** Implement the goals, policies and recommendations of the latest Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan that are consistent with this plan and within the County's fiscal capabilities.
- Policy 9C-17:** Promote the integration of trails within subdivisions, planned unit developments, and other development proposals that provide internal circulation and connect to nearby recreational opportunities and ideally enhance countywide trail system connectivity.
- Policy 9C-18:** Acquisition of and planning for trail corridors should be encouraged as new subdivisions and development occurs, if the trail has been identified in a park, trail, open space, or other plan adopted by Whatcom County.
- Policy 9C-19:** Continue to update the trails inventory to identify all designated and non-designated trails in the county.
- Policy 9C-20:** Continue to support the County's long-range parks and recreation vision of developing a countywide trail network, while respecting property rights, and working collaboratively with willing landowners to acquire easements or property for public trails, when opportunities exist.
- Policy 9C-21:** Provide non-motorized access to regional recreational and outstanding scenic areas in the county.
- Policy 9C-22:** Reduce conflicts between the various trail user groups and provide appropriate signage.
- Policy 9C-23:** Provide bike lanes or wide shoulders where appropriate for trail corridor connection in conjunction with major road improvements.
- Policy 9C-24:** Coast Millennium Trail - Continue to develop trail corridors, particularly off-road segments such as the airport connector and shoreline access.
- Policy 9C-25:** Hertz North Lake Whatcom Trail Extension - Develop and implement a plan to either acquire Rights of Way for a trail corridor along the abandoned RR R/W between the existing North Shore Trail and Blue Canyon Road or consider an alternative route to link these points.
- Policy 9C-27:** Nooksack River Trail - Develop and implement a plan to acquire Rights of Way for a trail corridor and picnic areas along the Nooksack River between Ferndale and Glacier, to provide recreation opportunities, inter-community transportation, and tourism development.

**Policy 9C-28:** Continue to collaborate with other organizations, groups, or individuals consistent with the goals identified in the Natural Heritage Plan for Whatcom County and the Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

**Goal 9D: Provide specialized recreation areas taking advantage of unique opportunities to serve both county residents and visitors.**

**Policy 9D-1:** Because these facilities are unique, adopt specific standards for each one individually.

**Policy 9D-2:** Explore need for community parks as undeveloped areas of county increase in density.

**Policy 9D-3:** Encourage development of sport field complexes to meet the needs of organized recreation activities, using public and private partnerships where possible.

**Policy 9D-4:** Promote the integration of recreational and open space opportunities in subarea planning, subdivisions and other development proposals.

**Policy 9D-5:** The dedication and acquisition of open space and recreation opportunities should be encouraged as new subdivisions and development occurs.

**Goal 9E: Recognize the shoreline as one of Whatcom County's unique assets and provide adequate physical and visual access for present and future generations.**

**Policy 9E-1:** As economically feasible, acquire for public use as much of the saltwater shoreline as possible. Public and private resources should be explored to further this policy. A reasonable goal is to acquire for public access a minimum of 15% of the saltwater shoreline and adjacent tidelands in Whatcom County.

**Policy 9E-2:** Continue to review the Nooksack River Plan (Jones and Jones, 1973) and implement those elements which are beneficial, appropriate and economically feasible.

**Policy 9E-3:** Provide pedestrian, interpretative and small boat access sites for a diversity of public shoreline.

**Policy 9E-4:** When the County acquires property for flood storage or fish and wildlife purposes, the County should consider secondary use for park and open space purposes.

**Goal 9F: Coordinate with the DNR to provide ORV opportunities.**

**Policy 9F-1:** Recognizing that there will continue to be a demand for ORV riding, the county should continue to assess its role in the ORV program. Between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service, some joint solution may be possible.

**Goal 9G: Encourage multi-use indoor activity centers to meet the needs of the population, using public and private partnerships where possible.**

**Policy 9G-1:** Support multi-use of the existing senior/community centers to maximize their full potential.

**Policy 9G-2:** Continue the cooperation between the County and the Cities and Point Roberts Park District on ownership and management of the existing senior/community centers.

**Policy 9G-3:** Evaluate the cost/benefit ratio of adding a multi-purpose facility on the property owned by the Parks Department at Smith and Northwest Roads to meet the expanding demand by all age groups in the Bellingham/Ferndale growth corridor.

**Policy 9G-4:** Expand the Plantation Rifle Range to meet the needs of citizens and law enforcement agencies.

**Policy 9G-5:** Acquire property for a buffer area around the Plantation Rifle Range to insure the ability to continue its use in the future.

**Policy 9G-6:** Continue to utilize the Roeder Home for cultural arts activities, community events and gatherings while utilizing partnerships, leased space, or creative opportunities to accommodate program expansion.

**Policy 9G-7:** Continue to monitor the need for additional aquatic facilities in the community, with the basic assumption that Whatcom County will not be an indoor aquatic provider in the near future.

**Policy 9G-8:** Continue to search for partnerships with other public agencies and private groups in providing recreation facilities such as golf facilities, camping, and resort centers.

**Policy 9G-9:** Expand the partnership concept to incorporate school buildings and other public or private facilities which can accommodate meetings and recreational functions.

**Goal 9H: As economically feasible, continue to implement the Whatcom County Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space (CPROS Plan) goals and policies through adoption of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).**

**Policy 9H-1:** Continue to monitor park and recreation service needs throughout the county and encourage others to provide the identified service needs.

**Policy 9H-2:** Develop facilities and areas that will be particularly attractive to Whatcom County residents.

**Policy 9H-3:** Develop and maintain facilities at a high standard. These standards should be established in accordance with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space (CPROS Plan) and the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy 9H-4:** Design and develop recreation facilities for low maintenance.

**Policy 9H-5:** In keeping with policies in other chapters of this plan, consider strategies for ensuring the provision of community parks in accordance with appropriate standards. In the residential UGAs not associated with cities and in Rural Communities, mechanisms are needed for acquisition, development, and subsequent maintenance and operations. Community Associations and Park Districts are options to be explored.

**Policy 9H-6:** Continue to plan for full utilization of existing senior/community centers and explore partnerships to help absorb future need.

**Policy 9H-7:** Continue to identify and develop major planning initiatives identified in the CPROS Plan.

**Policy 9H-8:** Develop strategies to acquire land currently leased for the Plantation Rifle Range and a buffer around the rifle range

**Policy 9H-9:** Galbraith/Lookout Mt. – Develop and implement a plan cooperatively to acquire Rights of Way for trail corridors and for the purchase or lease of additional acreage, along with pursuit of formal usage and mitigation agreements with private individuals or land owners, to preserve or expand the recreational values for residents and tourists with reasonably limited impact on both local residents and the environment.

**Policy 9H-10:** Stewart Mt. - Negotiate with current landowner to obtain formal usage agreements for access to logging trails, to open public access corridors between Lake Whatcom recreation areas and the South Fork Valley.

**Goal 9I: Develop a stronger financial base for recreational services.**

**Policy 9I-1:** Design future recreation facilities and areas with the ability to charge user fees.

**Policy 9I-2:** Explore new innovative methods of financing facility development, maintenance, and operating needs.

**Policy 9I-3:** Consider joint ventures with private clubs, public agencies, commercial operations and other groups to build and maintain facilities.



**Policy 9I-4:** Seek to design and develop facilities that will encourage tourism.

**Policy 9I-5:** Consider the establishment of park impact fees based on the Growth Management Act.

**Policy 9I-6:** Experiment with novel public-private partnerships to provide facilities that will provide a quality experience to draw tourists to Whatcom County's parks. Some examples would be privately operated zip-line facilities and strategically located seasonal food trucks. Part or all of the "rent" provided could be by the provision of privately funded public use facilities such as toilets and shuttle buses used to service these private facilities.

## CHAPTER 10 – Environment

**Goal 10A: Protect natural resources and systems, life, and property from potential hazards.**

**Policy 10A-1:** Support good stewardship of Whatcom County lands, and apply this principle to the management of public lands.

**Policy 10A-10:** Support acquisition, conservation easements, open space, and other such programs to protect high-value natural areas as identified through the GMA planning process, the Natural Heritage Plan, the state Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program, the Lake Whatcom Management Program, and other sources.

