

MOTION NO. 8767

A MOTION adopting master plan program and approving the composition of the Parks Citizen Advisory Committee to advise King County in the development of the Parks Division master plan for the Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park.

WHEREAS, the King County council has appropriated funds to the parks division to initiate a master plan for Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, and

WHEREAS, the development program describes the elements to be included in the proposed master plan, and

WHEREAS, the citizens advisory committee is an important component in the development of the plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park master plan program (Attachment A) provides the basis for developing a master plan for the park.

B. The composition of the proposed citizens advisory committee (Attachment B) shall serve as the basis for appointing the actual individuals to serve on the committee.

C. The committee will be known as the Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park - Citizens Advisory Committee and its responsibilities shall include the following:

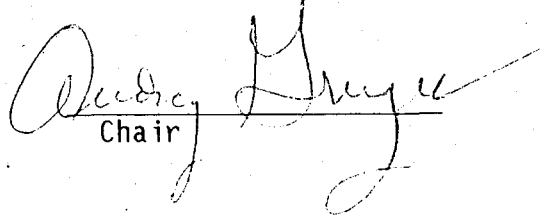
1. The members will serve as representatives of the community to advise king County throughout the development of the master plan.
2. The committee will work with the county staff and the consultant to develop a complete master plan for the park that includes the elements in the development program.
3. The committee will recommend preferred alternatives on key issues, identify issues not presented where possible, and review and recommend changes to the master plan elements presented to them by the consultant.

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4. The committee will review the submittals and presentations of the consultant and recommend to King County an approved draft master plan.

PASSED this 8th day of September 92.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Chair

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Council

COUGAR MOUNTAIN PARK MASTER PLAN

A master plan can be many things to many people. However, the master plan envisioned for this park will be a document that outlines the methods and procedures to provide stewardship and enhance preservation of the park and the wildland experience that exists there. The pressures upon the use of the park are great and will be getting greater. The plan needs to insure the park can effectively, safely, and with strong environmental awareness accommodate the various user groups while at the same time prevent overuse, misuse and degradation of its natural, historic, and recreational use characteristics. Without the plan, a likely outcome will be inappropriate isolated development, misguided maintenance practices, missed acquisition opportunities and overall degradation of the park. The master plan will have to make sure the park is seen in the context as a portion of a larger set of adjacent mountains and valleys to insure that connections and inter-relationships are explored.

In the 1981 Cougar Mountain Regional Park report, three main goals were established for the park. Even though ten years have passed and much has happened toward securing the park, those original goals, summarized below, still have much to offer as the Parks Division begins the current master planning process:

Recreational Goals:

Promote the provision of sufficient land in the Cougar Mountain area for wilderness outdoor recreation and to help meet the region's current and anticipated needs for a regional wildland park.

Preservation Goals:

Promote the preservation of park land on Cougar Mountain of outstanding regional significance, and which may become "lost opportunities" if not acted upon now.

Preserve a natural habitat environment near urban and suburban development and to provide relief from extensive encroaching urbanization.

Conservation Goals:

Preservation areas of outstanding scenic value and/or which provide habitats for unique vegetation and wildlife species.

Prevent the unnecessary conversion to urban use of the Cougar Mountain area, especially those areas having special value such as of a historical, cultural and educational nature.

The following are the major parameters and tasks the King County Parks Division feels are needed for inclusion in the master plan of this park.

Definition of a Wildland Park:

The term "wildland" needs to be defined in a broad general way so the definition

can be applied to all future types of development, enforcement, maintenance and operation practices. In addition, the goals and objectives of the term need to be developed. The final definition of the term "wildland park" will be accomplished by discussing the issue in an extensive public process with all potential parks users.

Part of the definition of the term "wildland" will be to establish a hierarchy of park types. This hierarchy should contain the definition of a wildland core area (where development is kept to an appropriate minimum), various buffer areas or other areas to be more intensively used such as visitor, interpretive, and maintenance centers.

Public Involvement Process:

The Division will develop a process so the public at large, special interest groups, adjacent property owners, interested agencies, local cities, and elected officials have an opportunity to have meaningful input into all aspects of the planning process. It will be within this process that we define the recreational park uses and activities for the park. The balance between hikers, walkers, equestrians and interpretive uses will be defined.

Base Map and Survey Information:

One of the first steps in the master plan will be to have an appropriate park topographic and boundary base map prepared. The boundary survey is currently underway and the information should be available soon. In addition, there may be some areas (where specific detailed designs are to be prepared) that need to have some new topographic survey prepared. Both large scale and small scale mapping will be critical to record the various physical elements of the master plan.

Site Inventory and Analysis:

Cultural and Historic Elements:

In the case of Cougar Mountain Park the inventory element is particularly important for future planning since so many historical and cultural remnants remain in the park and adjacent to the park. The Division must systematically compile the information so future use and development will not destroy these qualities. Also important to the plan will be the inventory information related to the old mine artifacts, adits and under ground voids (rooms).

Natural Conditions:

To truly provide stewardship of the park, the plan will have to compile information on the land, plants, animals and their interrelationships. Consulting experts will be hired by the prime consultant to accomplish the necessary environmental studies. The plan will compile information on soil types, slopes and erosion potential of the landforms in the park. This information combined with the surface water drainage and runoff characteristics of the lakes, streams and wetlands will allow the Division

to determine how to decrease flood impacts on trails, streams and other developed areas. In addition, the information on wetlands will be used to help identify those areas of the park that should have limited public use or other means of protection.

The plan will also compile information on plant community types to identify those unique and sensitive areas so future trail and other development will not harm these areas. Likewise, the plan will compile information on the wildlife of the park so the development of trails, access points, and other facilities will minimize impacts on these creatures and their migratory patterns. Of particular interest will be the wildlife corridors leading to the east to Squak Mountain and the Cascades.

Infrastructure and Policies:

This element of the inventory will be to compile the existing information on local utilities, surrounding land use, proposed street and road improvements, and other laws and regulations that will effect the park. There will undoubtedly be several new access points, trail heads, interpretive centers and other facilities proposed in the plan. These will have to be served with water, power and sewerage as required by the Health Department and the permitting agencies.

In addition, the impacts of the surrounding land use will be the information that helps locate needed buffer areas for the park. The impacts of surrounding streets and roads will be particularly critical for park planning. The misplacement of these facilities could cause noise, fumes and visual clutter in the park. There will be a particular need to analyze the new King County Sensitive Areas Ordinance and how it will effect the placement of all new trails, access point, trail heads, interpretive centers, parking areas and other facilities.

Visual Resources:

The final element of the site inventory and analysis will be to compile and map the visual resources of the park. This element will include all elements of visual quality that are significant to the park experience such as the many view locations of Mt. Rainier and the surrounding areas, wetlands, rock outcroppings, old growth forest areas, other unique forest types, surface coal deposits, and many other items.

Interpretive Plan:

Because of the rich natural and cultural history of the site, the plan will identify and outline a thorough plan to interpret for the public this history. The plan will insure that site natural and cultural resources are understood and appreciated through appropriate site design, interpretive signage and programming. An interpretive center will undoubtedly be the centerpiece of the park.

Maintenance Plan:

A fundamental task of the master plan will be to develop methods and procedures for maintenance and operations of the park. The plan will develop, through the public process and internal staff work, standards for trail rehab and maintenance appropriate for the "wildland" core and for the other more developed areas of the park. This plan may include typical cross sections of the various trail types showing the travel surface type and width and the methods needed for edge and buffer maintenance. In addition, it may include the methods and procedures for new trail alignment and development in the various park landscape types.

Signage Plan:

Providing appropriate signage in a large park like this one is a major task. Trails, access point and trail heads, parking areas, facilities like restrooms, visitor center, and interpretive centers and other items must all have clear signage. The plan will develop a system of signage for the park.

Detailed Site Planning for Specific Sites:

A major element of the master plan will be detailed site plans for facilities such as interpretive facilities, maintenance bases, parking, and major access points. These specific plans will pull together the utility information, earthwork and grading ideas, planting and restoration ideas, cost estimates and all other elements that will be required for construction permits as the facilities are built in the future. These plans will not be construction drawings for each project. However they will be sufficient for the Division to prepare budgets for the future phases of development.

Safety, Security and Enforcement Plan:

A safety and security plan for this park is somewhat unusual in that it will take into account not only the normal personal safety, rules enforcement and park protection issues, but also safety concerns caused by the historic mining activity. The plan will have to identify and plan around all areas that might present a danger. Future trails, construction roads, maintenance roads and facilities will all have to be located away from the potential safety areas.

Future Park Boundaries and Access Points:

A major element of the master plan will be the identification of those areas adjacent to the park that should be considered for future inclusion into the park and those areas where connections should be made to adjacent cities and other trail heads. This element will identify acquisitions that are needed, future access points that need to be acquired or secured by other means, and those areas that can be controlled by land use controls.

Development, Acquisition, and Maintenance Phasing:

A phasing plan is a critical element of the master plan so future development, acquisition and maintenance practices can be systematically spaced out in time so the most appropriate and necessary items are accomplished first.

This plan will also provide the schedule by which King County can provide the needed funds for future needs. Cost estimates appropriate for the task of project budgeting will be prepared by the consultants. Also, acquisition costs for additional lands will be prepared.

Coordination with Other Agencies:

A major task of the master plan will be to make sure there is meaningful contact and interaction with adjacent State and local agencies. There are currently many open space, trail and park proposals being discussed and developed. Cougar Mountain Park is in a key position to help solidify and promote a major trail and open space system that extends beyond it's borders.

Restoration and Reforestation:

A major task of the master plan will be to identify those areas that need to be restored or reforested to recreate habitat buffers or other natural areas.

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Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park
Generic Citizen's Committee

- 2 Members Representing the Issaquah Alps Trails Club
- 2 Members Representing the Equestrian Community
- 2 Members Representing the Newcastle Historic Society
- 1 Member Representing the Audubon Society
- 1 Member Representing forestry interests from the
University of Washington
- 1 Member Representing Junior High/High School teachers
- 5 Members Representing the Environmental Community

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