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LARRY PHILLIPS
INTRODUCED BY BRIAN DERDOWSKI
PROPOSED NO. 96-378

MOTION NO. **9925**

A MOTION related to the King County Park and Open Space System;
adopting the program plan for the Three Forks Natural Area.

WHEREAS, the population of King County is projected to increase
by an estimated 325,000 over the next 15 years heightening the need to
preserve aquatic and riparian resources; and

WHEREAS, the land surrounding the confluence of the three forks
of the Snoqualmie River outside North Bend and Snoqualmie is a fragile
riparian area deserving preservation for the benefit of current and future
generations; and

WHEREAS, the Three Forks Natural Area is strategically located on
a wildlife corridor connecting the Cedar River Watershed, Rattlesnake
Mountain Scenic Area and the Mt. Si Natural Resource Conservation Area;
and

WHEREAS, the Snoqualmie Valley, Preston-Snoqualmie and
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Extension converge at Three Forks; and

WHEREAS, the western end of Three Forks has been in greenchop
production in support of King County agriculture.

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

The attached Three Forks Natural Area Program Plan is hereby adopted and shall be incorporated in the Master Plan.

PASSED by a vote of 13 to 0 this 17th day of August 1996.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Jane Hague
Chair

ATTEST:

Gerald A. Peterson
Clerk of the Council

PROGRAM PLAN THREE FORKS NATURAL AREA VISION STATEMENT

Three Forks is located at the confluence of the Middle, North, and South Forks of the Snoqualmie River, the largest river system in King County. It includes valuable riparian habitat, sloughs, forested wetlands and miles of riverfront. It is strategically located on the valley floor and on a major wildlife corridor connecting the Cedar River Watershed, Rattlesnake Mountain, Meadowbrook Farm, the Weyerhaeuser Tree Farm and the Mt. Si Natural Resource Conservation Area.

A majority of Three Forks is located in the floodway and flood plain; as such, it provides a valuable natural flood storage function for the Upper Snoqualmie Valley. These development constraints, combined with its strategic location, provide sanctuary for a wide range of wildlife, including black bear, cougar, eagle, elk, osprey and river otter.

Three Forks is a natural resource of outstanding regional significance within King County and the Puget Sound Basin. The highest purpose of the Master Plan shall be to conserve, protect and restore the riparian and natural systems on site and wildlife that use it. Therefore, the property should be identified as the **Three Forks Natural Area**. Subordinate goals will allow passive, low impact, recreational uses, in appropriate locations and during times of the year that foster an appreciation for these natural systems, wildlife resources and the historical human uses. All uses shall be consistent with the paramount goal of natural resource protection.

Three Forks should serve as a trailhead to three King County regional trails, the Preston Snoqualmie Trail, the Snoqualmie Valley Trail and the Snoqualmie Valley Trail Extension. Three Forks may also serve as a trailhead to the Mt. Si Conservation Area. It also offers water access opportunities and outstanding views of the Snoqualmie River, Mt. Si, the Cascades, and surrounding agricultural lands.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Existing lands should be divided into land use zones in the Master Plan modeled after the classification system in the adopted Cougar Mountain Master Plan. The primary distinction between all zone classifications should be the the range of allowable human uses. Edge effects of human uses on wildlife and riparian habitat should be considered in the zone classification system and minimized.

Zones should be defined and mapped based on a variety of factors like the type and location of sensitive areas floodplain, floodway, sloughs, streams, wildlife corridors, and wetlands. A large volume of this data is already available in technical studies compiled for this area by agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, King County and Puget Power.

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC USES

(Within areas and during times of the year determined in the Master Plan to be appropriate based on environmental and wildlife assessments)

Agricultural Crop Production (Via Permit)
Aquatic Resource, Archaeology, Wetland and Wildlife Scientific Studies (Via Permit)
Astronomy (Via Permit)
Bicycle, Equestrian and Hiking Trails in Designated Areas
Wildlife and Plant Observation and Identification
Cultural And Natural Interpretive Programming
Fishing, and other Passive Water Access Including Non-Motorized/Car Top Access
Picnicking, Photography

REGIONAL TRAILS

Three Forks Natural Area should function as another access point to the Regional Trails System. Connections from the Three Forks Natural Area to the Iron Horse, Preston Snoqualmie, Snoqualmie Valley and the Snoqualmie Valley Trail Extension (To Cedar Falls and Rattlesnake Lake) are required pursuant to the Regional Trails Plan.

LOCAL TRAILS

A connection to the Mt. Si Conservation Area should be considered in the Master Plan. A trail between the western and eastern end of Three Forks Natural Area should be incorporated into the Master Plan. This connection should be north of the River, possibly in the Reinig Road Right of Way, to minimize degrading the relatively undisturbed riparian habitat and wildlife corridor on the south side of the River. Dead end spur trails from Reinig Road to the River should be considered in the Master Plan.

Recommendations for additional loop trails that utilize other road rights of way, river levees and potential connections to North Bend and Snoqualmie should be considered. Recommendations for local trails within road rights of way shall evaluate and make recommendations on appropriate speed limits to protect trail users and wildlife.

Trail surfacing options for local trails should be evaluated with final selection based on capital and operating costs and visual compatibility with the rural character of this agricultural area.

PARKING

The final size of any parking facility in the Three Forks Natural Area should be based on a balance of appropriate levels of public use with protection of its natural systems and wildlife corridors. The larger of two parking areas should be located at the western end of the property. It should be located on King County property or, subject to concurrence from the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie, at the Meadowbrook Farm. It should accommodate approximately 50 vehicles, including provision for horse trailers. Use of existing parking facilities at the Snoqualmie Elementary School should be evaluated in the Master Plan.

A smaller parking lot should be provided at the eastern end of the Three Forks Natural Area. It should be limited to 10 to 20 vehicles to protect wildlife and natural systems from excessive public disturbance.

The existing gravel turnouts within the Reinig Road right of way should be retained to disburse limited public access to the River.

New parking facilities should be paved, if feasible, based on accessibility requirements and maintenance concerns. If paved parking is not feasible, alternatives should be considered and recommended. New parking should be sited adjacent to existing roads on or near trails for ease of access, maintenance and surveillance. Parking should incorporate landscape elements that soften their visual impact in the rural setting.

RESTROOMS

Restrooms should be located at or near the western and eastern parking areas. The style, finishes and architecture of these structures shall reflect the history of the Snoqualmie Valley, and shall respect the agricultural character of the Upper Snoqualmie Valley. Restrooms shall be sited to minimize visual intrusion in this rural setting but allow for ease of maintenance access and surveillance by law enforcement personnel.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED ACCESS

Access for the physically challenged at locations which provide reasonable and appropriate opportunities for enjoyment of the Three Forks Natural Area is a high priority for the Parks System. The Master Plan should recommend trails, paths and destination facilities to accommodate the physically challenged in appropriate locations.

BRIDGES

The Master Plan should evaluate the feasibility, capital and operating costs to design, construct and maintain small bridges over Normanbrook and Tate Creeks for public and maintenance access.

FUTURE ACQUISITIONS

The Master Plan should include recommendations on land acquisitions, beyond the 1989 and 1993 Conservation Futures Bonds, that complement the vision statement of Three Forks. Recommendations should also identify the range of potential acquisition options which may be appropriate, such as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, etc. Maps should identify proposed acquisitions.

VIEWING PLATFORMS

Elevated flood-proof viewing platforms of a moderate size should be considered at the Meadowbrook Slough, the Brockway Marsh or other locations to facilitate environmental education and interpretive programs. The Master Plan should make a recommendation on the size, number and location of these structures.

REVEGETATION

The Master Plan should consider revegetation of selected areas to increase biodiversity, riparian habitat and reduce edge effects for the benefit of wildlife. The Master Plan should evaluate the impacts and make recommendations on appropriate eradication and disposition techniques of non-native plants at Three Forks, including Japanese Knotweed and blackberry.

SIGNAGE

The Master Plan should include recommendations for a directional, informational and interpretive signage program that reflects the cultural and natural values of the area. The signage program should articulate the resource values of the property and why public access is not encouraged in selected sites. Signage should articulate the resource values of the site and identify boundaries as appropriate.

STEWARDSHIP, MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES

The type, frequency and cost of the maintenance activities at Three Forks after build-out should be identified in the Master Plan. The Parks System will prepare this element of the Master Plan. The Master Plan should identify a potential location for a small maintenance facility, preferably out of the floodplain and near existing roads, that allows storage of Three Forks interpretive supplies and supports ongoing maintenance, equipment storage, etc., to steward this large linear site.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN AND FACILITIES

Interpretive programming for Three Forks should recognize and incorporate interpretive programs being developed by the Snoqualmie Valley School District, the State DNR, the USFS, the Seattle Water Department and the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum.

Primary interpretive themes should focus on Three Forks Natural Area wildlife, natural systems and cultural history. Input from the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Society, Weyerhaeuser, local residents and the Cultural Resources Division should be sought to develop an accurate historical record and basis for an interpretive program. The Master Plan should identify the location of one or more small open interpretive shelters to facilitate use by groups of up to 30 for environmental and cultural education.

MASTER PLAN CAPITAL COST/PHASING

The Master Plan should identify the capital costs of all improvements at Three Forks and include recommendations for phasing.

3FK FINAL 2/26/96

