



**Signature Report**

**April 3, 2001**

**Motion 11152**

**Proposed No.** 2000-0606.2

**Sponsors** Phillips and Irons

1                   A MOTION related to the natural resources; endorsing the  
2                   Rock Creek Valley Vision.

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5                   WHEREAS, salmon habitat in Rock Creek is the best in the lower Cedar River  
6 basin and among the best in all of lowland Puget Sound, and

7                   WHEREAS, the Rock Creek Valley remains primarily in large contiguous blocks  
8 of undeveloped forested land and is the healthiest ecological tributary in the Lower Cedar  
9 River basin, and

10                  WHEREAS, the Clark Springs watershed in the Rock Creek Valley provides sixty  
11 percent of the drinking water to the city of Kent and is an important public resource, and

12                  WHEREAS, Rock Creek Valley supports a variety of land uses and recent  
13 development proposals and changes in land ownership are indications that the natural  
14 resources in Rock Creek Valley might be at risk, and

15                  WHEREAS, King County, Seattle and the suburban cities are developing a  
16 comprehensive response to Endangered Species Act salmon listings and will be required  
17 to conserve salmon habitat, and

18 WHEREAS, most of the Rock Creek Valley is within the Rural Forest District in  
19 the adopted King County Comprehensive Plan, and is a target area for land use incentive  
20 programs and private, federal, state and local conservation initiatives, and

21 WHEREAS, the Friends of Rock Creek Valley have developed a vision for the  
22 voluntary conservation of forest land, salmon habitat and open space that has been  
23 endorsed in principle by the King County rural forest commission, the Cedar River  
24 council and many other entities, and

25 WHEREAS, King County has established the Cedar River legacy program to  
26 protect salmon spawning habitat, provide appropriate public access and preserve open  
27 space, and

28 WHEREAS, King County has established the transfer of development credits  
29 program (TDC) and the public benefit rating system (PBRs), and the State of  
30 Washington authorizes forestry current use taxation programs as voluntary land use  
31 incentives that will assist in the preservation of Rock Creek Valley, and

32 WHEREAS, King County has expended over six million dollars for the  
33 preservation of trails, habitat and open space in the Cedar River basin;

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

35 The attached Rock Creek Valley Vision is hereby adopted.

36 King County strongly endorses the use of TDC, PBRs and public-private  
37 partnerships to voluntarily preserve forestry, salmon habitat and open space in the Rock  
38 Creek Valley.

39 The executive is directed to complete a targeted public outreach program to  
40 encourage Rock Creek Valley landowners to participate in the TDC and PBRs programs

41 and seek establishment of TDC receiving sites in Kent and other cities for density  
42 transfers from the Rock Creek Valley.

43         The executive is directed to develop a funding strategy to preserve forestry,  
44 salmon habitat and open space by purchasing development rights or fee simple interests  
45 from willing sellers in the Rock Creek Valley; this funding strategy shall be developed in  
46 the context of other countywide priorities for preservation of forestry, salmon habitat and  
47 open space.

48         The executive is authorized to seek and endorse grants from private, federal, state  
49 and local sources to preserve forestry, salmon habitat and open space by purchasing  
50 development rights or fee simple interests from willing sellers in the Rock Creek Valley.

51         The executive is authorized to submit funding applications to the King County  
52 conservation futures citizens oversight committee during 2001-2006 to assist in the  
53 acquisition of development rights or fee simple interests of priority properties identified  
54 in the Rock Creek Valley Vision.

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55           The executive is directed to encourage and support city-sponsored applications to  
56           the King County conservation futures citizens oversight committee during 2001-2006  
57           when a city, either through proposed or adopted TDC interlocal agreements, accepts  
58           residential densities from the Rock Creek Valley through the TDC.  
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Motion 11152 was introduced on 11/6/00 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/2/01, by the following vote:

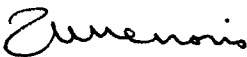
Yes: 13 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Miller, Ms. Fimia, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Pelz,  
Mr. McKenna, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Nickels, Mr. Pullen, Mr. Gossett, Ms.  
Hague, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Irons  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Pete von Reichbauer, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments**      A. Rock Creek Valley Vision, dated 3-22-01, B. Map, dated 10-5-00

## Rock Creek Valley Vision

### I. Overview

Rock Creek is the largest tributary in the lower Cedar River Basin, and has been acknowledged as the highest quality remaining salmon habitat in the lower Cedar and among the best habitats in King County. Rock Creek is an important stream for all species of salmonids found in the Cedar River Basin as well as providing critical habitat for a variety of amphibians, birds, and mammals. Additionally, Rock Creek provides 60% of the water used by the City of Kent while its underground aquifer serves Valley residents as well as providing water to the Kent and Covington well fields to the west. Clearly, water is a vital resource of the Rock Creek Valley that impacts a broad spectrum of people, fish and wildlife.

Forestlands within the Valley play a critical role in preserving and enhancing the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources. The Valley has historically been heavily forested, and numerous large tracts of working forest contribute to the near pristine condition of much of Rock Creek today. While protecting and enhancing water, preservation of these forests also provides habitat for a diverse range of wildlife. And, the forests, natural areas, and open spaces contribute to the visual beauty of the Valley while providing recreational and educational opportunities for citizens from throughout King County.

However, the natural resources within Rock Creek Valley are threatened by rapid and uncoordinated development. In response, the Friends of Rock Creek Valley have facilitated a community-based effort to define a Rock Creek Valley Vision. The purpose of this Vision is to identify key elements of natural resource, habitat, and recreation in the Valley, then develop a long-range plan to help guide future development and land use practices so as to protect and promote these key elements. A fundamental underpinning of the Vision is a reliance on voluntary landowner participation and cooperative efforts between the public and private sectors. Tools for achieving the Rock Creek Valley Vision will include public outreach and education as well as promotion of programs such as the Public Benefit Rating System, Transfer Development Credits, conservation easements, and forest management plans. Where appropriate, acquisition and restoration of sensitive areas through grants, private donations, public funding and joint county/city/community projects will also play a role.

The Rock Creek Valley Vision evolved out of numerous community meetings and discussions with interested stakeholders. These included representatives of major landholders in the Valley and local user groups, including horse owners, sports clubs, and historical interests who recognize the added benefit of recreational and historical preservation opportunities which will result from the resource and habitat protection efforts. Among such opportunities is a network of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails throughout the Valley including the Renton-to-Rainier Trail Corridor, a key link in a regional trail system connecting Mt. Rainier with the Puget Sound lowlands. Meanwhile, preservation of the rich history of coal mining and logging in the Valley will provide not only recreation, but education as well.

Current ongoing efforts by the Friends of Rock Creek Valley to preserve lands in the Valley have been endorsed by the King County Rural Forest Commission, the Maple Valley-Black Diamond Rotary, Covington Water District, the City of Kent, and the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Steering Committee. In addition, both the Cedar River Council and the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council have voiced support for a Rock Creek Valley Vision.

From the preservation of valuable water, wildlife, and forest resources to the provision of recreational, educational, and historical opportunities, it is hoped that the Rock Creek Valley Vision will serve as a guide to planning and development within the Valley. For it is only through the voluntary and cooperative efforts of an alliance of private citizens, community organizations and governmental entities that the unique natural resources of the Valley can be protected while providing benefits for all of King County.

**II. Primary Vision Elements**

- A. Protect and enhance water, fish and wildlife resources – **VERY HIGH**
  - Monitor and protect aquifer, stream, lake and riparian corridors
  - Maintain wildlife corridor connectivity between large blocks of wildlife habitat
  - Protect potable water supplies for City of Kent Clark Springs, residential wells, and Kent and Covington well fields
  
- B. Maintain forest cover for water and wildlife protection, aesthetics, recreation and commercial forestry opportunities – **VERY HIGH**
  - Maintain a viable forest industry presence within the Valley
  - Establish “light-touch forestry” on public forest lands in the Valley to serve as a public demonstration forest
  - Promote “residential forestry” on private, non-industrial lands
  - Identify and preserve sensitive forest viewsheds along major traffic corridors and recreational sites in the Valley
  
- C. Provide recreational opportunities – **HIGH**
  - Develop and maintain a network of local and regional hiking, biking and horse trails
  - Support community recreational sites (Ravensdale Park/Gracie Hansen, King County Equestrian Center, etc.)
  
- D. Preserve and promote local historic and cultural sites – **MEDIUM**
  - Develop Ravensdale Museum and walking tour to highlight mining and logging history
  - Establish Ravensdale Mine Memorial
  
- E. Establish working alliance between King County and private entities in Valley to implement Vision – **VERY HIGH**
  - Establish community based partnerships with landowners and local businesses that leverage private and public resources
  - Provide natural resource education, outreach and volunteer assistance for habitat restoration and stewardship
  - Seek private, local, State and Federal grants to acquire development rights or fee acquisitions on a voluntary basis from interested landowners
  - Establish and administer Acquisition and Stewardship Fund for preserving and maintaining critical lands within the Valley

**III. Priority Parcels for Achieving Vision**

The following is a list of high priority lands identified to achieve Rock Creek Valley policy goals. **All preservation strategies by King County will be based on voluntary participation by landowners and available incentive programs and private, local, state and federal funding.** As some or all of these lands are preserved or decisions are made by other landowners to sell or develop, additional properties may be identified.

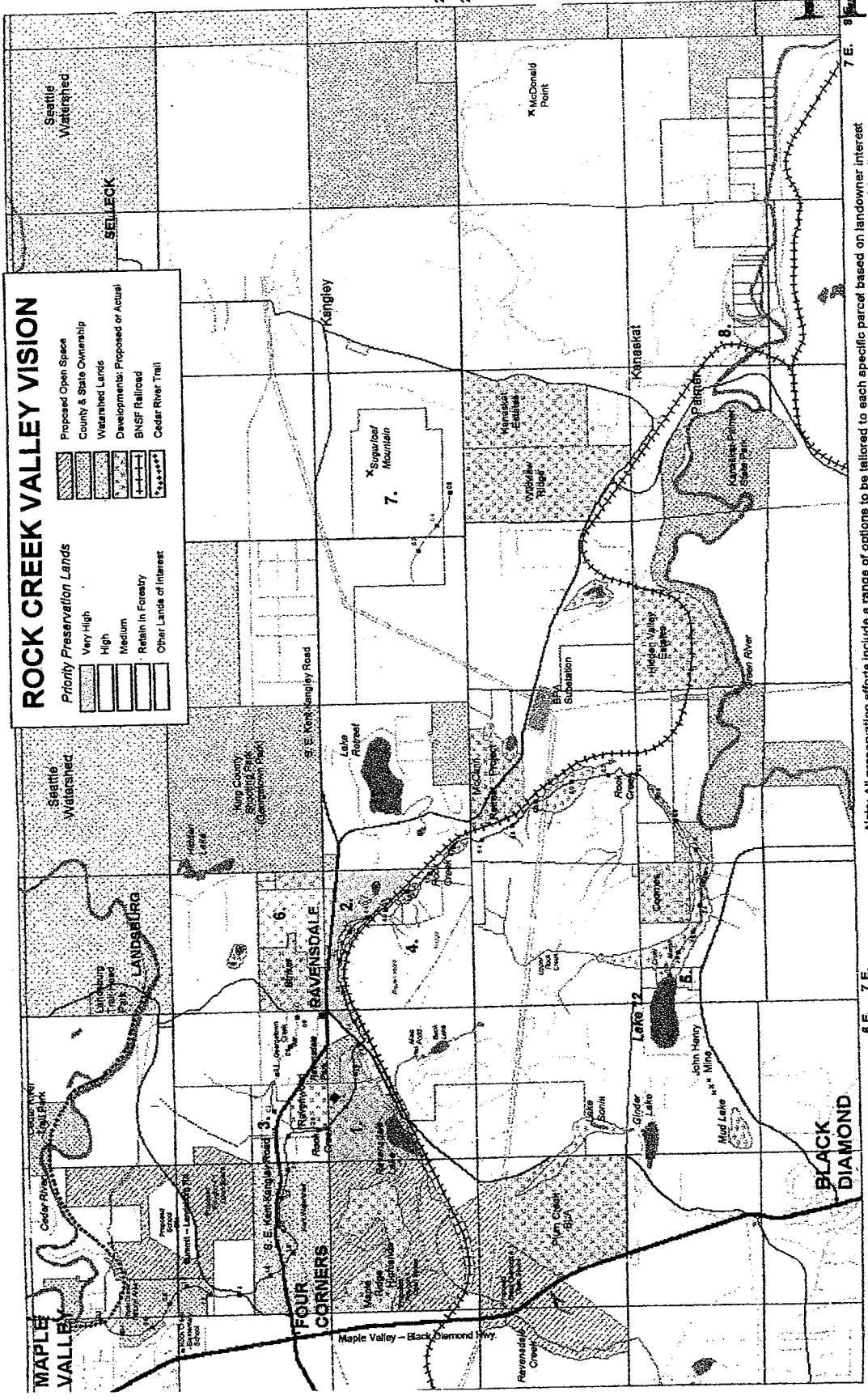
Rock Creek Valley Vision

Priority	Map Number	Tract/Owner	Approx. Acres	Primary Resource Values							Kent Water Recharge Area (Years)	Comments	
				Water/Fish/Aquifer	Habitat/Biotopes	Wildlife	Connectivity	Trails/Trail Connectivity	Aesthetics	Forests			Historical/Cultural
VH	1.	McCann BLA – Jack McCann Co	125	X		X					X	1 & 5	Development permits imminent. Water quality risk to Kent's Clark Springs & Bridal Trails Water Systems. Pioneer cemetery. If acquired, manage as forestlands.
VH	2.	Ravensdale/Retreat – Plum Creek	135	X	X	X	X	X				5	Development likely if not acquired by Fall 2000; 1 mile Rock Creek and wetlands; trails; adjacent to Kent-Kangley Rd; key wildlife connector with Striker. If acquired, manage as forestlands. Community has been active in monitoring & maintaining property
H	3.	Georgetown Meadows – Palmer Coking Coal	26	X		X	X	X		X		1 & 5	Coho spawning; likely development; adjacent to Kent-Kangley Rd; Landsburg Mine; additional adjacent lands available to provide wildlife connector. If acquired, manage through KC Parks & Recreation.
H	4.	Ravensdale Ridge – Plum Creek	280	X		X	X	X	X			5	1 mile Rock Creek/tributaries; high visibility; steep slopes/high erosion risk; 70 acres represent highest priority; possible conservation easement. Priority to retain as forestlands.
H	5.	Crow Marsh – Palmer Coking Coal	28	X	X				X	X		N/A	Lake 12 outlet; "old-growth-like" forest; marshlands. If acquired, maintain as Natural Area.
H	6.	Striker – Robert Striker	168			X	X	X	X			1 & 5	High development risk; TDC & subdivision applications submitted on 153 acres; acquisition of 3 additional 5-acre parcels would provide critical wildlife & hiking/equestrian trail connector; adjacent to Kent-Kangley Rd.
H	7.	Sugarloaf – James & Terri Cook	285				X	X	X			5 & 10	Qualified for TDC program, negotiations underway; equestrian trails and viewpoints. Priority to retain in forestry.
H	8.	Kanaskat Side Channel - Plum Creek	12	X	X							N/A	Former meander channel of Green River; Chinook, Coho, Chum, and Cutthroat spawning and rearing habitat; potential for restoration of water flows to improve habitat. If acquired, recommend WRIA9 staff work with 15 private landowners of associated parcels

TDC: Transfer Development Credits  
 CE: Conservation Easement  
 ACQ: Acquisition

Note: Preservation strategies indicated are only suggested. All preservation efforts include a range of options to be tailored to each specific parcel based on landowner interest and voluntary participation as well as available incentive programs and private, local, state, and federal funding.

VH: Very High Priority -- all parcels have equal priority in this category  
 H: High Priority -- all parcels have equal priority in this category



**ROCK CREEK VALLEY VISION**

**Priority Preservation Lands**

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Retain in Forestry
- Other Lands of Interest

**Proposed Open Space**

- County & State Ownership
- Watershed Lands
- Developments: Proposed or Actual
- BNSF Railroad
- Cedar River Trail

Note: All preservation efforts include a range of options to be tailored to each specific parcel based on landowner interest and voluntary participation as well as available incentive programs and private, local, state, and federal funding.

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Prepared by Friends of Rock Creek Valley 10/5/00