

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area Site Management Guidelines

December 2004



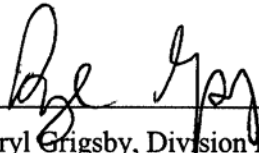
King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Water and Land Resources Division

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area Site Management Guidelines

December 2004



Daryl Grigsby, Division Director

King County Water and Land Resources Division



King County

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Water and Land Resources Division

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Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area

Site Management Guidelines

Summary

Site Description

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area is a King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Ecological Land. Ecological Lands are managed for the protection of their ecological value, with appropriate public access.

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area consists of six parcels designated as Ecological Lands (nearly eight acres), acquired between 2000 and 2004. An adjacent four-acre parcel is managed by the Flood Hazard Reduction Services section of DNRP. This parcel will likely be transferred to the Ecological Lands inventory, and is discussed as part of the site in this document.¹ Future acquisitions and additional King County DNRP inventory transfer may add acreage to the site. The current inventory is adjacent to, and the parcels are connected by, a large forested riparian parcel (042206-6666) mapped as aquatic bed with no owner.

The properties are located approximately 5 miles southeast of Renton and 1.5 miles north of Maple Valley. The parcels are located on the west side of Maxwell Road SE. The parcels contained in this Natural Area are located within the 'Mouth of Taylor Reach' of the Lower Cedar River as identified by the Cedar River Legacy program, located between RM 13.2 and 13.8.

The Natural Area parcels are located along the lower mile of Lower Taylor Creek, and contain the creek's confluence with the Cedar River. Lower Taylor Creek is unique among Cedar River tributaries for its extensive floodplain, flowing approximately one mile through the relatively flat river valley from near the SR 18/169 interchange to its confluence with the Cedar. The mapped FEMA floodplain contains most of the valley floor in this vicinity, including the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. The creek is noted for providing important overwintering and spawning habitat for salmon.

Many of the Natural Area parcels, adjacent private properties, and the adjacent aquatic bed parcel 042206-6666, include portions of a 25-acre Class 2 wetland that surrounds the mouth of Lower Taylor Creek. This wetland supports forested areas dominated by cottonwoods and alders with occasional conifers, and scrub/shrub areas dominated by salmonberry as well as non-natives such as Japanese knotweed.

The Getchman levee extends along the riverward side of the Natural Area (on the right bank of the Cedar River). The Natural Area parcels support an elongated backwater on the east side of the levee, included a relatively large pond adjacent to Lower Taylor Creek. Another wetland extends into the site from the south, near Maxwell Road.

Upland portions of the Natural Area include mixed coniferous-deciduous riparian forest, and lawn remaining on former house sites. Upon acquisition, a small area was planted with coniferous trees, and cardboard was laid to reduce presence of invasive species around the plantings.

The Flood Hazard Reduction Plan and other plans for this area recommend a setback and/or partial removal of the Getchman Levee as a long term solution for flood protection. This project will directly affect the Natural Area. This project is identified in the Water and Land Resources Six-Year Capital

¹ Two parcels located upstream were acquired by the Capital Projects section of DNRP, and one parcel may be acquired in the future. Portions of these parcels are intended to be transferred to the Ecological Lands inventory in the future, but the timeframe for land transfer is uncertain. These parcels are not discussed in this document due to uncertainty of timeframe and inventory.

Improvement Program for design in 2007-9 and construction in 2010. Associated recommendations for habitat restoration in the vicinity are not prioritized or funded at this time.

Public Use

The upland portions of the southern parcels, along Maxwell Road, provide opportunity for walking and nature observation. From this area visitors can observe the stream corridor and the backwater channel and pond behind the Getchman levee. Use should be directed to these portions of the site, as much of the site (the stream corridor itself, and various wetland areas) are environmentally sensitive and are not appropriate for extensive public use. Dense shrub vegetation may limit access on portions of the site, in particular to the northern parcels where there are no trails into the parcels. There is no established parking area at the site, but there is room to park on road shoulders.

Management Objectives and Recommendations

The goals for all King County Ecological Lands are to conserve and enhance ecological value, and accommodate appropriate public use that does not harm the ecological resources on site. The following are management recommendations that are designed to support these goals. Text follows each recommendation explaining how that recommendation applies at the site.

Objective: Maintain ecological integrity of the site

Recommendation: Ensure that management and public access support the regional ecological value of site

Decisions about site management and public access should consider the ecological role of, in particular, the extensive wetland areas, the backwater channel, and the stream corridor, and should preserve and protect ecological integrity. Public use at the site may be most supportable on the eastern upland areas of the site near Maxwell Road which was formerly a house site. This overarching recommendation is carried out through the various recommendations below.

Objective: Develop long term ecologically based protection and restoration actions

Recommendation: Perform ecological assessment

Complete an assessment of basic ecological conditions and physical processes. Staff with appropriate expertise (e.g., ecologists, biologists, and engineers) should perform this work. Existing documents, studies, and staff research may contribute substantial inventory and assessment information about the sites.

An ecological assessment at this site was prioritized for 2004-5 Watershed Ecology and Assessment Team work due to planned levee modification at the site.

Recommendation: Develop recommendations for site restoration from assessment, and work with existing recommendations for the site

As prioritized and funded, use assessment information to develop projects to achieve a set of goals and objectives consistent with those identified for King County Ecological Lands.

The Lower Cedar Basin Plan (WMC 1998), the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (WRIA 8 Service Provider Team 2004, Appendix F, p. 7 & 8), and the Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (King County 1993) make a number of management recommendations in the vicinity of the site that may be considered for future recommendations. These general proposals are aimed at the multiple interests of the Lower Cedar Basin Plan (flood hazard reduction, habitat quality and salmonid health, and water quality and quantity) though they are not prioritized or scheduled for implementation in the near term. Many recommendations for flood hazard reduction come from the 1993 Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (FHRP). The 1993 FHRP is currently being updated; flood control recommendations listed below may be revised to reflect current site conditions, research findings, budget, management priorities, and regulatory mandates.

These recommendations include: setback of Getchman levee and bioengineer the face of levee; enhancement of 25-acre wetland; restoration work on Taylor Creek at several places; and culvert/road work on Maxwell Road SE. Getchman levee removal and upstream habitat enhancement work (on land which is intended for future transfer to the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area inventory) were prioritized and funded in WLRD's Six-Year CIP; for the other projects there are no specific plans or timeframe for implementing these recommendations.

As projects on the Natural Area are prioritized and funded by King County groups outside of the Natural Resource Lands group (or by other implementing agencies), projects should be reviewed by NRL through the “Application to Alter Parks Division and NRL Managed Properties” process to coordinate site management with project work.

If project work is planned for parcel 042206-6666 (mapped as aquatic bed with no identified owner), the State Department of Natural Resources has recommended that they be contacted to investigate past channel location and ownership responsibility.

Objective: Contain spread of invasive vegetation

Recommendation: Monitor and control invasive vegetation

Park staff should monitor, contain the spread, and where possible to reduce the extent of noxious and invasive plant species that are present at the site, particularly in those areas where planting projects have occurred. Control is primarily through manual removal of plants by Park staff. However, due to the extent of Japanese knotweed at some portions of the site, control may be best performed through a capital project, small habitat restoration project, or work with the Noxious Weed Control Program.

Objective: Restore native vegetation

Recommendation: Maintain existing and establish new planting projects

Recent mitigation plantings on site will be maintained by responsible contractor until 2006. As warranted by budget and prioritization of work, King County Parks staff should maintain native plantings, primarily by controlling invasive species. New plantings may be installed where feasible to control invasive species and to maintain the work.

Objective: Allow current level of passive recreation at the site

Recommendation: Monitor public access

Public use should be primarily in the upland eastern portions of the site, in the grassy areas of the former house site. Park staff should note changes in visitor numbers and types of recreational activities and observe any noticeable visitor impacts on the ecological values of the site. This information should be reported annually to King County Natural Resource Lands Management Staff responsible for updating site management guidelines.

The current passive uses of walking and nature observation occurring at Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area should be monitored and maintained at current levels. This use level is appropriate given current site topography, access points, and sensitive resources.

Objective: Protect the site from inappropriate public uses

Recommendation: Control litter/dumping and encroachment activities

Park staff should monitor the site for encroachment, dumping, and other trash and respond as necessary to maintain a clean and safe property. Monitoring should occur at least monthly. Park staff should consider installing litter/dumping policy signs on the property if litter activity increases.

Objective: Coordinate management of county-owned sites

Recommendation: Pursue managing all county-owned parcels in Mouth of Taylor Reach together

The Natural Area parcels managed by NRL are adjacent to an FHRS-managed property (511240-0070). Management of these properties should be coordinated under a single land manager. Upstream are several parcels purchased by the Capital Projects section and managed by King County Roads; these parcels are intended to transfer to the NRL inventory as well.

More broadly, there could be a general policy decision by WLRD management of whether to place new acquisitions in areas of future FHRS projects into the FHRS or the NRL inventory. This decision should consider how to promote efficient management; support of ecological, public access, and flood hazard reduction goals; and future project implementation.

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Acknowledgements

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Suggested citation for this report:

King County. 2004. Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area, Site Management Guidelines. King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division. Seattle, Washington.

(this version updated August 2005 with additional funding information for parcels 042206-9076 &- 9055)

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area

Site Management Guidelines

Introduction

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area is a King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Ecological Land. Ecological Lands are a category of Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) properties managed for the protection of their ecological value. Appropriate public access and interpretive opportunities are accommodated on these sites where they do not harm the ecological value of the site. The Natural Resource Lands group and Parks and Recreation Division staff have responsibility for site management.

The parcels contained in Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area are located within the ‘Mouth of Taylor Reach’ of the Lower Cedar River.² The extent of this reach was identified through the Cedar River Legacy program, which directs public conservation efforts in the Lower Cedar River. Mouth of Taylor Reach is located between RM 13.2 and RM 13.8.³ Nineteen parcels were identified within the reach totaling nearly 34 acres, most of which is currently in private ownership (see Appendix 1).

This document provides general property and acquisition information, a description of existing site conditions, a chronology of recent events and management actions, and a list of management objectives and recommendations for Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. These site management guidelines were developed using guidance established in the King County Ecological Lands Handbook (King County 2003).

Part 1. General Property Information

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area is located in unincorporated King County, approximately 5 miles southeast of Renton and 1.5 miles north of Maple Valley. The vicinity is characterized by rural residential lots, zoned one house per 5 or 10 acres. See Figure 1 for a vicinity map and Figure 2 for a site map depicting river miles. Table 1 provides general information about the location of the Natural Area. Table 2 provides specific information for the parcels. Figure 2 shows the last four digits of parcel numbers; full parcel numbers for every parcel in the reach are provided in Appendix 1.

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area is nearly 8 acres in total at this time, consisting of 6 separate parcels. These parcels are located on the right bank (facing downstream) of the Cedar River, between RM 13.2 and 13.6. Two parcels are located off of SE 197th Place, and four are on Maxwell Rd SE between the 19800 and the 20200 blocks of Maxwell Rd SE.

While the Natural Area consists of parcels managed by the Natural Resource Lands program, there are several properties in this vicinity in which other WLRD groups have a land management ownership or interest. One in particular is relevant to management of Mouth of Taylor Creek Natural Area: parcel 511240 0070 immediately south of the Maxwell Road parcels (labeled 0070 on Figure 2). Flood Hazard Reduction Services (FHRS) purchased this parcel using flood hazard mitigation funding sources, thereby requiring that the lands be maintained as open space in perpetuity. The parcel is currently managed by FHRS as part of the overall reach in close coordination with NRL. This parcel may be transferred to NRL,

² This site has previously been called “Lower Taylor Creek Natural Area.” The newer name “Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area” is used in this document to reflect the reach name.

³ River miles depicted in the Lower Cedar River Basin and Nonpoint Pollution Action Plan (WMC 1998) are used in this report; actual river miles may be somewhat different due to improved technology in measurements.

Table 1. Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area General Information.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best Available Address | Several sites along or near Maxwell Rd SE and SE 197 th Pl |
| Thomas Guide Map Location | 687 J4 |
| Legal Description | Section 4, Township 22, Range 6 |
| Acreage | 7.68 acres (Natural Area inventory; 11.64 acres including FHRS parcel 0070 below) |
| Drainage Basin | Lower Cedar River Basin |
| WRIA | WRIA 8 |
| Council District | 12 |
| King County Sensitive Areas | Stream, wetland, FEMA 100-year floodplain and floodway, erosion |

Table 2. Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area Parcel Information.

| Parcel Number | Name Used in Document* | Acreage* | Purchase Date | Ownership type/price | Previous Names | Zoning | Funding Source | Recording Number |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0422069055 | Mouth of Taylor-9055 | 1.13 | 1/19/01 | Owned in Fee; \$22,500 for both | Bailey | RA-10 | Cedar River Legacy: Open Space non-bond, SRFB | 20010119001294 rerecorded as 20050520001023; Deed of Right: 20011221002108 |
| 0422069076 | Mouth of Taylor-9076 | 0.35 | 1/19/01 | | Bailey | RA-5 | Cedar River Legacy: Open Space Non-bond, SRFB | 20010119001294, rerecorded as 20050520001023; Deed of Right 20050812001708 |
| 5112400075 | Mouth of Taylor-0075 | 1.27 | 11/1/00 | Owned in Fee; \$43,750 | Getchmann | RA-5 | Cedar River Legacy: REET | 20001101000284 |
| 5112400076 | Mouth of Taylor-0076 | 1.47 | 3/10/03 | Owned in Fee; \$225,000 for both | Getchmann | RA-5 | Cedar River Legacy: CFT, SRFB | 20030310002119 Deed of Right 20031205001539 |
| 5112400080 | Mouth of Taylor-0080 | 0.77 | 3/10/03 | | Getchmann | RA-5 | Cedar River Legacy: CFT, SRFB | 20030310002119 Deed of Right 20031205001539 |
| 0422069019 | Mouth of Taylor-9019 | 2.69 | 2/6/04 | Owned in Fee; \$100,000 | Segur | RA-5 | Cedar River Legacy: CFT | 20040206000848 |
| <i>Adjacent FHRS parcel</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 5112400070 | FHRS-0070 | 3.96 | 9/15/03 | Owned in fee, managed by FHRS | Mandelin | RA-5 | Flood hazard reduction funds | 20030915001591; Covenant 20040521001139 |

*Parcels are referred to by the reach name plus the last four digits of the ten-digit parcel number.

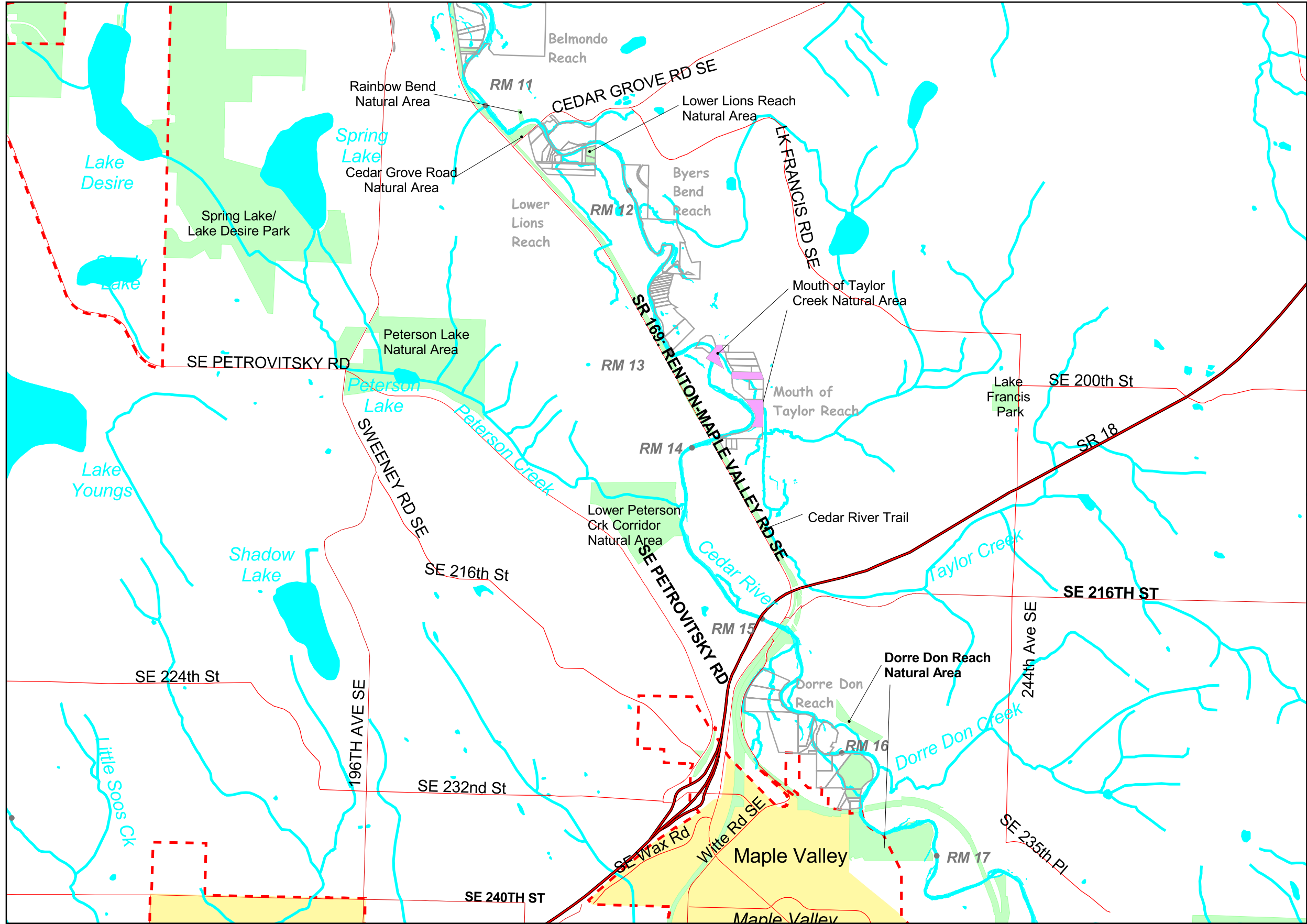
**Acreage taken from King County Assessor's data.

so this document will discuss management of this parcel with respect to the needs and requirements of the NRL and FHRS programs.

Three parcels to the south and west of the FHRS parcel are targeted for acquisition by early 2005: 5112400064, -0067, and -0068. (See Figure 2, labeled 0064, 0067, and 0068) Because these parcels are not in the inventory and staff have not had access to the site, these parcels are not included in this Site Management Guidelines at this time. If added to the inventory, these parcels will be managed in a manner similar to the rest of the Natural Area.

There are four additional King County-owned properties in the immediate vicinity. Locations of these parcels are shown on Figure 2.

- Two County-owned parcels are located approximately 1/3 mile upstream along Maxwell Road (# 511240 0045, at 20648 Maxwell Rd SE, and 511240 0040 at 20610 Maxwell Rd SE). A third parcel



Legend

- Mouth of Taylor Creek N. A.
- Selected Public Lands
- River Mile Markers
 - Miles from Lower Cedar Basin Action Plan
- River Reach Boundaries
 - Lower Cedar River reach extents are designated by Cedar River Legacy Program
- Rivers and Lakes
- Streams
- KC Urban Growth Area
- Municipal Boundaries
- Streets
- Freeways

March 1, 2004

800 0 800 1600 2400 3200 4000 Feet

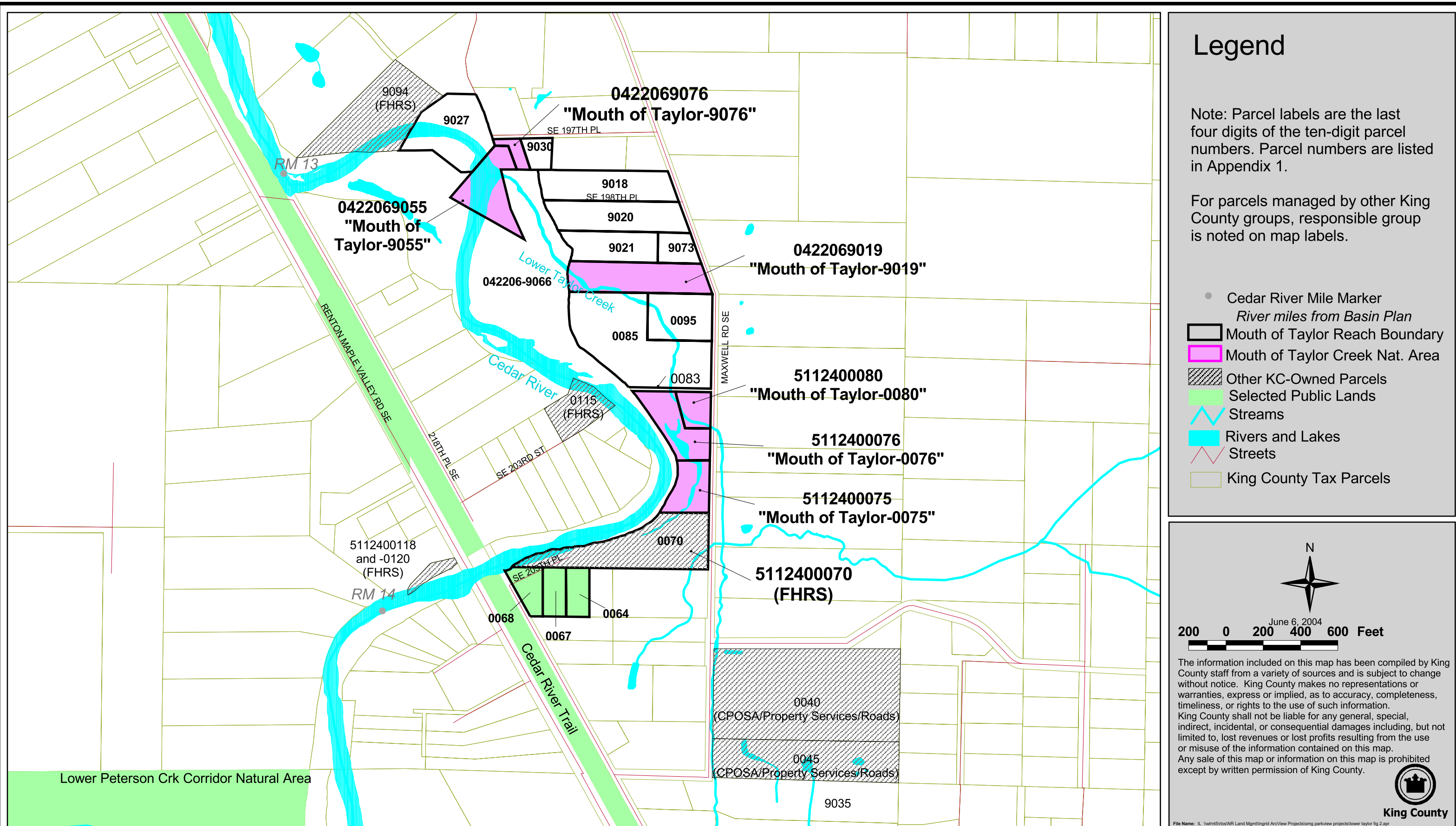
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King County

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Figure 1

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area: Vicinity Map



(092206 9035) is targeted for acquisition. (Parcels labeled 0040, 0045, and 9035 on Figure 2.) These parcels are managed by the Capital Project and Open Space Acquisition (CPOSA) section of WLRD with regular monitoring performed by King County Property Services. A future capital project is scheduled at the site. A boundary line adjustment will be performed to create a new parcel that contains the wetland and stream through the site; this parcel will be transferred in the future to the Natural Resource Lands program inventory and the houses on the remaining two parcels sold (Evans pers. comm. 2004).

- An FHRS-managed site is located north of the Taylor Creek mouth along 221st Ave SE (off of SE 197th Place), located west of 19614 221st Ave SE. (Site is parcel number 042206 9094, labeled 9094 on Figure 2).
- Another FHRS-managed site is located on the left bank of the Cedar River, across from Mouth of Taylor-0076 (site is parcel number 511140 0015, labeled 0015 on Figure 2).

To the west of the Natural Area parcels (between Mouth of Taylor-9055 and -0076), the Assessor's parcel maps include much of the Cedar River and Lower Taylor Creek corridor within a broad parcel 042206-6666 that is mapped as river bottom (see Figures 2 and 3). This land represents a significant acreage of un-owned forested and riparian acreage that connects the Mouth of Taylor parcels along the Cedar River. While the Assessor's Office does not cite any party as the owner of this parcel, the State Department of Natural Resources has recommended that, if King County intends to implement any projects on this parcel, that further research be done to investigate prior channel locations and associated ownership responsibility for this land (Durkin pers. comm. 2004). Details on this topic are presented in Appendix 2.

Part 2. Acquisition History, Funding Source and Deed Restrictions

The properties were acquired as part of the Cedar River Legacy program to protect and restore habitat. The Mouth of Taylor Creek area has received Legacy Program priority because of its relatively extensive floodplain, as compared to most other Cedar River tributaries (described further in Part 3). The county-owned parcels contain part of one of the largest floodplain wetlands along the Cedar and the mouth of Lower Taylor Creek. Acquisition of these sites advances the goals of the Lower Cedar River Basin Plan, Flood Hazard Reduction Plan, and WRIA 8 Near Term Action Agenda. Funding sources for most of these purchases were from the Cedar River Legacy pool of funds; Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds were used for the FHRS property (parcel 5112400070). Future acquisitions may add acreage to the area of this Natural Area.

Mouth of Taylor-0075

Mouth of Taylor-0075 parcel has the following deed restrictions on the title deed: "The property herein conveyed is subject to open space use restrictions and restrictions on alienation as specified in RCW 84.34.200, et seq., and King County Ordinance No. 9071, 10750, 11068, and 11713." (Pacific Northwest Title 2000) These restrictions refer to the following documents:

- Ordinance 9071 (July 27, 1989) authorized a public vote on 1989 Open Space Bonds.
- Ordinance 10750 and 11068 (March 8 and October 3, 1993) authorized the Regional Conservation Futures 1993 Bond Acquisition Program (per regulations in RCW 84.34.200). Under Conservation Futures, property use is restricted to low-impact passive-use recreation, non-motorized use, and minimum 15% impervious surfaces.
- Ordinance 11713 (February 15, 1995) refers to an allocation of Waterways 2000 funds to acquisition and stewardship. There are no explicit restrictions contained in the ordinance.

There are no easements or other applicable deed restrictions on title.⁴

The following information pertains to the funding sources used for this purchase:

- *Conservation Futures Tax Levy:* Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) levy is authorized by state statute RCW 84.34.230. A county may place this levy upon all taxable property in its jurisdiction. Revenues may be placed in a Conservation Futures Fund for jurisdictions or nonprofit nature conservancy corporations to acquire open space land or rights to future development within that county (these development rights are termed “conservation futures” in RCW 84.34.220). Open space is defined in RCW 84.34.020 generally as land contributing to natural resources, streams, water supply, public land network, historic sites, visual quality, or as certain agricultural conservation lands. Acquisition criteria identified by King County include: wildlife, salmonid, or rare plant habitat value; scenic resource, community separator, greenbelt, or general park and open space value; or historic and cultural resources. Additional consideration is given to passive recreation opportunity, interpretive opportunity, threat of loss, complexity of acquisition, public-private partnership, regional significance, relationship of proposed acquisition to existing parks, trails, or greenway systems or plans, and short-term and long-term stewardship commitment at the site (KCC 26.12.025).

King County Council directs the spending of a portion of annual CFT funds; a Citizen’s Oversight Committee reviews and approves competitive applications for the remainder of the funds. CFT funds are allocated to sponsoring jurisdictions with the requirement that matching funds from the applicant jurisdiction are of equal or greater value to CFT funding sought (matching funds may be cash, land trade, or value of land purchased adjacent to proposed acquisition). Acquisitions may be fee simple or less-than-fee acquisitions.

Purchases made with Conservation Futures funds are to be used for low-impact, passive-use recreation. Motorized use is limited to parking/staging/maintenance areas. “Non-vegetative impervious surfaces” should cover less than 15% of the site (CFT 2002). Conservation futures interests shall not be transferred except with agreement that land interests shall be preserved in accordance with the intent and language of RCW 84.34.230; uses of lands shall not be altered unless equivalent lands within the geographic jurisdiction are provided (KC Ordinance 10750, p. 10).

- *1989 Open Space Bond:* King County voters authorized the \$117,640,000 King County Open Space Bond initiative, described in King County Ordinance 9071, in November 1989 to provide funds for the acquisition, development, renovation and improvement of public green spaces, green belts, open space, parks and trails in King County. Specific goals included preserving wildlife, enhancing scenic vistas, providing access to the water and open space, and providing trail connections between virtually all the cities in King County to a regional trail system and trails within the suburban cities and unincorporated areas of King County (King County 1989). King County Ordinance 9071 authorizes reclassification of bond funds in Section 8, part C. Restrictions on land conveyance associated with Open Space Bond funds are identified in Section 8, part D.

Mouth of Taylor-9055 and -9076

The Mouth of Taylor-9055 and -9076 parcels were acquired together in winter 2001.

These parcels were subject to a 1960 King County river protection easement upon acquisition. The King County river protection easement no longer exists once King County purchases the property. If the property is transferred to another King County Division or Department for management, WLRD

⁴ The Purchase and Sale agreement was amended on 9/26/00 to provide that King County would provide inspections and maintenance of hazard trees that posed a risk to house on parcel –0076. The 2003 purchase of parcel –0076 and removal of the house obviates this requirement.

management will need to ensure that a similar policy decision is made to secure FHRS' right of access, or that this right is formalized in an interagency agreement. If the parcel were to be surplus in the future, King County would need to make sure it retains a river protection easement. This information applies not only to this parcel, but to all the parcels in this site which have river protection easements (Parcels -9055, -9076, -0076, and FHRS parcel 5112400070 have river protection easements; parcels -0075 and -9019 do not have river protection easements). Further information about the flood facilities is located in Part 3; information about policy on FHRS access and maintenance of their flood facility is provided in Part 4.

A 1936 covenant restricts use of the parcels for "any commercial purpose or any public enterprises." Another covenant from early in the century grants "reciprocal rights" between several individuals "to open the Old River Bed and to divert water therein, upon notice, to the other property."

"Deeds of Right to Use Land for Salmon Recovery and Conservation Purposes" on the -9055 and -9076 parcels were granted to the State of Washington in association with SRFB funding (see Table 2)⁵. The Deed of Right stipulates that use of the land is to be consistent with conservation purposes, unless SRFB approves substitution of comparable land.

The following information pertains to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board funding used for this purchase:

- *Salmon Recovery Funding Board:* The Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) was created in 1999 to administer funds for salmon recovery appropriated by the state legislature and Congress (RCW 77.85). (SRFB 2002) SRFB's mission is to "support salmon recovery by funding habitat protection and restoration projects and related programs and activities that produce sustainable and measurable benefits for fish and their habitat." SRFB receives administrative support from the State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

Project sponsors such as cities, counties, agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, and private citizens submit applications to local lead entities such as Watershed Resource Inventory Area Steering Committees. The lead entities submit prioritized lists of project applications to SRFB for consideration. Sponsors request funds to protect or restore salmon habitat, commit to long-term monitoring, and provide a monetary or in-kind match of 15% or more. Projects may include acquisition; in-stream passage or diversion; in-stream, riparian, upland, or estuarine habitat actions; or assessments and studies.

Lands acquired in fee with SRFB assistance must be dedicated to habitat conservation, outdoor recreation or salmon recovery uses in perpetuity. This is done through a recorded Deed of Right to Use Land for Habitat Conservation, Salmon Recovery, or Outdoor Recreation Purposes (depending on funding source). This Deed conveys property interests to the public forever.

Mouth of Taylor-0076 and -0080

The Mouth of Taylor-0076 and -0080 parcels were acquired together in 2003. There are no restrictions on use contained in the deed. Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Conservation Futures funds were used for this purchase. These parcels are each subject to a "Deed of Right to Use Land for Salmon Recovery and Conservation Purposes" granted to the State of Washington through the SRFB (see explanation above for parcels -9055 and -9076).

⁵ A SRFB Deed of Right was filed for parcel -9055 only (#20011221002108). No Deed of Right for parcel -9076 was filed at that time. During the writing of this document, NRL brought this matter to the attention of WLRD Acquisitions group. A SRFB Deed of Right was filed for parcel -9076 in 2005 (#20050812001708, which supersedes one filed with incorrect parcel number as #20050405001512).

Parcel -0076 has a 1960 King County river protection easement granting “the right to construct and maintain a rip-rap bank protection along the Cedar River.” (Recorded deed 20030310002119)

Mouth of Taylor-9019

Mouth of Taylor-9019 parcel was acquired in 2004 using Conservation Futures funds, under the Cedar River Legacy program. Upon acquisition, the legal description was amended to adjust the northeastern boundary slightly to accommodate a fenceline that formerly encroached five feet into the parcel (per Recorded Survey 20010410800006).

This parcel has similar deed restrictions on its title as does the Mouth of Taylor-0075 parcel (see above): “The property herein conveyed is subject to open space use restrictions and restrictions on alienation as specified in RCW 84.34.200, et seq., and King County Ordinance No. 9071, 10750, 11068, and 14265.” (Recorded deed 20040206000848) Descriptions are provided in the Mouth of Taylor-0075 section for RCW 84.34.200 and the first three ordinances. Ordinance 14265 is the 2002 Budget Ordinance passed by King County Council which places no restrictions on use.

The parcel is affected by water supply covenants⁶ that restrict development or sewer/septic/drainage uses around the well source, which is located approximately 370 feet west and 65 feet south of the northeast property corner. These restrictions do not affect property management by NRL. The landowner to the northwest (parcel 0422069021) is also bound by the same restrictive covenants (Recorded document 20020611000938).

Parcel 5112400070 (FHRS-owned parcel)

Although this parcel is managed by FHRS, information is provided here regarding acquisition because of its location adjacent to Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. This parcel was acquired and the house removed from the floodplain using federal funds for disaster relief. The parcel was acquired with funds provided under a Grant Agreement with the Washington State Emergency Management Department, which “restrict the use of the land to open space in perpetuity in order to protect and preserve natural floodplain values.”

Specific covenant conditions and restrictions apply at this site (Recorded document 20040521001139). The conditions include restrictions on uses, prohibition on structures, ineligibility for future federal disaster repair funds, and transferability of the property. Deed restrictions indicate that the property shall be maintained “for uses compatible with open space, recreational, or wetlands management practices; in general such uses include parks and outdoor recreation activities, nature reserves, unimproved pervious parking lots” and other uses as described in 44 CFR Section 206.434.

At the time of acquisition, these parcels have a 1960 King County river protection easement granting “the right to construct and maintain a rip-rap bank protection along the Cedar River.” (Recorded deed 20030310002119)

Part 3. Ecological and Physical Setting

This section describes the existing natural resources and ecological processes associated with Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. Additional analysis is presented in Part 6 below. Figure 3 depicts site features such as topography, streams, wetlands, and floodplains.

⁶ Recorded documents 20010629002207, 20020611000938, 20020611000939, 20020611000940. These documents list slightly different locations for the well.

Topography and Soils

The Cedar River valley is approximately ½ mile wide in this vicinity, widening from 1/3 mile to ½ mile wide at the SR 18/169 intersection. The eastern valley wall consists of forested slopes abutting residential parcels across Maxwell Road SE from the Natural Area. The western valley wall rises just west of SR 169.

The King County-owned Natural Area parcels are located along the lower mile of Lower Taylor Creek. Lower Taylor Creek flows approximately one mile through the relatively flat river valley from near the SR 18/169 interchange to its confluence with the Cedar River. The Lower Cedar Basin Plan describes the Taylor Creek drainage basin as follows:

“The Taylor Creek system...drains an area of approximately five square miles, developed almost entirely at rural densities. The generally flat terrain, combined with large expanses of slowly draining glacial till soils, has formed an extensive array of large wetlands. Many of these have been partially converted to pasture.” (WMC 1998, p. 3-37)

Soils

The parcels contain riverwash soils along the Cedar River corridor, and Pilchuck soils in the other areas of the site (Snyder et al. 1973).

- Pilchuck loamy fine sand is located on terraces adjacent to streams, found at low elevation, with 0-2% slopes and rapid permeability. Common inclusions are high amounts of riverwash, Puyallup, and other soil types.
- Riverwash soils are “long, narrow areas of sand, gravel and stones along channels of larger streams.” If vegetated, common species include cottonwoods or willows. “Overflow and alteration by severe erosion and deposition are frequent.”

Hydrology and Channel Morphology

Cedar River

Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area parcels are located at approximately RM 13.2 through 13.6 (see Figure 2). Using maps and aerial photographs, Perkins (1994, cited in Blair 2003a) described historic change in channel characteristics (see also King County 1993a). These studies classified the Lower Cedar River into eight river reaches. According to Perkins (1994), reaches were selected based on morphology and slope. The river reach between RM 10.0 (RM 9.4 in Perkins) and RM 13.8 was classified as a single river reach (King County 1993a, p. 5-22; Perkins 1994). The Lower Cedar River Current and Future Conditions Report (King County 1993a) describes historic conditions in this reach as follows:

“[The reach] was extensively braided in 1865, with braided zones ranging in width from 800 to 1300 feet so that the river occupied almost the entire width of the valley floor. By 1936, the river had abandoned many of its channels but still had an obvious meander belt between 300 and 600 feet wide... Most bends in this reach are constrained by revetments or the valley wall, leading to a relatively stable channel in the past two decades.” (King County 1993a, p. 5-29)

This analysis indicates that the 1895 active channel width was 460 feet, and in 1989 the active channel width was only 120 feet. The natural degree of confinement was characterized as “unconfined,” but the current level of hydrological modifications was characterized as “high.” Wetted channel width has decreased from a maximum of 299 feet and minimum of 161 feet in 1895 to a maximum of 108 feet and minimum of 90 feet in 1989. During this same time period, historic pool frequency decreased from “high” in 1895 to “low” in 1989. (Perkins 1994, Blair 2003a)

Backwater areas behind the Getchman levee that receive water from seepage under the Getchman levee may represent former side channels of the Cedar River (WMC 1998 p. A-116). There are no mapped side channels connected to the river in this vicinity.

FEMA 100-year floodplain and floodway

The mapped FEMA 100-year floodplain for the Cedar River depicts areas predicted to be inundated by a flood event of a severity that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004) (Figure 3). The mapped FEMA floodplain contains most of the valley floor from the upstream of this reach to the Natural Area, including the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area parcels. At the Natural Area, the mapped floodplain is approximately 1/3 mile wide extending just east of Maxwell Road SE.

The FEMA floodway is the area within and adjacent to the channel that is subject to the deepest and fastest flood flows. Although the FEMA floodway is not mapped on Figure 3, it is contained entirely within the mapped 100-year floodplain. The 100-year floodplain and floodway maps for this reach of the Cedar River have been recently updated and are considered best available data, but are awaiting final adoption by FEMA (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004).

Levees and revetments

There are four levees and revetments in the vicinity of Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. These levees and revetments were constructed during the 1960s flood control efforts along the Cedar River.

- The Getchman Levee extends along the right riverbank from the SR 169 bridge over the Cedar River north through parcel -0070 (the FHRS-managed property to the south of Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area), and onto Mouth of Taylor-0075, -0076, and -0080 parcels. The Flood Hazard Reduction Plan recommends a setback and/or partial removal of the Getchman Levee as a long term solution for flood protection. The design of this project will need to be coordinated with the Natural Area land managers as it would affect all four parcels (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004).
- The Jan Road Levee begins at the Mouth of Taylor-9055 parcel and extends west along the right riverbank through the King County-owned 0422069094 parcel. A partial removal of the levee as it crosses the county-owned parcel is currently under consideration (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004).
- The Rhode/Cedar Revetment is located across from the Getchman levee, on the left bank. Portions of this levee overtop during moderate flood events (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004).
- The Rutledge Johnson Revetment is located on the left bank downstream from the Rhode/Cedar Revetment. The upstream end of this levee provides flood protection to a number of homes. However, the downstream end of the facility largely serves to separate the river from an adjacent wetland and remnant side channel. Removal of the downstream end is being considered in concert with the Jan Road levee modification.

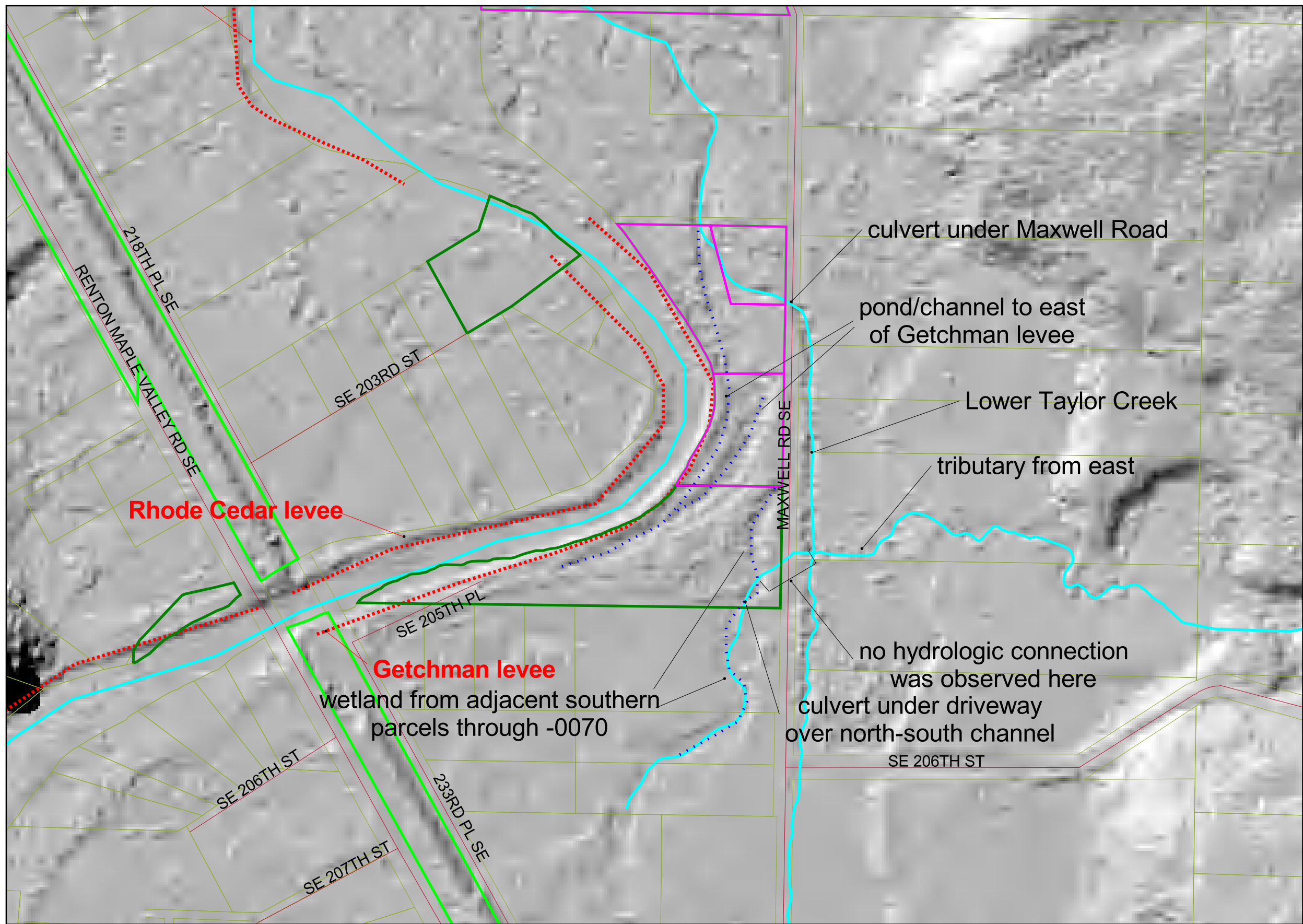
Further information about maintenance of this flood facility is provided in Part 4.

Tributaries

Lower Taylor Creek (WRIA # 08.0351), is the only mapped tributary in this reach. Lower Taylor Creek is 3.30 miles in length, with an additional 1.75 miles in three tributaries (King County 1993a, p. 7-34).

The Habitat Limiting Factors report describes Lower Taylor Creek as follows:

“Portions of the subbasin are composed of a network of relatively low-gradient stream channels containing habitat that is of good quality with some isolated pockets of excellent habitat. Riparian systems are generally well vegetated, although still immature. In high-gradient reaches, habitat is further stabilized by patches of small to moderate sized boulders. Hydrology of the system has not been greatly affected due to the relatively low level of development throughout the drainage.” (Kerwin 2001, p. 333)



Legend

Image is a Digital Ground Model showing the topography of the earth's bare surface. Image is obtained through LiDAR (Light Distance and Ranging) technology.

- Approximate locations of waterbodies
- Mouth of Taylor Reach NA
- Other King County-owned parcels
- Parks
- Levees and Revetments
- Streams
- Streets
- King County Tax Parcels



November 1, 2004
90 0 90 180 270 360 450 Feet

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

Note: Wetland, stream, floodplain, and topographic layers are approximate, mapped from GIS system.



King County

File Name: IL:\w\m\GIS\Users\l\und\ecological site research\parkview projects\smg parkview projects\lower taylor\lower taylor.apr

Figure 4

Mouth of Taylor Creek NA: Mapping of water body locations

Lower Taylor Creek is unique among Cedar River tributaries for its extensive floodplain; most tributary streams have a more confined confluence with the Cedar River.

Lower Taylor Creek flows southwest along SR 18, north along SR 169 from the junction of the two highways, and along Maxwell Rd SE for approximately 1/3 mile. Lower Taylor Creek regularly runs overbank and floods Maxwell Road and some structures in this vicinity during periods of high flows (King County 1993a, p. A-17). The creek flows in a culvert under Maxwell Road SE at Mouth of Taylor-0080 parcel at approximately RM 0.4 (see Figure 4 for an approximate mapping of channel location on a digital ground model image, depicting culvert location; see Figure 5 for photo of creek just downstream of culvert). The creek flows north for another 1/3 mile through largely undeveloped portions of residential parcels until its confluence with the Cedar River, within Mouth of Taylor-9055 parcel.

The Current and Future Conditions Report (King County 1993a) and the Habitat Limiting Factors analysis (Kerwin 2001) identify a number of systemic problems that affect Lower Taylor Creek habitat: clearing of vegetation; bank hardening; road proximity; culverts under SR 18 and private roads; reduced floodplain connectivity; channelization of the stream along Maxwell Road; road maintenance activities and road runoff; effects of agriculture and rural development (Kerwin 2001, p.344).

“In Lower Taylor Creek, habitat throughout much of the drainage has suffered somewhat due to the immature condition of its riparian system and limited quantities of LWD; these deficiencies suggest that the habitat could be significantly improved in complexity and stability over current conditions and that the system may be at risk of much more dramatic habitat degradation (King County, 1993).....

The altered hydrology and flow regimes in Lower Taylor Creek result from increased peak flows due to SR-18 and insufficient retention and detention attributes (King County, 1993). The water quality of Lower Taylor Creek has been degraded due to higher nitrite concentrations that are likely from nearby hobby farms (Warner et al, Draft 1999) and multiple crossings of SR-18 (King County, 1993).” (Kerwin 2001, p.344)

A stream channel is mapped through the southwest corner of 0070 running perpendicular to Taylor Creek. Field investigation in August 2004 revealed that this mapping is inaccurate. A tributary from the east joins Taylor Creek at the mapped point on the east side of Maxwell Road. On the west side of Maxwell Road, a separate body of water flows from a wetland to the south into parcel –0070. No visible outflow channel was observed from this wetland, which apparently terminates on parcel –0070 near Maxwell Road. Further information is described in *Wetlands* section below. See Figure 4 for an approximate mapping of channel location on a digital ground elevation model image.

Wetlands

The King County Wetlands Inventory has mapped Wetland 132 along the extent of Lower Taylor Creek that is included in the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. The 1993 Current and Future Conditions Report describes Wetland 132 as a Class 2 wetland approximately 25 acres in size. An acquisition report notes that Wetland 132 is a Class 1 wetland due to its size and number of vegetation classes (King County 2002).

“The lower end of the creek appears to have been artificially enlarged by partial impoundment and excavation behind homes on 198th Pl SE. As a result, the right bank has almost no buffer. The south end of the wetland contains a small side channel that flows into Taylor Creek at RM 0.3. Lower Taylor Creek flows north through the wetland, joining the mainstem at RM 13.1.

Two habitat types are present: a cottonwood/alder swamp, and patches of shrubs, mostly salmonberry, snowberry, vine maple, and Japanese knotweed. The more disturbed parts of the wetland, including the area along the revetment, are being invaded by blackberries and English ivy. Lower Taylor Creek flows north through the wetland, joining the mainstem at RM 13.1.” King County 1993a, p. 7-83

Figure 5: Lower Taylor Creek facing upstream toward culvert (Maxwell Rd) from parcel 0076. Photo 3/03.



Figure 6: Backwater channel/pond on parcel 0076. Photo 8/04.



Figure 7: Wetland area near Maxwell Road on parcel 0075 and 0070. Photo 8/04.



Figure 8: Forest in early spring on parcel 9019. Photo 3/04.



Figure 9: View of forest and shrub layer from parcel 0075. Photo 8/04.



The “small side channel” noted in the quote above is likely to be the ponded area associated with the Mouth of Taylor-0076, -0075, and -0070 parcels behind the levee. See Figure 4 for a Lidar image that shows ground surface contours in these parcels. The ponded area and wetland described below are evident in this surface relief map, and are mapped with a blue dotted line in Figure 4. See Figure 6 for photo of pond.

The extent of this pond was walked in early August 2004. A narrow channel originated on parcel -0070 behind the levee, and roughly paralleled the levee through parcel -0070 and -0075. At parcel -0076, the channel widened into a pond behind the former house site. The north end of this pond contained several channels, which apparently connected to Taylor Creek via subsurface flow (at the time of site visit) through narrow dams of mud and vegetation debris.

Previous communication with Parks staff had indicated that there were multiple disconnected bodies of water on these parcels, some of which dried up during the summer to allow pedestrian access to the levee (Harig pers. comm. 2003). Connectivity between these channels may vary with seasonal water levels. This channel supports just a limited amount of wetland fringe vegetation, instead consisting primarily of open water.

A separate wetland channel flows from the south into parcel -0070, though a culvert at the former driveway on the southeast corner of parcel -0070. The channel supported scrub-shrub and emergent vegetation in parcels to the south, observed to be primarily willow and yellow-flag iris on the property to the south. The channel is dominated by yellow-flag iris in parcel -0070. No water was observed at the culvert in August 2004. (See Figure 7 for photo of this wetland).

Vegetation

Vegetation in the Lower Taylor Creek floodplain is typical deciduous valley bottom forest dominated by red alder and black cottonwood with occasional conifers and bigleaf maple. Parcels -0076 and -0070 were both residential parcels in the past, on which part or all of the vegetation on their land was cleared and replaced it with lawn.

As noted above, the upland portions of Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area parcels (not cleared for residences or lawns) support mixed alder and cottonwood, with smaller amount of coniferous species (see Figures 8 and 9 for photo of typical forest stands). Typical understory plants observed throughout the site include snowberry, salmonberry, elderberry, red-osier dogwood, and sword fern. Wetland vegetation was described in “Wetlands” section above.

There is a significant amount of non-native invasive vegetation at the site including extensive areas of Himalayan blackberry and Japanese and giant knotweed. There are smaller amounts of ivy (on parcel -0070 in particular), clematis and holly (both on parcel -9019), burdock, morning glory, and many other weedy herbaceous species observed on site. The creek and the levee contain extensive tracts of Japanese knotweed at the various access points that have been visited. Several parcels contain various non-native fruit and ornamental species most of which do not appear to be invasive.

In parcels -0080, -0076, and -0075, coniferous trees were planted following acquisition. Often this was done in association with cutting back the knotweed, and laying cardboard and mulch around the plantings. Most trees observed in August 2004 had survived, although many were surrounded with competing invasive vegetation.

Tansy ragwort, a listed noxious weed for which control is required, was observed growing on the upland portions of parcel -0080, and along the levee on parcel -9055.

Fish and Wildlife

Adult Chinook salmon have been documented in Lower Taylor Creek from the mouth through SR 18 (Lucchetti in King County 2001). Coho, sockeye, cut-throat and steelhead trout adults and juveniles have been documented through this vicinity, and well upstream of SR 18 (King County 2001). The Lower Cedar Basin Plan notes that “both Lower Taylor Creek and the side channel [at RM 0.3] provide good over-wintering habitat for juvenile fish.” (King County 1993a, p. 7-83) “This reach of Taylor Creek supports some of the highest densities of spawning sockeye salmon anywhere in the basin planning area.” (WMC 1998, p. 4-25)

No wildlife inventory has been performed at the site.

Part 4. Site Use and Infrastructure

Access

There is no off-street public parking at the site. The Mouth of Taylor-0076 and -0080 parcels are mostly fenced along the perimeter and road boundaries, limiting access to the gate locations. The backwater channel on parcel 0075 dries out during the summer, allowing pedestrian access to the western portions of this site and the levee. The Getchman Levee that runs along the river on the west side of the -0075, -0076, and -0080 parcels contains an easement that provides access for FHRS staff for maintenance purposes only. However, local residents also may be accessing these levees across private property.

The northern Mouth of Taylor-9055, -9076, and -9019 parcels support blackberry or other vegetation along much of the road frontage that limits access, though informal access in more open portions of the site may occur on these parcels.

Acquisition documents note that a path leads from SE 197th Place to the levee along the Cedar River across Mouth of Taylor-9055/-9076 parcels, allowing access to the confluence of Taylor Creek and the Cedar River (King County 2000c). However, the parcel -9076 appears to be completely vegetated with trees and shrubs on its western boundary (see Figure 3). Any path that exists leading from SE 197th Place crosses private property and therefore is cannot legally be used to access parcel -9076.

Public Use

The sites are all unmarked as public property. These sites support limited regular use, primarily limited to passive recreational use including walking and nature observation along the levees (Getchman levee from the south and Jan Road levee from the north).

The wetlands, ponds, and creek are natural landscape attractors for visitors on the Mouth of Taylor-0075, -0076, and -0080 parcels.

A small pullout on the Mouth of Taylor-0075 parcel has been a frequent site of littering and dumping. Regular litter collection occurs at this site. A gate installed in the summer of 2003 at this pullout may reduce the frequency of dumping.

The house from parcel -0070 was removed upon acquisition. The driveway to the site remains, blocked by a gate.

Flood Facility Maintenance

Although King County FHRS’ river protection easements are no longer in existence, it is the policy of the Water and Land Resources Division that FHRS has the same rights and responsibilities for the river protection easement as when the property was under private ownership. Rights include the right to access and to ensure that the flood facility is maintained; responsibilities include notification of property owner

(NRL) when work is required on the facility, and obtaining applicable permits. Work that is outside of the scope of standard inspection of river protection facility (e.g. revegetation project or facility repair) would require notification of NRL and completion and approval of the “Application to alter Parks/NRL-Managed Property.”

The river protection facility on the property is maintained by FHRS as part of their river protection facility inventory. FHRS performs both routine and post-flood inspections and maintenance on all such facilities. Routine maintenance activities on these facilities typically include vegetation management, such as removal of blackberries, in order to ensure adequate access and visibility for inspection of the facilities’ structural integrity (Koon pers. comm. 2003).

In addition to the routine maintenance and repair of these flood hazard reduction facilities, the FHRS Section performs mapping and other flood-related studies and projects on lands adjacent to King County’s large rivers, including the Cedar River. FHRS and/or its contracted surveyors may have placed permanent stakes or rebar along the levee/revetment or riverbanks to mark sites at which river cross-sections are measured (Koon pers. comm. 2003).

Part 5. Site Management Chronology

The Mouth of Taylor-0076 parcel had a structure standing on the site upon acquisition (spring 2003). The structure was removed during the summer of 2003.

Parks staff removed invasive knotweed and blackberry at portions of Mouth of Taylor-0080 along Taylor Creek following site acquisition in 2003.

A contractor installed tree plantings at the Mouth of Taylor-0076 and -0080 parcels in the spring of 2003. This property was used as an off-site receiving area for mitigation plantings by the developer of the Trovitsky Development. The contractor and developer bears the obligation to monitor and maintain these trees to meet permit conditions until 2006 (Harig, pers. comm. 2003).

As noted above, a gate was installed during the summer 2003 at a pullout on the southern portion of the Mouth of Taylor-0075 parcel to limit regular parking and dumping.

Part 6. Analysis

The purpose of this section is to provide a context and foundation for developing recommendations that meet the NRL program mission of protecting the ecological value of lands within the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area. Site-specific information, public access considerations, and the larger landscape considerations described in the conservation principles section of the *Ecological Lands Handbook* will be used to help meet this purpose.

Information Gaps and Development of Management Recommendations

There are significant gaps in how much is known and understood about ecological conditions and physical processes in Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area because recent comprehensive baseline inventories of plant, fish, and wildlife species, and geologic and hydrologic conditions do not exist. This type of information is necessary prior to developing restoration concepts and specific designs, particularly for large-scale changes and modifications to site features. If basic site inventory and assessment is not done, there is a strong likelihood of inadvertently harming either individual plant or animal species or ecological processes that sustain one or more of these species.

Therefore, prior to undertaking major management activities in the Natural Area, a site inventory and assessment should be undertaken that is focused, at a minimum, on the conditions and processes that the management activities will affect. Such assessment or evaluations of proposed actions should be

conducted by those staff with appropriate expertise (e.g. Watershed and Ecological Assessment Team staff). Inventory and assessment information may be available in the Current and Future Condition Report, Habitat Limiting Factors Analysis, Lower Cedar Basin Plan, and Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment study of the Cedar River (being conducted at the time of writing), as well as past and future work by King County ecological staff.

Prior to minor management activities (e.g., small planting project), the proposed activity should be evaluated to determine whether or not the activity could do harm to existing or future desired ecological processes and conditions. If the likely outcome is harm, then the activity should not be undertaken.

As noted in Part 1, parcel 042206-6666 is mapped as aquatic bed with no identified owner. If project work is to be undertaken on this parcel, the State Department of Natural Resources has recommended that past channel location and ownership responsibility be investigated (Durkin pers. comm. 2004).

Species of Concern

Because of the lack of a comprehensive biological inventory at these sites, the species identified in this document do not account for all species that use the site for one or more stages of their lifecycles. However, documented evidence of Chinook salmon, and probable use by bald eagles, both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, make habitat preservation and restoration necessary management priorities at the site.

Restoring Processes

The primary restoration goal for portions of the mainstem Natural Area sites confined by levees should be to reconnect the river channel with its floodplain. Although this action could be accomplished in various ways (e.g. by removal or modification of the existing levees or revetments to trigger channel migration and reestablishment of connections between the main channel and off-channel floodplain) in-depth analysis of historic river conditions, hydraulics, and hydrology would be needed to determine the best approach for improving the channel-floodplain connection, and ensuring that the project does not result in adverse flood impacts.

The Lower Cedar Basin Plan, the Flood Hazard Reduction Plan, and the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan draft contain a series of recommendations for levee setback and habitat restoration at or near the site. These recommendations are described in Part 7 below. Acquisition of additional parcels may be required to further levee removal and restoration work.

In particular, the Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (and subsequent documents) recommended a setback and/or partial removal of the Getchman Levee as a long term solution for flood protection. This project has not yet been designed (Faegenburg pers. comm. 2004).

Restoring Structure and Function

In order to restore riparian habitat conditions, it may be necessary to control invasive, non-native species, and actively promote establishment and growth of a native riparian plant community, where possible, given site and budgetary constraints. Plantings should represent the historic vegetative communities commonly associated with forested riparian areas in western Washington and at the site in particular. Inherent in the restoration should be efforts to maintain structural complexity, historic levels of plant diversity and multiple canopy layers in order to provide a variety of vegetative and physical features that would provide a number of niches for wildlife.

Public Use

Public use of this site is limited at this time, though littering and dumping has been a problem. These sites are recent acquisitions; as the sites are in public ownership for a longer amount of time, public use may

increase. The type and extent of use should be monitored to ensure that it does not inappropriately impact sensitive areas or habitat quality at the site. The site may provide opportunities for interpretive or educational outreach, or for volunteer events, though parking is highly constrained. There are no apparent revenue-generating activities at the site.

Coordinating Management of King County Sites

NRL/Parks and FHRS programs manage adjacent parcels in this vicinity (Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area parcels and FHRS parcel 511240-0070). The current management responsibility was determined by, primarily, the fact that flood hazard reduction funding was used to purchase the FHRS parcel (although it was also a Cedar River Legacy priority). The Natural Area and the FHRS parcels will all be affected by a future levee setback project. Future acquisitions are expected to occur in this vicinity which will also add to the inventory.

This is one example of several sites along the Cedar River where WLRD has acquired parcels in areas where FHRS levee setbacks are planned, inconsistent decisions have been made over the years as to which whether these new acquisitions should be placed in FHRS or Natural Resource Lands property inventory. In some areas, NRL and FHRS currently manage adjacent parcels.

Additionally, upstream are two parcels purchased by the Capital Projects program and managed by Roads crews under contract with Real Estate Services. Following a Boundary Line Adjustment, portions of this property are intended to transfer to NRL for management.

Given parcel contiguity, the need for ecological functioning and managing public use across the parcels, and the efficiency of having site maintenance performed by a single party, it makes sense to have a single program hold management responsibility for all County-owned parcels in this reach. This issue would need to be addressed at a management level within the Water and Land Resources Division.

Part 7. Management Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations

The objectives and recommendations in this section are derived from the standard practices for most NRL sites. Office of Rural and Resource Programs staff will revise the recommendations for Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area as new information from baseline inventory, assessment, and site monitoring programs and other initiatives becomes available for use in land management decisions.

Goals for Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area

The goals for all King County Ecological Lands are to:

- conserve and enhance ecological value, and
- accommodate appropriate public use that does not harm the ecological resources on site

The objectives and recommendations that follow are designed to support these goals at Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area.

Management Objectives and Recommendations

Objective: Maintain ecological integrity of the site

Recommendation: Ensure that management and public access support the regional ecological value of site

Decisions about site management and public access should consider the ecological role of, in particular, the extensive wetland areas, the backwater channel, and the stream corridor, and should preserve and protect ecological integrity. Public use at the site may be most supportable on the eastern upland areas

of the site near Maxwell Road which was formerly a house site. This overarching recommendation is carried out through the various recommendations below.

Objective: Develop long term ecologically based protection and restoration actions

Recommendation: Perform ecological assessment

Complete an assessment of basic ecological conditions and physical processes. Staff with appropriate expertise (e.g., ecologists, biologists, and engineers) should perform this work. Existing documents, studies, and staff research may contribute substantial inventory and assessment information about the sites.

An ecological assessment at this site was prioritized for 2004-5 Watershed Ecology and Assessment Team work due to planned levee modification at the site.

Recommendation: Develop recommendations for site restoration from assessment, and work with existing recommendations for the site

As prioritized and funded, use assessment information to develop projects to achieve a set of goals and objectives consistent with those identified for King County Ecological Lands.

The Lower Cedar Basin Plan (WMC 1998), the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (WRIA 8 Service Provider Team 2004, Appendix F, p. 7 & 8), and the Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (King County 1993) make a number of management recommendations in the vicinity of the site that may be considered for future recommendations. These general proposals are aimed at the multiple interests of the Lower Cedar Basin Plan (flood hazard reduction, habitat quality and salmonid health, and water quality and quantity) though they are not prioritized or scheduled for implementation in the near term. Many recommendations for flood hazard reduction come from the 1993 Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (FHRP). The 1993 FHRP is currently being updated; flood control recommendations listed below may be revised to reflect current site conditions, research findings, budget, management priorities, and regulatory mandates. There are no specific plans or timeframe for implementing these recommendations at this time.

Getchman levee removal and upstream habitat enhancement work (on land which is intended for future transfer to the Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area inventory) were prioritized and funded in WLRD's Six-Year CIP; for the other projects there are no specific plans or timeframe for implementing these recommendations.

As projects on the Natural Area are prioritized and funded by King County groups outside of the Natural Resource Lands group (or by other implementing agencies), projects should be reviewed by NRL through the "Application to Alter Parks Division and NRL Managed Properties" process to coordinate site management with project work.

If project work is planned for parcel 042206-6666 (mapped as aquatic bed with no identified owner), the State Department of Natural Resources has recommended that they be contacted to investigate past channel location and ownership responsibility.

Lower Cedar Basin Plan Recommendations:

- CIP Recommendation 3105: Getchman Levee Modification. Reduce damage to homes along Rhodes levee (left bank) by setting back the Getchman levee (right bank) and bioengineer the faces of the levees. (p. 4-6) (Also recommended in the Flood Hazard Reduction Plan (King County 1993b).)
- CIP Recommendation 3140: Maxwell Rd SE Flood Abatement and Taylor Creek Restoration. This recommendation is to reduce flooding of the road and homes along Maxwell Road, and to restore aquatic habitat along this reach. This recommendation involves widening, realignment, culvert/bridge adjustment, and restoration activity on the creek along Maxwell Road. (p. 3-38; 4-24, 4-25)

- CIP Recommendation 3141 and 3142: Taylor Creek Habitat Restoration. Restore instream aquatic habitat and reduce downstream sedimentation. Improve tributary habitat at several points by revegetation, woody debris placement, and fencing. (p. 3-38; 4-26, 4-27)
- Mainstem Habitat Restoration and Enhancement MS-4: Wetland 132 and Ponds. Enhance the wetland and riparian area with conifer underplanting and large woody debris to improve rearing habitat for salmonids, increase structural diversity, and improve wildlife and wetland habitat. Ponds could be added to the wetland to increase its structural diversity and add new habitat for salmonid use. (p. A-114, 115)
- Mainstem Habitat Restoration and Enhancement MS-4: Getchman Levee Pond and Side Channel. Enhance groundwater-fed side channel behind Getchman levee with excavation, revegetation, and woody debris. This would add access to the pond, and would enhance channel and wetland habitat value for salmonids and other wildlife. The pond recommendation would involve excavating a groundwater-fed pond connecting to the channel, in coordination with the levee modifications (3105). (p. A-116, 117)

WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (6/30/04 Draft; WRIA 8 Service Provider Team 2004):

- *Partial Removal of Jan Road and Rutledge/Johnson Levees*: Modify or remove levees on right and left banks of river in immediate vicinity of Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area.
- *Getchman Levee Setback*: Remove or setback levee (on Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area and adjacent properties) as describe in Lower Cedar Basin Plan.
- *218th Place Side Channel*: left-bank restoration at about RM 13.
- *Mouth of Taylor Creek Reach*: acquisition of about 40 acres of land including 1000' of mainstem channel, and 1,300 feet of the creek.

Objective: Contain spread of invasive vegetation

Recommendation: Monitor and control invasive vegetation

Park staff should monitor, contain the spread, and where possible to reduce the extent of noxious and invasive plant species that are present at the site, particularly in those areas where planting projects have occurred. Control is primarily through manual removal of plants by Park staff. However, due to the extent of Japanese knotweed at some portions of the site, control may be best performed through a capital project, small habitat restoration project, or work with the Noxious Weed Control Program.

Objective: Restore native vegetation

Recommendation: Maintain existing and establish new planting projects

Contractor for the Trovitsky development bears responsibility to maintain mitigation plantings at Mouth of Taylor-0076 and -0080 until 2006.

As warranted by budget and prioritization of work, King County Parks staff should maintain native plantings, primarily by controlling invasive species. New plantings may be installed where feasible to control invasive species and to maintain the work.

Objective: Allow current level of passive recreation at the site.

Recommendation: Monitor public access

Public use should be primarily in the upland eastern portions of the site, in the grassy areas of the former house site. Park staff should note changes in visitor numbers and types of recreational activities and observe any noticeable visitor impacts on the ecological values of the site. This information should be reported annually to King County Natural Resource Lands Management Staff responsible for updating site management guidelines.

The current passive uses of walking and nature observation occurring at Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area should be monitored and maintained at current levels. This use level is appropriate given current site topography, access points, and sensitive resources.

Objective: Protect the site from inappropriate public uses

Recommendation: Control litter/dumping and encroachment activities

Park staff should monitor the site for encroachment, dumping, and other trash and respond as necessary to maintain a clean and safe property. Monitoring should occur at least monthly. Park staff should consider installing litter/dumping policy signs on the property if litter activity increases.

Objective: Coordinate management of county-owned sites

Recommendation: Pursue managing all county-owned parcels in Mouth of Taylor Reach together

The Natural Area parcels managed by NRL are adjacent to an FHRS-managed property (511240-0070). Management of these properties should be coordinated under a single land manager. Upstream are several parcels purchased by the Capital Projects section and managed by King County Roads; these parcels are intended to transfer to the NRL inventory as well.

More broadly, there could be a general policy decision by WLRD management of whether to place new acquisitions in areas of future FHRS projects into the FHRS or the NRL inventory. This decision should consider how to promote efficient management; support of ecological, public access, and flood hazard reduction goals; and future project implementation.

Implementation

Many of these recommendations pertain to ongoing site maintenance and short-term management. These short-term recommendations are currently being implemented through actions by the Parks Resource Coordinator. Table 3 presents the time frame and sections responsible for recommendations.

Recommendations that address long-term management will need to be developed when funded and prioritized by DNRP management (within the work programs of NRL, Science, Basin Stewards, CPOSA, and FHRS). As new information is gathered for the site, restoration projects may be developed following adoption of these site management guidelines. Projects should be consistent with management objectives and approaches described above and in the Ecological Lands Handbook. Funding for restoration projects may be available through Surface Water Management CIP funding or salmon conservation planning funds.

Table 3. Matrix of Management Recommendations

| Recommendations | Year | Park Resource Staff | Basin Steward | NRL staff | WLRD Management | WRIA Project Coord. | CPOSA | WEAT | FHRS |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------|-------|------|------|
| Priority One | | | | | | | | | |
| Monitor and control invasive vegetation | At least monthly | X | | | | | | | X* |
| Maintain existing and establish new planting projects | At least monthly | X | | | | | | | |
| Control litter/dumping and encroachment activities | At least monthly | X | | | | | | | X* |
| Monitor public access | At least monthly | X | | | | | | | X* |
| Priority Two | | | | | | | | | |
| Perform ecological assessments | As prioritized and funded | | | X | | | | X | X |
| Develop recommendations from assessment, and coordinate with existing recommendations for the site | As prioritized and funded | | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Pursue collective management of all KC-owned parcels within a reach | As prioritized by management | | X | X | X | | | | X |
| Update Site Management Guidelines | Within at least five years | | | X | | | | | X |

*FHRS work is associated with levees/revetments or with future capital projects on Natural Area parcels.

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Appendix 1: List of all parcels in Mouth of Taylor Reach

Parcel acreage derived from Assessor's Database. Properties listed from north to south in the reach. Refer to Figure 2 for Reach and Parcel Identification.

| Mouth of Taylor Reach | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assessor's Parcel # | | Acreage | Ownership |
| 042206 | -9027 | 3.14 | Private Ownership |
| | -9055 | 1.13 | King County Ecological Land |
| | -9076 | 0.35 | King County Ecological Land |
| | -9030 | 0.55 | Private Ownership |
| | -9018 | 2.64 | Private Ownership |
| | -9020 | 2.65 | Private Ownership |
| | -9021 | 1.84 | Private Ownership |
| | -9073 | 0.68 | Private Ownership |
| | -9019 | 2.69 | King County Ecological Land |
| 511240 | -0095 | 2.00 | Private Ownership |
| | -0085 | 5.91 | Private Ownership |
| | -0083 | 0.20 | Private Ownership |
| | -0080 | 0.77 | King County Ecological Land |
| | -0076 | 1.47 | King County Ecological Land |
| | -0075 | 1.27 | King County Ecological Land |
| | -0070 | 3.96 | King County FHRS |
| | -0064 | 0.75 | Private Ownership |
| | -0067 | 0.75 | Private Ownership |
| -0068 | 0.98 | Private Ownership | |
| Total | | 33.73 Acres | |
| King County-Owned Parcels in Vicinity (first two are located within Mouth of Taylor Reach; latter three are outside the reach) | | | |
| Assessor's Parcel # | | Acreage | Ownership |
| 042206 | -9094 | 4.22 | King County FHRS |
| 511140 | -0115 | 1.39 | King County FHRS |
| 511240 | -0040 | 11.34 | King County CPOSA (maintained by Property Services)* |
| | -0045 | 5.00 | King County CPOSA (maintained by Property Services)* |
| | -0118 | 0.47 | King County FHRS implied responsibility; may be in King County Property Services inventory** |
| | -0120 | N/A | King County FHRS implied responsibility; may be in King County Property Services inventory** |
| Total | | 22.42 Acres | |

* Pers. comm. from Glenn Evans 2004.

**Pers. comm. from Steve Bleifuhs and John Koon with Ingrid Lundin February 2004.

Appendix 2: Issue of Possible State Aquatic Lands Jurisdiction Over Parcel 042206-6666

Parcel Description

Parcel 042206-6666 (see Figure 10, as well as Figures 2 and 3) is identified by the King County Assessor's Office as having no owner. The minor code (the last four digits) of "-6666" is used by the Assessor's Office to designate "Hydrological or Unknown."⁷

This parcel, nearly 700 feet in width at some points, contains land in two meander bends of the Cedar River. This parcel contains riparian forest, wetland, and a portion of Lower Taylor Creek, therefore containing substantial habitat value in this area.

Several Mouth of Taylor Creek Natural Area parcels are connected by this parcel. The area of the aquatic bed land adjacent to Natural Area parcels on the right bank of the river is highlighted on Figure 10.

Issue of Concern

The Cedar River Basin Plan and WRIA 8 planning documents contain project recommendations for habitat restoration within this wetland and riparian corridor on Lower Taylor Creek.

The issue of concern apparent to NRL staff was: If King County were to pursue habitat enhancement on its Mouth of Taylor Creek Natural Area parcels, whether it could legally perform work on the 042206-6666 parcel.

This issue is purely theoretical at this time but has relevance to decisions about future projects when prioritized and funded.

NRL staff contacted Washington State Department of Natural Resources staff in April and May 2004. The following information is based on email and phone communication with Monica Durkin (quotations are from Monica Durkin's email text (Durkin pers. comm. 2004)).

Washington State DNR Aquatic Land Ownership

Washington State Department of Natural Resources "asserts ownership to the beds and shores of all navigable bodies of water at the time of statehood." Washington State DNR may hold ownership of more than just aquatic bed lands; it may hold ownership of lands that were formerly aquatic bed. Determining ownership of these lands that may have formerly been aquatic bed is difficult.

A determination must be made, first, of whether the river is navigable; DNR staff indicated that the Cedar River probably is navigable.

State DNR staff indicated that then "research needs to take place to determine when, how, and why the river moved" in order to determine whether the State DNR may own portions of this parcel. An evaluation must be made of how river movement has affected ownership. "River movement also determines the ownership of the area. More specifically the ownership may move due to accretion, erosion, and reliction, but will remain fixed if avulsion occurs." Research would be necessary into the prior location of the river, rate of river movement, etc.

It is important to note that this type of research exceeds the work done for Site Management Guidelines, but may be necessary if future project work will affect this property.

⁷Metadata for "King County Tax Parcel" shapefile on King County GIS Center page at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/gis/sdc/Content/internal/property/parcel.htm>, last updated 10/3/03

Guidance for habitat enhancement projects

The following is some general guidance to follow for dealing with habitat restoration/enhancement projects on upland areas that are located within an un-owned parcel along a river (often those with -6666 as last four digits).

If a project goes below the OHWM

- If a project goes below the ordinary high water mark (OHWM), Washington State DNR would usually need to issue a lease or easement as an agreement to allow King County to perform the work.

If a project is located above the OHWM

- If the area has been determined to be private land there is no need to contact WA DNR. “The trigger to notify WA DNR of projects would be if it may be located on State Owned Aquatic Lands.”
- If it is unknown whether the land is a State-owned aquatic land, “it is best to notify WA DNR.” DNR staff advised that King County could contact Washington State DNR to ask about ownership on a project-by-project basis. If State DNR cannot determine whether it owns the lands, then State DNR could write a letter that indicates: that State DNR cannot confirm ownership of these lands; that a lease/easement is not needed; and that State DNR is in support of the project.
- Note that if State DNR did determine they had ownership in the upland area, King County would usually need to obtain a lease or easement for the work.
- “If a project is completed and later it is found out that it took place on State-owned aquatic lands the DNR should be notified, they will review the project and the appropriate documentation may be signed.”

Contact Information:

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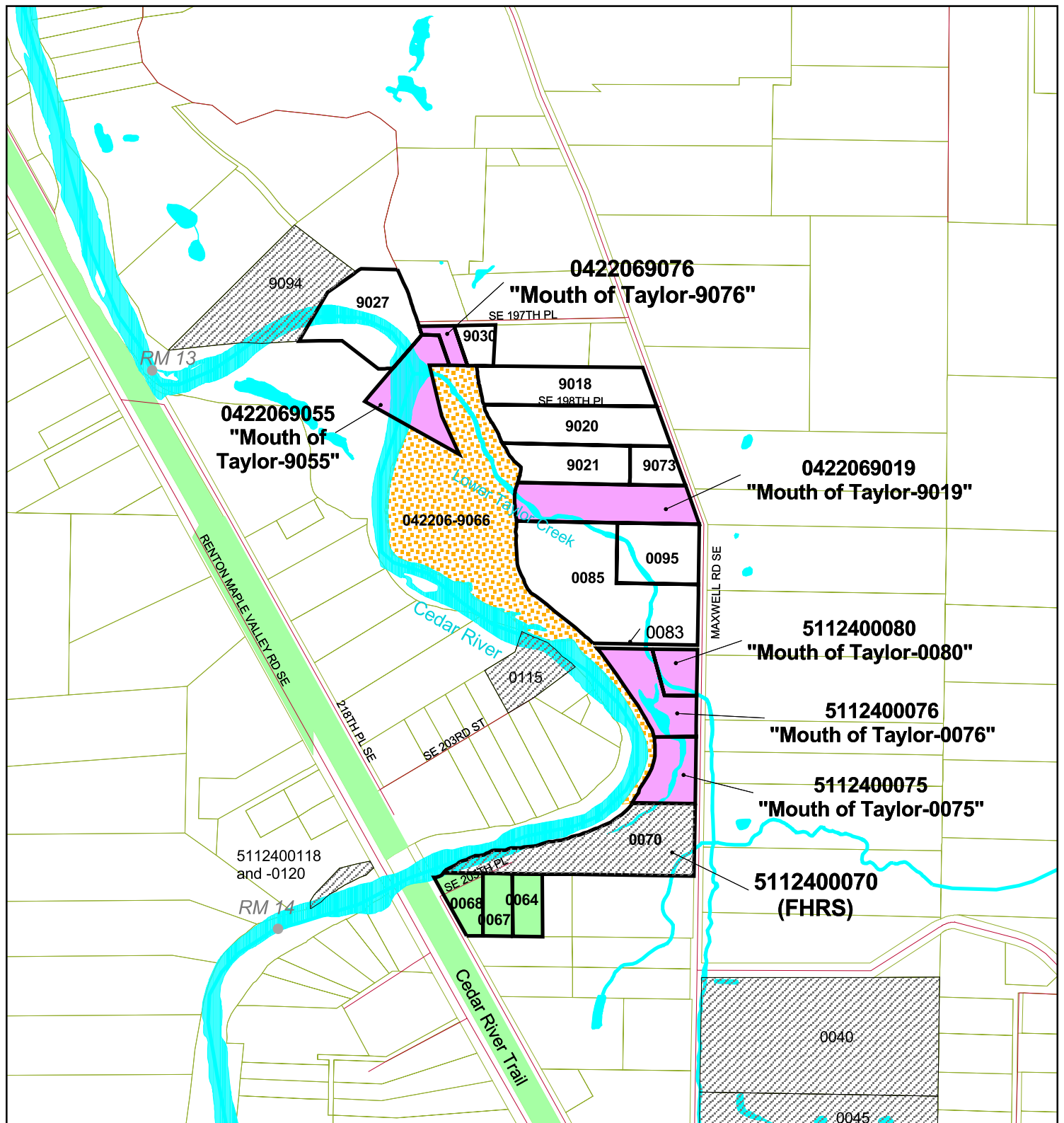
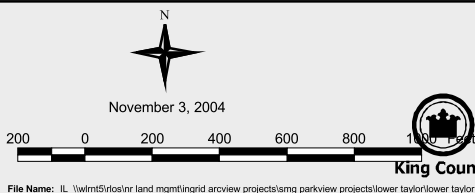


Figure 10

Mouth of Taylor Reach NA: Aquatic bed

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.



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Legend

- Other King County-owned parcels
- Mouth of Taylor Reach
- River Miles
- Open Water
- Rivers and Lakes
- Streams
- Aquatic Bed adjacent to NA
- Mouth of Taylor Reach NA
- Streets
- Parks
- King County Tax Parcels