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Maury Island Natural Area
Site Management Plan
February 2013



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King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104-3855
(206) 263-6371

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Kevin Brown, Division Director
Parks and Recreation Division
King County Department of Natural Resources

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Acknowledgements

Contributors:

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Parks and Recreation Division

Connie Blumen, Natural Resource Lands Program Manager, Parks and Recreation Division

Larry Kimble, Natural Lands Maintenance Supervisor, Parks and Recreation Division

Scott Snyder, Park District Maintenance Coordinator, Resource Area 2, Parks and Recreation Division

Joe Van Hollebeke, Park Specialist II, Resource Area 2, Parks and Recreation Division

Water and Land Resources Division,

Greg Rabourn, Vashon Maury Island Basin Steward and Ground Water Protection Program Manager

Preserve Our Islands

Amy Carey, Executive Director

Vashon Maury Island Land Trust

Tom Dean, Executive Director

Abel Eckhardt, Land Steward

Planning Advisory Group Members

Lu-Ann Branch

Jim Gerlach

John Gerstle

Craig Harmeling

Beth Kellner

Polly Kranick

Cliff Marks

Karlista Rickerson

Kip Schwarzmiller

Brenda Sestrap

Mimi Thompson

General Property Information

Location

Maury Island Natural Area is a 276 acre property comprised of five tax parcels located on the southeast side of Maury Island. The Natural Area is situated in portions of Sections 28 and 29, Township 22 North, Range 3 East (See Figure 1). It is situated on a sea bluff above Puget

Sound. The land surrounding the Natural Area is generally forested with some rural residential properties and small residential communities. King County's Dockton Forest and privately owned vacant forest lands are situated to the northwest and west of the Property. Small residential communities are located off the south end and northeast corner of the Property, and two rural properties for residential and equestrian use (horse acreage) are located to the west.

Maury Island, located in Puget Sound north of Tacoma, is just off the southeast side of Vashon Island and is connected to that island at its north end by an isthmus. The two landmasses together are commonly referred to as Vashon-Maury Island.

Maury Island Natural Areas' nearly one mile of shoreline is the longest undeveloped stretch of Puget Sound shoreline in King County. When combined with the nearby 320-acre Maury Island Marine Park, the two sites represent the largest public holding of protected marine shoreline in all of Puget Sound.

King County Zoning/Land Use and Acreage

Maury Island Natural Area's largest parcel (257 acres) has split zoning-- Mining (M) and RA-10 (Rural Residential, 1 Dwelling Unit per 10 acres); a majority of the parcel lies within the Mining Zone. The three smaller parcels are zoned M, the approximately 10 acre (northern most) parcel is zoned RA 10. (See Table 1. below and Figure 2). The M zoned properties have zoning designations of "Potential" RA 2.5 (Rural Residential 1 Dwelling Unit per 5 acres). The zoning designations for these parcels allow for the Natural Area to be managed as a passive recreation open space site. The parcels are also encumbered (per King County Code 21A.38.150) with a Ground Water Protection Special District Overlay designation (SDO 140), the purpose of which is to limit land uses that have the potential to severely contaminate groundwater supplies and to provide increased areas of permeable surface to allow for infiltration of surface water into ground resources.

TABLE 1.

Tax Parcel Number	Acreage	Zoning	Land Use
2822039023	257.38	M-SO and RA-10-SO	Mining & Rural Residential
2822039005	9.78	RA-10-SO	Rural Residential
2822039025	2.74	M-SO RA-2.5-SO	Rural Residential
2822039057	3.09	M-SO RA-2.5-SO	Rural Residential
2822039024	2.91	M-SO RA-2.5-SO	Rural Residential

King County Shorelines Master Program Designation

Per the County's Shoreline Management Program, the portion of the property within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark is designated a "Natural Environment". (See Figure 3). The purpose of the Natural shoreline is to protect those shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence or have high ecological quality. This designation allows only very low intensity uses in order to maintain the existing high levels of ecological process and function; and In accordance with King County Code (21A.25) requirements, only passive and low-impact recreational development is allowed in a Natural shoreline. For purposes of this code, passive recreation is defined as such activities as camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, observing and photographing nature, picnicking, walking, bicycling, running, horseback riding and fishing. Passive recreation facilities do not require significant levels of infrastructure or development.

King County Park Classification

King County Code (KCC 2.16.045) and the 2010 King County Park and Open Space Plan establish four classifications of lands within the County's park system: Active Recreation, Multiuse, Working Forest and Ecological. Because this site was acquired to be managed for natural resource conservation purposes with only passive recreation use allowed, it has been classified as an "ecological" site. King County Ordinance 14199 defines Ecological Lands as sites that serve important natural resource functions, including but not limited to benefiting and protecting natural drainage systems, drainage basins, flood control systems, ecological systems, water quality, ground water, fisheries and wildlife habitat, and other natural resource purposes. Sites that fall under that classification are called "Natural Areas".

Acquisition History

The following information provides a summary of King County's acquisition of the land that comprises Maury Island Natural Area.

On December 30, 2010 King County acquired four tax parcels (282203-9023, 282203-9024, 282203-9025 and 282203-9057) totaling 250 acres from Northwest Aggregates (now CalPortland). The purchase price for all four parcels was \$36 million. The property deed recording number is 20101230001080. In addition, the King County Parks and Recreation Division acquired an approximately 10 acre parcel (2822039005) through an interdivisional transfer from King County Roads on December 15, 2010.

Acquisition Funding Sources and Associated Restrictions

The various funding sources used to purchase the Maury Island Natural Area parcels formerly owned by Northwest Aggregates are listed below in Table 2. Funds used to pay for the costs associated with the transfer or the former King County Roads property were from the County's Park Open Space Levy.

TABLE 2.

Funding Source	Grant Name/Reference Number	Amount of Funds Used
Conservation Futures Levy	Maury Gravel Mine Acquisition	\$19,100,000.00
Washington State Dept. of Ecology	Maury Island Gravel Mine Acquisition Agreement C1100003	\$40,911.50
Washington State Dept. of Ecology	Maury Island Gravel Mine Acquisition Agreement C1100003	\$14,500,000.00
King County DNRP Royalty Concessions	Parks Lease	\$2,400,000.00
Donations		\$ 610,000

The following information provides a more detailed description of the funding sources used to acquire the property and the restrictions on uses of the land that are associated with those funding sources. As is indicated in the specific descriptions below, the use of Conservation Futures Tax funds for acquisition requires that only passive-use recreation use is allowed on the site and only 15% of the land within the site can contain impervious surfaces (trails are excluded from this percentage limitation).

Conservation Futures Tax Levy (CFT)

RCW 84.34.230 authorizes Washington counties to place a Conservation Futures Tax levy on all taxable property within their jurisdiction to acquire open space land or rights to future development (termed “conservation futures”). King County Ordinances 10750, 11068, and 13717 authorize Conservation Futures funding; King County Code Section 26.12 addresses Conservation Futures.

Ordinance 10750 states that “Future use of property acquired with CFT funds is restricted to passive-use recreation; development of facilities to support organized/structured athletic activities is not allowed. Use is further limited to non-motorized use, except as is necessary for maintenance or staging areas, such as entrance roads and parking to provide public access. A maximum of 15% of the total surface area of the land area may be developed with non-vegetative impervious surfaces unless additional parking or staging areas are specially authorized by the King County Council. Trail surfaces are not included in the calculation of this restriction.

Property acquired with this funding source must continue to be used for these stated purposes and the Property may not be transferred or conveyed except by agreement providing that the Property shall continue to be used for the purposes contemplated by CFT and in strict

conformance with the uses authorized under RCW 84.34.230. The Property may not be converted to a different use unless other equivalent lands are received in exchange.

King County Park Levy (Prop. 2, King County Ordinance 15760)

Properties acquired under Prop 2, must meet the definition of "open space" in RCW 84.34.020. Habitat preservation/salmon recovery, farmland preservation, forest preservation, urban/rural buffering, and passive recreation are among the legitimate permitted purposes on sites acquired with these funds.

Washington State Department of Ecology Grant

As part of the 2009 legislation session (ESHB 2836), Washington State appropriated \$15 million to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to assist King County in the acquisition and remediation of property on Vashon and Maury Island. (Note: \$14.5 million was used to acquire the site; the remaining funds were used to study the feasibility of purchasing the property). This appropriation was partially funded out of the Asarco settlement fund (\$4.1 million) and partly out of the State Toxics Control fund (\$10.9 million).

King County DNRP Royalty Concessions

Per the terms of the purchase and sale agreement between King County and Northwest Aggregates (NWA), NWA received a "credit" for \$2.4 million over 20 years following the acquisition closing date (for the Maury Island Natural Area site) related to its existing gravel extraction agreement with the County for the gravel mine it currently operates at the Maury Island Marine Park.

Donations

An effort spearheaded by Cascade Land Conservancy (now Forterra) and supported by the Vashon Maury Island Land Trust and Preserve our Islands, resulted in approximately \$610,000 in pledges to offset the purchase price; this money was used to replenish the CFT funds that had been directed to the acquisition of the site.

Site History

Initial human use of the property was by the Puyallup Tribe, whose member used the lands for fishing and hunting. The CFT property was first occupied by white settlers in the late 1800's when the northeastern upland portion of the property was homesteaded; however, the homesteading occupants left the property in 1891. Shortly after 1902, gravel mining began on

the northeastern portion of the property along the bluff, beside the former homesteaded area. Those initial mining operations peaked in 1917, and shut down shortly after 1923, but possibly as late as the early to mid-1930s. The owner of the gravel mine also began a dairy farm on the level upland portion of the property adjacent to the mine approximately the same location as the homestead. The farm also shut down around 1923 but remnants of the foundation of some of the farm building can still be found on the property.

Gravel mining activities did not occur again until sometime between the mid and late 1960's, when mining operations began in the central area of the property. The amount of and location of mining activities varied throughout the years. Barging of materials began in 1968 specifically for a Port of Seattle fill project and stopped several years later; the mine was completely closed by 1978 and Glacier mining operations ceased then. The site was leased out for the interim decades to an individual on the island who used some of the primarily stockpiled material when he needed small amounts of fill.

The Natural Area lies within one of the most substantially impacted areas of the Tacoma Smelter area-wide contaminant plume. Surface soils within the Tacoma Smelter plume contain elevated metals concentrations, primarily arsenic and lead. In addition, a former skeet shooting range was located on the southwest portion of the property north of SW 260th Street

Site Name

When King County first acquired the property, the name "Maury Island Site" was used to identify the site as a "placeholder" name so that a public planning process could be used to designate an official name for the site. The Planning Advisory Group recommends that the site should be called "Maury Island Natural Area. The "Natural Area" portion of the name was selected to be consistent with King County Park's classification system that directs all passive recreation/ecological conservation sites to have this wording in their name. The name "Maury Island" was chosen to retain geographic nexus and to provide for the ability for this site and the Maury Island Marine Park to be combined into one "park" site once acquisitions have been completed that accomplishes that connectivity.

The plan also recommends seeking community input on "sub names" for specific areas, viewpoints and trails within the site. This allows for existing common names to be formalized, and provides for an opportunity to apply names of historical or local interest. Lastly, creating such names serves to identify trails that transect other park sites in the vicinity, providing direction and continuity to the trail system.

Existing Public Use

This section describes public use, access points and trails at Maury Island Natural Area.

Public Use

Although the land was not officially open for public recreation use while owned and operated as sand and gravel mine, the property within the Natural Area was used for various different types

of passive recreation activities (primarily weekend use by island residents). Due to the site's location, size and condition from mining activities and terrain, the property was also a popular destination for off-road vehicle riders (ORVs).

At present there are no formal facilities to support recreational use. Approximately 6.3 miles of soft surface "social trails" exist throughout the site; they were constructed over time mainly by the trail users themselves (Figure 4). Some trails started first as wildlife trails. The trails (and so provide a wide variety of experiences for visitors; they allow access to the shoreline, through forested areas and to the disturbed mined areas. Spectacular views of Puget Sound and, Mt. Rainier from the high bluffs as well as from the water are provided from many different areas on the site.

The tidelands off the site are a well-known and highly popular location for scuba divers. The presence of old sunken barges and pilings from the "dock" structures (for loading barges) attract divers to the site, marine life is plentiful; in addition the site facilitates easy drop off and pick up and the presence of other popular dive sites within the vicinity and close to access location further add to the site's popularity with divers.

Currently, low impact "passive recreation" use is allowed in the Natural Area; prohibited uses included motorized use on trails and dogs off leash. Various different types of recreation activities occur on the site today, the most popular being: hiking, dog walking, horseback riding, bird watching and other nature observation, photography, running, mountain biking and informal picnicking. Illegal activities such as use by off road vehicles and walkers with dogs off leash are known to occur on the site. King County Parks' staff conducts minor maintenance on the trail to address safety/liability issues (primarily following storm events) and visits the site regularly to monitor use and inspect site conditions.

Access

Maury Island Natural Area can be accessed by public road (SW 260th Street) (See Figure 4). The main park maintenance access is from the main gate located on the south side of SW 260th Street (near the northwest corner of the main parcel); this gate is kept locked and is not available for public use. A walk-in access is located near the cell tower area near the northeast corner of the main parcel and trails lead to the Natural Area from the east side of the property via a trail network on King County's Dockton Forest, which lies immediately to the east of Maury Island Natural Area. In addition, two existing parking lots near King County's Dockton Park are also access points to the site due to presence of a trail system that provides connectivity between the Park, Dockton Forest and Maury Island Natural Area. One is located on Dockton Road across from waterfront park and the other is off of 94th Avenue SW, both can accommodate trailers or larger/longer vehicles. Access is also available to the Natural Area by walking, riding and hiking via the shoreline (as tides allow) and from the water by small craft such as kayaks, /canoes and rowboats.

Management Goals, Objectives and Implementation Recommendations

Site Management Goals

King County's 2004 *Ecological Programmatic Plan* establishes clear goals for all King County Natural Areas; these overarching goals direct management of the Maury Island Natural Area. They are as follows:

- conserve and enhance the site's ecological value,
- facilitate appropriate passive recreational use that does not harm natural resources,
- engage the public in planning, development and stewardship activities and
- employ adaptive management methods (NOTE:: this is listed in county policy guidance)

The following are management objectives designed to support these broad goals. Specific implementation recommendations follow each objective explaining how that recommendation applies at Maury Island Natural Area.

Objective: Maintain ecological integrity of the site through the protection and restoration of natural processes, structure and functions.

- Develop and implement ecologically based protection and restoration actions.
 - Protect and restore the wetlands, riparian areas, shorelines and other sensitive or unique habitats of the site.
 - Conserve and restore habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species; especially sensitive, threatened, or rare species
 - Control invasive species, focusing on regulated noxious weeds
 - Conduct stewardship activities to promote healthy, diverse and sustainable forests
 - Remove human made structures from the shoreline and leased aquatic lands.
 - Install native plants in key areas along the shoreline and in areas where invasive species have been removed.
 - Preserve and protect meadow areas and remnants of former orchards (fruit trees)
- **Complete soil remediation (cleanup) requirements in conjunction with the Washington State Department of Ecology, as directed under the Agreed Order**

(related to both contamination from the Asarco Smelter and the former shooting range)

- Conduct additional soil sampling/testing in specific areas to inform cleanup
 - Provide Ecology the various reports required under the Agreed Order:
 - Remedial Investigation Report
 - Park Management Plan
 - Feasibility Study
 - Coordinate with Ecology on cleanup
 - Develop the Cleanup Plan
 - Conduct cleanup where risk of exposure to humans is greatest due to:
 - Contamination levels
 - Human use of the site
 - Location
 - Provide educational signage and brochures, etc. to help notify park visitors of health actions they can take to reduce risk of exposure
 - Take into consideration contamination levels and location of contaminated areas when planning stewardship, maintenance and development actions on the site.
- **As required by State and County Code, complete the reclamation of formerly mined areas.**
 - Conduct grading to:
 - create varied steepness and sinuous appearance
 - eliminate over steepened slopes
 - restore natural drainage
 - provide stable slopes
 - Revegetate with native shrubs/trees to:
 - reduce erosion, restore scenic values and, stabilize soils
 - restore areas after structures have been removed
 - Remove mining structures (consistent with other plan recommendations):
 - pilings and dolphins,
 - concrete footing
 - towers (consistent with other plan recommendations)
 - Restore/ retrofit internal roads to serve park purposes (trails, access to parking and other park amenities)

- **Perform selective ecological and assessments to direct future stewardship activities.**
- **Restrict public access to, and use of, critical areas through installation of devices that control access (such as gates, ecology blocks, rocks, bollards and fencing).**
- **Develop and install signage:**
 - rule signage directing visitors to take actions to protect the site's natural resources (stay on designated trails, leash pets, pack garbage in/out, etc.),
 - interpretive signage to educate visitors about the ecological value of the site
- **Where feasible, repurpose materials from existing structures/ infrastructure**

Objective: Provide for safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities that are compatible with the ecological value of site and are consistent with King County Park rules (KCC 7)

- **Formulate decisions about site management and public access through consideration of the ecological role of the varied habitats at the site** (such as aquatic resources, shoreline habitat, wetlands, and forests).
- **Limit recreational use of the site to low impact, passive recreation** (such as hiking, mountain biking, dog walking, running, mountain biking and horseback riding as well as water based activities such as canoeing, kayaking, scuba diving).
- **Do not allow off road vehicle use on any portion of the site.**
- **Maintain the existing soft surface trail system in a manner that:**
 - supports a wide variety of passive recreational opportunities
 - accommodates appropriate levels of public use to reduce trail user conflicts while protecting critical resources
 - is consistent with USFS and King County backcountry trail standards
 - ensures connections to access points and parking facilities
 - allows linkage to existing and future public lands and trails
 - takes into consideration historical trails and trail use
 - respects adjacent property boundaries
 - provides access to key attractions on the site (view points, unique vegetation/forest cover, historic structures/landscapes, etc.)
 - protects existing wildlife corridors
 - is located in areas that minimize trail maintenance needs

- **Support development of facilities that help accommodate appropriate levels and types of use, ensure visitor safety and protect the site's ecological resources and park infrastructure**
 - **Facilities considered appropriate are:**
 - Parking facilities (vehicles only, no horse trailers)
 - Small picnic shelter or picnic areas
 - Sanicans or vault toilets (self-contained, primitive)
 - Interpretive Signage (Natural and Cultural--historical/archeological))
 - Rule Signage
 - Potential Water Trails System
 - Natural Shoreline/Beach Access
 - Support scuba diving community's efforts explore feasibility of installing features on aquatic lands to enhance/facilitate diving experience as long as the proposal is environmentally sound/enhances habitat (for such species as salmonids and forage fish) and consistent with development regulations
- **Remove any structures on site that present a safety/liability hazard, restrict access unnecessarily or impact wildlife movement** (including remnants of historic structures)
- **Install devices that control illegal access** (such as gates, ecology blocks, rocks, bollards and fencing)

Objective: Manage the site within the ecological and human context of the surrounding landscape.

- **Acquire additional land or easements that provides both wildlife and habitat connectivity.**
- **Ensure that planning efforts for other King County Park sites in the vicinity consider, and are consistent with, this plan's recommendation.**
- **Coordinate with other land management agencies and stewardship organizations in plans for site stewardship and development.**
- **Consider potential impacts of proposals on surrounding residential properties**

Objective: Collaborate with the community and other stakeholders in future management of the site.

- **Collaborate with the community, Puyallup Tribe, user groups, adjacent landowners and other stakeholders to manage Maury Island Natural Area.**
 - Create a “Friends of Maury Island Natural Area” advisory group to serve as an advisory body and collaborate with King County staff in the decision making and implementation of the site management plan.
 - Encourage citizens to serve in the Park Ambassador and Adopt a Park Programs and participate in volunteer trail and restoration events.
 - Hold public meetings to inform, and seek input from, the community at key milestones in plan implementation and before major management activities occur on site.
 - Develop a web page for the Natural Area to provide information about this site and to provide notification of any major actions or meetings
 - Maintain a mailing list to keep interested citizens informed about the site (“Enewsletter”/US mail).
 - Employing a public process, review the site management plan every 5 -10 years to allow for a current expansion of the planning horizon

Objective: Utilize adaptive management in planning and management of the site

- **Study and evaluate restoration projects on similar lands for applicability to Maury Island Natural Area**
 - Assess ongoing restoration at Maury Island Marine Park
 - Explore opportunities for obtaining clean soil or soil amendments for the site
- **Ensure that restoration projects are maintained/monitored and have appropriate performance measures**
- **Monitor and track changes in types and levels of public use**
- **Use “pilot project” approach to assess appropriateness of, and support for, any proposed new passive recreation uses**
- **Reassess site plan recommendations at least every five years**