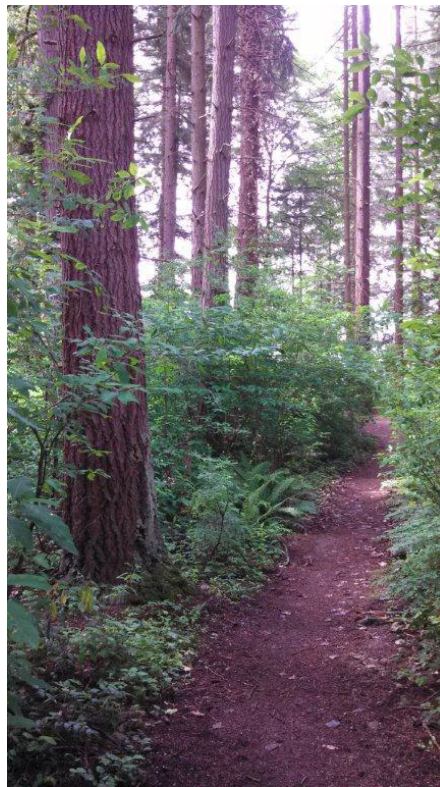


Big Finn Hill Park Trail Recommendations Plan

March 2014



Kevin R. Brown

Kevin Brown, Director
Parks and Recreation Division

Big Finn Hill Park --Trail Recommendations Plan

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Final Plan produced March 2014 by:



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Parks and Recreation Division

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Executive Summary

From June 7, 2012 through July 24, 2013 King County Parks conducted a public outreach and planning process to determine appropriate trail uses and improvements at Big Finn Hill Park. Big Finn Hill trails are part of a popular network that includes Bastyr University and Saint Edwards State Park in north Kirkland. A volunteer advisory committee of local trail users spent 10 months working with the county to develop long term trail recommendations. Those recommendations led to a plan that calls for all trails to be open to all non-motorized users, and includes several implementation phases that provide for new signage, improved drainage, elimination of hazardous obstacles, construction of mountain bike-specific features and a pump track. Additionally, some trails will be removed or rerouted and some new trails will be built to make the park more enjoyable for all user groups.

Introduction

Trails have become an integral part of outdoor recreation in King County and the public's interest in and use of them is growing. Trails provide many benefits such as:

- promoting outdoor physical activity which enhances public health and improves the overall quality of life in the region
- providing an opportunity for all citizens to experience King County's beautiful natural landscape of mountains, forests, streams and shorelines and
- serving as non-motorized transportation corridors.

King County Parks manages a system of both regional and backcountry trails. Backcountry trails are natural surface trails intended for shared passive recreation use including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, trail running and nature observation. There are over 190 miles of backcountry trails within 26 parks throughout the King County Park system. These trails are designed to take advantage of the natural terrain and are predominantly narrow paths through forested park lands; they are constructed and maintained per United States Forest Service Trail standards in a sustainable manner that protects natural resources, ensures safety, and requires minimal maintenance. King County Parks has a programmatic permit from King County's Department of Permitting and Environmental Review to construct and maintain backcountry trails. For more information about King County's Backcountry Trail Program see Appendix B.

Part 1. General Property Information

Big Finn Hill Park is a 220-acre King County multiuse regional park located in the northwest part of the City of Kirkland and just south of the City of Kenmore that serves as an active recreation site and as a wooded urban oasis with over 9 miles of trails. (See Map 1) To the east of Juanita Drive, the park offers developed recreation facilities including little league baseball fields, a lacrosse and soccer field, a play area and picnic area, and multiuse trails. There is a large wetland and beaver pond in the southeast corner of the park. To the west of Juanita Drive multiuse trails meander through a Douglas-fir forest and

connect with trails at St. Edwards State Park to the north. The trails are frequented by mountain-bikers, dog-walkers, and hikers.

Acquisition History

In 1968, voters approved a Forward Thrust Bond Issue which included \$249,000 for the acquisition of Big Finn Hill (220 acres) to be developed as a “major urban park.” Forward Thrust defined public park and recreation facilities as *“any land, interest in land and facilities thereon within the County set aside for public park, recreational, greenbelt, arboretum, historic, scenic, viewpoint, aesthetic, ornamental or natural resource preservation purposes.”*

Previous Planning and Development

A Master Plan for 85 acres of Big Finn Hill Park was adopted in 1981, designating its use as a regional sports and recreation area. The Master Plan was revised and adopted again in 1988 and 1994. The original Master Plan focused on 85 acres of Big Finn Hill Park located on the east side of Juanita Drive and earmarked for active recreation such as play areas, soccer and ball fields. As part of the planning process in 1990, the Big Finn Hill Park Neighborhood Committee recommended a plan revision so that the *“beautiful regional park will be used by people from all over the county who have a wide variety of recreational interests.”* The Master Plan did not include detailed recommendations for the western area of the park that is west of Juanita Drive.

Primary Park Uses

Soccer/lacrosse, baseball, children’s play area, picnicking, hiking, mountain-biking and dog walking.

Park Access

Formal park entrances are located at NE 138th St. from both Juanita Drive NE and 84th Ave NE. Two parking areas are available within the park area east of Juanita Drive NE and west of 84th Ave NE. The only parking west of Juanita Drive NE is on-street parking along NE 138th Street.

Part 2. Planning and Public Outreach Process

Goal

The overall goal of the planning process was to provide recommendations for improving the trails and trail infrastructure, enhancing the trail experience for all users of all ages, determining appropriate non-motorized trail uses and conserving the natural character of Big Finn Hill Park. This trail recommendation plan supplements previous planning efforts, such as the 1994 Revised Master Plan.

Trail Planning

King County Parks sought recommendations from the public on ways to enhance and improve the trails and trail uses at Big Finn Hill Park. King County staff gathered public input at two general meetings in June and August 2012. Over 50 people attended the initial meeting in June, including staff from the City of Kirkland’s Parks Department. At the August meeting, a 15-person trails advisory committee was created based on voluntary stakeholder interest. The committee held over 25 meetings from September 2012 through July 2013; all of those meetings were open to the public. In addition, the committee met with the principal of Finn Hill Middle School which is adjacent to Big Finn Hill Park; the

school conducted a survey on how students use the park and trails; a summary of the survey's result are in the "Youth" section on page 5. On May 29, 2013, the committee's recommendations were presented at a general meeting of the Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance. In early June 2013, the committee's recommendations were reviewed and approved by King County Parks' management. On June 20, 2013 the committee's recommendations were presented at a public meeting held at Finn Hill Middle School.

Public Input

At the June 2012 public meeting, the attendees broke into small groups and identified the primary planning goals and outcomes:

- ❖ Ground truth and update trails map
- ❖ Perimeter trail
- ❖ Connect to St Edwards and O.O. Denny Park
- ❖ Safe crossing of Juanita Drive
- ❖ Skills park for bikes
- ❖ Trails for hiking
- ❖ Keep trails narrow
- ❖ Maintain natural features of the park
- ❖ More trail signage needed but not too much
- ❖ Signage at trail crossings for safety
- ❖ Kiosks at trailheads
- ❖ Advisory group should include members who represent all users

At the second public meeting in August 2012, the following planning goals and outcomes were identified:

- ✓ Protect the environment
- ✓ Improve mt. bike trails – flow and fun
- ✓ Keep development out
- ✓ Keep as wild as possible
- ✓ Keep trails safe
- ✓ Biking/hiking connection to Juanita Beach
- ✓ Reduce the number of trails
- ✓ Develop a trail maintenance plan
- ✓ Plan should accommodate users
- ✓ Identify outside funding sources, such as from the state
- ✓ Completed trail inventory
- ✓ A planning document that is useable and useful
- ✓ Establish policies that determine appropriate use, identify projects and provide maintenance guidelines
- ✓ Address parking and traffic
- ✓ What to do about the beavers?
- ✓ Improve communication on site with new kiosks
- ✓ Prioritize the list of recommendations

- ✓ Keep the positive flow of the group!

In addition, a list of trails users was created, in no particular order:

Authorized Users

- Neighbors
- Hikers
- Walkers
- Dog walkers
- Mountain bikers
- BMX'ers
- Naturalists
- Photographers
- Orienteers
- Disabled
- Geocachers
- Cross country runners
- School children
- Berry pickers and mushroomers
- 3 year olds on push pedals
- Picnickers
- Equestrians (very limited)

Non Authorized Users

- Vandals
- Partyers
- Paintballers and air soft pellet gamers
- Homeless (overnight camping is not allowed)
- Dirt bikers (motorized)

The Big Finn Hill Park trails committee

At the August 2012 meeting, King County formed the Big Finn Trails Committee which served as the advisory group to King County Parks. The 16 member citizen committee was selected based on volunteer interest and comprised of Finn Hill neighbors, park users, hikers, mountain bikers and dog walkers. All of the respective user groups were well represented, including members of the Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance. No local equestrians volunteered to be on the committee.

Big Finn Hill Park trails committee members:

- Aaron LeFohn
- Bill Hall
- Christy Carter
- Dan Barton

- George Meredith
- Janice Gerrish
- Jeanette Leach
- Jennifer Pruitt
- Matt Pruitt
- Jill Bartlett
- Joel Wood
- John Cope
- Scott Edison
- Mark Garnick
- Tom Fitzpatrick
- Troy Kasper

King County Parks staff:

- Mike Crandell, Parks District Maintenance Coordinator, Resource Area 4
- John Turner, Parks Specialist II, Resource Area 4
- David Kimmett, Backcountry Trails Program Manager

The committee worked collaboratively to achieve consensus and to address concerns raised during the series of meetings from September 2012 through May 2013. Multiple site visits to the park were taken to inspect existing conditions and to review and develop recommendations for proposed trail enhancements. A small group of committee members made a field trip to Snohomish County's Paradise Valley Conservation Area to observe and compare the trail network of another agency.

Areas of Focus

Based on input gathered at two general meetings in June and August 2012 the committee identified the following major themes and trail issues that became the key focus of the committee's agenda:

Trail mapping and inventory	Trail maintenance	Shared use trail layout and design
Juanita Drive crossing	Dogs on trails	Engaging youth
Trail connections	Access and parking	Beavers
Trail signage	Preserve natural character	Bike skills areas

The committee looked at every section of trail in the park to determine appropriate uses and to review and consider proposed changes and enhancements. In many areas, no changes will be made to the trails. On May 29, 2013, the committee's recommendations were presented at a general meeting of the Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance. In early June of 2013, the committee's recommendations were reviewed and approved by King County Parks' management team. On June 20, 2013 the committee's recommendations were presented at a public meeting held at Finn Hill Middle School.

Part 3. Short Term Trail Recommendations

These short term recommendations refer to trail issues and improvements that can be implemented immediately and phased in over the next few years. The committee developed an implementation schedule which is listed in Part 4.

Accurate map of existing trail network

Working with Parks staff, committee members completed a survey of all trails to help produce an accurate map of the existing trail network. This map will be available at trailheads and posted on kiosks and the King County Park Backcountry Trail Map web page. Each trail intersection is numbered on the map to help users determine their location on the trail network. Each intersection will have a corresponding numbered sign.

Trail signs

Wood engraved signs will be installed at trailheads and key intersections. Each numbered trail intersection will be posted with a wood sign that corresponds to the trail map.

Kiosks

A new kiosk has been installed on the west side just off NE 138th. Another kiosk will be installed in the future on the east side at a location to be determined.

Trail designation and standards

The trails are designated as “backcountry trails” under King County Parks’ trail classifications. All trails will be maintained and constructed to U.S. Forest Service standards, as outlined in King County’s programmatic backcountry trail maintenance and construction permit (see Appendix B for more information). Since Big Finn Hill Park is located within the City of Kirkland, King County will also obtain any necessary permits required for trail construction from Kirkland.

Trail maintenance

Annual maintenance on all major trails will control encroaching vegetation and eliminate wet areas. There will be a north-south maintenance access trail on the west side to facilitate trail maintenance and site stewardship with small utility vehicles. Most of the existing shared use trails will be maintained in their current (2014) condition except for ongoing mitigation of wet spots. Where they pass through wet areas or over streams, bridges and boardwalks on trails will be constructed of dimensional or milled lumber. Natural obstructions such as fallen trees or branches will be removed as quickly as possible by King County Parks staff.

Shared trail use

All existing and new trails will be considered “shared use” or multi-use, and will be open to all non-motorized uses such as hiking, mountain biking, running, dog walking and local equestrian use. There will be no designated or exclusive use on any of the trails. Certain trails will have technical bike features targeted for beginner and intermediate riders but will remain open and accessible to other uses. Some trails may require baffle gates or other design elements to encourage slower bike speeds at trail intersections or other appropriate locations. The primary goal is to minimize user conflicts while maintaining safe, open access to all trails for non-motorized users of all ages and varying abilities.

Minor Trails

These are short connector trail segments with no developed bike features. Individual fallen tree trunks up to 7 inches in diameter (or that can be trimmed to no more than 7 inches above grade) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they may remain in place to provide a natural bike feature without impeding foot traffic. King County Parks staff will remove large fallen trees and will be responsible for normal trail maintenance.

New trails

Certain existing trails that are poorly designed or sited will be decommissioned and replaced with properly designed and engineered trails and trail structures, such as bridges and turnpikes (elevated trails) to improve trail safety and accessibility. There will be two new trail loops with bike features on the west side. (See following section for more detail).

Trails with bike features

Certain existing and newly constructed trails will include bike features such as small jumps, log roll-overs, drops and log-rides (See Appendix A for examples of these types of features). These trails will have technical features that make for a more challenging bike ride but would be designed so that the features are either optional or rideable by beginner and intermediate riders. King County Parks staff will remove large fallen trees and will be responsible for normal trail maintenance. Technical features will be approved by King County Parks before construction, and be constructed of natural materials (no dimensional or milled lumber). All bike features greater than 7-inches in height will incorporate a walk-around bypass trail for all other users. All trails with bike features will be “walkable” and open to all foot traffic, including local equestrian use.

Bike skills areas

Create three bike skills areas on the west side for beginner and intermediate mountain bikers, to include small jumps, log roll-overs, log rides, rock gardens and chutes. (See Map 5 and Appendix A).

Bike pump track

Construct a 30-foot wide by 60-foot long bike pump track on the east side near the play area. The target users for this facility are young children who are learning to ride a bike. Many families who use the existing play area will also use this kid-friendly recreational feature.

Horses

The Finn Hill area used to support many horse owners but this has diminished dramatically in recent years. Currently, a few local equestrians use the Big Finn trails on a limited basis. Equestrian use is allowed in the park, although the lack of parking to accommodate horse trailers limits equestrian use to local horse riders who can ride to the trails directly from home. The committee did not recommend adding equestrian parking facilities and King County concurred with that recommendation. The site is not suitable for horse trailers and non-local equestrians are encouraged to use facilities in the region that accommodate horse trailers.

Unauthorized trail construction

Recommendations include:

- Eliminate and remove unauthorized trails
- Post rule signage to both discourage trail users who build and construct inappropriate and unauthorized trails and trail features and, encourage participation in sanctioned volunteer trail maintenance events.

Youth

Engage students and youth to help with trail stewardship. Finn Hill Middle School students were surveyed about the park and trails, such as how they use the trails and if they would help with trail improvements. For example, of the 268 students surveyed, 35 percent hike and ride bikes in the park, and 33 percent use the ball fields.

Forest health and site restoration

Conduct a forest health analysis of the unique stand of Pacific madrone trees on the west side. Perform a hazard tree assessment and remove all hazardous trees. Develop a plan to restore the old homestead and orchard site. An ongoing invasive plant control program should be implemented to control English ivy and holly, and other non-native plants.

Beavers

The beaver pond in the southeast corner of the park is a unique natural feature and should be preserved. Trail users are encouraged to coexist with the beaver activity. Any trails that are seasonally flooded by the beaver pond will be closed. The beaver pond will be routinely monitored during the wet and rainy seasons.

Trail Partners and Friends

King County Parks staff will continue to work with volunteers from the Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, other volunteer groups and community members on trail stewardship. King County staff will also establish a “friends of Big Finn Hill Park trails” group to facilitate coordination and communication regarding implementation of the trail improvement recommendations outlined in this document.

Part 4. Trail Project Implementation Schedule

One of the committee’s final tasks was to develop an implementation schedule of trail improvements. All projects will be scheduled and coordinated with King County Parks staff and are not listed in order of priority. All tasks in Phase 1, which focus on improvements to existing trails, will be completed before Phase 2 and 3 tasks are initiated.

See the maps in Section 7 for references to the numbered trail segments. For example, E-27 refers to trail intersection number 27 located on the east side of the park. Likewise, W-24 refers to trail intersection number 24 on the west side of the park. In addition, W59-60 refers to the trail segment between intersections 59 and 60 on the west side of the park.

Phase 1- The focus will be on improving existing trails

Repair log ride skills area
Intersection E-27 <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ sight line improvement and reroute
Fix the worst of the wet/muddy spots (ongoing) <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ West of E38❖ E27-26 (south of Lacrosse Field)❖ Mainline loop – various locations

Remove treated landscape timbers at various locations such as old turnpike remnants (ongoing)
Remove rotten logs and bike features as needed (ongoing)
W59-60 (new) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Install turnpike/boardwalk (remove rock garden) ❖ adding chicane if there is funding, replant rock garden Install Rock Garden skills area at W26-27 (new)
W24-26 reroute, close W24-25
Remove jumps and borrow pits in the clearings at W31-33 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ remove buried beams
New signage (ongoing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Unauthorized trail building ❖ Trail intersection numbers ❖ 8 X 11 trail maps ❖ Trail directional signs
Meditation bench near intersection W44

Phase 2

Close specific trail sections (will have the most success during fall/winter when it is suitable to replant and there is less trail use) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ W63-57 ❖ W67-68-creek
Re-routes (new) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ W16-17 ❖ W8-22 (Add new trail to the north, aka Hall Pass) ❖ W48-49-50
Madrona Trail (new) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Complete Pacific Madrone forest assessment prior to new trail layout

Phase 3

Berry patch skills line (new)
Orchard restoration
Build new trails

W54-66: completes perimeter loop. South of 132 nd : Sidewinder (W-SE corner of Park)
Playground Pump Track

Next Steps

King County Parks staff will work with stakeholders to identify future trail maintenance and enhancement projects by:

- Monitoring and tracking changes in types and levels of public use;
- Using “pilot project” approach to assess appropriateness of, and support for, any proposed new passive recreation uses;
- Reassessing trail recommendations at least every ten years.

Part 5. Long Term Site Issues

These respective issues were discussed by the committee and were determined to be beyond the scope of the committee. These issues will require further investigation by county Parks staff in conjunction with trail stakeholders and/or City of Kirkland staff.

Juanita Drive crosswalk

With increasing trail use there is a critical need to provide a safe crossing of Juanita Drive. King County staff and a trail committee representative participated in the City of Kirkland’s Juanita Drive Corridor Study during the last quarter of 2013. According to the city’s website:

“The purpose of the study is to evaluate existing conditions, collect input from stakeholders and users, and analyze potential safety improvements for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. The study will identify key improvements that will be included in the project prioritization process in 2014 for the 2015-2020 Citywide Capital Improvement Program.”

The Corridor Study investigated the feasibility of a crosswalk that connects the east side and west side trails at Big Finn. The Study recommends two crosswalks, one at NE 138th Place and one that connects E-25 to W-22. (See Map 5).

Parking on the west side of Juanita Drive

There is no current recommendation to create a parking lot on the west side of Juanita Drive. The committee supported working with the City of Kirkland to expand shoulder parking along NE 138th Place.

Trail connection to O.O. Denny Park

Due to topography and soil conditions, a direct trail connection from Big Finn Hill Park to O.O. Denny Park is difficult; however there is much interest in connecting the two parks. The Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance is the best group to lead the effort to find a suitable route and to work with the City of Kirkland Parks Department, Finn Hill and Denny Creek neighbors, and other stakeholders.

Dogs

Dog walkers are one of the primary users of the Big Finn trails and many dog walkers would like the trails officially designated as “off leash”. King County’s and the City of Kirkland’s park rules require that all dogs must be on a leash at all times except within formally designated off leash parks. Any change to the leash rule would require the county to amend its park rules under Title 7 of the King County Code, which would require approval by the King County Council. The committee felt this issue required much more investigation and consideration. The committee’s recommendation is for dog owners to organize a group to develop a viable proposal for future consideration by King County Parks.

ADA accessible trail and boardwalk

Currently there are no trails that are suitable for people with disabilities. The committee agreed that the best site for an accessible trail is just south of Thoreau Elementary. The committee supported further investigation in developing a trail that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that would connect with a proposed boardwalk parallel to 84th NE. The boardwalk would keep all trail users off of the road shoulder. The accessible trail and boardwalk would require dedicated capital funding and most likely require permitting from the City of Kirkland. This project would make an ideal grant proposal for state and federal funding.

Part 6. References

American Trails. Many references and resources on trail planning, design, construction and management. P.O. Box 491797, Redding, CA 96049-1797. <http://www.americantrails.org/>

Birkby, Robert. 2005. *Lightly on the Land, The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual*. Second Edition. The Student Conservation Association. The Mountaineers Books.

Hesselbarth, Woody; Vachowski, Brian; Davies, Mary Ann. 2007. *Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook: 2007 edition*. Tech. Rep. 0723-2806-MTDC. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center.

International Mountain Bicycling Association, *Trail Solutions: IMBA’s Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack*. 2004.

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Steinholtz, Robert and Brian Vachowski. *Wetland Trail Design and Construction*. Missoula, MT: USDA Forest Service, Technology and Development Program, 2001.

USDA Forest Service, *Trails Management Handbook* (FSH 2309.18).

USDA Forest Service, *Forest Service Standard Specifications for Construction of Trails* (EM 7720-103).

Part 7. Maps

Map 1: Vicinity map of Big Finn Hill Park and surrounding area.

Map 2: Existing trails on the east side of the park.

Map 3: Proposed trail improvements on the east side of the park.

Map 4: Existing trails on the west side of the park.

Map 5: Proposed trail improvements on the west side of the park.

January 2014

Map 1: Big Finn Hill Park and Vicinity



Trailhead - hiking



Trailhead - hiking/mtn. biking



Lacrosse Field



Parking



Restroom



Baseball Field



Boat Launch



Open Play Field



Picnic Shelter



Play Equipment Area



Soccer Field



Gate



Maintained Trail



Major Road



Local Road



King County Parks



Other Parks



Wetland



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Kenmore

Saint Edward State Park

Bastyr University

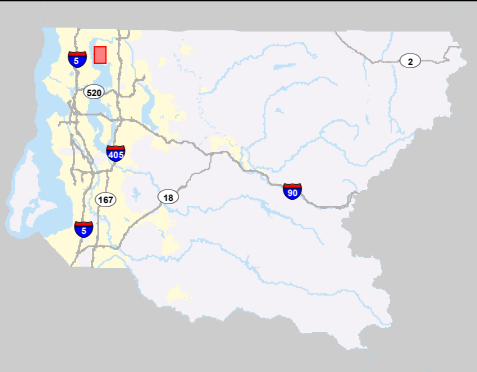
Big Finn Hill Park

Finn Hill Middle School

Kirkland

O. O. Denny Park

Juanita Woodlands Park



Map 2: Big Finn Hill Park East
Existing

Trail Intersections

Gate

Trails in King County

King County Parks

King County

Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Parks Division

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This aerial map displays the Big Finn Hill Park East area, featuring a network of trails marked with red lines and numbered green dots (1-71). The trails are bordered by a magenta line representing King County Parks. Key landmarks include Henry David Thoreau Elementary School, Finn Hill Middle School, and several baseball fields. Major roads shown are Juanita Drive, 140th, 80th, 81st, 84th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 78th, 79th, 85th, and Private. Two gates are labeled: Maze Gate and Bollards. The map also includes a legend, a scale bar (0-200 feet), and a north arrow.

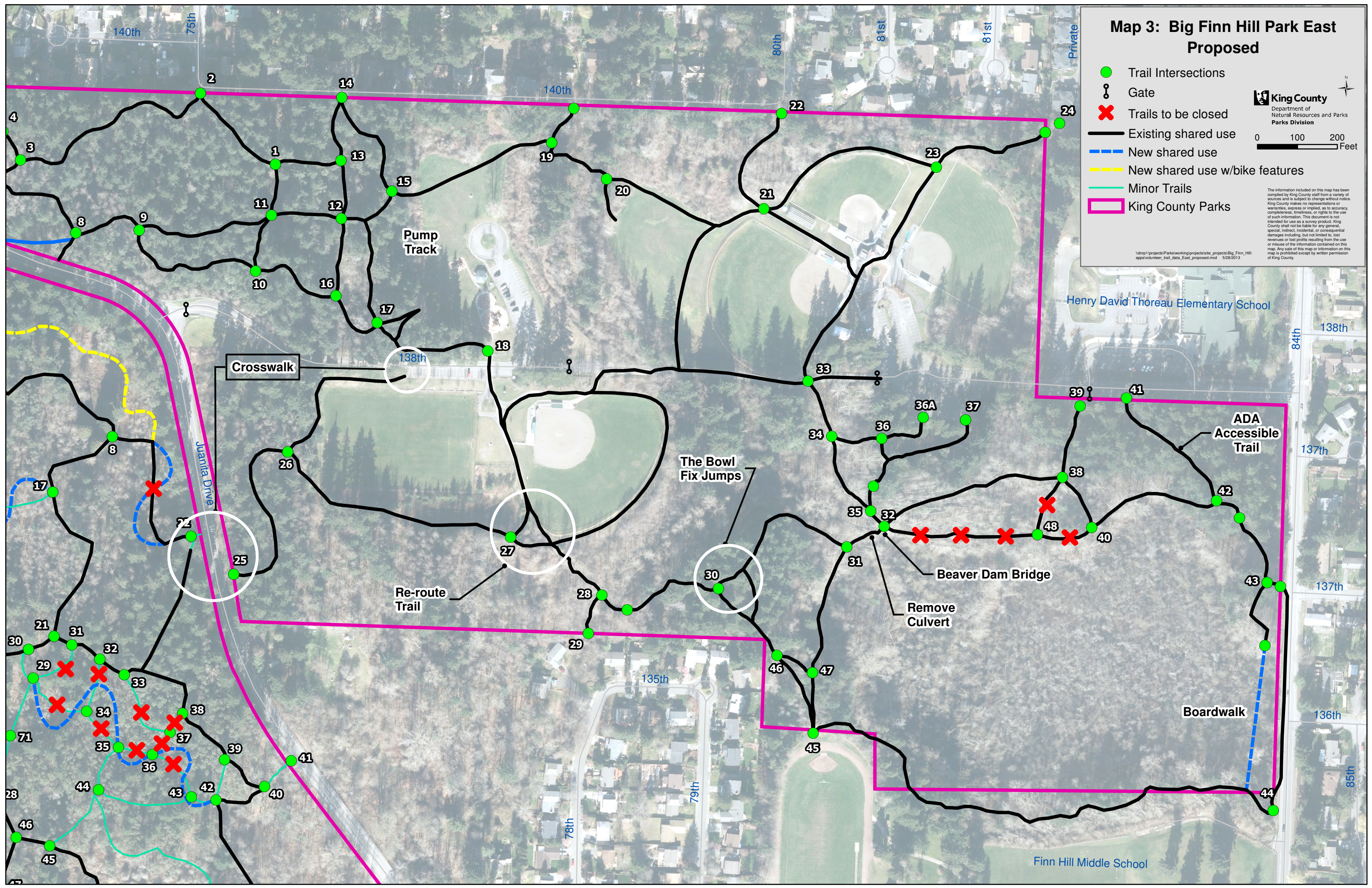
Map 3: Big Finn Hill Park East
Proposed

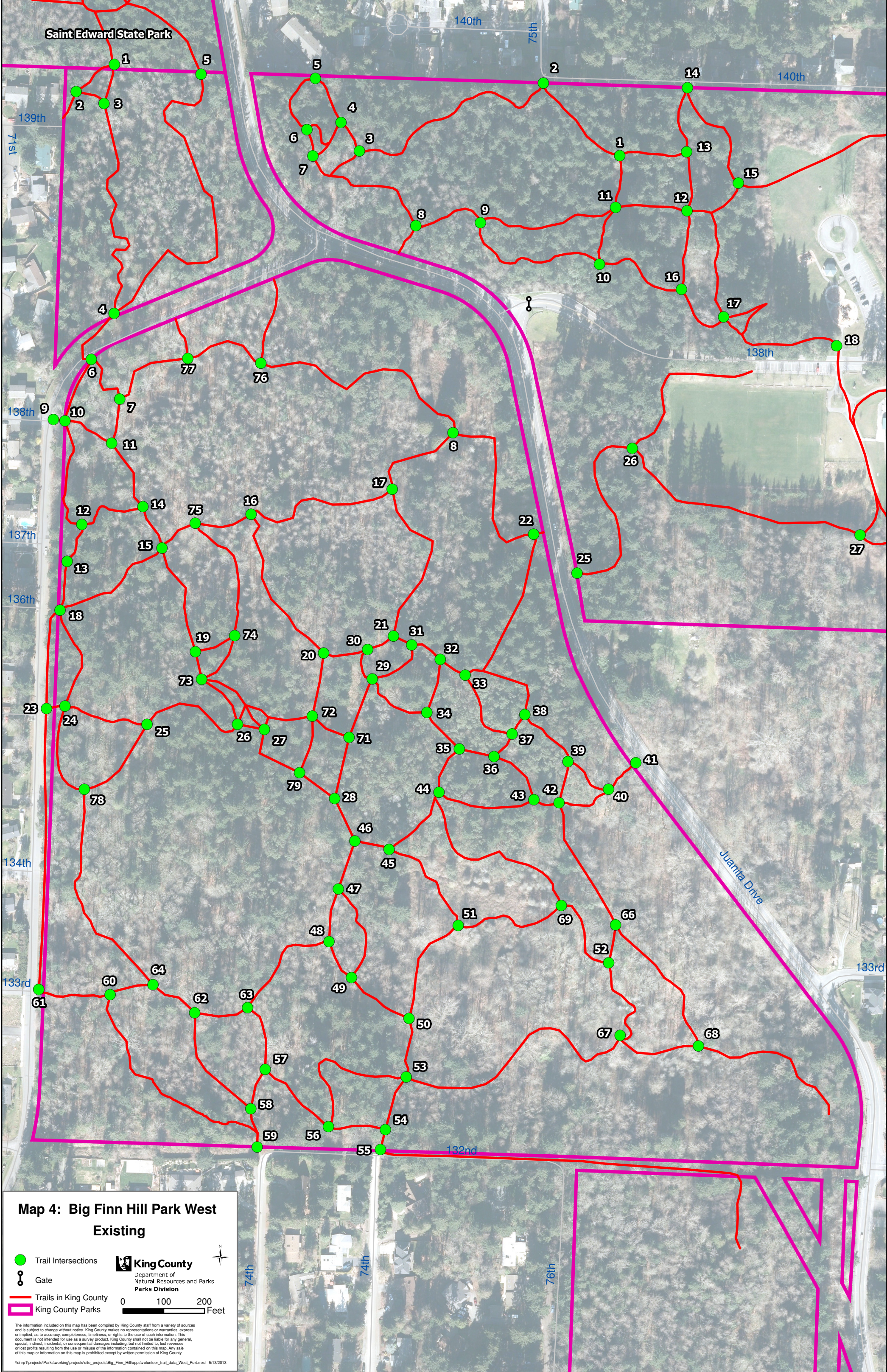
- Trail Intersections
- Gate
- Trails to be closed
- Existing shared use
- New shared use
- New shared use w/bike features
- Minor Trails
- King County Parks




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**Map 4: Big Finn Hill Park West
Existing**

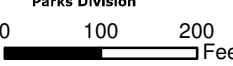

 Trail Intersections

 Gate

 Trails in King County

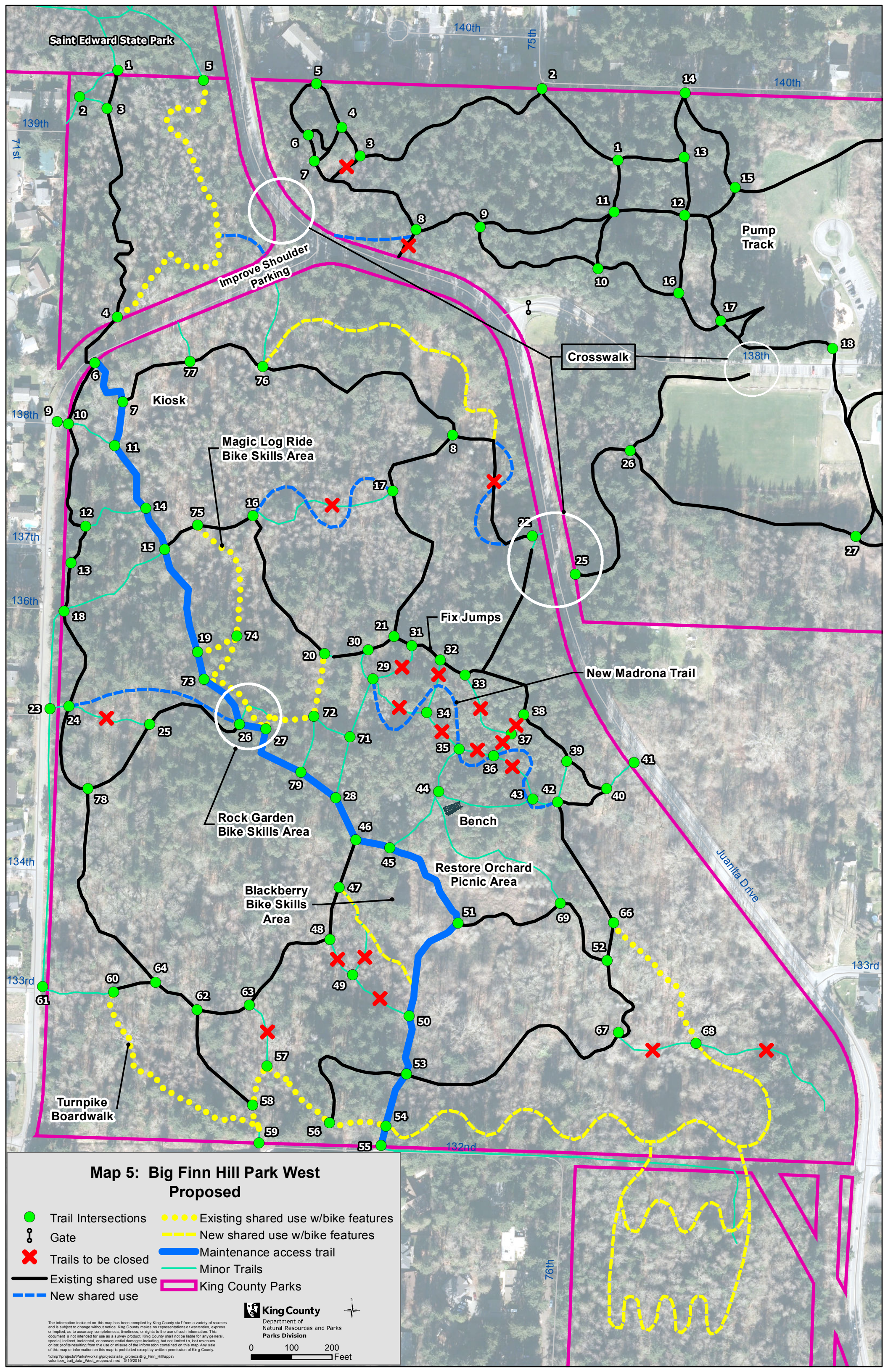
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Map 5: Big Finn Hill Park West
Proposed

- Trail Intersections
- ⚓ Gate
- ✗ Trails to be closed
- Existing shared use
- New shared use
- Existing shared use w/bike features
- New shared use w/bike features
- Maintenance access trail
- Minor Trails
- King County Parks

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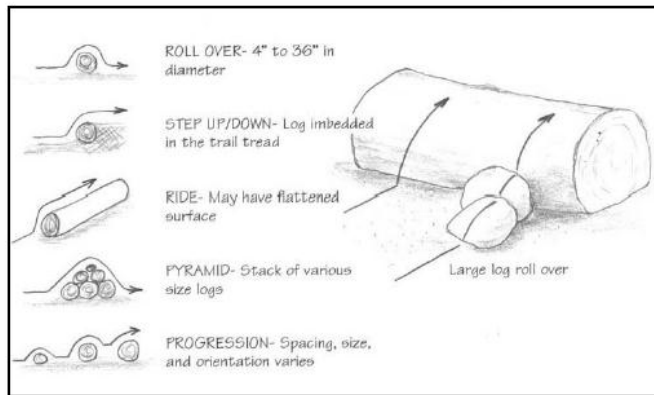
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Appendix A. Examples of Mountain Bike Trail Features

Appendix of Technical Trail Features

Log roll overs:

Logs are a common natural feature on trails in the woods.

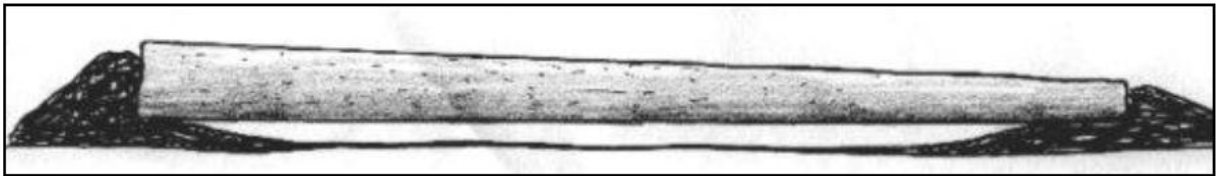


Skinnies and Log Rides

When riding in the backcountry, balance is a key skill required to negotiate very narrow trail passages and/or trails with exposure to dangerous falls. Skinnies and log rides are narrow elevated riding surfaces for developing and practicing balance skills. They can be built from fallen trees, split logs, milled planks, dimensional lumber or other materials.

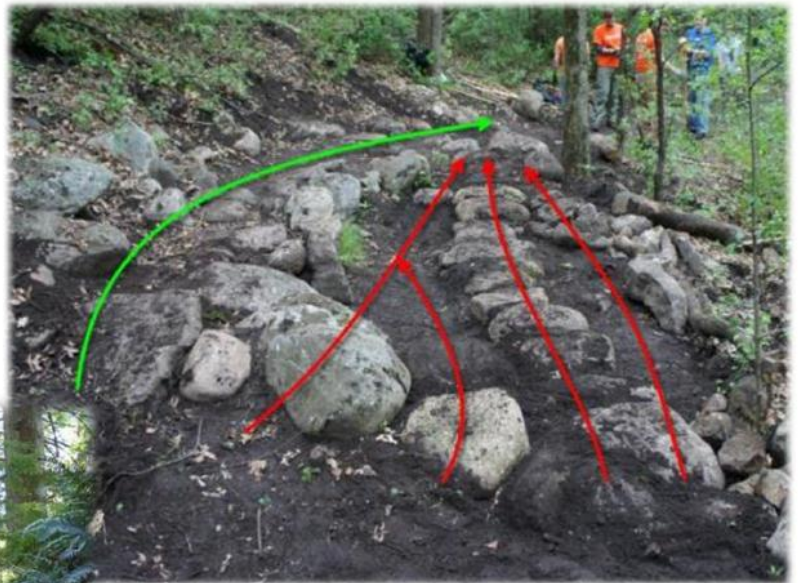


Blowdown logs are a common natural feature on trails in the woods and many different types of natural and manmade log features can be implemented.



Rock Gardens and Chutes:

Steep rocky chutes make fun and challenging trail features. They are also a great skill builder before heading out onto backcountry trails where rocks and rocky crossings can be common.



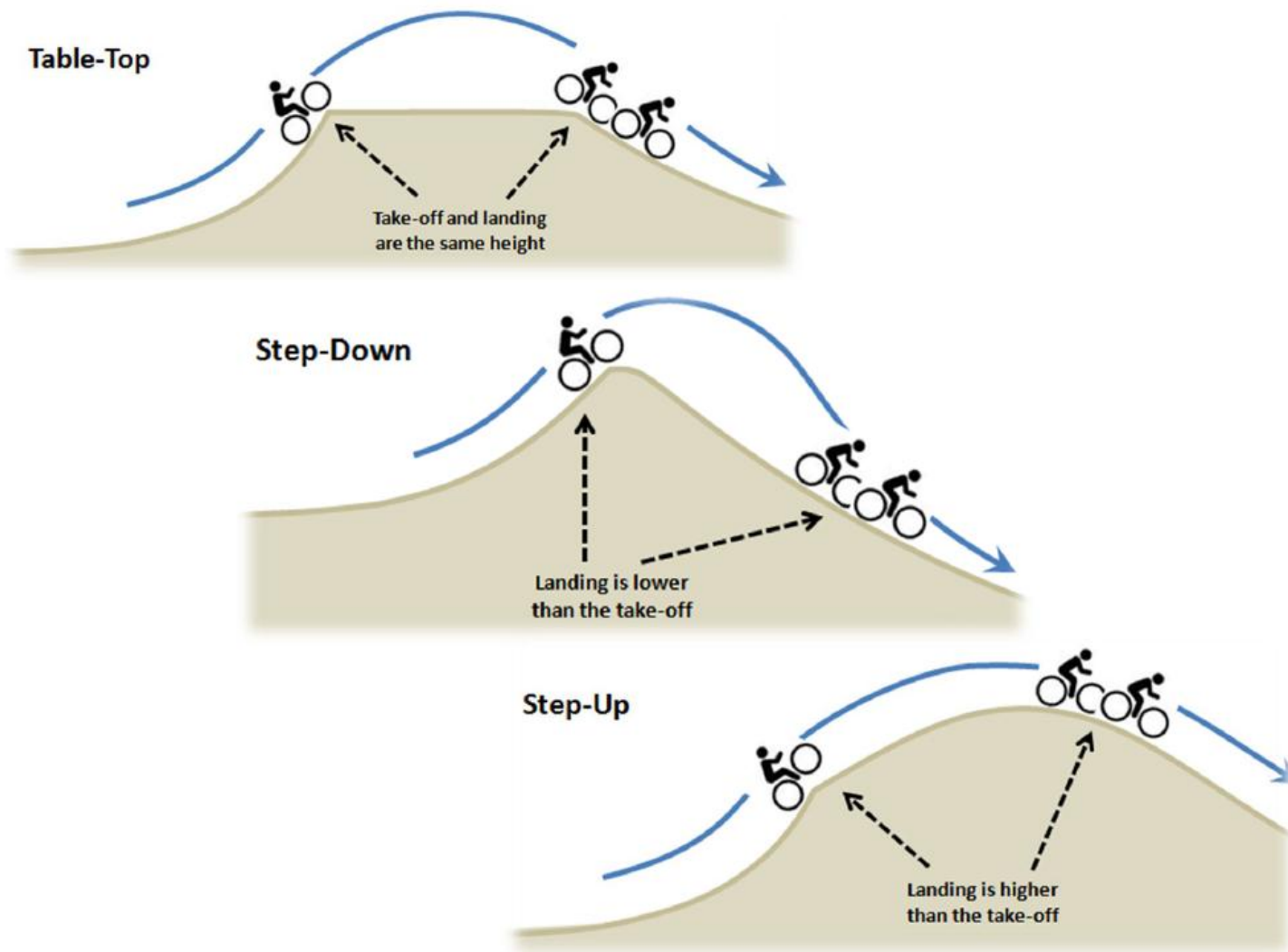
Drops (or Drop-Offs):

The characteristic that distinguishes a drop from a jump is the take-off angle. A jump has a positive take-off angle, so sends the rider higher in the air than the lip of the jump. A drop has a flat or negative take-off angle, so sends the rider downward. The two require different skills and technique.



Jumps:

There are 3 categories of jumps: Table-Tops, Step-Downs and Step-Ups:



Appendix B. King County's Backcountry Trail System

Definition

Backcountry trails are natural surface, non-paved trails intended for shared use recreation including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, trail running and nature observation. Users of backcountry trails are looking for a natural experience with forests and trees, streams and wetlands, and birds and wildlife. Backcountry trails are designed to take advantage of the natural terrain. These trails are predominantly narrow paths through forested park lands but may also include existing maintenance roads as well as old logging roads. These trails are not intended for public motorized vehicle use.

Backcountry Trail Sites

There are over 190 miles of backcountry trails within 26 King County Parks' sites. Backcountry trails provide the public multiple opportunities to experience hiking, running and riding in a natural setting across a variety of landscapes and terrain, and at varying lengths and distances.

History

Many of the open space park lands and forests acquired by King County Parks over the past 25 years contained an existing network of social trails, now referred to as backcountry trails. These trail networks were originally created by local hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers.

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, purchased in the mid 1980's, was the first backcountry trail network developed and managed by King County Parks in partnership with hiking and equestrian trail users. Other major backcountry trail sites were former private timber holdings (Taylor Mountain Forest, Grand Ridge Park) or Washington State Department of Natural Resources Trust Lands (Soaring Eagle, Island Center Forest).

Trail Uses and Types

Backcountry trail uses include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and running. At present, most backcountry trails are shared by all users. At some sites, trails have designated uses.

Cougar Mountain has trails designated solely for hikers and equestrians, and Duthie Hill Park has trails for mountain bikers and hikers only. The Duthie Hill trails have advanced mountain biking features that are not found on shared use trails. Opportunities to develop interpretive trails and accessible trails for the disabled should be explored.

Trail Standards and Sustainability

Backcountry trails shall be managed in a sustainable manner that protects natural resources, ensures safety, and requires minimal maintenance. Trails shall be constructed and maintained per United States Forest Service Trails Management Handbook (FSH 2309.18) and Forest Service Standard Specifications for Construction of Trails (EMH-7729-103).

Trail Permit

King County Parks has a programmatic clearing and grading permit from King County's Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER) to construct and maintain backcountry trails that follow U.S. Forest Service standards. The publications, **United States Forest Service (USFS) Trails Management Handbook (FSH 2309.18)** and **Forest Service Standard Specifications for Construction of Trails (EM**

7720-103), form the basis for King County’s programmatic permit.

Other Trail Permits

King County Parks will obtain appropriate permits for trail construction projects that occur in areas that fall under city municipal jurisdiction.

Trail Planning and Design

King County Parks will establish trail planning and design protocols to ensure that trails are properly located and constructed to meet the growing demand for trails. Backcountry trail infrastructure improvements, including trailhead facilities, parking lots, kiosks, signage, restrooms and shelters, will be identified through a planning process.

Trail Connections

King County Parks will collaborate with other public land agencies, non-profit trail groups and private landowners to create a connection of backcountry trails for all users throughout King County. New trail connections can be acquired through fee purchase of the land, or through voluntary dedication or sale of a trail easement.

Trail Stewardship and Partnerships

Ever since the first backcountry trails were established at Cougar Mountain, King County Parks has relied upon trail user groups to help preserve lands for trails and open space, to maintain and improve existing trails, and to construct new trails to meet the growing demand for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. King County Parks partners with many trail user and advocacy groups including the Washington Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Finn Hill Neighborhood Alliance, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Backcountry Horsemen – Tahoma Chapter, Enumclaw Forested Foothills Recreation Association, King County Executive Horse Council, Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust.