



Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park Master Plan

August 26, 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a master plan being developed for Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park?

Kitsap County Parks is developing a master plan to better understand the recreational and tourism opportunities of Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, while maintaining the Vision and Goals established. This master plan will provide future direction for long-term park developments and operations.

What is the timeline?

The master plan process will follow a roughly 12-month timeline from initial assessments through the final document being presented to the Board of Commissioners. We're targeting County approval of the master plan in early 2022.

Who is developing the master plan? Who will make decisions about the park in the future?

Kitsap County Parks has hired a team of consultants to manage and develop the master plan process on behalf of the County. The master plan will be a community-led effort with active engagement coordinated with stakeholders and various partner organizations, and recommendations from our master planning team. Final decisions and the adoption of the master plan will be made by the Board of Commissioners.



How does this effort relate to other recent and ongoing projects and plans for the park?

Current efforts were planned and presented to the County and Kitsap Public Facilities District for funding prior to the implementation of a master planning effort. That said, all current efforts will be coordinated with the master planning process as best as possible to align efforts.



What are the terms of the agreement with Pope Resources for future logging, and how will this work with the master plan improvements?

The purchase of land from Pope Resources (Rayonier) was made possible with the retainage of timber rights for one remaining harvest over the next 25 years. The terms of the agreements and encumbrances on the property provide limitations on what developments can be planned and will be considered throughout the master planning process.

How will we balance conservation and/or preservation of the natural environment and existing wildlife habitat with plans for new park recreation and visitation amenities?

Any park improvements will need to be considered against ALL the goals established for the master plan. The balance of meeting these goals will come from active engagement with members of the community, as well as various advisory groups of experts guiding the master planning team on meeting the needs of the various goals established.

How will access to the park be provided for people of all abilities and mobilities?

The master planning team has established an Accessibility Advisory Group to specifically review any opportunities considered and guide the team and the Parks Department on how to best improve access throughout the park.

How will conflicts between different park users be reduced?

The master planning team will work with various user groups to understand the root cause of potential conflicts and address that with proposed solutions in the master plan regarding trail and signage standards, potential management strategies, and other improvements to ensure all park users can equally enjoy the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park indefinitely.

How are the desires of the local community being balanced with the desires of park visitors from farther away?

Kitsap County Parks sees the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park as a significant community asset, as well as a regional attraction. Keeping with the park's Vision and Goals and the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan, the intent is to make the park a valuable resource for all users and future generations. Active engagement with our stakeholders and partners will make sure a balance to serve all park users is implemented, while keeping in mind that the park may be a future attraction to regional visitors.



Who are participants on the master plan Steering Committee?

The three volunteers on our team include Mark Schorn, Don Willott, and Kathryn Thompson. These three individuals were selected as representatives of the many partner organizations identified for the master planning project.

Will Rayonier continue to perform clear-cutting operations within the park?

Currently, Rayonier retains the timber rights for one remaining harvest within the park and will continue operations until that agreement is fulfilled. There are some potential fundraising efforts within the community to assist the County with purchasing some of the remaining timber rights, which the County will explore and consider.

How is the County managing invasive species after clear-cutting or thinning operations that disturb the soil?

The Kitsap County Parks Department manages invasive species through the established stewardship and other volunteer programs. Occasionally, the Parks Department will hire Conservation Corps groups to assist with this effort.

Is Rayonier a partner in the diverse forest planting concepts as they re-plant over the next 25 years?

Rayonier is required to replant any areas harvested per the DNR Green-Up requirements. The County is working on a plan to diversify these efforts in the future.

How will the County Parks Department manage the park with their limited staff? How will the Parks Department continue to leverage the stewardship groups and other volunteer support?

The County recognizes that there are limitations with staffing and resources. However, the Parks Department is exploring sources of funding and other resources to supplement existing capabilities.

What is the current condition of Port Gamble Forest, and how will the County restore the park to a healthy, natural forest?

The Port Gamble Forest has been a commercial timberland for over a century, resulting in a densely planted stand and unhealthy forest conditions. The planning for ecological restoration will be an ongoing effort beyond the development of the master plan. The County will continue to explore options to manage the Port Gamble Forest, as well as other forested park lands, in a manner consistent with current scientific understanding.



What is the Ride Park, and how is that project approved ahead of the development of the master plan?

The Ride Park is a mountain bike park that will be a system of trails built in the northern section of the park. The Ride Park and the Sound to Olympics Trail are two improvements that have been approved and are proceeding ahead of the development of a master plan. The County was awarded an RCO Grant for the Ride Park that allowed for the acquisition of that acreage during the community campaign. The Ride Park was conceptualized and proposed by the community over 5 years ago as a desired project in the park. The Ride Park was reviewed and approved by Kitsap County prior to the start of the master planning process.

Will the master plan incorporate plans for emergency services?

The master planning team is working with the Kitsap County Sherriff's Office, North Kitsap Fire and Rescue, and the Department of Emergency Management regarding access and services in the park. All programming, spatial planning, and the final master plan will be reviewed and approved in consultation with these partner organizations.

How are the trails being designed and developed to ensure safety and minimize environmental impact?

The Ride Park trails are designed by Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance. The Sound to Olympics trail will be designed by the design team hired by the Kitsap County Public Works Department, and it will utilize existing roadbeds while following strict regional trail standards. All trails are designed and evaluated against existing national trail standards, which will be formally adopted and updated within the master plan document.

What are we doing to engage with as much of the community as possible?

We've been conducting in-person and virtual surveys, and polling exercises in the Public Open House meetings. Additionally, informational posters have been placed throughout the park and will be updated regularly. Our polling and survey efforts are not considered a comprehensive community response, but rather a way to sample community preferences. We'll also continue to post polling on the web page, soliciting specific input from stakeholder and partner organizations, and work with the Kitsap County Human Services Department to reach as broad an audience in the community as possible.

Do the groups holding races or events in the park pay an event fee?

The Kitsap County Parks Department has a Special Event Application process for any event proposed within County parks, and it includes a fee.



Where can I watch the recordings of the public meetings I missed?

All recordings for public meetings will be placed on the web page within the Reference Materials Library. You can also use these direct links to the individual meetings:

- Public Meeting No. 1: <https://youtu.be/ExA5D8UAemY>
- Ecological Restoration Panel Q&A: <https://youtu.be/WQXD0ml4tdU>
- Public Meeting No. 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juPlqGmodbU>

How can I provide input? How can I get more involved?

Thank you for providing input and wanting to get involved! Visit <http://portgambleforestpark.com> regularly and sign up for email notifications to stay up to date on events and efforts. Public meetings and surveys will be posted to continue collecting input. To get more involved, please contact parks@co.kitsap.wa.us for opportunities such as the PGFHP Stewardship Committee, Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board, or other volunteer opportunities.