



Kitsap County Forest Stewardship Program

Ecological Forest Management: Coulter Creek Heritage Park, Calvinwood, and Square Lake Park

At just over 1,550 acres, Coulter Creek Heritage Park, Calvinwood and Square Lake Park form the second largest Kitsap County Park; second only to Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park (3,497 acres). Starting in 2017 citizens and stakeholders have been actively involved in park and forest stewardship planning for these three county owned properties and the process is continuing. Square Lake officially became a Kitsap County park property in October 2020.

Starting in 2017 the Forest Stewardship Program selectively thinned trees in Coulter Creek Heritage Park to improve the health of the forest which was used historically for timber production and Christmas tree farming. Calvinwood was thinned in 2019/20 and Square Lake Park is scheduled for selective thinning beginning in March 2021.

The process called "restoration thinning" involves the removal of small to medium sized Douglas fir trees to reduce disease, fires risk, and allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor. The goal is to promote a healthy, diverse forest and increase understory vigor that more closely resembles a natural forest condition. Hemlock, cedar, pine and hardwood trees will be left to grow or will be planted, creating a more diverse forest ecosystem.

KEY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Policy for Sustainable Forests

Kitsap County adopted an [Integrated Forest Stewardship Policy](#)* in 2012 to ecologically manage county owned forest lands. A 2015 amendment provided further guidelines to protect and restore forests within riparian and wetland Management Zones in county parks.

Habitat Conservation

The Kitsap County Forest Stewardship Program protects habitat for species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endanger Species Act.

Ecological Forest Management

Kitsap County owned forest lands are ecologically managed using a science-based ecological approach, not a production forestry approach.

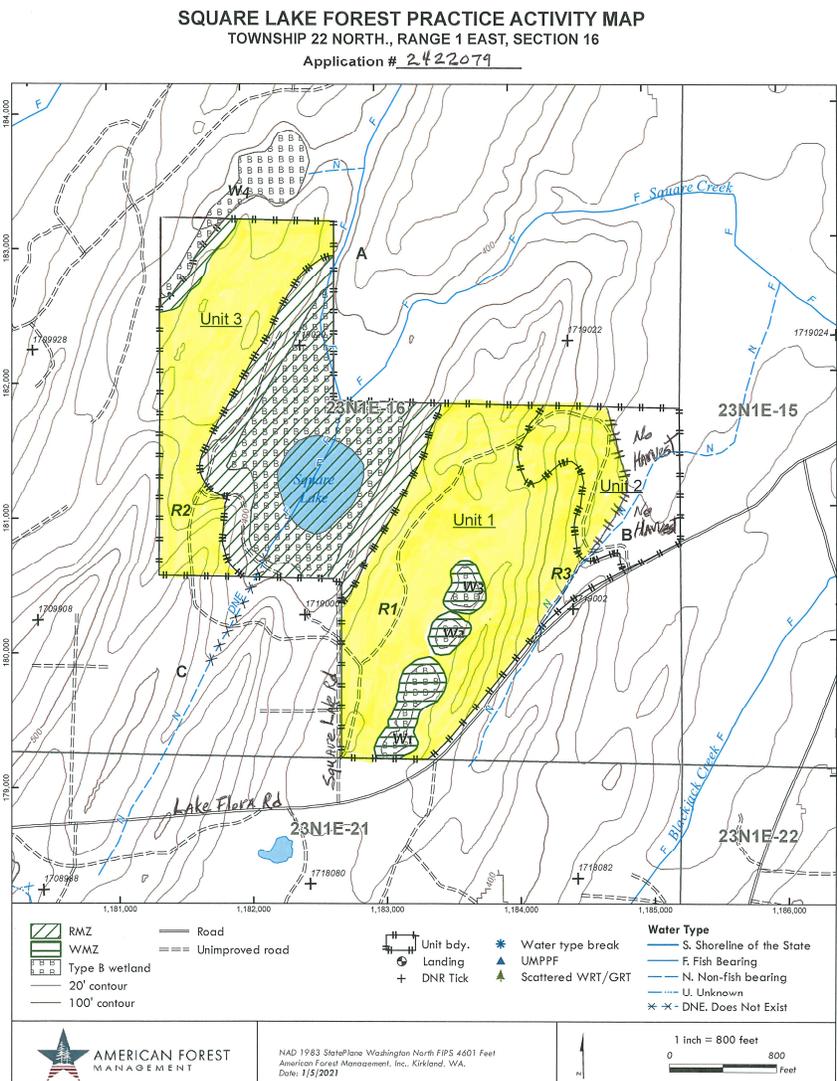
Washington Forest Practices Act

Kitsap County's Forest Stewardship Program follows state regulations to protect public resources, such as water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Timber harvests including any new road construction on Kitsap County owned park lands are reviewed for probable significant adverse impacts (SEPA review).

The permit for the restoration thinning at Square Lake will be issued by the Washington Department of Natural Resources – Forest Practices. Approval is expected in mid-February. Below is the map showing the areas, in yellow, that will be selectively thinned. Wetlands, streams and Square Lake all have buffers to protect water quality, fish and wildlife. Thinning at Square Lake is expected to start in March 2021.



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*For additional information - <https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/ForestStewardship.aspx>