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STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

June 2008

Item #12: Project Tour Overview

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**Approved by the
Director:**

Proposed Action: Briefing

Summary

The June 2008 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) meeting includes a project tour on Thursday, June 19. The tour will include projects within the City of Bellingham funded with Board grants. RCO and city staff chose these particular projects to highlight unique geographic locations or major challenges during implementation. Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff believes it is beneficial for the Board to see both projects that went smoothly from start to finish as well as those that had to rise above significant obstacles.

Background

The City of Bellingham has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the Board and RCO through the years, beginning with the city's first Board-funded project in 1967. Since then, the city has been successful in acquiring funding for 35 projects with a total investment of over \$23 million. The Board provided more than one-third of that total investment, with a contribution of over \$8 million in grant funds.



Tour Sites

Woodstock Farm and Chuckanut Bay

RCO grant #04-1504A Inspiration Point/Chuckanut Bay Acquisition

The Woodstock Farm and Chuckanut Bay site was funded under the ALEA program. The total project cost was \$1,852,650, including the ALEA grant of \$600,000.

This 12.3-acre park in Bellingham's Chuckanut Bay Greenway has 1,800 feet of marine shore, 3.5 acres of tideland, and 8.7 acres of upland. The site includes the mouth of salmon-bearing Chuckanut Creek and 800 feet of smaller Woodstock Creek. The site features existing paths, dramatic view and wildlife observation points, a caretaker's cottage, boathouse, and two prehistoric archaeological sites. It provides the nearest kayak and rowboat access to Chuckanut Rocks, Chuckanut Island, and the scenic, rocky shores of Clark Point and inner Chuckanut Bay. There are rocky headlands, a 300-foot beach, oyster beds, and uplands featuring uncommon vegetation typical of the Olympic rain-shadow islands.

Woodstock Farm is a small farm estate with structures that were excluded from the RCO Deed-of-Right as in-holdings within the project footprint. The structures include four caretaker's residences, a barn, and a garage. These outbuildings give significant historical value to the park and may offer visitors a unique historical interpretive experience. A boathouse is also at the site, and included within the Deed-of-Right. The city is discussing plans for future building restoration to provide public use. In addition, the city is in discussions with the Lummi Nation about creating a re-interment area for human remains taken from the Chuckanut area and recently repatriated by the Lummi Nation.

Upper Whatcom Creek Trail.

RCO grants #92-356A and #92-389D

Two grants helped fund the Upper Whatcom Creek Trail.

The WWRP-Trails program funded the acquisition phase (grant #92-356A) of this project. The total phase cost was \$2,782,675, with the WWRP grant contributing \$1,391,059 to the project.

- The acquisition included about 31.1 acres of park land for a trail adjacent to Whatcom Creek between Whatcom Falls Park and Racine Street. The trail links Lake Whatcom to Interstate 5, with connections to the Railroad Trail, Bloedel Donovan Park, St. Clair Park, Whatcom Falls Park, and Civil Field.

The development phase (grant #92-389D) was funded under the LWCF program for a total of \$648,780, with the Board contributing \$252,605 to the project.

- The development included a non-motorized trail from Lake Whatcom to Interstate 5, located adjacent to Whatcom Creek. The trail provides linkages along the creek from Lake Whatcom to Interstate 5.

In 1999, a gas line fire delayed the grant schedule timeline and required the acquisition of additional riparian open space along Whatcom Creek to complete the project. Restoration work resulting from the fire will be evident when the tour stops near Woburn Street at the entrance to the Whatcom Creek Gorge.

This 5-mile trail will eventually extend to the entrance of the Whatcom Creek Waterway in Bellingham's Waterfront District, at the former Georgia Pacific pulp mill site. At its eastern terminus on Lake Whatcom, the trail now begins at Bloedel Donovan Park and extends downstream to Racine Street with a connection to a trail serving the Civic Field Complex. The Washington Department of Ecology provided additional funding for riparian areas.

Squalicum Creek Park and Squalicum Creek Trail *RCO grants #02-1339A and #04-1444D*

The WWRP–Local Parks program funded the acquisition phase of this site (grant #02-1339). The total cost of the phase was \$4,031,988, including WWRP grant funding of \$500,000.

- The acquisition included about 42 acres of land for a major athletic field and park complex. The facility blends active sports with restored natural areas. The city combined the acquired property with pre-existing park tracts to expand an existing park and trail system, to over 47 acres. The project also protected and enhanced the riparian lands on Squalicum Way, an important scenic drive along Squalicum Creek, which is the City's most productive salmon stream.

The WWRP–Local Parks program also funded the development phase of this site (grant #04-1444D). The total cost of the phase was \$992,063, including the grant of \$300,000.

- The final development is nearing completion, and will result in a combination athletic field, trail hub, and water resources park site. The entire park development effort represents restoration of a former gravel mine that was excavated to within a few feet of the water table. In addition to a softball complex, the site will include loop and arterial trails that connect several major trails extending across North Bellingham. The park lies on an unused rail corridor, which is being discussed as part of a future rail-to-trail project. The city is using additional local funds to construct a passive-use riparian corridor to conserve and convey high-quality spring water to Squalicum Creek.

Maritime Heritage Park and Whatcom Creek Greenway.
RCO grant #80-054 (Whatcom Creek Park)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program funded the acquisition of Maritime Heritage Park. The total project cost was \$674,000, with the grant contributing \$323,500.

Located in downtown Bellingham, this project involved the fee acquisition of about 2.5 acres. The site is an essential part of the Whatcom Creek Greenway, and is the terminus of the Whatcom Creek Trail. An additional 47 acres of State Harbor Area may be incorporated into the site, much of it as shoreline park or marine resource bedlands.

Boulevard Park, South Bay Trail, and Taylor Dock
RCO Projects #76-016, #79-015, #91-198, and #02-1332

Two grants helped fund Boulevard Park.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund funded the first project (#76-016). The project total was \$107,275, including grant funds of \$61,300. This project acquired almost 5 acres of land along the shores of Bellingham Bay to become part of Boulevard Park.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund also provided funds to the second project (#79-015). The total cost of this project was \$603,000, including grant funds of \$301,500. This project developed about 10 acres, including 1,400 feet on Bellingham Bay. Development focused on passive recreation including picnicking, a children's play area, and hiking.

The WWRP-Trails program funded the South Bay Trail (grant #91-198). The project total was \$449,876, including grant funds of \$224,938.

- The project developed a continuous four-mile multi-use trail corridor along the Bellingham Bay and Padden Creek shorelines from downtown Bellingham to the Interurban trailhead beyond Fairhaven Park.

The WWRP-Trails program also funded Taylor Dock (grant #02-1332). The project total was \$2.1 million, including grant funds of \$800,000.

- This project developed a critical shoreline trail segment to both fill the gap in the existing South Bay Trail and provide a grade-separated crossing over the active Burlington Northern Rail line. The trail segment was is a half-mile long and 12 feet wide. The project also redeveloped and restored an historic dock and over-water railroad trestle. The trail provides access to unique natural features along Bellingham Bay and serves as a non-motorized bypass around roadway, railway,

and topographic barriers. It links neighborhoods in south Bellingham with a saltwater beach and an existing waterfront community park.

Grant support was critical in establishing the shoreline promenade, its access points, and its park sites. Funds from local resources (Whatcom County and Bellingham), private sources, and the U.S. Department of Transportation matched state resources, including Harbor Areas leases from the Department of Natural Resources. Overall, the South Bay Trail and Boulevard Park represent a significant accomplishment by the city, demonstrating the importance of persistence, vision, and the use of partnerships to accomplish a very difficult yet extremely satisfying project.

The tour includes time for the Board to walk from the head of Taylor Street Dock northward on the South Bay Trail bridge over the Fairhaven Harbor area, to a van pick-up point at Boulevard Park.

Attachments

- A. Tour map