

2013



Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan



Skagit County Parks and Recreation
315 South Third Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273



December 2013
Final Adoption

The Skagit County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan advances the goals established by the Growth Management Act. These goals include the retention of open space, the enhancement of recreational opportunities, the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, better access to natural resource lands and water, and the development of parks and recreational facilities. To be eligible for Washington State grants, the Recreational Conservation Office requires that the plan is updated every six years. In the making of this plan, the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, along with Parks and Recreation Staff, held several public meetings throughout the County in an attempt to gather assessments of need from residents.

After several months of review, this plan is being unanimously approved by the following members of Skagit County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. On February 16, 2012, the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board voted to forward the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan Update to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners with their recommendation for final adoption and approval.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

District One:

Mike Elde



Mark Dobie



(To be filled)

District Two:

Lloyd Brown



John Semrau



Liz McNett Crowl



District Three:

Kevin Loy



Chris Allen



Elizabeth Detillion



An Ordinance Adopting the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

WHEREAS, on July 15, 2013, the Board of Commissioners established the following 2012 comprehensive plan docket through Resolution R20130179:

- C-1 Proposal to re-designate and rezone four parcels (P74450, P103560, P103559, P74451) near La Conner to Rural Business;
- C-2 Proposal to re-designate and rezone P118792, owned by Del Mar Community Service, from Rural Resource-NRL to Rural Reserve;
- C-3 Proposal to incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan by reference the 2012 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan;
- C-4 Proposal to amend the Bayview Ridge Subarea Plan;
- NC-1 Proposal to expand the City of Anacortes's Urban Growth Area by about 10.45 acres;

WHEREAS, on November 12, 2013, the Planning Commission approved a Recorded Motion recommending adoption of the docketed amendment proposals, with some modifications;

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2013, the Board of Commissioners met to review the Planning Commission's Recorded Motion and deliberate on which of the Planning Commission's recommendations to adopt;

WHEREAS, due to a lack of requested information from the applicant, the County did not undertake SEPA review of proposal NC-1, nor did the Planning Commission consider or make a recommendation on the proposal, as required under SCC 14.08.030(5);

WHEREAS the public has been afforded opportunity to comment on any substantial change now proposed for adoption;

WHEREAS the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.130) allows for adoption of amendments to the comprehensive plan no more frequently than once per year.

Now Therefore Be It Ordained by the Board of County Commissioners:

- Section 1. The additional recitals and the findings and fact and reasons for action from the Planning Commission's Recorded Motion, attached here as Exhibit A, are incorporated by reference.
- Section 2. Proposed comprehensive plan amendments C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 are hereby adopted as shown in the attached exhibits.
- Section 3. Proposal NC-1, to expand the City of Anacortes's Urban Growth Area by about 10.45 acres, is hereby deferred until the next Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle, consistent with SCC 14.08.090(5).

Approved this 3rd day of December, 2013.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Sharon D. Dillon
Sharon D. Dillon, Chair

Ron Wesen
Ron Wesen, Commissioner

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt
Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Commissioner

Attest:

Amber Kellogg
Clerk of the Board

Recommended:

Bob Perreault
Department Head

Approved as to form:

Ryan Walter
Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Skagit County would like to acknowledge all of those individuals who gave their time and energy to developing this Comprehensive Plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE

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Tony Tewalt, SCPR Recreation Manager
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John Semrau, SCPR PRAB Member
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Mark Dobie	Fidalgo Island	District 1
Vacant		District 1
Lloyd Brown	Big Lake	District 2
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Liz McNett Crowl	Mount Vernon	District 2
Chris Allen	Sedro-Woolley	District 3
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Elizabeth Detillion	Sedro-Woolley	District 3

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS CONTINUED

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SKAGIT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Tim Holloran

SKAGIT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

1	Carol Ehlers	2/1/09 - 1/31/13
1	Annie Lohman	2/1/09 - 1/31/13
1	Jason Easton	8/1/10 – 7/31/14
2	Dave Hughes	11/4/10– 11/3/14
2	Vacant	
2	Josh Axthelm	1/1/11 - 12/31/14
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3	Matt Mahaffie	2/1/09 – 1/31/13
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan updates the 2012 plan. It is intended to lay the groundwork for the future of the County park system. The plan inventories existing parks and identifies current and future park needs. It explores potential park development and/or improvements, and prioritizes strategies to meet a level of service which fits the needs of County residents. The plan also describes existing and potential funding sources that will be needed to meet the desired Level of Service (LOS) and maintain park facilities and recreation services. In addition, the plan sets forth several goals and objectives to help guide County staff and elected officials in implementing the park plan.

The plan establishes project priority by analyzing: **1) LOS standards**, which provide service levels from other Washington State Counties and provide guidance in establishing LOS standards in Skagit County; **2) Public Input - Survey and Open Houses**, which provides direct and fundamental information from those who use facilities and programs in Skagit County and indicate facility or program need; **3) Use Patterns**, which provides statically valid information on statewide trends in recreation and from those who oversee facilities and programs in Skagit County and indicate facility or program need; **4) Public Input – Other Factors**, which provide a category for integrating other input that should be factored into analysis.

Skagit County grew in population over 13 percent between 2000 and 2010 with the fastest growth occurring the first half of the decade. Future projections indicate similar growth may occur during the next 25 years. During the next twenty-five years, a portion of this growth will take place in the unincorporated Urban Growth Areas. As a result, the Bayview Subarea may receive a higher concentration of development than the surrounding rural lands. As a growing rural community with higher densities, there will be an increase in the need for parks and recreational facilities. The changing pattern of projected growth may require that the County's priorities and strategies related to the growth of park and recreation facilities will need to adapt in several ways. Among the ways that such strategies may change is by focusing more attention and resources into areas of projected growth. This will help assure the needs are being addressed and the services are centrally located.

The parks plan includes a discussion of sources available to fund the maintenance and expansion of the County parks system; a system that must meet the growing needs of an increasingly urbanized area. These sources include a variety of tax revenues, user fees, mitigation fees, and grants and loans from state, federal, and private sources. While the plan makes general recommendation regarding specific funding options, it assumes that most existing sources will continue to be available. Other potential sources will allow the County to be flexible and

consider future funding options as circumstances may dictate. The park plan builds upon historical data to ensure that assumptions regarding projected facility and program needs are realistic.

The park plan contains an inventory of county facilities: parks, recreation, open space areas, trails, and related sites. The inventory is supplemented by a description of other facilities available to County residents; specifically, sites and facilities owned or controlled by state or federal agencies, and sites owned by municipalities and school districts. Inventories primarily show facilities and speak very little about the condition of the facilities.

The “level of service” standards used for this plan are derived from an average of three Washington State counties. The counties used for comparison are Whatcom, Snohomish, and Spokane and are aggregated into what is referenced as the “Tri-County Aggregate”. Level of Service (LOS) standards are often derived by the number and size of facilities without accounting for the facility conditions. The condition of facilities becomes important for making proper comparisons in service levels. It is one of the reasons SCPR is incorporating several other factors into the equation when determining priorities.

Use patterns can be analyzed in a variety of ways. Lack of facility space, a shortage of campsites, or an overrun trail system may lead SCPR staff and/or Parks Board members to easily conclude needs are not being met. In other cases, the analysis may be more complex. For example, the fact that a facility is being used under capacity may lead some to believe the needs are being sufficiently met. Whereas, the real reason the facility is being under used may be due the facility is in need of maintenance, in need of expansion, or in some other way may be inadequate. In other situations, there may be a surplus of baseball fields on the west side of the county but a shortage on the east side, even though the LOS standards indicate there is sufficient amount of fields’ county-wide. Because of all of these variables, it becomes necessary for SCPR Staff/Board to look at every facility and/or program “site specifically” to determine if in fact the needs of the community are being met. This level of analysis is handled in the category of “Other Factors.”

The focus of this Comprehensive Plan Update is to chart the course for the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department for the next six years. The update will also allow continued SCPR eligibility for Recreational Conservation Office (RCO) grants. A high priority of the plan update is to 1) ensure the need for adequate public facilities that maintain an adequate level of park and recreational services; and perhaps more importantly 2) ensure the needs of Skagit County residents are being met. Although challenges may force County Parks and Recreation to deviate from the original chartered course, the goal will remain that of providing satisfaction with recreational opportunities to Skagit County residents. Godspeed.

CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION**

MISSION STATEMENT **OF** **SKAGIT COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION**

It is the mission of the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department to provide high quality recreational services, facilities and parks to our customers and the citizens of Skagit County. This is exemplified through professional staff, cost effectiveness, community leadership, conditions in parks and facilities, and customer service.

A strong park and recreation system is essential for a thriving community. Outdoor recreation benefits the individual, as well as society as a whole—both mentally and physically. Studies show communities rich with park and recreational opportunities have less crime, decreased health care and insurance costs, less heart disease, stronger economies, and a healthier environment.

Governor Christine Gregoire referenced studies showing the importance of parks and recreation in an address she made to the public late in 2009. Gregoire encouraged the addition of green spaces, open spaces and trails as a way to improve health by lowering stress and encouraging exercise. According to numerous reports, there is evidence that living near parks, woods, or other green spaces improves mental and physical health. Close proximity to green spaces is associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and reductions of many other health problems, according to several studies, including the study Gregoire referenced in her address. The Netherland Study Gregoire referenced is not the first to suggest that green spaces help keep people healthy, but it is the first to assess their impact on specific health conditions. Investigators in the Netherlands examined patient health records from medical practices throughout the country and using postal codes, were able to determine the percentage of green space existing within about 2 miles of each patient's home. "The strongest associations we saw between green space and health occurred within a 1 kilometer [0.6 mile] radius of the home," study researcher Jolanda Maas, PhD, of Amsterdam's VU University, reported.

"Trails for Health", is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiative to help Americans of all ages achieve the health benefits of physical activity by increasing opportunities for physical activity and helping to make it an integral part of community life. "Trails for Health" supports the Department of Health and Human Services' *Steps to a Healthier US* initiative, which

promotes behavior changes and encourages healthier lifestyle choices to help advance the President's goal of building a stronger, healthier nation. The significant benefits of physical activity include the following:

- Weight Control.
- Control of high blood pressure.
- The reduction of risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer.
- The reduction of symptoms associated with depression and anxiety.
- The reduction of arthritis pain and disability.
- The prevention of osteoporosis.
- Reduction in injury from falls

Tommy G Thompson, the secretary for the US Department of Health and Human Services, perhaps said it best when he stated “Few factors contribute so much to successful aging as regular physical activity-- it’s never too late to start!”

Here in Skagit County, we are blessed with a wide variety of outdoor recreation settings, from marine islands, to rushing rivers, to alpine meadows. In addition to natural settings, a variety of agencies provide recreation facilities and programs to the residents and visitors of Skagit County. Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR), with over 2000 acres of park land and hundreds of thousands of annual participation hours in its parks and programs, is a key provider in helping to ensure the availability of passive and active recreational opportunities to people of all ages.

This Park and Recreation Plan update is the primary document for addressing the need for public access to natural areas, providing services to newly established sub areas, and meeting the park and recreational needs of County residents. The park and recreation plan is Skagit County’s foundation for the park system of the future. It reflects the changes in both supply and demand for parks since the previous 2004 plan. Our primary focus for the next six years is to service and maintain the recreational infrastructure we currently have.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan will redefine policies and establish a sense of direction for the County to follow in serving the recreational needs of its residents. The update is a Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement and fulfills grant funding eligibility criteria required by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). This document sets the goals and objectives which

will provide the department with policy direction and implementation of strategies. It helps to provide direction for SCPR in regards to property acquisition, park development, capital improvement planning, and programs for the next six years.

The elements contained in this plan include:

- An analysis of the community's population and setting
- An analysis of existing parks, open space areas and trail facilities
- An analysis of existing department operations
- An assessment of recreation and facility needs
- Recommendations for the acquisition and development of parks, open space and trail systems
- Recommendations related to management, administration, and other aspects of providing park and recreation services
- Recommendations for funding and implementing the plan

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process consisted of four basic steps. We used all studies available to us, including the study conducted by Applied Research Northwest (ARN) for the prior plan. The ARN survey asked Skagit County residents a number of specific questions in order to obtain estimates of residents' preferences for parks and recreation facilities development and priorities for future planning. Questions related to recent activities, desired expansion of existing facilities (including athletic fields, campgrounds, trails, etc.) and the addition of a new public indoor facility including classrooms and a multi-purpose gym. Development of the Northern State Recreation Area was also included in the study. We also used recent surveys from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) as well as a public input survey done through the internet.

The second step was to hold public meetings throughout the three County districts. The meetings served as a forum for listening to the concerns and desires of County residents. An internet survey was developed to help the public communicate their desires.

The third step of the process was to reassess the parks and recreational services and verify as to what modifications to the current levels of service (LOS) standards are presently warranted. This determination was made through public meetings, the county-wide survey, input from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB), consultation with user groups, as well as input from Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) staff.

The fourth step was to refine the previously established vision and set goals to support the implementation of the modified plan. The modified plan included adjustments to previous recommendations for park and recreation services. These services consist of improvements to existing parks, acquisition and development of new parks, and changes to the administrative and operation functions of the Department.

The fifth and final step includes a series of implementation strategies for funding and managing the actions of SCPR for the next six years.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation in this type of study is critical because local needs vary, depending upon the values local residents place on their region. Since every region is different, national standards or analogous recommendations may not meet Skagit County's specific recreation needs. As a result, public involvement in the planning process was essential and was solicited with a multipronged approach.

The level of public involvement included:

- Surveys
- Public Meetings
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Input
- SCPR Staff Input
- Contributions from Local User Groups

KEY MECHANISMS

Skagit County Parks receives input from the general public. The flow of input comes in many forms including, but not limited to:

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

Skagit County Parks and Recreation has a 9-member advisory board which meets monthly. The Park Board reviews acquisition offers, policy recommendations, works in concert with park staff to develop master plans, and provides input into development projects. Over the next six years, the Park Board will continue to provide a sounding board for the public to provide input about a variety of park issues. These meetings are advertised by web and the agenda allows time for the public to comment and/or submit proposals.

Site Master Plan Processes:

Park sites with significant development opportunities are typically subjected to a master plan process. This process incorporates input from a variety of park users, neighbors, and the general public in developing the future vision for a given park. As such, it is a good vehicle for folks to express their opinions on their park needs. For sites which do not go through a formal master plan process, neighborhood meetings are a good way for concerned citizens to develop an understanding of planning and development efforts.

Public Comments:

Skagit County Parks and Recreation staff has contact with their clientele on a daily basis. This contact provides a forum for staff to receive recurring advice, criticism, comments, assessment, analysis, and/or praise from park users. Letters, electronic mail, phone calls, and other types of correspondence come in regularly. This information is often presented and discussed at SCPR staff meetings. This informal type of feedback from the public is taken in earnest and is another piece of the formula which contributes to everyday decisions and long range planning made by the department.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

REGIONAL LOCATION

As shown below, in Figure 2.1, Skagit County is located in the northwestern part of Washington, stretching from Puget Sound to the crest of the Cascade Mountains. It is bordered by Whatcom County to the north, Okanogan and Chelan Counties to the east, and Snohomish County to the south. Rectangular in shape, the County covers about 1,735 square miles and measures about 24 miles from north to south, and 95 miles from east to west. The City of Mount Vernon serves as its County Seat.



Figure 2.1 Regional Location

Interstate 5 travels north and south, through the County, providing direct and easy linkage to Vancouver, BC in the north, and the Seattle metropolitan area in the south. State Highway 20 (the North Cascades Highway) provides west and east linkage through most of the larger communities in the County. It also serves as a major tourist route from Interstate 5 to Anacortes (west) to North Cascades National Park (east) and beyond. The east-west dimension of the County is unusually long, with driving distance from Deception Pass (southwest edge of County) to

the eastern border being about 115 miles. Driving distances from Mount Vernon to various areas are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1
Distances from Mount Vernon

City	Distance
Anacortes, WA	21 miles
Marblemount, WA	46 miles
Bellingham, WA	30 miles
Seattle, WA	60 miles
Vancouver B.C.	75 miles
Tacoma, WA	92 miles
Winthrop, WA	132 miles
Yakima, WA	193 miles
Portland, OR	225 miles
Spokane, WA	311 miles

Burlington-Northern Railroad has several active spurs within Skagit County. Typical shipments along these routes include fuel and construction supplies such as coal and lumber. Amtrak also uses the rail lines for transporting people along the north-south corridor. A large portion of the east-west route is rail-banked for potential use in the future. In the meantime, the route is used as a non-motorized transportation route. The port of Anacortes is a deep-water port accommodating sea-going ships, as well as tugs, barges, and tankers used for local transport. The Port Authority also operates the Anacortes Airport, a small, one-runway facility. The Skagit Regional Airport contains three runways and is located in Burlington. The airport in Bellingham has recently expanded and is starting to become more of a regional provider but despite this airport's ability to handle jet airliners, most county residents still travel to Seattle-Tacoma International or Vancouver International Airport for their major air travel.

NATURAL FEATURES

Moving from west to east in Skagit County, one encounters the leeward islands of the San Juan Archipelago, the broad delta and floodplain of the Skagit River, an extensive valley punctuated by intermittent hills, rolling foothills on up to the glaciated peaks of the North Cascade Mountains.

Elevations range from sea level along the County's tidal border, to just over 9,000 feet at the peak of Mount Logan in North Cascades National Park.

The Skagit River is the largest river in the County, and the second-largest in the State. Originating high in the Cascades, it flows about 90 miles through the County to its outlet at Fir Island, just south of Mount Vernon. Major tributaries to the Skagit River include the Cascade, Sauk, Suiattle, and Baker Rivers. Approximately 160 miles (almost 35,000 acres) of the Skagit, Sauk, Cascade and Suiattle Rivers are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Other notable rivers in the County include portions of the Samish and Nooksack. Major lakes include Shannon, Cavanaugh, Big, Clear, McMurray, Campbell, and Erie. There are also numerous sloughs throughout the valley, including Wiley and Swinomish. Numerous wetlands adorn the county, along with the waters of Puget Sound.



Figure 2.2 Major Waters of the Region

Though diking, logging, and other land conversions have altered Skagit County's landscape, it is still host to a wide variety of wildlife, including deer, elk, bear, mountain goats, cougar, and numerous birds and small mammals. Species of interest in the County include the Bald Eagle, Heron, Trumpeter Swan, Snow Goose, Brandt, and Orca Whale. Anadromous fish species include Chinook, Coho, and Chum Salmon, as well as Shad and Steelhead. Resident fish species include several trout species, bass, perch, crappie, sturgeon, catfish, and whitefish. Grizzly bear and Gray Wolf also inhabit portions of the County.



Western Skagit County's climate is typical of the Puget Sound Trough. Located in the rain shadows of the Olympic Mountains, the county receives a rainfall average of 32 inches per year, less than most other western Washington counties. The average annual minimum temperature is slightly over 40 degrees; the average maximum is about 60 degrees. Summer temperatures typically average 65 to 75 degrees. Marine air moderates temperature extremes in the west portion of the county, with the effect decreasing to the east. Precipitation generally increases with greater distance inland.

HISTORY

Prior to historical settlement, twelve Native American groups inhabited the area now known as Skagit County. These groups included the Chobahabish, Kikialius, Nooquachamish, Mesekwiguilse, Sbaleoch, Misskaiwhwa, Sakhumehhu, Noowhatah, Squinahmish, Swinomish, Sauk-Suiattle, and Samish. The area making up Skagit County was formerly a part of Whatcom County. Skagit became its own county in 1883.

The first non-native intruders to the area built a small number of cabins on Fidalgo Island in 1858. Settlement spread to the head of Fidalgo Bay, with diking opening the tidal flats to farming. The first trading post was established in the LaConner area in 1867. By 1870, the lower Skagit Valley was seeing the beginnings of full-scale settlement. Travel was limited to boats. Beginning in 1874, monthly steamboat services began between Seattle and "Skagit City".

In 1890, there was speculation that the Fidalgo Island town of Anacortes would become a terminus for a transcontinental railroad. The conjecture generated a growth boom which increased the town's population from 200 on January 1st to 2000 by mid-March. Although Anacortes never became a terminus, it nevertheless was soon bustling with shingle mills, fish plants, lumber mills, and a box factory. By 1903, there were four shingle mills, and three

sawmills. Sloans Shipyard on Guemes Island built ships during World War I and employed 600 people in the spring of 1917.

Settlement of the area near and above what we know now as Mount Vernon was limited due to two large log jams on the Skagit River. In 1874, dismantling of the log jams began, opening up portions of the channel to navigation. Ten years later, the channel was fully cleared. Soon the City of Mount Vernon was founded and supported by the local timber industry. By 1889, steamboat service had expanded to no less than 15 boats, which ran between Seattle and Mount Vernon. In 1891, the Great Northern Railway was extended to Mount Vernon.

With navigation of the upper Skagit River possible, timber harvest and mining increased, and settlement expanded into the upriver area. The towns of Sedro (a Spanish reference to the large cedars in the area) and Woolley (named after the founder of a lumber mill) merged to form the city of Sedro-Woolley. By this time, the old growth fir and cedar were being cut and sold at a furious pace and the new city flourished.



An 1882 logging camp was the first development in the Burlington area with several shingle mills soon to follow. By 1891, the railway through the area made Burlington a center of transportation. Lyman was settled in the early 1870's with a lumber mill and shingle mill being its earliest employers. Coal and iron deposits brought Hamilton's first residents, and the lumber industry turned it into an early 1900's boom town, with over 2000 inhabitants.

In 1909, Concrete was founded (named for its principal product), and boasted a cigar factory, stores, theater and confectionery. Concrete boasted the State's largest cement plant until closing in 1968. The Superior Cement Plant supplied almost half of the cement for the Grand Coulee Dam, as well as materials for other nearby dams.

Rockport was founded in 1901 and served as the terminus of the rail line from Anacortes. It was a popular stop-over during the construction of Diablo and Ross Dams. Marblemount began as a tent saloon (and later trading post) during the gold rush of the 1890's. Many miners came upstream by canoe to prospect along the Skagit River and the mountains above the Cascade River. Silver devaluation brought the end to that era for the community.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

According to the US Census, county and state population, growth rates have fluxuated however remain similar on average. Growth in Skagit County has outpaced state-wide growth. Growth rates for the various cities in the County are displayed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2
Historical Population Growth, 1970 - 2000

Area	1970	1980	Percent Change (1970-1980)	1990	2000	Percent Change (1990-2000)	2010	Percent Change (2000-2010)
WA State	3,413,244	4,132,253	21%	4,866,692	5,894,121	21%	6,724,540	14.1%
Skagit County	52,381	64,138	22%	79,555	102,979	29%	116,901	13.5%
Anacortes	7,701	9,013	17%	11,451	14,557	27%	15,778	8%
Burlington	3,138	3,894	24%	4,349	6,757	55%	8,388	24%
Concrete	573	592	3%	735	790	7%	705	-11%
Hamilton	201	283	41%	228	309	36%	301	-3%
LaConner	639	660	3%	656	761	16%	891	17%
Lyman	324	285	-12%	275	409	49%	438	7%
Mount Vernon	8,804	13,009	48%	17,647	26,232	49%	31,743	21%
Sedro Woolley	4,598	6,110	33%	6,031	8,658	44%	10,540	22%
Total (Cities)	25,978	33,846	31%	41,372	58,473	41%	68,784	18%

Source: Economic Association of Skagit County

The US Census provides information for areas within counties, called subdivisions. Skagit County has been divided into many such areas, 8 of which are shown in Figure 2.3.

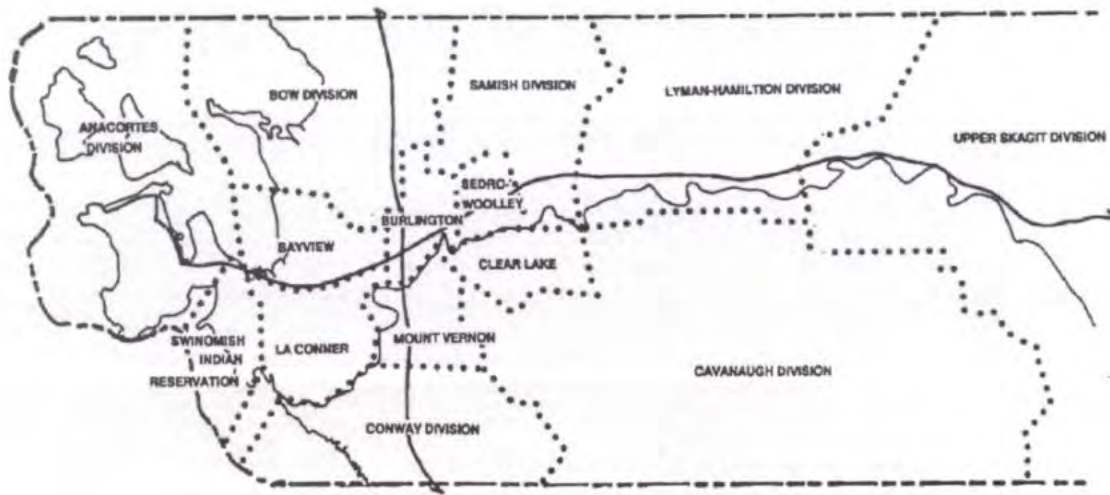


Figure 2.3
Census Tracts

County-wide, average household income was about \$43,000 in 2000 and \$54,000 in 2010. State and National household incomes have increased annually since the local recession in the 1980's, but then declined with the national average in 2008 corresponding with the "Great Recession".

Age distributions are important because age is a major determinant of recreation interests and levels of participation within a county. In general, as a population ages, relative participation in active or competitive recreation activities declines. Overall, youth (younger than 18) tend to participate more frequently than any other age group, and tend to favor more strenuous and competitive activities, relative to other age groups. Young adults (ages 18 to 34) are also active, and form the core of adult competitive sports.

Adults (ages 35 - 64), on the other hand, appear to have less time to devote to recreational activities. They tend to maintain their homes and jobs more. Recreational time is at a premium and often limited to weekends and occasional evenings.

The senior population (age 65 and over) has more available time for recreation. As a group, they tend to favor more passive activities, such as walking, gardening, picnicking, boating, swimming, and crafts.

As shown in Table 2.3, Skagit County had a growing younger population over the last 10 years. The median age in Skagit County was 35 in 1990, 38 in 2000, and 37 in 2010. This may be due to an influx of families to residential communities that expanded so dramatically during the housing boom years of the previous decade.

Table 2.3
Age Distribution in Skagit County, 1990 - 2009

Total Skagit 2009 Population was 118,900

	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age	of People	of Total	of People	of Total	of People	of Total
Group	1990	1990	2000	2000	2009	2009
Under 20	23,036	29%	30,099	29.2%	32,059	27%
20 - 44	28,705	36.1%	33,573	32.6%	44,183	37.6%
45 - 59	11,658	14.7%	20,036	19.5%	14,744	12.4
60 and over	16,156	20.3%	19,271	18.7%	27,347	23%

Source: Economic Development Association of Skagit County

Table 2.4
Ethnic Distribution in Skagit County, 1990-2010

Ethnic Group	Number of People 2000	Percent of Total 2000	Number of People 2010	Percent of Total 2010
White	89,070	86.5%	97,448	83.4%
Black	450	.4%	774	0.7%
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,538	1.5%	2,080	2%
Native American/Alaskan Native	1,909	1.9%	2,516	2.2%
Hispanic Origin (Can be of any race)	11,536	11.2%	19,709	16.9%

Source: 2010 Skagit County Census

As shown in Table 2.4 above, Skagit County is primarily made up of Caucasians. By percentage, Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic group in Skagit County.

Despite recent economic diversification, Skagit County's economy remains heavily resource dependent, with primary sectors being agriculture and food processing, lumber and wood

products, oil refining, tourism, retail, and marine-related industries (fishing, processing, boat building and repair). The unemployment rate was over 15 percent from 1981-1987, but has remained less than 10 percent since. The 1990 jobless rate was 6.7 percent; in 1995 it was 8.9 percent, and 6.8 percent in 2000. In December of 2011, the Skagit County unemployment rate was at 9.0% with the State rate hovering at 8.5%. Historically, the Skagit County unemployment rate has generally been a percentage point higher than the Washington State average.

POPULATION GROWTH

In most communities, one of the primary elements affecting recreation demand is population growth. Table 2.5 shows county population for the year 2010 and forecasts through 2030. As shown, population growth is expected to remain near its current rates. In relative terms, Skagit County is expected to grow at a much higher annual rate than the State of Washington. State-wide growth which is projected to grow at an approx annual increase of 1.05 percent between 2010 and 2020. With projected County growth averaging above 2 percent, the County population is expected to grow at roughly twice the rate of the State during the next 16 years.

**Table 2.5
Population and Project Increases**

Year	Total Population	Average Annual Increase
2010	119,000	--
2015	128,000	2%
2020	140,000	2%
2025	154,000	2%
2030	168,000	2%

Source: WA Office of Financial Management

CHAPTER 3

EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Parks and recreation bring people together helping them to connect with nature, their community, and each other.

A strong and healthy parks and recreation system can open up a number of opportunities for people to enhance the quality of their lives. Physical recreation and fitness contributes to a full and meaningful life, helps to keep people healthy, reduces stress, and promotes self-esteem and positive self-images. Participating in leisure activities and enjoying nature helps assist individuals in leading a balanced life.

Table 3.1
Summary of Park and Recreation Areas
Skagit County

Agency	Acres
Cities and Towns within Skagit County:	3,799
Skagit County Park System	2255
State of Washington	18,602
National Forests/Parks:	555,200
Other Agencies	473
Total	580,282

SCPR PARKS

Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) owns or manages 2255 acres of parkland, both developed and undeveloped. SCPR operated parks come in an array of shapes and sizes and provide a variety of services. They range from small neighborhood parks to large areas of open space and represent the many unique recreational opportunities available to the citizens of Skagit County.

PARK ADDITIONS SINCE 2005 PLAN

Since the last plan, SCPR has worked to add to the existing park inventory in a meaningful and sustainable manner. The following facilities were either added or expanded.

Frailey Park	400 acres
Montgomery Duban Headland - (added to Sharpe Park)	40 acres
Nichols Sandbar Park	33 Acres
Pressentin Park- (added to existing)	13 acres
Samish Beach Access	2 acres

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

SCPR park land is classified by several factors, which may include size, service area and type of use. Tables 3.2 through 3.5 list all of the Skagit County parklands, by various classifications. The initial classification is based upon park size and service area. These categories are as follows:

- Regional Parks
- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Open Space and Undeveloped Parks
- Special Use park land

The parks quick guides for each park classification can be found on the following pages.

SCPR REGIONAL PARKS

Regional Parks are generally larger sites that offer a variety of unique features or recreational experiences that serve the entire county population and beyond. These may include one-of-a-kind natural, cultural, or historic features, water access, or a concentration of facilities that can accommodate large-scale events. Regional parks and associated amenities are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
SCPR Regional Parks

Regional Parks Quick Guide	Acres	Ownership	Ball Fields	Barbecues	Boat Launch	Camping	Courts	Fishing	Nature Area	Picnicking	Playground	Restrooms	Showers	Soccer	Hiking/Jogging	ADA	Reservations
Burlington-Sedro Woolley Trail	7	sc							x						x	x	
Campbell Lake Boat Launch	3	p			x			x	x	x		x					
Cascade Trail (23 mi.)	279	sc							x	x		x			x		
Centennial Trail	27	sc							x								
Conway Park	7	sc	x		x			x	x		x				x		
Donovan Park	3	sc		x				x	x	x	x	x				x	
Grandy Lake	22	sc			x	x		x	x	x		x					
Howard Miller Steelhead Park	93	sc		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Lake Erie Boat Launch	1	p			x			x	x	x		x					
Padilla Bay Shore Trail (4 mi.)	15	p							x	x		x			x	x	
Pomona Grange & Trail	17	sc		x					x	x		x			x	x	x
Samish Beach Access	2	p							x								
Sauk Park	30	sc				x		x	x	x		x			x		
Skagit Valley Playfields	25	p	x	x			x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Swinomish Boat Launch	3	p		x	x			x	x	x		x				x	
Young's Park	13	sc		x				x	x	x		x				x	

sc = Skagit County Owned

p = Partnership - property is owned and/or maintained by Skagit County and an additional agency

SCPR COMMUNITY PARKS

Community Parks are generally bigger than Neighborhood Parks, generally smaller than regional parks and host a larger number and type of ball fields, facilities and a variety of activities such as open space, swimming, BBQs and picnic areas for larger gatherings. Passive recreational development includes boardwalks, nature trails, picnicking facilities, shelters, park benches, picnic tables, environmental, cultural or historic interpretive facilities, and parking. Natural areas include streams, wetlands, forestlands, or even a unique natural feature.

SCPR Community parks and associated amenities are listed on table 3.3.

**Table 3.3
Community Parks**

Community Parks Quick Guide	Acres	Ownership	Ball Fields	Barbecues	Boat Launch	Camping	Courts	Fishing	Nature Area	Picnicking	Playground	Restrooms	Showers	Soccer	Hiking/Jogging	ADA	Reservations
Allen Community Park	17	p	x									x		x			
Nichol's Sandbar Park	25	sc						x	x	x					x		
Clear Lake Beach	1	sc		x			x	x	x	x	x	x				x	
Schoolhouse Park-Guemes	4	sc	x	x			x		x	x	x	x		x			
Samish Island Play ground	2	sc	x	x			x		x	x		x				x	

sc = Skagit County Owned

p = Partnership - property is owned/maintained by Skagit County and an additional agency

SCPR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood Parks are generally small, pedestrian oriented and situated to serve residents of an immediate area. Recreational activities may include both passive and active uses as well as multipurpose facilities such as basketball, tennis or play equipment. Passive uses include open play areas. Age appropriate needs of the surrounding neighborhood, such as play equipment, should be emphasized as a neighborhood park.

Skagit County recognizes the provision of neighborhood parks ultimately being the responsibility of local cities. Skagit County does not foresee adding to the one neighborhood park currently within its jurisdiction. Table 3.4 shows the neighborhood park affiliated with SCPR.

**Table 3.4
Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood Parks Quick Guide	Acres	Ownership	Ball Fields	Barbecues	Boat Launch	Camping	Courts	Fishing	Nature Area	Picnicking	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Restrooms	Showers	Soccer	Hiking/Jogging	ADA	Reservations
Cleveland Park	1	sc					x			x		x						

sc = Skagit County Owned

p = Partnership - property is owned/maintained by Skagit County and an additional agency

SCPR OPEN SPACE

Open Space Parks and Undeveloped Parks are identified as available for passive outdoor recreation, offering trails for viewing, parking and other limited improvements. Open space and undeveloped parks often allow for passive recreation opportunities in the form of sightseeing, picture taking, picnicking, beachcombing and other activities. Open space parks may also feature natural or conservation areas. Open space parks may also function as a greenbelt or view shed on which there is no public access.

**Table 3.5
Open Space & Undeveloped Parks**

Open Space & Undeveloped Parks Quick Guide	Acres	Ownership	Ball Fields	Barbecues	Boat Launch	Camping	Courts	Fishing	Nature Area	Picnicking	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Restrooms	Showers	Soccer	Hiking/Joggin	ADA	Reservations
Big Rock (Hoag Memorial Park)	13	sc							x									
Cascade Park	41	sc							x									
Hansen Creek Reserve	3	sc							x							x		
Frailey Mountain Park	400	sc						x	x	x						x		
Nichols Bar	33	sc						x	x	x								
Northern State Recreation Area	726	sc						x	x	x	x		x			x		
Pilchuck Forest Trail	81	sc							x							x		
Presentin	54	sc							x	x	x					x		
Centennial Corridor	45								x									
Rexville Park	.5	sc							x									
Sharpe Park/Montgomery-Duban Headlands	115	sc		x				x	x	x			x			x		
Squires Lake Park and Trail	57	p							x	x			x			x		

sc = Skagit County Owned

p = Partnership - property is owned/maintained by Skagit County and an additional agency

SPECIAL USE PARK LAND





These park lands are acquired to provide for park activities that have specific needs that may or may not be compatible with other uses. Examples include land acquired for development as golf course, off-road vehicle facility, or shooting range. The Frailey Mountain Shooting Range is a good example of a Special-Use Park. The Park is a proposed four hundred acre development which will one day contain a shooting and training range. The development, known as the Frailey Mountain Shooting and Training Range, is located in the southwest region of the county. According to the state comprehensive outdoor recreation planning document, shooting and hunting is enjoyed by at least 7% of the state population. The figures are higher for counties with a higher rural contingent. According to WDFW, interest in shooting is up over the past few years. Hunting license revenue is growing and gun/ammunition sales are at an all time high. The proposed shooting/training range will satisfy the need for this growing recreational group and provide for training of local law enforcement groups.

EXISTING PARK INVENTORY



Figure 3.1
Park Locations in Skagit County

SCPR'S REGIONAL PARKS

<p>Burlington-Sedro Woolley Trail Three miles of hiking/jogging trail covering 6.8 park acres. This linear trail divides Highway 20 and the Burlington Northern Railway and provides for recreational and non-motorized transportation. Skagit County will be asphaltting this trail 2012.</p>	
<p>Campbell Lake Boat Launch This site is 2.5 acres. It has a boat launch with parking, temporary restrooms and fishing opportunities. The park is part of a partnership between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and SCPR. The WDFW maintains the boat launch and lake, while SCPR mows the grass and dumps the garbage.</p>	
<p>Cascade Trail This rails to trails conservancy project is 22.5 miles of multi-use trail that parallels the scenic State Route 20 corridor, connecting Sedro-Woolley and Concrete. Hiking, biking, and equestrian use are permitted on the path. No motorized vehicles are allowed. The trail is open year round and in places, meanders along the Skagit River. Viewpoints along the way provide for wildlife viewing opportunities. Trail amenities include portable toilets at trailheads and benches along the trail. The trail encompasses 280 acres of land.</p>	
<p>Centennial Trail The Centennial Trail is a regional trail system intended to eventually connect Snohomish and Whatcom County. Unlike the Cascade Trail, which is in a rails-to-trails conservancy as per federal legislation, this property has been purchased outright. The existing trail segment is approximately 3/4 mile long starting from south Lake McMurray off State Route 9. The trail ends at the Snohomish County line. In all, the trail system is contained within 22 acres of county parkland.</p>	
<p>Donovan Park This site is 3 acres large and is located on Friday Creek, in the Alger area. A former State Park site, it is a popular site with local communities. The park includes a picnic area, barbeques, a playground, year round restroom.</p>	


<p>Grandy Lake Park</p> <p>This primitive camping site is located off Baker Lake Road about five miles northwest of Highway 20. It is well used by hunters and anglers. Seasonal camping (April 1 - Oct 31) is on a first-come first-serve basis. The Scott Paper Company of Everett, Washington donated this 22-acre site to be used solely for public recreational purposes on December 18, 1979.</p>	
<p>Howard Miller Steelhead Park</p> <p>106-acre campground and open space in Rockport. Includes cultural artifacts, bald eagle viewing, and base camp for Upper Skagit Valley adventures. Site has BBQ's, boat launch, camping with hook-up sites, fishing, nature area, picnicking, covered picnic shelters, playground, restroom, showers, hiking, handicapped accessible, and can be reserved through reservations. Facilities include: 7 Tent sites, 3 RV sites w/o hookups, 30 RV sites with electric only, 19 RV sites with water & electric, 2 Adirondacks (up to 8 persons), 3 restrooms (two have showers), a clubhouse with sink and cooking facilities, a covered picnic area, and trailer waste station. Approximately 80 acres of the park is open space lands with non-motorized trails. The Sauk Reach Trail can be accessed on the west side of the park. An interpretive Center is open during the winter months.</p>	
<p>Lake Erie Boat Launch</p> <p>This site is 1 acre. It has a boat launch with parking, temporary restrooms and fishing opportunities. The park is part of a partnership between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and SCPR. The WDFW maintains the boat launch and lake, while SCPR provides turf management and waste removal services.</p>	
<p>Padilla Bay Shore Trail</p> <p>This 15-acre site includes a 2.2-mile interpretive trail from Bay View along the dikes of Padilla Bay. Limited to hiking, biking, and non-motorized vehicles. There are portable toilets and ADA access. Parking is located at the North and South trailheads. This park property has a co-management agreement between SCPR, Dike District 13, and the DOE. Hunting is allowed from the trail.</p>	
<p>Pomona Grange Park</p> <p>A 15-acre park bordered by Friday Creek and the state fish hatchery. Old growth forest environment, interpretive nature trail, portable toilets, picnic shelter, BBQ, and picnic tables.</p>	

<p>Sauk Park A primitive 30-acre overnight camping park (May 1 - Oct 31). Park has magnificent views, fishing, nature area, picnic area, hiking and portable toilets, as well as Sauk River frontage.</p>	
<p>Skagit Valley Playfields 25-acre park with 4 championship softball fields, baseball field (Dream Field) and stadium, one soccer field, BBQ's, picnicking, picnic shelter, playground, restrooms, concessions building, jogging/hiking trail, and ADA access. Located at the northeast corner of Skagit Valley College, the playfields are accessed from Martin Road.</p>	
<p>Swinomish Boat Launch This park is located off Highway 20, below the east approach to the bridge over the Swinomish Channel. This site has a popular boat launch for recreating in the Puget Sound or exploring the San Juan Islands. It is 3 acres large and has Swinomish Channel frontage, a picnic area, restrooms, a large parking area and two boat ramps. Surrounding zoning includes both agricultural and industrial.</p>	
<p>Young's Park This site is located at the northern edge of Guemes Island, off Guemes Island Road. It is a 13-acre day-use waterfront park with BBQ's, a nature area, picnicking, saltwater access, a seasonal restroom, ADA access, a trail, and a kayak launch. The San Juan Islands and Mount Baker can be viewed from the Northeast side of the park.</p>	






SCPR'S COMMUNITY PARKS

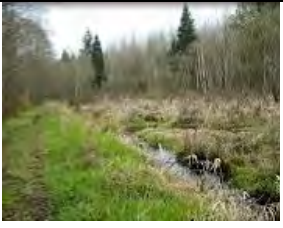




<p>Allen Park This park is situated on school property and is located on a triangular parcel between Chuckanut Road and Avon-Allen Road. Although this site is considered a County park, the school district retains ownership of the land. The school district also contributed funding to this site and provides facility mowing. The site includes a youth softball field, youth baseball fields, soccer fields, two parking areas and a portable restroom. The field also provides a practice facility for lacrosse.</p>	
<p>Burlington-Edison Park 25-acre park with athletic fields and 3/4 mile surfaced jogging trail. Site includes softball/baseball fields (primarily youth), soccer, tennis, fitness trail, shelters, picnicking areas, playground and restrooms.</p>	
<p>Clear Beach Skagit County Parks and Recreation opens Clear Lake Beach year round for sunbathing and fishing during the summer. Park amenities include a seasonal boat/fishing dock, boat rentals, a snack bar, grills, basketball hoop, playground, volleyball court, three docks, two waterslides, and restrooms with lockers. The lake contains a diversity of fish, including Rainbow Trout, Largemouth Bass, Yellow Perch, Cutthroat Trout and Catfish.</p>	
<p>Conway Park & Conway Ball Fields This park is located adjacent to the bridge over the South Fork of the Skagit River near Conway. It has 3 acres of Little League ball fields on the South Fork Skagit River frontage, a boat launch, fishing, a picnic area and a seasonal restroom. The boat launch is very popular during fall salmon migrations. It is the last maintained boat launch with parking available on the South Fork of the Skagit River.</p>	
<p>Guemes Island Playground This site is located near the intersection of Guemes Island Road and Eden's Road. A former school site, the County took it over in 1978. It contains an ADA accessible playground and picnic area, a tennis court, youth baseball field, grass volleyball court, basketball court, a Philip McCracken sculpture, parking and some undeveloped property to the south.</p>	
<p>Samish Island Playground This rural park is located off Halloran Road just west of Roney Road on Samish Island. The land was donated to the County from the Samish Island Community Club, whose members constructed the improvements. The site includes a playground, tennis court, basketball hoops, restroom building, picnic tables, and multi-purpose field.</p>	

SCPR'S NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

<p>Cleveland Park This 1-acre park consists of a full length basketball court, a playground and a picnic area.</p>	
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SCPR'S OPEN SPACE & UNDEVELOPED PARKS

<p>Big Rock: Richard M. Hoag Memorial Open Space Park Approximately 13-acres of rocky hilltop in the midst of surrounding lowlands. There are beautiful 360 degree views from the top. Access is an issue that will need to be addressed.</p>	
<p>Cascade River Park This is a primary forest in the riparian of The Cascade River. The riverfront parcel includes 40-acres of undeveloped parkland. The timber was extracted from this site in the nineties.</p>	
<p>Frailey Mountain Park This park is 400 acres in size and was acquired for use as a shooting and training range a wide range of weaponry.</p>	
<p>Hansen Creek Park This property contains 3-acres of undeveloped linear parkland with Hansen Creek frontage.</p>	
<p>Northern State Recreation Area Skagit County acquired the 726 acre Northern State Recreation Area northeast of Sedro Woolley. In 2000, a Masterplan was prepared that includes trails, ball fields, play areas, campgrounds, equestrian center, and environmental education and interpretation sites. Natural resources on the site include Hanson Creek with associated wetlands and tributaries and Red Creek. Over 500 acres of the site will remain undeveloped to support the wildlife.</p>	

<p>Pilchuck Forest This 81-acre property was once owned by a timber company and is now in Open Space. The property is primarily deciduous with tall cottonwood, numerous willow and alder, and scattered evergreen. A portion of the Centennial trail meanders through the property.</p>	
<p>Presentin Park This park is located off Highway 20, near Marblemount. The site is 40-acres and includes wooded areas, large open terraces, Skagit River frontage, and Highway 20 access. Presentin has a network of meandering trails and is a popular destination for watching wildlife. Free parking is available at the Shell station nearby.</p>	
<p>Rexville This is a .5 acre rock outcrop overlooking the fertile Skagit Valley farmlands. It is currently undeveloped. The view of surrounding farmlands and Cascade Mountains would make for a picnic location.</p>	
<p>Sharpe Park /Montgomery-Duban Headlands A loop trail of 2 ½ miles throughout 115 acres of natural open space featuring excellent wildlife viewing opportunities as it meanders along an open wetland, on onto a rocky bluff. The park contains a picnic area, benches, hiking, and portable toilets.</p>	
<p>Squires Lake Park A 57.19 acres day-use hiking park with parking lot. The park is part of a partnership with Whatcom County with shared management. There are hiking trails, benches, the lake and wetlands.</p>	

The countywide recreational facilities inventory includes facilities managed by private, city, county, and state organizations. Most of the facilities reside within city and county owned parklands.

COUNTYWIDE RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY

Senior Baseball Fields:

Senior baseball fields are regulation in size (90' base paths). In Skagit County, the senior baseball programs are managed by several organizations. SCPR manages the American Legion Tournaments. Organizations managing programs include Skagit Valley College, the local high school, Junior and Senior American Legion, Babe Ruth, Sandy Koufax, and Senior Little League. Currently, there is a total of 12 Senior Baseball Fields.

Youth Baseball Fields:

Youth baseball fields are little league sized (60' base paths). In Skagit County, there are several organizations involved in youth baseball. These include four Little League groups (South Skagit, Burlington-Edison, Sedro-Woolley, and Anacortes) and the YMCA. SCPR manages the summer baseball camps. The majority of the inventoried fields are nothing more than playgrounds with a chain link backstop.

Currently, there is a total of 53 Youth Baseball Fields.

Softball Fields:

The softball program in Skagit County is managed by several organizations. This includes but is not limited to Skagit County Parks and Recreation, Skagit Valley College, the local high schools' fast pitch teams, The City of Mount Vernon, and private tournament providers.

Currently, there is a total of 25 Softball Fields, 7 of which are available to adults.

Adult/Junior Soccer Fields

The soccer program in Skagit County is managed by several Youth Soccer organizations. This includes but is not limited to Skagit Valley College and the local high schools teams, Skagit County, City of Anacortes, City of Burlington, and private groups.

Currently, there is a total of 40 Adult/Junior Soccer Fields.

Youth Soccer Fields:

The youth soccer program in Skagit County is managed by several youth soccer organizations. This includes but is not limited to the local high schools, Skagit County, City of Anacortes and private groups.

Currently, there is a total of 33 Youth Soccer Fields.

Football Fields:

The football fields in the county are being maintained and provided primarily by the city school districts.

Currently, there is a total of 11 Football Fields.

Day Use/Group Picnic Areas:

Description: There are 20 group picnic areas in Skagit County. Excluded in this inventory are individual picnic units. Individual picnic sites are difficult to inventory and can be added to almost any park or recreation area. Group picnic areas, on the other hand, are a larger investment and require more land than a traditional picnic unit. There has been expressed interest in having picnic shelters of various sizes at most Skagit County Parks.

Currently, there is a total of 20 Day Use/Group Picnic Shelters.

Public Swimming Pools:

There are two indoor swimming pools in Skagit County. In Anacortes, the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center operates year-round and is dependent on a special levy voted on by Fidalgo Island residents every six years. In Mount Vernon, the YMCA provides swimming opportunities at their facility.

Year round swimming opportunities is limited to 2 Public Swimming Pools.

Outdoor Swimming Areas:

Skagit County no longer provides for sanctioned swimming at Clear Lake. Numerous lakes throughout the county present unsanctioned summer swimming opportunities for people who choose to swim at their own risk.

Indoor Recreation Center:

Although several multi purpose rooms, small indoor facilities, senior centers, and other spaces are used to stage recreational enrichment opportunities, there is currently not an indoor recreation center in Skagit County.

Boat Launches:

There are at least 8 saltwater ramps, 9 river ramps, and 18 lake ramps available to Skagit County residents. Two new boat ramps will be constructed along the Skagit River in 2012.

Currently, there are a total of at least 35 boat ramps.

Public Shoreline:

There are 17 locations for saltwater shoreline access areas in Skagit County, some of which are only available by boat. There are 7 locations to access lake shorelines, and at least 7 areas to access streams.

Currently, there is a total of at least 30 shoreline access points on Skagit County waters.

CHAPTER 4

SCPR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department to provide high quality recreational services, facilities and parks to our customers and the citizens of Skagit County. This is exemplified through professional staff, cost effectiveness, community leadership and customer service.

A. Vision and Overall Goal:

- To provide a wide variety of well organized, cost effective, community enriching, recreation programs for all Skagit area residents.
- Develop, renovate, and acquire a system of parks, recreational facilities, and open space that is attractive, safe, functional, and accessible to all citizens of Skagit County.

B. Priority Goals:

Skagit County citizens value the long-term benefits of parks and recreation. It is important to retain the connection with the outdoors and the wildlife it hosts as well as provide for passive and active recreation activities for the citizens. This will be done by acquiring, maintaining, and/or preserving a network of parks that provide diverse recreational opportunities for all residents.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION GOALS

To provide the support and leadership necessary for all staff to conduct excellent work within the Parks, Recreation & Fair missions. Administration goals are listed under three categories; Director, Management and Administrative Services.

Director Objectives:

- To create and facilitate a unified department whereby all divisions (Parks, Recreation, and Fair) are linked through a central mission of the Parks and Recreation department.
- To empower and lead department personnel to professional success.
- To listen and respond to the needs and concerns of the community as it relates to the Parks and Recreation issues.

- To ensure financial integrity of the department that encourages cost savings while sustaining quality services.
- To seek and create department efficiencies by pursuing additional funding sources.
- To promote a vision of the Parks and Recreation department that meets the needs and interests of our community.
- Encourage community support through positive and responsive image of the Skagit County Parks, Recreation & Fair department.

Administrative Management Objectives:

- To ensure successful facilitation of division goals and expectations.
- To maintain quality control in all aspects of the Department.
- Provide support, guidance and staff development for division personnel.
- Develop and maintain protocols and procedures necessary to meet County government directives and public expectations.
- Develop and maintain new programs and events in response to department goals.

Administrative Services Objectives:

- To provide superior and accessible customer service to the public and all County departments in a professional, informative and timely manner.
- Adhere to county procedures and protocol in performing day to day support functions that include but are not limited to customer service, registration, scheduling, payroll, purchasing, and community coordination.

PROJECTS AND PLANNING GOALS

Develop, renovate, and acquire a system of parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open space that is attractive, safe, functional, and accessible to all citizens of Skagit County.

Project Planning Objectives:

- Work with citizens to clearly identify desired new or improved facilities.
- Develop multi-year plans that can be realistically implemented and funded.
- Incorporate community input throughout project development and planning.
- Identify regional standards and trends in recreation for consideration in park planning.

- Engage in ongoing dialogue with city, state, and federal government to assure a coordination of policy plans, goals, and objectives, including the continued discourse of subarea plan processes.

Project Implementation:

- Complete capital projects in a time efficient manner and within budget..
- Use parks operation staff where feasible to provide project cost saving.
- Protect local economic interests by not duplicating services that are being met by the private sector.

Community Relations:

- Communicate with community on the status of current and projected projects.
- Work with community representatives or individuals to facilitate project ownership, and possible cost savings.

Project Funding:

- Identify and secure grant sources for park development.
- Work with private, non-profit, and public partners to share cost and use of facilities.
- Establish consistent revenue stream for project development.

RECREATION DIVISION GOALS

Provide safe and affordable community enhancing recreation programs that offer indoor and outdoor, active and passive recreational opportunities for all residents. Be both visionary and reactionary in developing new programs and identifying community recreation needs. Work with administration and parks divisions to develop and enhance recreation facilities for community use.

Recreation Division Objectives:

- Increase the participation hours in recreational programs.
- Expand revenue generating programs.
- Increase revenue opportunities i.e. donations, fees, and charges as market allows.
- Form partnerships with other agencies and/or non-profits where feasible to assure the needs of Skagit County residents are being met.

PARK FINANCE GOAL

Develop financing strategies to address the need for regional and community park acquisition, development, maintenance, and stewardship.

Park Finance Objectives:

- Consider developing a GMA-based impact mitigation fee ordinance.
- Explore funding partnerships with public and private sources to assist in efforts for park acquisition, development, programs and maintenance.
- Work with outside Foundations to promote private investment in park acquisition and development.
- Work with the community to develop a new Parks, Recreation, and Fair Foundation to help support the department's objectives.
- Seek funding for new facilities and improvements to existing facilities through a variety of fund sources including capital reserves, real estate excise tax, grants, contributions, bonds, and/or levies.
- Consider consolidation of services with educational institutions and other community park providers.

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Provide a multi-use regional trail system, which connects to other county and municipal parks and community trail systems

Trail Development Objectives:

- Skagit County will work with other county, state, and city parks to establish links and connecting trails.
- Provide trails for pedestrians (including, where feasible, access for persons with disabilities), bicyclists, equestrians, and other trail users.
- Provide for linkages of population centers, community facilities, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, recreation areas, open space and cultural/historical areas.
- Coordinate with other agencies to ensure a comprehensive approach to trail planning.
- Separate recreational trails from motorized vehicle traffic where feasible.
- Create a management policy for SCPR operated trails.

- Coordinate with regional subarea plan processes to assure trail connectivity objectives are being accounted for.

NATURAL RESOURCE GOALS

Promote preservation of natural areas to protect fish and wildlife habitat corridors, conserve open space, provide appropriate public access, and offer environmental education opportunities.

Natural Resource Objectives:

- Promote acquisition, preservation and responsible stewardship of suitable habitat on county park lands.
- Coordinate public and private efforts to identify and acquire key habitat parcels that help to preserve critical corridors.
- Explore techniques to preserve and protect forest lands in County ownership.
- Encourage partnerships with public and private organizations to assist in implementation, monitoring and research of impacts on sensitive county park lands.
- Utilize parklands, facilities, and programs to promote environmental education and encourage park visitors to become stewards of Skagit County's natural resources.
- Provide appropriate park access to natural resource areas to support environmental education programs.
- Provide interpretive facilities that make it possible for visitors to learn about natural resources through self-guided exploration.
- Provide outdoor classrooms and gathering places where appropriate in county parks to facilitate environmental learning programs.
- Encourage partnerships with local environmental education providers to promote programs and ensure that educational resources are efficiently employed.
- Provide natural resource information and environmental education messages at recreation sites to promote understanding and encourage responsible recreational use.
- Work with other agencies in coordination of a hazard mitigation plan, including fire risk assessment.
- Work with the Department of Natural Resources and local fire districts to coordinate fire suppression strategies for at risk urban-rural interface and intermix areas.
- Work with local fire marshals to ensure campground infrastructure is up to code and seasonal fire restrictions are implemented accordingly.

OPEN SPACE GOAL

Conserve Open Space corridors within and between urbanizing areas to define communities, provide recreation, and protect habitat.

Open Space Objectives:

- Participate with other county, state, federal, and non-profit agencies to develop a vision for habitat and open space corridors within urbanizing areas (inside or outside of UGA's) for use in planning, regulating, and developing livable communities.
- Coordinate planning efforts and initiate projects that meet multiple objectives, such as urban area greenway planning, transportation planning (including non-motorized), and storm water facility planning.
- Coordinate with regional subarea plan processes to assure open space objectives are being accounted for.
- Recognize the importance of open space lands to the aesthetic appeal and environmental value.

WATER ACCESS GOAL

Provide opportunities for water access and activities throughout the County.

Water Access Objectives:

- Identify future sites and partnerships to acquire additional salt water access sites along Salish Sea.
- Identify future opportunities for appropriate lakefront water activities at new park sites.
- Evaluate opportunities to develop new sites, or redevelop existing parks to expand water dependent activities at appropriate locations.
- Designate, maintain and promote aquatic trail opportunities and recreational experiences for users of kayaks, canoes, inflatable boats, pleasure boats, and small-non-motorized watercraft.

- Develop a plan to assess river access needs on Skagit River, utilizing partnerships with other agencies and providers.
- Acknowledge that the residents of Skagit County consistently rank waterfront connectivity as a primary need and continue to work on providing for all types of access, be it river, lake, or salt water.

SPECIAL USE GOALS

Provide facilities or dedicated use areas for single-use, indoor, emergent and/or specialized recreational uses, where feasible.

Special Use Objectives:

- Inventory and analyze developed parks and undeveloped park land for the feasibility of providing off leash dog areas.
- Support opportunities for indoor recreation.
- Identify opportunities to generate revenue through special use recreational facilities and programs.
- Continue to consider the need for a sanctioned and accessible recreational shooting facility.

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL GOALS

Promote the cultural and historic resources of Skagit County through parks and programs.

Cultural Historical Objectives:

- Work with communities, tribes and historical organizations to identify culturally and historically significant landscapes appropriate for inclusion into the Skagit County park system.
- Use site history and culture to create development themes and interpretive materials within existing SCPR operated parks.
- Recognize the historical significance of the Northern State Recreational Area (NSRA) from the various groups that have used the park over the years, including the Tribes, hospital patients, hospital farm-workers, recreationalists, and native wildlife.
- Reference revolutionary landscape architectural firm Olmstead Bros. plans and site designs for NSRA to ensure the components of their vision is preserved and carried forward.

ATHLETIC FACILITY GOALS

Provide youth and adult athletic facilities throughout the county.

Athletic Facility Objectives:

- Skagit County Parks and Recreation shall pursue partnerships with local cities, school districts, special service districts and qualified nonprofit organizations to provide local youth and adult athletic facilities.
- Skagit County Parks and Recreation shall identify opportunities for partnerships with local school districts for the capital construction and maintenance of youth athletic facilities at local schools.
- All partnerships shall ensure that open public access will be provided to land and facilities in public ownership. Limitations on public access, however, may be placed upon the facility subject to design considerations, and/or preferential scheduling of the organization involved.
- Partner with the local college to ensure adequate facilities are made available for youth sports. College athletic programs for young adults should be supported solely by the college.

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Acquire and develop parks and recreation facilities and open space areas to meet the needs of the public within available resources.

Acquisition and Development Objectives:

- Coordinate and cooperate with both public and private sector interests to further park and recreation opportunities.
- Coordinate park planning and land acquisition efforts across jurisdictional boundaries and consider existing and planned infrastructure, population served, environmental constraints, and available resources.
- Work with non-profit recreation providers to enhance the quality and quantity of available recreation facilities.
- Make acquisition and development of water property for parks, trails, and open space a high priority.
- Acquire and develop regional parks and secure open space in rural areas as opportunities to meet the other goals set forth in this plan.
- Assure the acquisition of parkland for community parks, neighborhood parks, water access and trails in Urban Growth Areas and rural subareas.
- Ensure new sites respond to community's needs and/or demands, and are unique and/or are part of linked open spaces.
- Consider acquisition which provides habitat and/or recreation connectivity. Support efforts to facilitate an open space corridor between The Anacortes Community Forest Lands and Deception Pass State Park, as called out in planning documents dating back to the early seventies.
- Acquire lands and place into open space reserves until future uses can be changed to fit the modern day needs.

CHAPTER 5

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION

Skagit County is blessed with a high level of topographic and ecological diversity, from deep marine waters and coastal bluffs, to the sub-alpine and alpine zones of the North Cascades Mountains. Such diversity naturally brings a wide array of wildlife species and habitats. Though the amount and location of productive wildlife habitat has been altered, there remain large protected areas and many places, which retain high wildlife habitat values. A variety of agencies and private groups are moving to protect special species and habitats

In recent years, the Washington State Legislature passed a law related to wildlife and recreation statewide. Their basis for this law was:

- ". . . Washington possesses an abundance of natural wealth in the form of forests, mountains, wildlife, waters, and other natural resources, all of which help to provide an unparalleled diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and a quality of life unmatched in this nation. ... As the state's population grows, the demand on these resources is growing too, placing greater stress on today's already overcrowded public recreation lands and facilities, and resulting in a significant loss of wildlife habitat and lands of unique natural value.
- ... Public acquisition and development programs have not kept pace with the state's expanding population.
- ... Private investment and employment opportunities in general and the tourist industry in particular are dependent upon the continued availability of recreational opportunities and our state's unique natural environment.
- ... If current trends continue, some wildlife species and rare ecosystems will be lost in the state forever and public recreational lands will not be adequate to meet public demands.
- ...There is accordingly a need for the people of the state to reserve certain areas of the state, in rural as well as urban settings, for the benefits of present and future generations.

It is therefore the policy of the State to acquire as soon as possible the most significant lands for wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation purposes before they are converted to other uses, and to develop existing public recreational land and facilities to meet the needs of present and future generations."

In implementing this law, the Washington Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) was given the responsibility to administer grants allocated by the State to accomplish the intent of the Act. Half of the allocated funds go to the Committee's general recreation grants fund. The other half is allocated to a "habitat conservation fund". The grants are matching grants, meaning they require the applicant to provide at least half of the project cost.

To compete for habitat conservation grants, the County must also have an approved Habitat Conservation Plan on file with the RCO, or include habitat conservation element in their parks and recreation plan. This section is intended to fulfill this requirement.

During the 2009-2011 biennium, a total of \$42 million was appropriated to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), with \$22.5 million (50%) allocated to the habitat conservation. Of the \$22.5 million, 35% is allocated for critical habitat, 20% is allocated for natural areas and 15% is allocated for urban wildlife habitat. The remaining 30% is discretionary. With the current \$45 million allocation, at least \$3.375 million will be available for urban wildlife proposals. Skagit Park lands located on the Skagit River and many of its tributaries are eligible for Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grants. SRFB funds are used for both land acquisitions and habitat restoration.

The RCO defines "urban wildlife habitat" as those areas that:

- Provide habitat for wildlife species, food fish, shellfish, or freshwater or marine fish in close proximity to a metropolitan area,
- Serve as a corridor for wildlife movement in existing population areas,
- Include and encourage public use for wildlife interpretation and education.

Grant funds can be used for acquisition and/or development. Facility development is limited to items such as fencing, interpretive or observation trails, interpretive signs or kiosks, restrooms, parking, and creation or enhancement of habitat. An agency cannot submit proposals that involve renovation of an existing facility.

HABITAT ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Since passage of the Act, the RCO has been developing and refining the criteria for eligibility for habitat conservation grants. The habitat conservation element must:

- Describe and assess habitat types, species of interest, threats, ownership(s) and historical trends (gains or losses). A map depicting the distribution of these habitat elements in the local, state, federal, and private communities must be included. Use existing information to the greatest extent possible.

In addition to this criterion, the plan must include:

- A statement of the agency's habitat conservation acquisition, development and management goals and objectives;
- An inventory, or assessment of applicant-managed lands with critical habitat, natural area, and urban wildlife habitat values;
- A description of the public involvement process;
- An analysis of public needs and land demands;
- A list of proposed acquisition and development projects.

The RCO suggests several resources to assist in preparation of the element, including Growth Management Act (GMA) planning products and the State's Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) information. A PHS summary map is available for the County. Another suggested tool is an experimental process called GAP Analysis, which is a method to classify wildlife habitats currently being utilized by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

PROCESS

The purpose of this Wildlife Habitat Conservation Element is to lay the groundwork for Department qualification for Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grants. In addition to this process, Skagit County is required under GMA to identify "fish and wildlife conservation areas," which is contained in the Environment Element of the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan.

It should be recognized that areas identified in the Environmental Element to the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan will likely result in citing constraints for the development of recreational facilities identified in the park and recreation plan. The Planning and Community Development Department has completed a critical areas ordinance to address the classification, designation and protection of critical areas as mandated in the Growth Management Act and articulated under WAC 365-190. Under certain circumstances, this ordinance may influence the citing or preclude areas from recreational development.

The process used in preparation of this Element was limited to a summary of existing information related to fish and wildlife and discussions with local agency representatives. Public priorities for fish and wildlife conservation were addressed through a County-wide Parks and Recreation Survey, three community workshops, discussions with a 21-member Citizens Advisory Committee, and public hearings held during plan adoption.

HABITAT TYPES AND SPECIES

RCO guidance suggests categorizing habitat types according to a system being utilized by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. This system includes four major categories of

habitat; terrestrial, marine, estuarine, and freshwater. This discussion is organized by the four main habitat types, with discussion at the second level where appropriate.

Overall habitat distribution in Skagit County can be generalized as shown below. Approximate acreages of these habitat types are shown in Table 5.1. It should be noted that both the figure and table likely underestimate the relative proportion of estuarine habitat in the County, since upstream boundaries of estuarine habitat are extremely difficult to determine.



**Figure 5.1
Habitat Distribution
Skagit County, WA**

**Table 5.1
Generalized Habitat Distribution
Skagit County, WA**

Habitat Type	Approximate Acreage	Percent of Total
Marine	23,531 ac.	1.9 %
Estuarine	78,053 ac.	6.4 %
Freshwater	122,671 ac.	10.1 %
Terrestrial	987,329 ac.	81.5 %
TOTAL	1,211,584 AC.	99.9 %

Sources: Skagit County Department of Planning, JC Draggoo & Associates

The following text describes each of the main habitat types in Skagit County, provides an overview of species present, and discusses related trends and concerns.

MARINE HABITAT

Description:

Marine habitats are deep-water areas beyond the estuarine zone. According to the RCO classification system, these zones extend landward to the upper limit of wave spray. They have higher salinity levels and colder water temperatures than estuarine zones.

In Skagit County, the marine zone extends west from the western shore of Cypress and Fidalgo Islands to the western County line. The remainder of the County's tidal and intertidal areas is considered to be estuarine.

Species and Conditions:

Species, which typically inhabit marine zones, include harbor seals, orca whales, kelp and other varieties of seaweed, various species of fish and marine invertebrates. Sea birds frequent these areas, as do migrating salmon, steelhead, and whales.

The straits of northern Puget Sound, general, are considered to be components of a very complex and productive ecosystem. The Sound is home to at least 211 species of marine and anadromous fish, as well as a variety of other sea creatures. The open channels, rocky outcrops and islands, and large bays provide wintering and breeding habitat for marine birds including gulls, loons, grebes, cormorants, and a wide variety of diving birds (e.g. auklets, guillemots, murre, puffins, and oyster catchers).

The water quality of Northern Puget Sound is a major concern of its residents and critical for the survival of Puget Sound marine life.

ESTUARINE HABITAT

Description:

Estuaries are areas between the marine zone and & freshwater habitats. According to the RCO classification system, waters in these areas have lower concentrations of salts than marine zones (less than 30 parts per thousand). This includes sub-tidal and intertidal zones, as well as lagoons, sloughs and channels, which meet the salinity criteria. Typically, estuaries are shallower and have warmer water temperatures than marine zones.

The dividing line between estuarine and freshwater habitats is defined by RCO as where ocean salt concentration becomes extremely low (0.5 parts per thousand). The dividing line between estuarine and terrestrial habitats is the upper limit of saltwater influence.

In Skagit County, the estuarine zone extends from the eastern edge of the marine zone upstream to a likely maximum of about 5 miles. Many factors affect salinity levels, including the amount of freshwater entering the area, the strength of the tides, and the resulting amount of mixing of fresh and salt water. Salinity is almost never constant at any one point, and varies with depth. The best indicator is not absolute salinity, but the types of animals and vegetation associated with these areas. Some studies have been made of the North Fork of the Skagit River that indicates average salinity levels may drop to 5 ppt near the North Fork Bridge, approximately 3.5 miles upstream of its outlet.

Species and Conditions:

The estuarine areas of Skagit County include Samish, Padilla, Fidalgo, Skagit, and Similk Bays, and a variety of sloughs and saltwater wetlands. These areas support over 50 types of fish, 100 types of shorebirds, 40 types of marine algae, 200 small marine animals, and several types of large marine mammals. Some familiar types include: jellyfish, anemones, marine worms, marine snails, limpets, clams, cockles, oysters, mussels, barnacles, crabs, starfish, urchins, sea cucumbers, and sea squirts. Fish species include; dogfish, herring, anchovy, salmon, sea-run trout, and smelt. Familiar birds include; loons, grebes, cormorants, herons, egrets, swans, geese, brants, a variety of ducks, sandpipers, gulls, murrelets, puffins, and others.

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture group has identified various areas along the Pacific Coast as targets for ecological restoration and enhancement. The Skagit River Estuary is considered their top priority in their five-County "Northern Washington Bays and Straits Focus Area" (Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island and Snohomish Counties). It is identified as one of two first-step priority areas in the United States, due to both its high current estuarine and upland value and opportunities for enhancement.

The Skagit complex supports a winter population of over 40,000 Wrangell Island Snow Geese, the largest wintering population in the world. It is the most important wintering area in Washington for Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, supporting 86% of two species of wintering ducks, and is a feeding area for about half the brants and geese migrating on the Pacific Flyway. The Joint Venture group recommends additional habitat acquisition in both the Skagit Delta and Similk Bay.

State priority wildlife habitats and species in and/or directly dependent on the estuarine zone include bald eagle, seabirds, waterfowl (including heron), osprey and priority estuary areas. Priority fisheries habitats and species in and/or directly dependent upon the estuarine zone

include spawning areas for smelt herring, and perch, as well as salmon feeding areas, and downstream portions of salmon and steelhead migration routes. Padilla Bay includes the largest known eelgrass "meadow" in coastal Washington. This meadow supports a diversity of creatures, including 20,000 Black Brant (sea goose), which winter in the area and feed on eelgrass. Winter duck populations in Padilla Bay typically number 50,000, with counts as high as 120,000.

Bald eagles feed on upland creatures, as well as taking dead fish and organisms from the estuarine zone. They have also been observed hunting and killing ducks. Many eagles winter in the areas adjacent to the estuarine zone, and some are year-round residents.

FRESHWATER HABITAT

Description:

Freshwater habitats are those lakes, rivers, creeks, and wetlands, not included in the previous categories. They have a low ocean salt content, and support different types of species than estuarine and marine habitats. They include the open water areas, as well as wetland-associated vegetation. Unlike the RCO classification system, which limits the river portions of these habitats to the river channel, river freshwater habitats are considered to extend to the edge of the active floodplain.

In Skagit County, the Freshwater zone extends from the upstream boundary of the estuarine zone to the upstream point of mapped perennial and intermittent streams, and includes lakes, streams and wetlands mapped in the County's freshwater features database. The Skagit River Watershed drains the North Cascades mountain range of Washington, USA and British Columbia, Canada. The watershed encompasses 8,270 km² and is the largest watershed in the Puget Sound Basin, providing over 30 percent of all freshwater flowing into the sound. The Samish river drains an area of 139 square miles (360 km²) between the Skagit River basin on the south and the Nooksack River basin on the north. The Samish River has runs of seven Salmon and two other salmonid species including: Spring/Winter Steelhead, Summer Sockeye, Fall Chinook/Chum/Coho, and year-round runs of Cutthroat, and Dolly Varden.

Species and Condition:

Wildlife species typically associated with freshwater ecosystems include mammals and birds that live in these areas or are dependent upon them for food (beaver, river otter, ducks, osprey, frogs, salamanders, etc.), as well as terrestrial and aquatic insects, and resident and migratory fish species (bass, trout, salmon, steelhead, etc.). Notable river fish species in Skagit County include Coho, Chinook, Pinks, Sockeye and Chum salmon, Steelhead, and Shad (migrating species), and

trout, whitefish, bass, perch, crappie, catfish, and sturgeon. Many lakes in the County are stocked with trout.

The Skagit River system is the largest basin draining to Puget Sound. Its fishery is of national significance, with five species of salmon, three species of sea-going trout, a nationally-renown sport steelhead fishery, and a variety of resident fish. The system provides an estimated 30% of the young anadromous fish entering the Sound, and is an important fishery to Indian tribes and groups granted fishing rights to it. In 2002, the commercial value of the fishery was estimated to be \$8 million in odd-numbered years (when pink salmon migrate) and \$3.3 million in even-numbered years.

Martha Lake, Barney Lake, and Debays Slough provide important wintering habitat for Trumpeter Swans, and attract many wildlife watchers from November through March. About 20 heron rookeries are known to exist in Skagit County, supporting populations of both green and blue herons, dependent upon nearby freshwater and estuarine wetlands for food.

Side channels, tributaries, and adjacent wetlands provide important spawning and rearing habitat for resident and anadromous fish species. Especially important areas include Minkler Lake and Carey's Creek Slough, Sauk River, Illabot, Day and Finney Creeks, all in upper Skagit River system.

WDFW priority species and habitats within this zone include harlequin ducks, bald eagles, osprey, and areas outlined as riparian priority habitat. Riparian zones are considered to be some of the most productive wildlife habitat available. They provide all elements needed for many species, including food, cover, water, and many species are dependent upon riparian areas for reproducing.

In general, Skagit County's freshwater habitat is considered to be in relatively good condition in comparison to other, more urban, counties with much of the forest land in public ownership. As with estuarine habitats, development pressure near water sources (and overall) will increase potential for increased sedimentation, contaminants, and removal of streamside vegetation.

TERRESTRIAL HABITAT

Description:

Terrestrial habitats generally include all areas not included in the preceding categories. Basically, they are upland areas, above the marine, estuarine, and freshwater zones.

Species and Condition:

Species that typically inhabit terrestrial habitats include a variety of insects, amphibians, reptiles, large and small mammals, lowland and upland birds, and other creatures, which live in, or are otherwise dependent upon terrestrial habitats. Big game species in Skagit County include deer, elk, bear, mountain goats, and cougar. Upland game species include grouse, rabbit, and pigeon. Many species such as eagles, osprey, and murrelets use other habitats for foraging, building their nests in upland locations.

Washington has the largest population of wintering bald eagles in the lower 48 states, with most found in forested areas west of the Cascades, and the largest concentration (approximately 15% of State total) on the Nooksack River (Whatcom County). The upper reaches of the Skagit River (typically between Rockport and Marblemount) are a popular wintering area for the eagles, which feed on the spawned-out salmon carcasses lining the river.

Nesting, roosting and perching habitat requirements vary, but roosting areas are typically in areas protected from the weather, used only at night, and located in tall, trees in or near



riparian areas. Nesting habitat is typically in mature trees that dominate the surrounding forest and have large horizontal branches.

Padilla and Samish Bays support one of the largest known wintering populations of peregrine falcons in North America, including one endangered subspecies. Ten types of raptors (i.e. prey-birds, like owls, hawks, eagles, etc.) winter in the western portion of the County. Wintering birds include peregrine, merlins, and snowy owls. It is reported that all five species of falcon have been observed in the Padilla Bay area on the same day. Since many of the marine islands are in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains, they support some species (such as golden eagles) that are not typically found in other portions of western Washington.

Big game winter range areas are essential to maintaining deer, elk and mountain goat populations. During average to mild winters, these animals can usually find food and cover up to 3,000 feet in elevation. During severe winters, however, forage and cover at or below 2,200 feet is critical. The most important component of winter habitat is thermal cover, typically provided by mature forest areas. Deer and elk winter range is typically associated with drainages and their adjacent riparian areas. Mountain goat winter ranges are typically steep rocky slopes of 40 degrees or more, or mature forest stands in lower areas.

WDFW priority species directly dependent upon the terrestrial zone in Skagit County include: grizzly bear, gray wolf, Roosevelt elk, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, spotted owl, bald eagle, marbled murrelet, osprey, pileated woodpecker, and Townsend's Big-Eared Bat.

PRIORITY HABITATS AND SPECIES

In order to assist counties and other agencies in incorporating wildlife concerns into their planning process, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife developed the Priority Habitats and Species Program. Through this program, state biologists have generated countywide maps of areas used by high-priority wildlife species, as well as high priority habitat areas. Priority habitats are areas that are valuable for the number and/or diversity of species present, are important breeding, travel, or foraging areas, or are rare and/or vulnerable. Priority species include those wildlife species with populations that are currently or potentially threatened with extinction, as well as those that are highly sensitive to habitat loss.

Priority Habitats and Species are mapped in detail, on 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle base maps. Skagit County includes at least 10 of the possible 24 priority habitat areas, as well as confirmed sightings of at least 12 of 60 priority species. These are listed in Table 5.2 below.



Table 5.2
Priority Habitats and Species
Skagit County, WA

Priority Habitats	Priority Species
Caves	Bald Eagle
Cliffs/Bluffs	Golden Eagle
Estuarine Zone	Grizzly Bear
Riparian Area	Harbor Seal
Snag-Rich Area	Harlequin Duck
Urban natural Open Space	Marbeled Murrelet
Wetlands	Northern Goshawk
Critical Spawning Habitat for Resident Species	Osprey
Anadromous Fish Runs	Pileated Woodpecker
Resident Fish Reaches	Rocky Mountain Elk, Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, Trumpeter Swan

Figure 5.2 is a summary of large priority habitat areas. As shown, these occur primarily along coastlines, river corridors, and the upper elevations in the northern and eastern portion of the County. It should be noted that there are many small priority habitat areas (notably wetlands) interspersed throughout the County that are too small to map at this scale.

Concerns in the coastal areas are primarily related to seabird colonies, estuarine habitat, eagle, peregrine, and shorebirds (heron, etc.). Concerns in river areas focus upon priority riparian habitat, harlequin duck habitat, eagles and osprey. Concerns in upland areas focus upon bats, elk, grizzly and wolf.

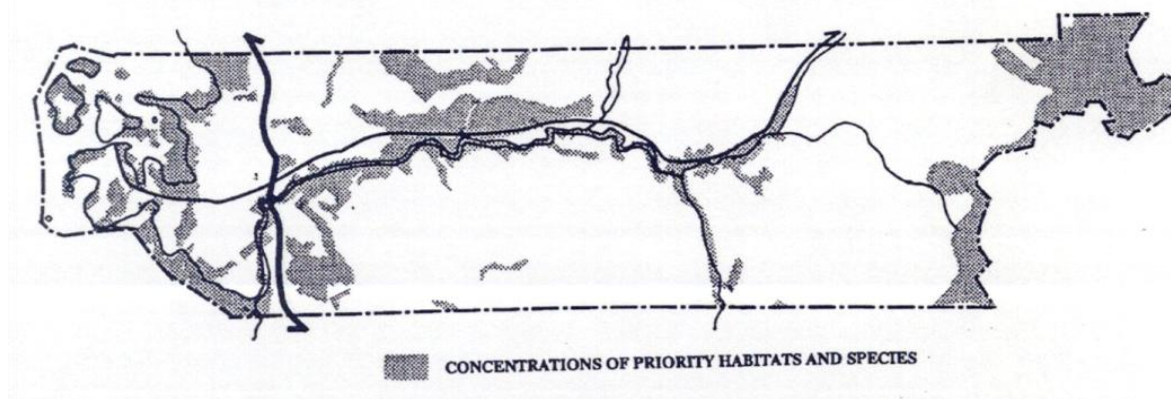


Figure 5.2
Concentration of Priority Habitats and Species
Skagit County, WA

Figure 5.3 shows major land ownerships in Skagit County. A comparison of the two figures shows much of the priority habitat lying outside the large blocks of public land in Skagit County, notably the river corridors, and areas on the valley floor.

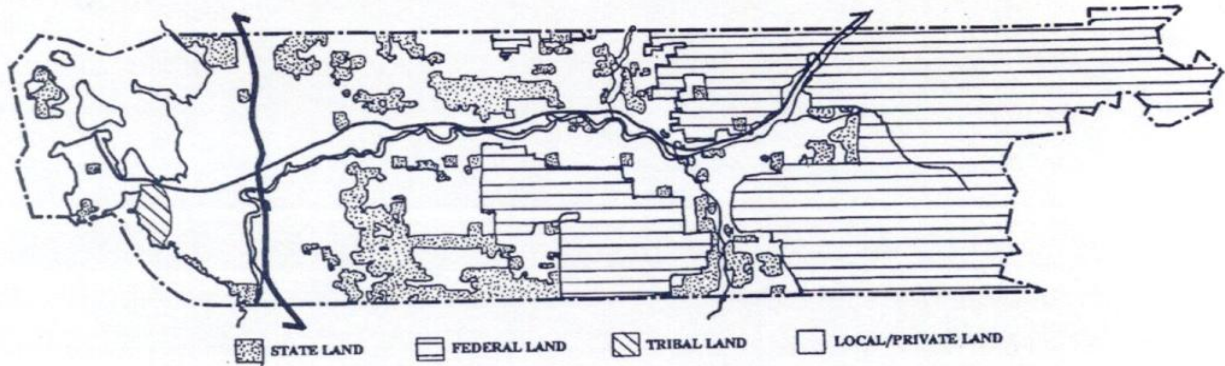


Figure 5.3
Major Land Ownership
Skagit County, WA

One PHS designation is especially relevant to requirements under the WWRP program. These are the areas outlined as UNOS (Urban Natural Open Space). Criteria for these areas are as follows:

A priority species resides within or is adjacent to the open space and uses it for breeding and/or regular feeding, - and/or the open space functions as a corridor connecting other priority habitat areas, especially those that would otherwise be isolated, - and/or the open space is an isolated remnant of natural habitat larger than 10 acres and is surrounded by urban development. Local considerations may be given to open space areas smaller than 10 acres.

HABITAT PROTECTION MECHANISMS

There are a wide variety of regulations and programs active in Skagit County that relate to habitat protection, including:

- County GMA requirements for designating Critical Areas
- WDFW Priority Habitats and Species Program
- WDFW Bald Eagle Protection Rules
- Washington Endangered Species Program
- Requirements for Hydraulic Permits for projects affecting streams
- Forest Practices Rules and Regulations
- Wetland fill permit requirements under the Clean Water Act
- Shoreline Management Act Designations
- Project review requirements under the State Environmental Policy Act
- Required minimum stream flow under the Minimum Water Flows and Levels Act
- Efforts of the Puget Sound Partnership

In addition to these programs, a variety of agencies and private groups are moving to protect resources and habitat in Skagit County. Approximately 160 miles (almost 35,000 acres) of the Skagit, Sauk, Cascade and Suiattle Rivers are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Portions of two Wilderness Areas and one National Park are within Skagit County. Washington State Parks and Washington Department of Natural Resources have lands in Skagit County that are maintained primarily for their open space and conservation values. The Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve covers 10,800 acres of Skagit County bay lands and uplands.

The Nature Conservancy, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Forest Service, and Washington State Parks have purchased lands in the upper Skagit River corridor for bald eagle habitat. These purchases total about 6,000 acres. Seattle City Light recently purchased lands along the Nooksack and Illabot drainages for purposes of wildlife conservation. These conservation ownerships are all in addition to open space lands managed by the County and local agencies that provide wildlife and recreation habitat. Additional open space areas are proposed in County Growth Management Act (GMA) planning, and the County has designated "critical areas" for wildlife habitat under their GMA planning requirements.

Existing and proposed open space and conservation areas are shown on Table 5.3. These are areas where conservation of natural resources is the primary emphasis, and public access is carefully managed. For existing protected areas, acreages and ownerships are shown in Table 5.3. As shown, there are currently over 300,000 acres of public protected areas in Skagit County or about one-quarter of the County land base. This does not include privately owned parcels within the Wild and Scenic River Corridors or non-wilderness National Forest lands, nor does it include any trust conservation easement lands.

Table 5.7
Existing Conservation Areas
Skagit County, WA

Area	Managing Agency	Acres Approx.
<i>Chuckanut Mountain</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources/ Washington State Parks</i>	<i>3,980</i>
<i>Cypress Island Conservation Area</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources</i>	<i>3,933</i>
<i>Hat Island</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources</i>	<i>115.20</i>
<i>Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserves</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources</i>	<i>700</i>
<i>Mary Leach Natural Area</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources</i>	<i>30.70</i>
<i>Blanchard Forest</i>	<i>Department of Natural Resources</i>	<i>4,800</i>
<i>Hope Island State Park</i>	<i>Washington State Parks</i>	<i>12.50</i>
<i>Saddlebag Island State Park</i>	<i>Washington State Parks</i>	<i>23.20</i>
<i>Kukutali Preserve</i>	<i>Washington State Parks</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Glacier Peak Wilderness Area (portion)</i>	<i>United States Forest Service</i>	<i>117,417</i>
<i>Noisy Diobsud Wilderness Area (portion)</i>	<i>United States Forest Service</i>	<i>6,476.80</i>

Mt. Erie/Cranberry/Heart/Whistle Lake Complex	City of Anacortes	2,808.20
Cap Sante Park	City of Anacortes	37
Nooksack Elk Habitat	Seattle City Light	3,240
North Cascades National Park	National Park Service	14,016.50
Padilla Bay Reserve	Washington Department of Ecology/ Nat. Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin.	10,800.00
Pilchuck Tree Farm	Skagit County	81
Frailey Mt Park	Skagit County	400
Sharpe Park/Montgomery-Duban Headlands	Skagit County	115
Northern State Recreation Area (portion)	Skagit County	726
Nichols Sandbar	Skagit County	33
Minkler Lake	Skagit Land Trust	128
Pressentin Park	Skagit County	75
Cumberland Creek	Skagit Land Trust	195
Guemes Mountain	Skagit Land Trust	70
Hurn Field and Forest Property	Skagit Land Trust	64
Skagit Bald Eagle Habitat	The Nature Conservancy/Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife/United States Forest Service/WSParks Seattle City Light	6,000.00*
Skagit Wildlife Area (includes Wley/Deepwater Sloughs)	Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife	16,000
Fisher Slough	The Nature Conservancy	60
Total		192,433.10

PUBLIC PRIORITIES FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Information on public priorities for wildlife conservation came from several sources; national and state studies, and questions asked in the Parks and Recreation Survey and Community Workshops in the preparation of this plan. Pertinent information from these sources is provided below.

National and State Studies:

Several studies have been prepared on public priorities for wildlife conservation. The national Wildlife Watchers Survey (intercept Research Corporation) reported the following findings related to wildlife viewing:

- Over 60% of respondents had, at some time in their lives, taken a trip to view, study or photograph wildlife.

- Of 12 choices, the top two preferred species to view were "large mammals" and "small mammals."
- 90% of Respondents consider nature trails or boardwalks to be the most useful site enhancements for viewing wildlife.
- 85% of respondents believed interpretive information is important to their wildlife viewing experience.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife research project, Understanding People in Places, reported the following results:

- Many residents indicated that they consider the wildlife near their homes as enjoyable to have around (86.4%) and as a valuable opportunity for recreation (57.4%).
- Several counties, including Skagit, had a majority of voters in favor of more public access to land near their home.
- Large number of residents expressed a desire for increased numbers of certain local species (47.7% for elk; 40.9% for deer).
- A majority of residents in seven counties (Asotin, Columbia, Cowlitz, Franklin, Lewis, Pacific, and Skagit) wanted WDFW to work with private landowners to provide more access to local lands.
- Skagit County had the highest percentages of residents expressing support for the previously mentioned approach (57.7%).

2003 Park and Recreation Plan Survey and Workshops:

Priorities for wildlife habitat areas were addressed in the Park and Recreation Survey. In general, recreational open space and natural area conservation concerns were secondary to more active recreation interests, but were consistently cited by some participants as being important. Residents of the more urban areas were more interested in conservation of open areas and natural features than residents of rural areas. Specific findings of the 2003 survey and workshops are listed below:

- 2% of respondents felt wildlife interpretive areas were one of the three most-needed recreation facilities or activities in Skagit County. Such facilities ranked 19th of 44 most-needed types of recreation areas or facilities.

- When asked what type of park area should have the highest priority in a County park system expansion, "protection of natural areas or open space" received the most first-choice votes.
- Of nine choices for expanded recreation programs, "nature and outdoor activities" ranked third, behind "teen programs" and "youth sports".
- Responses to what types of open space should be acquired were scored as follows:

Table 5.4
Open Space Responses to 1998 plan survey

Score	Response
1,166	Scenic areas/vistas for quiet public enjoyment
920	Important wildlife or nature education areas that may have limited public access
817	River and stream corridors
657	Open lands to separate urban areas from each other and adjacent rural lands
452	Wetlands
381	The County should not require open space lands

1998/2003 Survey Results:

- "Wildlife watching" is the third most popular recreation activity in Skagit County (behind "walking for pleasure" and "beach activities"). "Nature walks" is the fifth most popular activity, and "bird-watching" is the eighth most popular activity.
- When asked which activities respondents preferred if facilities were available, "nature walks" ranked second, behind "walking for pleasure".
- Of those surveyed, 78% have spent time at a public seashore, lake or river.

Community 1998 workshop results related to wildlife conservation were as follows:

- "Open space and natural areas" tied for third most needed area or facility in the County-
- Nature trails ranked 5th (of 12) as the most needed type of trail in the County.

- When asked to rank 9 potential types of park and recreation improvements for Skagit County, "open space" ranked 5th.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION

Preservation of a well-functioning ecological system is the best overall approach to wildlife habitat conservation. Since urbanization fragments these systems, we must attempt to maintain important locations, important connections, and important habitat types (or "niches"). This requires cooperative efforts of a variety of agencies, notably those with jurisdiction over land use. The Skagit County Department of Parks and Recreation is only one player in the effort required to conserve wildlife habitat in Skagit County.

The following goals and objectives take into account the habitat issues discussed in this Element, the jurisdictional bounds of the Skagit County Department of Parks and Recreation, and the opportunities provided through existing and proposed Department lands and programs.

Goal 1:

Incorporate potential fish and wildlife habitat enhancements into site development and redevelopment, where possible.

Objective:

1. Where increased wildlife use is compatible with site objectives, incorporate plantings, access controls, removal of barriers to fish passage, and other measures to enhance habitat.
2. Incorporate non-structural bank stabilization methods (e.g. plantings, buffer areas, etc.) into waterfront projects, where feasible and practical. Avoid use of riprap.

Goal 2:

Where relevant, the Department will coordinate with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop and operate Department lands and facilities in accordance with management recommendations for Washington's Priority Habitats and Species.

Objectives:

1. The department director should work with county natural resource employees to in addressing fish and wildlife habitat concerns. These county employees must keep up-to-date on WDFW projects and recommendations, and provide updates to the resource managers.

2. Skagit County recognizes that trail corridors can have high wildlife habitat impact potential and should coordinate trail planning and development with WDFW.

Goal 3:

Provide educational and interpretive opportunities on existing and proposed recreation and open space lands, focusing on ecological processes, fish and wildlife resources, viewing tips, and conservation strategies.

Objectives:

1. Provide improvements at County parks, recreational open space areas, and trails such as viewing blinds, interpretation, and access controls that will encourage non-obtrusive wildlife viewing and learning.
2. Maximize access to interpretive opportunities by providing barrier-free structures and areas where feasible.
3. Pursue funding for priority projects.

Goal 4:

Work with the County Planning Department to define and protect valuable fish and wildlife habitat resources.

Objectives:

1. Ensure the proposed recreation resource management areas are given careful consideration as valued open space and habitat areas in county-wide comprehensive plan updates.
2. The Department will consider the management of additional lands for combined fish and wildlife and recreation values, if funding is available.

Goal 5:

Work closely with current and potential providers of interpretive and environmental education opportunities to help ensure a comprehensive and effective offering of these programs throughout the County.

Objectives:

1. Continue to coordinate with the North Cascades Institute, the SCS Watershed Project, the USFS, Padilla Bay Reserve, and others regarding providing educational programs at SCPR and/or other facilities.
2. Ensure education and viewing areas at SCPR facilities are sized to accommodate class groups, and that parking areas can accommodate at least a small school bus or three passenger vans.
3. Encourage those offering existing and new excursions through the Department include information on wildlife, habitat, non-obtrusive viewing, and conservation efforts.

PROJECT LIST

Table 5.4 presents a list of projects for potential WWRP grant applications. The overall approach in developing this list was to suggest projects that:

- Respond to the habitat conditions and concerns described above,
- Assist in focusing efforts and public attention on areas not already protected,
- Are consistent with public preferences for wildlife habitat conservation, and
- Contribute to enhancement of other related recreation opportunities.

Projects were limited to proposals allowed under the WWRP program (acquisition and development, with development limited to items such as fencing, interpretive or observation trails, interpretive signs or kiosks, restrooms, parking, and creation or enhancement of habitat). They were also chosen with regard to the selection criteria for urban wildlife habitat proposals, which are:

- Community support
- Immediacy of threat to the site uniqueness of the site
- Diversity of species using the site quality of the habitat
- Long-term viability of the site
- Presence of endangered, threatened, or sensitive species enhancement of existing public property
- Consistency with a local land use plan or a regional or state-wide recreational or resource plan educational and scientific value of the site
- Population of, and distance from, the nearest urban area proximity to other wildlife habitat potential for public use

- Potential for use by special needs populations

**Table 5.4
Potential Acquisition and Development Projects**

Project	Recommended Action
Similk Bay Shoreline Access	Acquire uplands and tidelands/Develop for resource protection, public use and education.
Samish Bay Shoreline Access	Acquire uplands/Develop for resource protection; heavy public use discouraged along shoreline.
Trumpeter Swan Wildlife Viewing/ Education Area	Coordinate with other agencies to develop wildlife viewing at the Barney Lake Preserve
Swinomish Park Access and Interpretation	Develop additional shoreline access at proposed Swinomish Park expansion/Provide Interpretive Improvements
Pressentin Park	River access protection and improvements (stabilize banks, control use), conserve eagle habitat, provide education/view.
Howard Miller Steelhead Park	River access protection and improvements (see Pressentin)/Provide barrier-free interpretation and viewing/ Develop fish viewing station
Lake Shannon Improvements	Provide educational display on osprey and Loons
Conway Park	Rehabilitate site to control shoreline access and enhance habitat/interpretive improvements
Pilchuck Forest Trail and Open Space	Develop interpretive boardwalk/Brochures and assist state and local agencies with stream rehabilitation
Northern State Recreational Area	Develop interpretive boardwalk/brochures with an observation platform along the wetlands. Develop educational/interpretive center. Fish habitat restoration.

CHAPTER 6
EXISTING OPERATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department contains two of the twelve divisions within Skagit County government (The Fair Division falls within SCPR oversight). The Department is headed by a Department Director, who reports to the Skagit County Commissioners. This person is responsible for planning and administering the park and recreation programs and the operations of the Fairgrounds.

Two citizen advisory boards (the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) and the Fair Advisory Board (FAB) provide citizen input on community values and issues and assist in developing operating policies. Each Board has an equal number of representatives from the three County Districts.

The Parks and Recreation Department is outlined below:

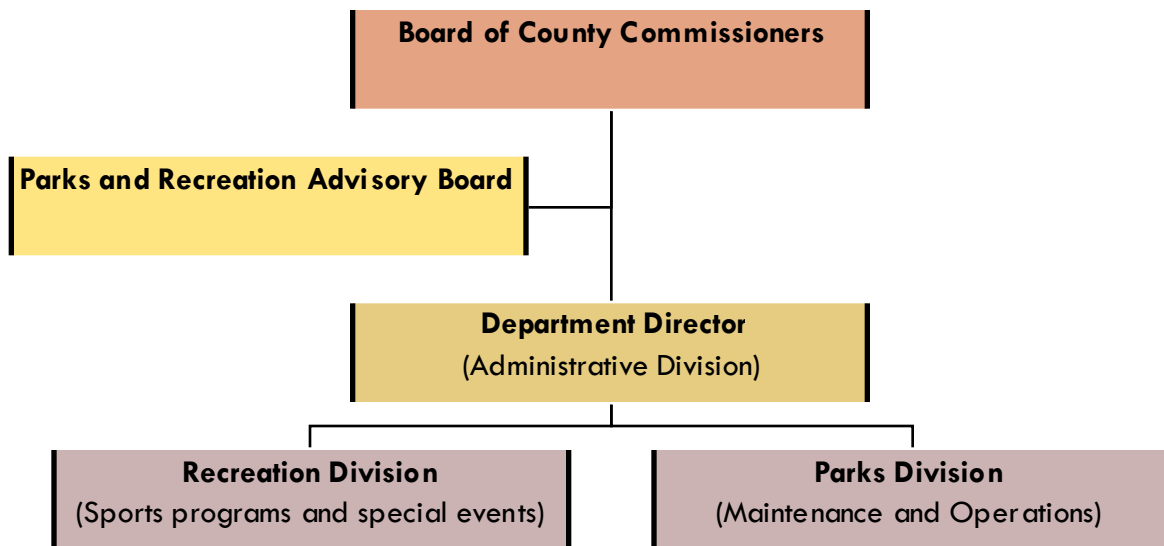


Figure 6.1
Parks and Recreation Department

During the year, the Parks and Recreation Department employs approximately 10 full-time employees. A review of past staffing levels shows a significant decrease in permanent full-time

staff within the department (there were 21 FTE's in 2003). In addition to full-time and part-time employees, the Department also employs over 250 contracted and seasonal employees. The number of contract employees has remained relatively constant. Contract employees are part time assignments such as referees and program aides.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION



The Administration Division is responsible for overseeing personnel, purchasing, contract administration, budget and the management of the other divisions. This division is also involved with planning, acquisition, design, development, special projects, grant preparation, and coordination of capital projects.

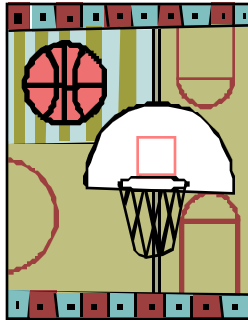
Each division within the Department operates relatively independently with each coordinating its own public and media relations activities. The Administration Division, however, is ultimately responsible for coordination between the divisions and with other County departments.

PARKS DIVISION



The Parks Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of existing County Park and Recreation facilities. The Division is also responsible for the purchase and upkeep of maintenance materials, equipment and vehicles, fee collection at county park sites and park security.

RECREATION DIVISION



The Recreation Division manages the County's recreation program which includes youth and adult sports leagues and tournaments, special events, classes and workshops, youth skills camps, and other special activities for youth. Facilities used are various public and private school gymnasiums and facilities. These facilities include The Skagit Valley College Gymnasium, local school district gyms, and various other private and public facilities. Programs offered operate on a cost-efficient basis. That is, program fees and charges generally pay for the program expenses. In some cases, adult programs recover revenue above the cost of the operating costs. This extra revenue helps to subsidize the youth programs which may not have full cost recovery.

OPERATING BUDGET FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

The gross cost of park and recreation services has averaged just over 1.7% of the County's total expenditures over the last five years and just 1.09% in 2010. By comparison to other counties that provide park and recreation services, this amount is on the low end. For example, for 2010 the Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department budget represented 3.9 percent of the overall Snohomish County expenditures. The Whatcom County Parks and Recreation department represented 2.2 percent of their overall expenditures, and the Spokane County Parks and Recreation budget represented 1.3 percent of their overall expenditures. For 2009, the compiled county spending ratios of the three comparative park systems indicates the tri-county park budgets average 3.31 percent of their overall county expenditures compared with Skagit County's 1.09 percent. That being noted, some more rural counties have completely dissolved their parks and recreation services due to the current economic climate and the fact that parks and recreation are a non-mandated service as compared to law and justice or public health.

Table 6.1
Parks Operating Budget to Total County Expenditures

Area	2010 Park and Rec Expenditures	2010 County Expenditures	Percentage of Park Expenditures to County Expenditures
Spokane County	\$1,795,713	\$134,375,722	1.33%
Snohomish County	\$26,982,435	\$675,484,297	3.99%
Whatcom County	\$3,854,616	\$174,024,739	2.21%
Tri-County Average	\$10,877,588	\$327,961,586	3.31%
Skagit County	\$1,212,806	\$110,480,530	1.09%

COST OF PARK AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Another means of analyzing an agency's level of park and recreation services is to compare operating costs on a per capita basis. The gross cost per capita is the total cost of the services divided by the number of persons in the service area. However, this is not necessarily the true cost to the taxpayer, because it does not reflect the net cost after revenue is deducted. Both costs are shown below for Skagit County for 2010. This assumes a 2010 county population of 116,901 persons.

Table 6.2
Recreation Cost Per Capita
2002 - 2010

<u>Item</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Percent Change</u> <u>2002-2010</u>
Gross Expenses	\$2,648,825	\$1,212,806	-46%
Net Expenses (after program fees)	\$1,424,105	\$717,702	-50%
Gross Cost Per Capita	\$16.75	\$10.37	-62%
Net cost Per Capita	\$13.85	\$6.14	-44%

RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Skagit County offers a wide range of recreation activities, using its own buildings as well as school and college facilities. The tables below (6.2 and 6.3) summarize recreation participation levels for and subsequent revenues generated. The numbers represent the number of "hours," meaning one person participating in one activity in hours.

Table 6.3
Recreation Participation Hours Comparison
2002 - 2010

<u>Activity</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Percent Change</u> <u>2002-2010</u>
Adult Leagues	134,538	169,737	+20.8%
Youth Leagues	75,338	114,670	+34.4%
Tournaments	28,523	54,931	+48.1%
Special Events	8,915	8,392	-5.9%
Youth Camps	8,562	9,718	+11.9%
TOTAL (All Activities)	255,876	357,448	+28.5%

Table 6.4
Recreation Revenue Comparison
2002, and 2010

<u>Activity</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Percent Change</u> <u>2002-2010</u>
Adult Leagues	\$104,015.00	\$118,816.00	+12.5%
Youth Leagues	\$61,570.00	\$98,672.00	+37.7%
Tournaments	\$18,999.00	\$43,945.00	+56.8%
Special Events	\$14,776.00	\$13,986.00	-5.3%
Youth Camps	\$20,470.00	\$21,596.00	+5.3%
TOTAL (All Activities)	\$219,830.00	\$297,015.00	+26.0%

According to the analysis, participation since 2003 has increased by 28.5 percent while revenues have increased over 26 percent. Over this same period, overall department costs have been reduced by approximately 50 percent.

CHAPTER 7

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

There are several tools we use to acquire input from the public. It is our goal to extract information from a wide sample of residents and not just rely on those who are more vocal than the County as a whole. A detailed data table of the input from the countywide public meetings and month long public input survey is found in appendices of this Comprehensive Plan. This chapter contains the summaries of comments we obtained through our interface with the public.

Identifying recreation needs is a difficult task because every region is different and community values vary according to many internal factors. In essence, identifying recreation needs is the process of the comparing the supply of existing facilities and programs against the demand for facilities and programs demonstrated by local residents. In Skagit County it is somewhat more complicated because the region also attracts significant users who live beyond the County boundary. Two of the sources of information used to quantify community desires and establish program and/or facility priorities were household surveys and a series of community workshop meetings.

SUMMARY OF THE 2011 HOUSEHOLD PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

For the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update, Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) prepared a public input survey that was delivered via the internet. This survey was open for the entire month of June 2011. The overall goal of the study was to provide SCPR with estimates of residents' preferences for parks and recreation facilities development and priorities for future planning. This survey was open to all residents of the county and was advertised in the following ways

1. Two press-releases and subsequent public service announcements in the Skagit Valley Herald,
2. An invitation was sent to the entire customer database of the Parks Department;
3. A link listing on the Skagit County splash page as well as the Parks Dept splash page;
4. An invitation was sent to all city planning departments and all city parks departments;
5. An invitation was sent to Parks Advisory Board for re-distribution to other user groups;
6. The survey was advertised during the public meetings held in late 2010 and early 2011;
7. The survey was advertised on TV channel Skagit 21.

At the conclusion of the survey 353 households completed the survey. Once a household (computer) had completed the survey, software allowed the survey to be modified but not taken

a second time. This placed some sidebars on attempts to complete more than one survey. It is acknowledged the 2011 public input survey was limited as use for survey data in comparison to our other surveys that were done by random-sample and were statistically valid. The sampling of the 353 households was just another tool utilized for obtaining input from the public and served as a summary of public input gathered for use in this planning document. It was an augmentation of all other means of obtaining the public’s recreational need.

2011 PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY FINDINGS

Park Usage:

Nearly all (93%) of the respondents reported their household had used a park facility in the past 12 months. The most popular activities respondents reported household members spending time on were trails in natural areas, trails near where people lived, access to shorelines, and visiting wetlands / viewing wildlife. (Table 7.1)

**Table 7.1
Parks Activities Regularly Used***

Park Activity	% of Use
Trails in Natural Areas	79%
Trails near where I live	67%
Access to Shorelines	55%
Wetlands / wildlife viewing	49%
Group Picnic / BBQ	41%
Playgrounds	29%
Boat Launch	28%
Camping - tents	20%
Special Events (such as Clear Lake Triathlon)	15%
Soccer	13%
Camping – RV’s	11%
Softball	7%
Baseball	7%
Basketball	6%
Disc Golf	5%

Park needs and projected use:

1. When asked what the top four priorities are, respondents reported that trails were the top priority in terms of the uses currently provided by SCPR, specifically “wilderness trails-

non motorized” (1st), followed by “trails near where I live” (2nd), Preservation of natural open space (3rd), and “Shoreline Access” (4th).

2. When respondents were asked to rank the most needed facilities, trails, open space and shoreline access were the top priorities. This was handled as an open ended response in an attempt to reduce bias but various responses were grouped into appropriate categories. Some priorities are not listed, such as “Model Rocket Launch Areas” as they represented less than one percent of the respondents. See the complete list in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2
Top Development Priorities

Top Development Priorities	N=353
Walking / Hiking Trails	69.43%
Bike Trails	50.66%
Shoreline Access	25.76%
Open Space and Wetland	20.09%
Park / Picnic areas	15.28%
Outdoor Sports Fields	13.54%
Swimming Pool	13.10%
Indoor Rec Courts / Center	10.48%
Camping Facility	10.04%
Playground	9.61%
Boat Launch	7.42%
Equestrian Facilities	5.68%
Shooting Range	5.68%
Dog Park	2.62%
Education / Env Center	1.75%
Motorized Trails	1.75%
Disc Golf	1.75%
Golf	1.31%
Fairgrounds	1.31%

Community satisfaction:

In general the community appears satisfied with the quality and quantity of recreation and facilities current offered by SCPR.

- Figure 7.1 shows the ranked listing satisfaction of all park facility types and the aggregate indicates that all facility types are regarded as acceptable or highly acceptable in terms of QUALITY. In terms of amenity quality, bike trails and shoreline access received the lowest ranking but were not ranked so low as to be in the lowest category. The item that received the lowest ranking in terms of quality was Shoreline Access, (approx 2.4 or “somewhat unacceptable”). The uses soccer, softball, baseball, and disk golf all had positive or acceptable ratings for quality.

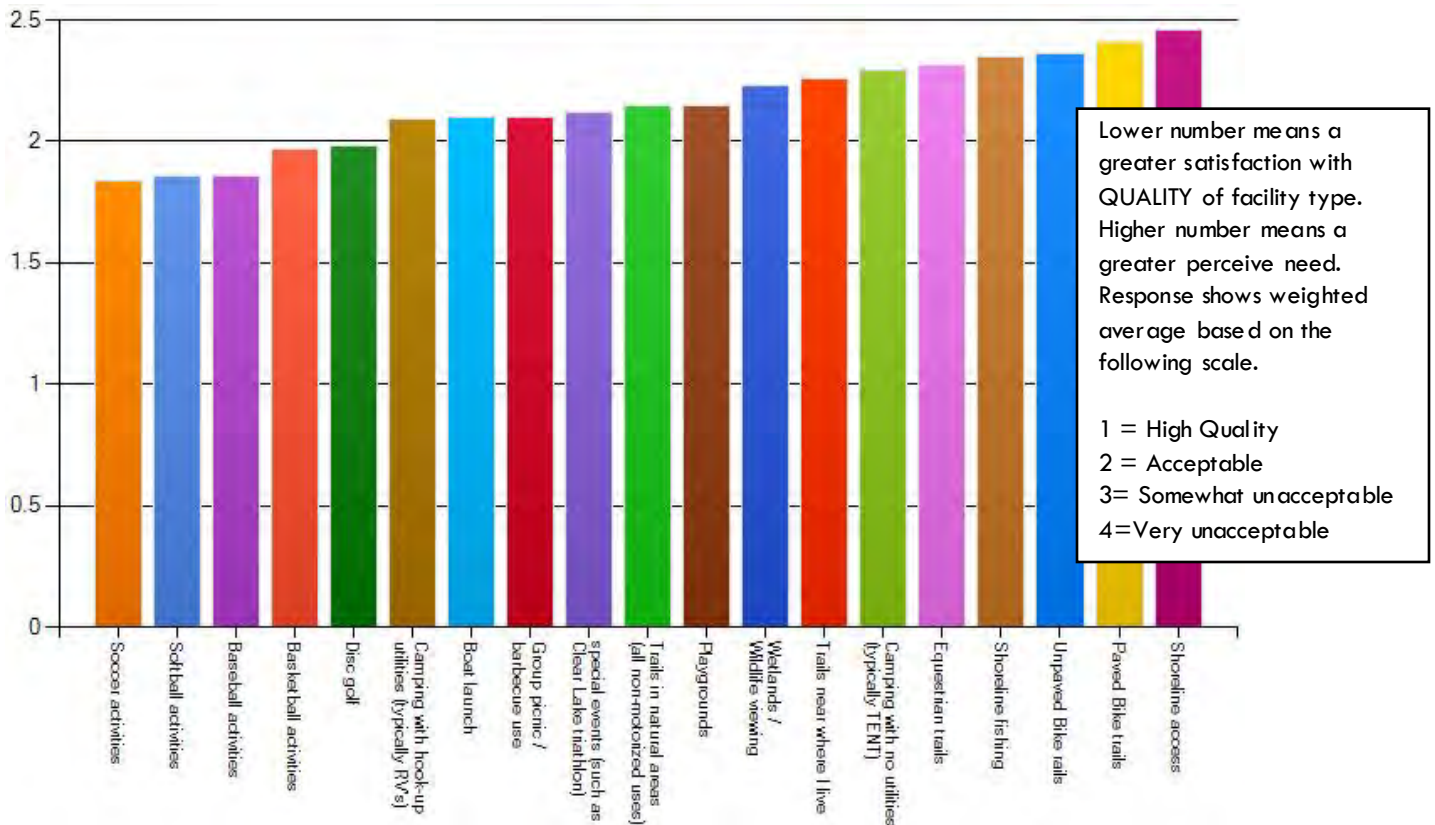


Figure 7.1: Recreation Facility QUALITY

- In terms of QUANTITY the community also appears somewhat satisfied, but there is a latent desire for more facilities present in the data. The most deficiently ranked item was “Paved Bike Trails” which received a 3.24 on the 4 point scale. Only soccer, baseball and softball were reported to be in sufficient quantities. See figure 7.2

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT QUANTITY. In your opinion, please rate your satisfaction with the QUANTITY of the following facilities in Skagit County Parks

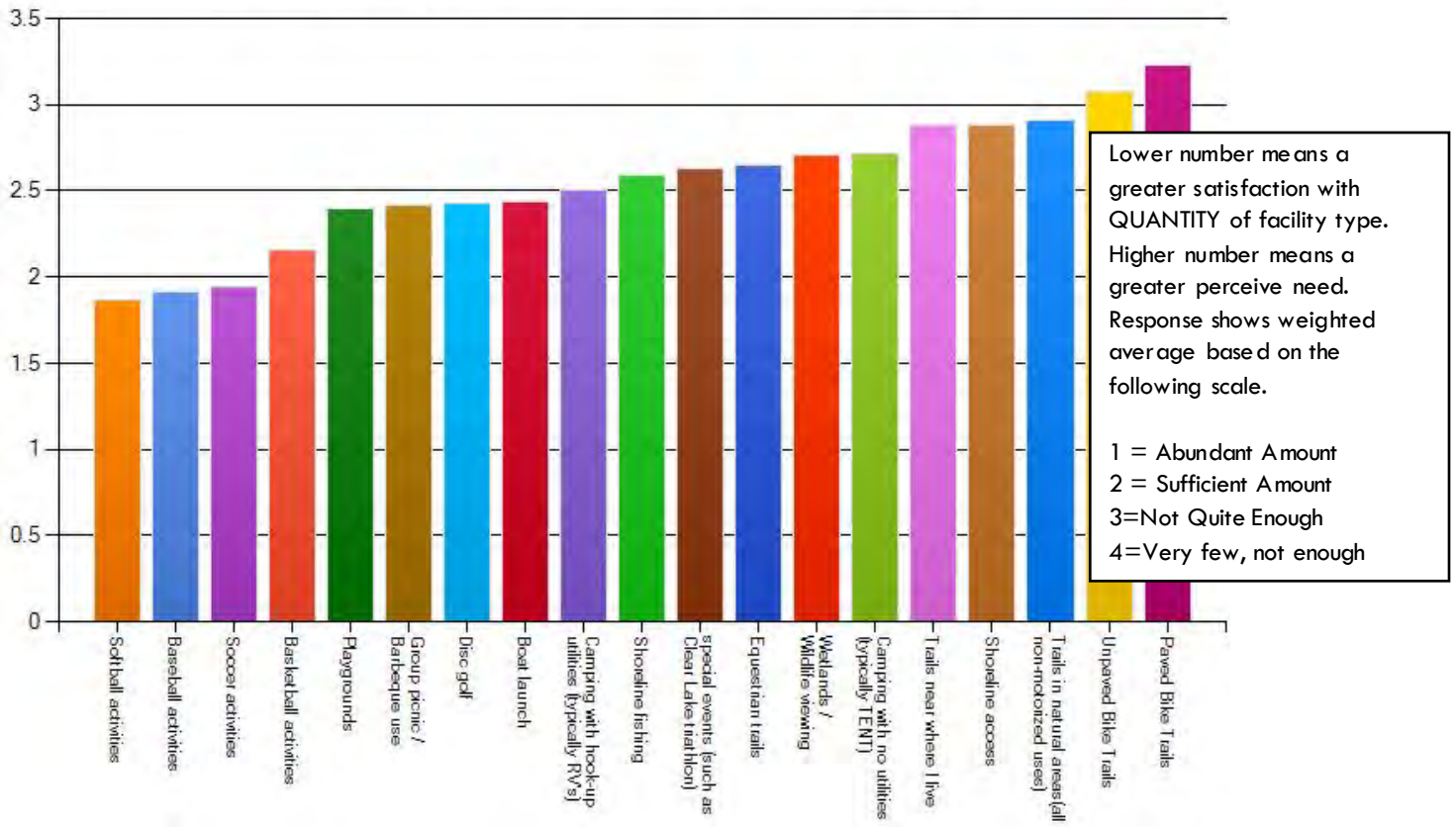


Figure 7.2: Recreation Facility QUANTITY

- The ranking for quantity is about three quarters of a point lower than quality, indicating the community is less satisfied with how much is offered than the quality of existing facilities. When asked directly what may have caused dissatisfaction, the following information was reported (Figure 7.3). This data is consistent in reporting that the largest reason of dissatisfaction was *location and/or proximity*, which is another way of documenting a request for more facilities. Cost or value was the lowest reported reason to be dissatisfied.

If you indicated that you were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the above activities please indicate what the contributing reasons may be?

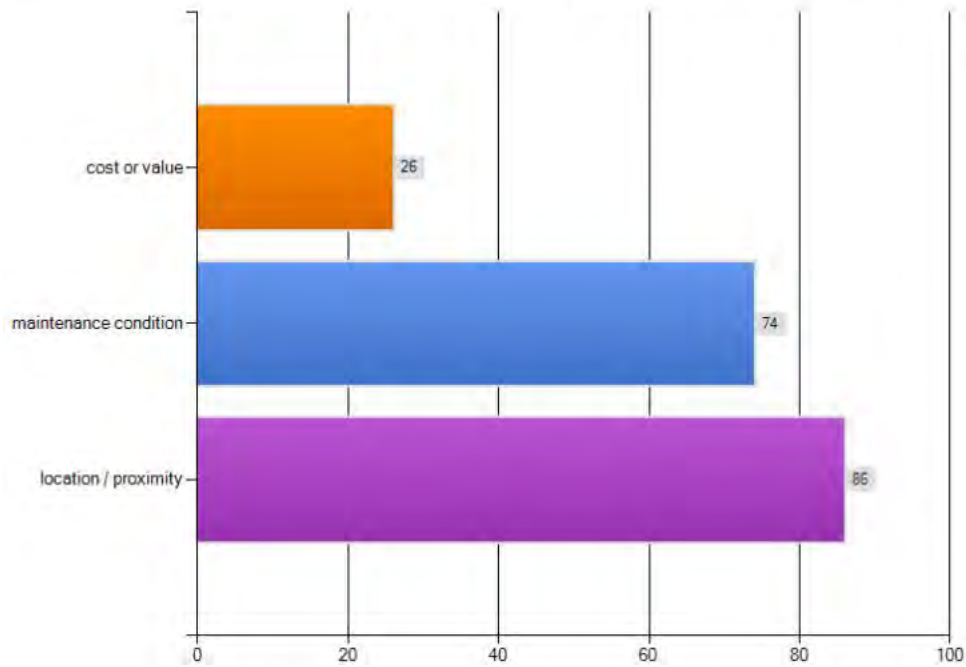


Figure 7.3: Reasons for dissatisfaction

- In a separate question, respondents were asked if service should be increased, maintained or decreased, the majority indicated a preference for increase (62%) followed by a preference to continue at current levels (36%), with a small minority (2%) indicating a preference for a reduction in service. See figure 7.4.

Skagit County Parks and Recreation has downsized significantly over the past 5 years due to budget constraints. Currently our department manages the operations of the 26 parks listed on the first page of this survey with 11 full time employees and seasonal workers. In the future, what role do you feel the County should take in providing parks and recreation services?

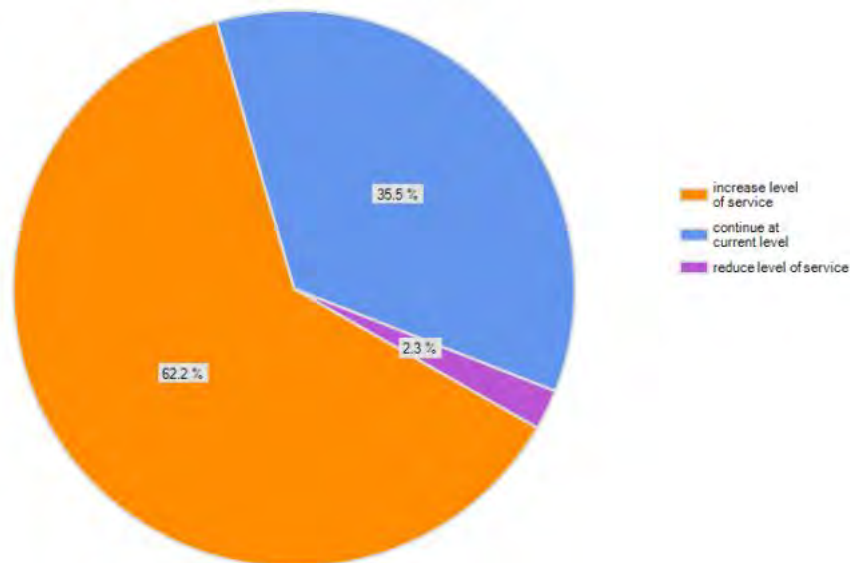


Figure 7.4: Preferred level of service

Of those respondents who wished to see service increased, there was a preference (greater than 50%), for “More Parks”, “More Open Space”, and “Better Maintenance.” See Figure 7.5

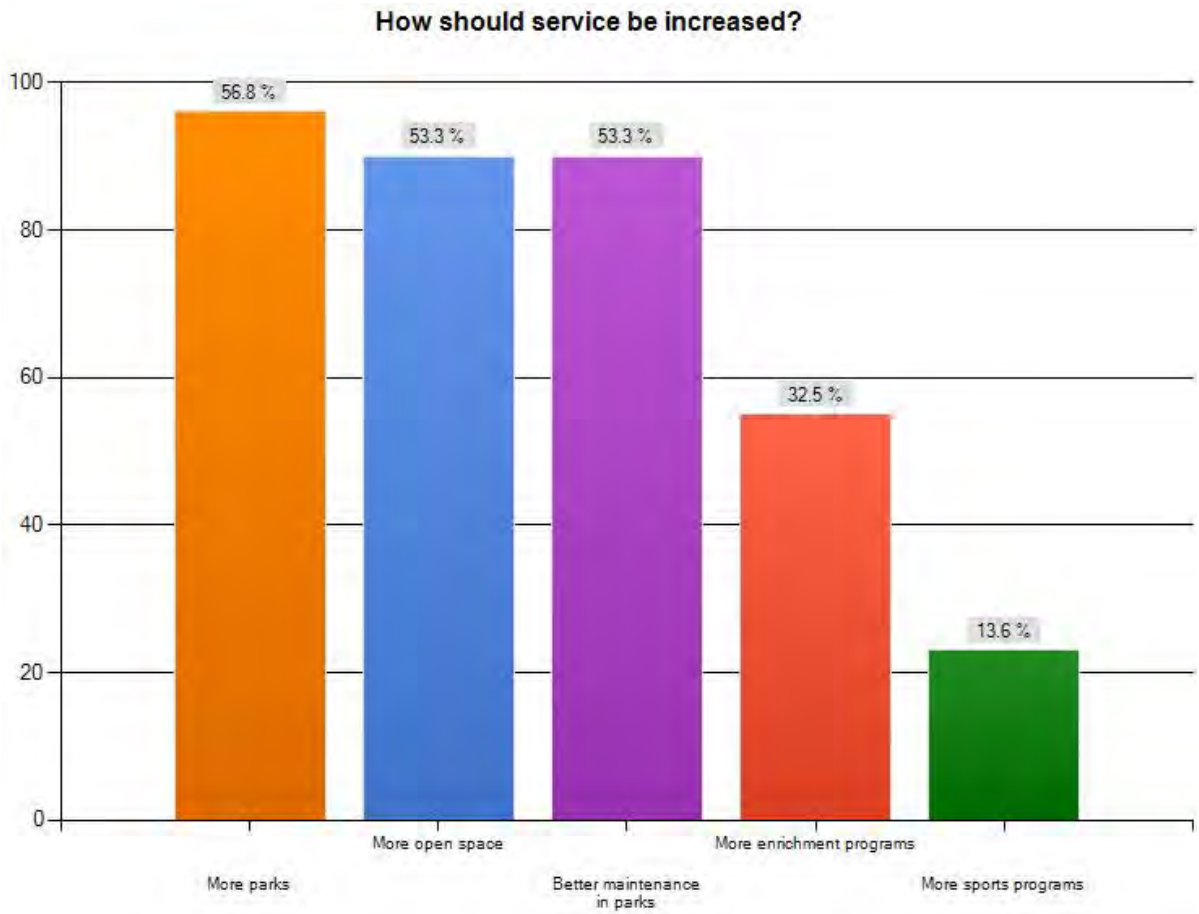


Figure 7.5: Preferred type of service increase

Park Funding:

Understanding how to pay for an increased service level is an important component in considering the reported desire for more park facilities. This survey asked respondents to consider tax increases, user fees, and development fees. The fee increase question helps weight responses with a measurement. In other words, are people willing to “back their money with their respective responses.” The data may have no bearing on whether fees will truly be established, although the data may have significant value if Skagit County residents ever decided to form a taxing district to support parks.

1. Regarding taxes and user fees the vast majority of respondents (90%) were open to some sort of fee/tax increase given the assumption that a park or program was developed in line with the users priorities. The majority preference was for a tax increase over a user fee, and 70% of the respondents would support an increase up to 15 dollars per year. Many households would support more. See Figure 7.6.

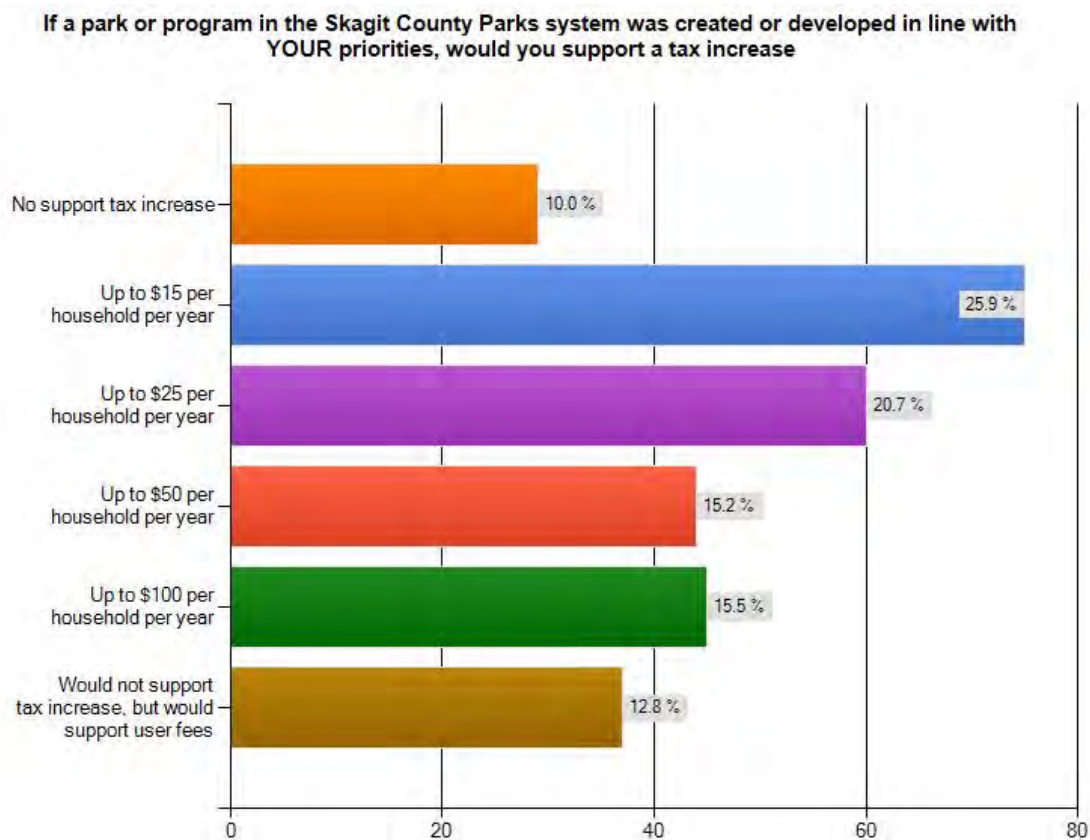


Figure 7.6: Preferred type of service increase

2. Responders were also asked regarding developer impact fees. Although level of fee was not addressed, the vast majority (82%) supported making development fees mandatory where the current system only has a voluntary fee. See figure 7.6.

Recognizing that it may increase the cost of new housing, should Skagit County require developers to pay a fee for parks, open space and trail systems?
(Current fee is voluntary)

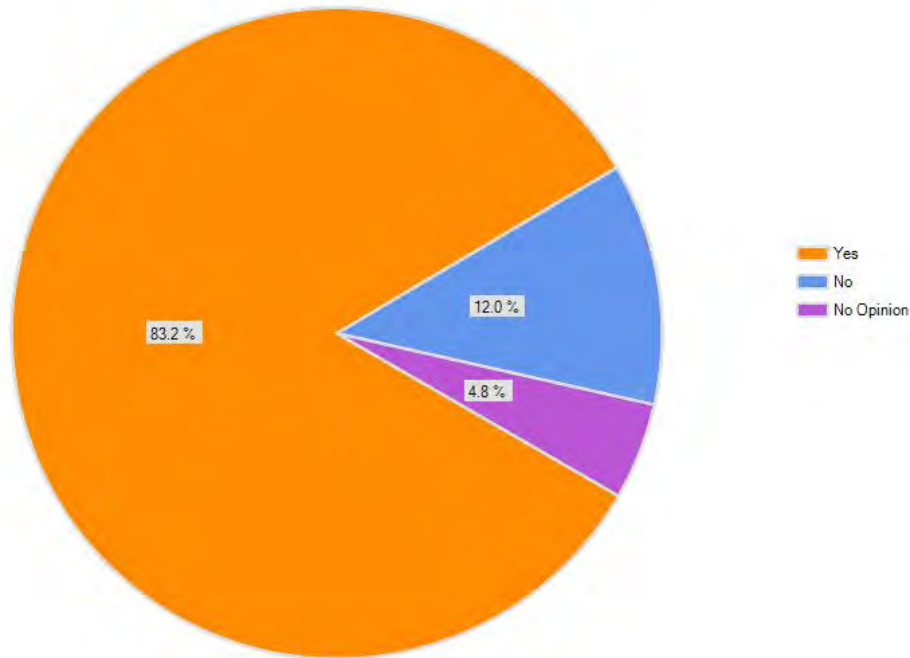


Figure 7.6: Should developer park impact fees be mandatory

SUMMARY OF THE 2004 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESULTS

For the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update, Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) contracted with Applied Research Northwest (ARN) to conduct a scientific study. The purpose of the study also was to obtain the input of Skagit County residents. Although this survey is a few years old, it is included in the 2012 update as additional data regarding estimates of residents' preferences for parks and recreation facilities development and priorities for future planning. The study consisted of the administration of a community survey to a random sample of Skagit County residents and included questions regarding recent activities, desired expansion of existing facilities (including athletic fields, campgrounds, trails, etc.) and the addition of new public indoor facilities including classrooms, a multi-purpose gym, and an indoor pool.

MARGINS OF ERROR

The findings in the ANR Survey have an estimated error margin of plus or minus six percent (6%) with a 95% level of confidence. That is, we can be 95% sure the survey results reflect a view accurate within 6 percentage points.

2004 SURVEY FINDINGS

Park Usage:

Nearly all (92%) of the respondents reported their household had used a park facility in the past 12 months. More SCPR respondents reported household members spending time at a public seashore, lake, or river (water access, 78%) in the past twelve months than any other of the listed facilities. Trails (67%) were a close second. Spending time at a park playground was ranked third with just over half (55%) reporting spending time at a park playground.

**Table 7.1
Parks Used in the Past 12 Months***

Park Activity	% of Use
Water Access	78%
Trails	67%
Park play ground	55%
Campground or RV	47%
Other parks	43%
Outdoor Athletic Facility	40%
Boat launch	34%
Indoor public pool	27%
Indoor Athletic Facility	18%

* N=299. N is an average. Sum of percentages greater than 100 are due to use of multiple facilities.

The survey shows a strong relationship between households with children and park usage. Households with children were significantly more likely than others to use water access (88%), trails (80%), playgrounds (76%), outdoor athletic facilities (61%), RV/campgrounds (58%), indoor pools (40%), and indoor athletic facilities (31%).

In general, households with the fewest years of living in Skagit County, younger-aged households and households with children were more likely to report using parks in the past 12 months. As expected, younger aged households are more likely to have lived in Skagit County a fewer number of years and are more likely to have children living in the household. Because younger people are generally more active, more likely to move or to have just “settled down” and to have

children living in the home these findings suggest a strong demographic relationship with park use.

PARK NEEDS AND PROJECTED USE

1. When asked about projected use, trails and indoor facilities (aquatic, recreation and multi-purpose rooms) would be used the most, with 66% of the respondents saying they would definitely or probably use more trails, and 64% saying they would definitely or probably use an indoor aquatic facility. More than half of respondents (53%) say they would definitely or probably use multipurpose rooms, and the same percentage said they would use additional campgrounds and RV parks. Survey respondents (64%) also said the County is in need of a multi-purpose gym.
2. Of those respondents who reported their household "probably" or "definitely" would use additional trails, 80% said their household would use additional hiking trails and 53% said their household would use bicycle trails.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

▪ Land Acquisition for Future Park Use

On the question of acquiring land for future park use, 79% of the respondents said that it is somewhat, extremely or very important (Figure 3.2). With a margin of error of 6%, this suggests that as many as 85% of county residents believe land acquisition to be important to county residents.

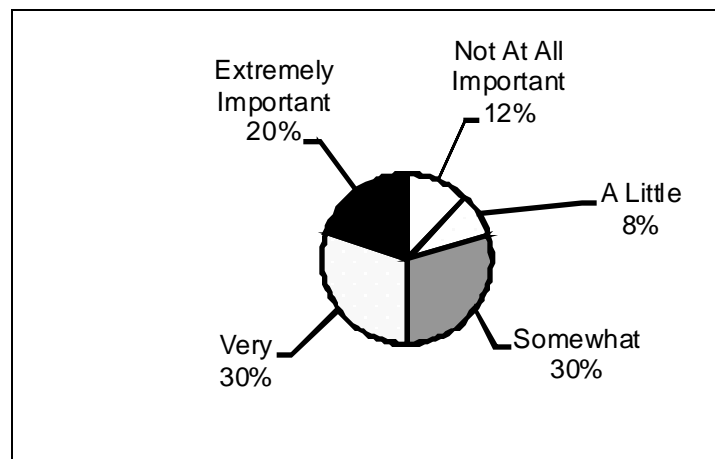


Figure 7.2: Importance of Land Acquisition*

*N=294.

USING SURVEY RESULTS FOR DETERMINING NEED

These two aforementioned surveys are used in obtaining a survey ranking for ultimate determination of need/priorities dictated in chapters 11 and 12 of this comprehensive plan update. Survey results, use patterns, level of service standards, and other factors are ranked and averaged to derive at the needs/priorities of County residents. Complete survey results are available in the appendices.

2011 PUBLIC MEETINGS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Four public meetings were held in the County during the Plan Update process for the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update. These meetings were multi-purpose: to inform people of what the existing system consists of at this time, to provide an overview of the activities of the past 6 years, (including improvements, program changes and acquisitions), and to hear issues, concerns and feedback on the services provided.

The meetings were held “open house” style with a series of boards placed around the room where participants could see a listing of facilities within a various ‘park type’ (IE campgrounds OR trails OR sports fields, etc.). At each of these stations, participants were given the chance to ask any specific questions and comment about the type of facilities they preferred. Prompts were asked in different ways in an attempt to allow participants to talk both about their “likes” and dislikes. “ For example, prompts included questions such as: “What I like about ‘Campgrounds’ in the parks system is....” Or “What I would like to see different about ‘Campgrounds’ in the park system is...”. Participants were also welcome to register their open comments and a fair amount of people contributed with suggestions, comments, and/or support of park facilities, events, and offerings.

A number of those attending were there to promote a specific concern or recommend a specific interest be met. For example, Clear Lake Beach advocates attended the meeting in Clear Lake to promote their interest in seeing a park devoted to accommodate their needs. Meeting participants in Rockport showed a focused interest in enhancing Howard Miller Steelhead Park. The complete list of comments can be found in the appendices.

CHAPTER 8

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Levels of service are quantifiable measures of the amount of public facilities that are provided to the community. Typically, measures of levels of service are expressed as ratios of facility capacity to demand. For this plan, level of service is expressed in acres per 1000 population.

QUANTIFYING NEED

A Level of Service (LOS) analysis has traditionally been included in park and recreation plans as a useful way to inventory park and recreation facilities and to measure services to specific standards. Historically, a LOS value was calculated for each park and facility category based on population and then compared to a national standard. The practice of quantifying local levels of service to a national standard has not proven to be beneficial or justifiable. Each city, county or state's resources and needs are unique. Planning for parks services must arise from the abilities and goals of each individual jurisdiction. Because of this, the National Recreation and Park Agency has recently ceased publishing their LOS standards. An extensive LOS evaluation was prepared for Skagit County for the 1998 Park Plan based on the previous NRPA standards. For this plan, the SCPR LOS is compared with a compilation of three Washington State Counties. The formula used to determine Skagit County LOS needs is based on the county aggregate. Skagit County is no longer utilizing the outdated NRPA standards. The aggregate L.O.S. levels will be used in chapter 10, combined with other contributing factors to rank and prioritize projects. The method we came up with to measure LOS in 2004 is now being widely used by other park providers in the State.

Although LOS standards give an indication as to the degree of facilities and programs comparable Washington State Counties are providing their citizens, there are many other dynamic factors contributing to priorities/need in Skagit County. In this plan, the final project/program recommendations are based on public input, survey results, staff/board knowledge of "use patterns" as well as LOS comparisons of other Washington State Counties. In chapters 10 and 11, a combination of these contributory factors are weighed and ultimately ranked as to their overall degree of need. These results, along with current and forecasted population numbers, are used to determine an existing and future need statement.

To quantify park and facility needs, Skagit County Parks and Recreation (SCPR) made comparisons with other Washington State counties and from these comparisons, developed a level of service standard. It should be noted that the standard for recreation lands applies to County facilities only. Local cities and towns have developed (or should develop) their own LOS standards for recreation lands under their jurisdiction. Table 8.1 shows the LOS of Skagit County as well as the tri-county aggregate. By comparing service levels, Skagit County can determine its deficiencies and project future needs.

Table 8.1
Comparative Level of Service Standards

(The following data are for selected comparable counties in acres/1000 population)

Park Type/ Park Facility	Snohomish LOS	Spokane LOS	Whatcom LOS	Aggregate Average	Skagit LOS	Skagit Need
Regional Parks	17.46/1000	9.28/1000	9.05/1000	11.93/1000	4.64/1000	7.29/1000
Community Parks	.91/1000	.77/1000	1.70/1000	1.12/1000	.42/1000	.70/1000
Neighborhood Parks	.44/1000	0	.13/1000	.19/1000	.01/1000	.18/1000
Open Space	3.51/1000	10.47/1000	17.26/1000	10.41/1000	13.42/1000	0
Campgrounds (# sites/1000)	.19/1000	.09/1000	.59/1000	.29/1000	.86/1000	0
Total Park Acreage	22.33/1000	20.52/1000	28/1000	23.65/1000	18.48/1000	5.13/1000

Using Skagit County's current LOS specified in Table 8.1, it is possible to make comparisons to analogous counties in Washington State. For this plan update, the Snohomish, Whatcom, Spokane and Skagit aggregate LOS was used for comparison and ultimate ranking of SCPR service levels. Whatcom and Snohomish Counties, two of the counties in the collective LOS, were chosen due to their proximity to Skagit County, as they neighbor us to the north and south respectively. Spokane County was chosen as the third county in the aggregate LOS due to the similarities in services provided, because a distant county comparison gives an outside perspective, and due to the easy accessibility of information. Skagit County LOS standards are based on a population of 116,901 in 2010.

The aggregate method of LOS comparisons more appropriately compares Skagit County with its immediate surroundings. The aggregate LOS is a collection of four state counties combined and averaged into one collective LOS. This allows Skagit County services to be compared to those comprised of the collective (Table 8.1).

From these comparative service levels, Skagit County has arrived at a standard for determining current needs and projecting needs into the next six years. The standard is based deficiencies/sufficiency in relation to the aggregate county average (table 8.2).

**Table 8.2
Park Classification on Aggregate LOS Standard 2010**

Park Classifications	Aggregate Standard (in acres/1000 people)
Regional Parks	11.93/1000
Community Parks	1.12/1000
Neighborhood	.19/1000
Open Space & Undeveloped	10.41/1000
Total	23.65/1000

PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS

Using the standards identified in tables 8.1 and 8.2, the actual amount of park acreage required for each park type in Skagit County is shown in table 8.3.

Park Classification Existing Inventory and Need: Table 8.3 uses the tri-county aggregate LOS standards to forecast Skagit County acreage needs in 2020 population of 119,481 .

Table 8.3

Park Classifications	Existing Inventory	Year 2020 Demand*
	Existing Acres	Acres (Based on 2010 Aggregate LOS)
Regional	542	1207
Community	49	113.5
Neighborhood	1	16.7
Opens Space & Undeveloped	1569.5	1335

* Based on a 2020 population of 140,000

Level of Service for Skagit County: Table 8.4 provides Skagit County’s current service levels and general definitions in relation to service areas for the various park classifications.

**Table 8.4
Current LOS for Park Types**

Category	Description	Service Area & Size	Skagit County Inventory & LOS
Regional Parks	Areas of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation (e.g. hiking, picnicking, boating, beach activities). Contiguous to or encompassing natural areas.	- Attracts several communities - Attracts use from outside county -Generally larger than community parks	542 Acres 4.64a/1000
Community Parks	Facilities specifically designed to serve community with diverse activities: courts, ball fields, day-use areas, etc. Usually have on-site parking. Easily accessed by automobile from more distant neighborhoods. May include natural features.	- Attracts several neighborhoods - Generally larger than neighborhood parks and smaller than regional parks	49 Acres .42a/1000
Neighborhood Parks	All uses designed to serve both passive and active activities for the immediate residential area (ca 5000 people). Designed for intensive use and accessible/visible from surrounding area.	- Generally attracts within a 5 mile radius - Generally smaller than community parks	1 Acres .01 a/1000
Open Space	Protection and management of natural cultural environment with recreation use as trails and other low impact activities.	- Can be of any size -The service area can vary Generally attract from throughout the county	1568.5 Acres 13.42 a/1000
Trails	Loop trails and liner trails.	- No Standard	44.4 Acres .142 a/1000
Campsites	RV or Tent sites available.		101 sites .86 sites/1000

Table 8.5

Demand and Need for Park Facilities

Regional Parks

Current SCPR LOS (acres/pop)	4.64 / 1000
SCPR Existing Acreage	542 acres
Aggregate LOS (acres/pop.)	10.1 / 1000
Projected SCPR Need (2020)	1207 acres
Need/Difference in Acreage (2010-2020)	665 acres

Community Parks

Current SCPR LOS (acres/ pop)	.42 / 1000
SCPR Existing Acreage	49 acres
Aggregate LOS (acres/pop.)	.95 / 1000
Projected SCPR Need (2020)	113.5 acres
Need/Difference in Acreage (2010-2020)	64.5 acres

Neighborhood Parks

Current SCPR LOS (acres/ pop)	.01 / 1000
SCPR Existing Acreage	1 acres
Aggregate LOS (acres/pop.)	.14 / 1000
Projected SCPR Need (2020)	16.7 acres
Need/Difference in Acreage (2010-2020)	15.7 acres

Open Space

Current SCPR LOS (acres/ pop)	13.42 / 1000
SCPR Existing Acreage	1568.5 acres
Aggregate LOS (acres/pop.)	11.17 / 1000
Projected SCPR Need (2020)	1335 acres
Need/Difference in Acreage (2010-2020)	Already Met

Camp Spaces

Current SCPR LOS (sites/ pop)	.86 / 1000
SCPR Existing Acreage	101 Sites
Aggregate LOS (sites/pop.)	.29 / 1000
Projected SCPR Need (2020)	41sites
Need/Difference in Acreage (2010-2020)	Already Met

Table 8.6

Park Classifications	Previous Plan	Current Plan	Change in acre Per 1000
	2005 LOS per 1000	2010 LOS per 1000	
Regional	5.14	4.64	(-0.5)
Community	.47	.42	(-0.05)
Neighborhood	.01	.01	same
Opens Space & Undeveloped	10.3	13.42	+3.12

SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF SERVICE

LOS standards are simply a means for making comparisons of service levels of Skagit County to other county recreational providers in Washington State. The comparisons are not the only measure for determining need, as several other criterion play in to factoring the recreational requirements of Skagit County residents. For the purpose of this plan update, the final recommendations on needs will be done by also factoring in information obtained through public input as well as parks staff observation. Public input is in the form of scientifically valid surveys, public meetings, letters from the community, the SCPR Parks Advisory Board, and informal conversations with concerned citizens.

The NPRA standards were last used in the 1998 comprehensive plan update. This plan shows only the LOS standards derived from the new Snohomish, Spokane, Whatcom and Skagit County average. Open Space needs appear to decrease using the new standard. The Open Space needs may change as open space lands become developed. This update shows an over all greater park need when using the new county aggregate comparison. This may be attributed to the value people from our region place on their parks.

USE PATTERNS

The household survey results and LOS standards combine to give SCPR Staff a greater comprehension as to the recreational needs of Skagit County residents. They offer an objective method for SCPR to better distinguish the needs of Skagit County residents and aid in SCPR formulating plans to better serve County residents. Although the opinion survey and LOS standards provide the greatest means of understanding resident needs, there are many variables these methods have difficulty in accounting for. To fully account for the missing information, knowledge from those using or overseeing the programs is needed. This “use pattern” information will be combined with additional public input and more adequately decipher County residents’ priorities. This added information will provide the link and ultimately merge the surveys and LOS standards into a recommendation.

Use patterns can be analyzed in a variety of ways. Lack of facility space, a shortage of campsites, or an overrun trail system may lead SCPR staff, Parks Board and / or County Commissioners to easily conclude needs which are not being met. In other cases, the analysis may be more ambiguous. The fact that a facility is being used under capacity may lead some to believe the needs are being sufficiently met. Whereas, the real reason the facility is being under used may be due the facility is in need of maintenance, in need of expansion, or in some other way may be inadequate. In other situations, there may be a surplus of baseball fields on the west side of the county but a shortage on the east side, even though the LOS standards indicate there is sufficient amount of fields’ county-wide. Because of all of these variables, it becomes necessary for SCPR Staff/Board to look at every facility and/or program “site specifically” to determine if in fact the needs of the community are being met. SCPR staff/board oversees facility use, has a current knowledge of the inadequacies and/or deficiencies of these facilities, and is the best resource for making this determination.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Skagit County started offering organized Recreation programs for the public in 1976. Recreation program growth has been steady since its inception. Since 2002 participation in Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department – Recreation Programs has increased 28.5% overall and by 34% from 1996. The largest growth in participation has continued to be in youth sports activities. Youth Leagues and Tournaments have averaged a 41.25% growth rate in participation hours since 2002. Additionally, since 2002, Recreation Program Revenue has increased 26% and is a direct result of the rising costs associated in offering Recreation Programs to the Skagit County citizens (i.e. staff, facility rentals, equipment, and contracted sports officials). Since Recreation Programs

are non-subsidized by the citizens of Skagit County, all costs associated with Recreation programming are directly passed along to participants.

The Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department breaks down Recreation programs into the following categories – Adult Leagues, Youth Leagues, Tournaments, Special Events and Youth Camps. Note that as of June 2009 Enrichment programs consisting of Clear Lake Beach; Youth, Teen, Family and Adult programs that were comprised of Classes, Trips, Special Activities and non-sports Camps were dropped from the Skagit County Parks & Recreation program offerings.

Schools are the primary facilities used for Recreation programs, including all 7 Skagit County school districts. The Skagit Valley College gym is the most used indoor facility, with Skagit Playfields the primary outdoor (softball) facility.

Recreation programs are divided into three main categories – Sports, Enrichment and Open Activities. The Sports programs consist of Adult Leagues, Youth Leagues, Tournaments, Special Events and Youth Camps. Skagit County's sports programs, including youth and adult leagues and tournaments, have become regional programs i.e. they have regular team participation from adjacent counties, including Snohomish, Whatcom, San Juan and Island counties, as well as Skagit County.

SPORTS PROGRAMS

Adult Sports Leagues

Overall, Adult Leagues have remained an important part of Recreation Programs since the Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department's inception. Adult Leagues have the most participants by category and bring in a large portion of the Recreation Division revenue each year. Participation Hours have experienced significant increases of 20.8% since 2002. Adult Leagues such as Adult Softball, Volleyball and Basketball are the backbone of our Recreation Programs and brought in \$118,816.00 in Program Revenue in 2010. This was a 12.5% increase from the \$104,015.00 brought in during 2002. Each year there are also new dynamics presented to the Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department staff in meeting the needs of participants in Adult Leagues (i.e. an active aging population, lack of adequate facilities, and family oriented activities for participants with children).

Youth Sports Leagues

The Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department runs extensive Youth Leagues that allow participants the opportunity to participate in organized programs at a reasonable price. The Boys & Girls S.W.I.S.H. (Snohomish, Whatcom, Island, Snohomish Hoops) League is the largest basketball program in Northwest Washington with 130 teams participating in 2010. This league offers opportunities for both boys and girls in the 4th-8th grades regardless of skill level. With a high participation rate, there are enough teams in the S.W.I.S.H. Leagues to split into divisions that

best match the overall skill level of teams. With the economic collapse that started in October of 2008, the SWISH league has gained in popularity. The higher costs of select sports has driven families towards the more affordable SWISH league. For many communities, SWISH is replacing school and city basketball leagues.

There are also opportunities for high school aged participants. Skagit County Parks & Recreation runs a Boys Masters Basketball League each school year that caters to high school aged boys that do NOT play on a high school basketball team. This league has remained popular over the years with ten teams participating in 2010. There are also competitive high school basketball leagues offered for school teams in the fall, spring and summer totaling over 115 teams.

In the summer of 2003 Skagit County Parks & Recreation started a Girls High School Fastpitch League with six teams in the inaugural season and now maintains a steady number of seven to eight teams annually. This league has continued to receive strong support from the local community and was created to fill the void of a lack of any previous fastpitch league in the area.

Tournaments

Skagit County Parks & Recreation offers various tournaments throughout the year for both adult and youth sports programs. Some tournaments are annual events (i.e. Gobblers Classic Volleyball Tournament, Boys & Girls Tulip Basketball Tournament, and Spring Opener Kickball Tournament) while others are seasonal events (i.e. A.S.A. Championship Softball Tournaments) that may change in scope from year to year. Since 2002 there has been an increase in both Participant Hours (+48.1%) and Program Revenue (+56.8%) with the bulk of the increase associated with growing interest in youth and high school basketball tournaments. Increasing the size of current tournaments or adding additional tournaments is now limited by the availability and size of current facilities.

Special Events

The three annual Special Events that Skagit County Parks & Recreation offers are the Skagit Valley High School "Senior" Basketball Games, the Hershey Track & Field – District Meet, and the Clear Lake Triathlon. Since 2009 annual events like the Pink Cheeks Fun Run and the All-Comers Track & Field Meets have been eliminated from the Skagit County Parks & Recreation program offerings. However, participation in the three core Special Events has remained strong and have had continued and steady growth since 2002. With the elimination of two of five Special Events since 2009, overall Participation Hours (-5.9%) and Revenue (-5.3%) still only saw minimal decreases.

Youth Sports Camps

Youth Camps focus on the fundamentals, skills, sportsmanship, and fun that prepare young athletes to participate in Youth Leagues. There is a wide array of Youth Camps offered from a specialized Shooting Stars Basketball Camp in October that gives new players the foundation of

playing offense and fine tunes skilled players for the upcoming basketball season. A Youth Basketball Skills Camp is offered for five to eight year olds in January and February focusing on skill development in small working groups. Baseball and Softball/Fastpitch Camps that focus on the fundamentals of fielding, hitting and a spin off Pitchers Camp that focuses on the intricacies of pitching mechanics.

Additional Youth Camps throughout the year involve a Summer Basketball Camps w/ Burlington-Edison High School Boys & Girls teams and a Junior Golf Camp that takes young golfers from the aspects of course etiquette and how to grip a club all the way through to playing a round of golf at the conclusion of camp. Both of these camps are run at facilities not operated by the Skagit County Parks & Recreation Department, which require additional program fees to cover rental costs.

Overall, Youth Camps have continued to be a strong aspect of our Recreation programs, though growth has been moderate since 2002. Youth Camps increased in participation from 2002 through 2010 by 11.9%, though the trend since 2008 has been more static. This is a great tribute to the quality of the Youth Camps that Skagit County Parks & Recreation offers since during this same period most Youth Camps in our area have seen great declines in participation and in some cases have disappeared entirely. Much of this can be attributed to our struggling economic times and the ever increasing competition for the recreation dollar of youth participants. Anacortes, Burlington and Mount Vernon Parks & Recreation Departments all offer programs that compete (some directly and some indirectly) with what Skagit County Parks & Recreation is offering with its Youth Camps, yet this area continues to show an increase in Participant Hours and Participant Revenue (+5.3% since 2002).

**Table 9.1
RECREATION PARTICIPATION HOURS COMPARISON
1996 – 2002 - 2010**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>Percent Change 1996-2002</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Percent Change 2002-2010</u>
Adult Leagues	141,596	134,538	-5.0%	169,737	+20.8%
Youth Leagues	57,475	75,338	+23.8%	114,670	+34.4%
Tournaments	19,540	28,523	+31.5%	54,931	+48.1%
Special Events	10,775	8,915	-17.3%	8,392	-5.9%
Youth Camps	6,869	8,562	+19.8%	9,718	+11.9%
TOTAL (All Activities)	236,255	255,876	+7.7%	357,448	+28.5%

Environmental/Interpretive Learning Center

Skagit County is a hub of environmental learning opportunities. The diverse landscape of coastal Puget Sound waters on the County's west side, to the high mountain wilderness areas to the east, Skagit County boasts the paramount of Pacific Northwest's exemplary beauty. Local business is beginning to spring up throughout the county to find economic benefit from Skagit County's majesty. The Eagle Festival, whale watching tours, youth camps, and other tourist trade oriented businesses have opened a need for a permanent Environmental and/or Interpretive Learning Center. This type of facility would better allow businesses to better capitalize on this growing business. With the North Cascades Institute facilities representing the upper reaches of the Skagit River watershed, a prime location for the center would be on Fidalgo Island, the Rockport area, and/or the lower valley/foothill interface. A temporary interpretive facility currently operates at Howard Miller Steelhead Park (in an old house adjacent to the park). The facility is currently used for disseminating educational and interpretive information via lectures and material distribution, especially during the eagle season. Potential sites for interpretive facilities include the south end of Fidalgo Island, NSRA near Sedro Woolley, and at Howard Miller Steelhead Park in Rockport (permanent site). The development of an environmental learning center at Northern State is included on the master plan and if one day constructed, may reduce the need for such a facility elsewhere. Any interpretive center would have to be part of a greater cross-agency partnership, including public, non-profit and private sectors.

PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES

Passive recreational activities involve recreational activities that although may be exertive, don't require a field or court and typically doesn't require the use of a ball. Also includes activities which require less energy, such as walking, picnicking, boating, and wildlife viewing.

Boat Launches

Skagit County provides a number of water access opportunities including inland lakes, The Skagit River, and Puget Sound. In addition to County access, the state and municipalities provide a number of areas to launch watercraft. The popularity of these access points and the growing popularity of boating reveal a shortage of adequate opportunities for watercraft enthusiasts. Adding to the shortage has been the decline in the number of water access points along the County Rivers over the last several years due to The Washington State Fish and Wildlife Department decommissioning many of their Boat Launches. Lake access is also very important. There is a need for permanent and legal access to a boat launch on Shannon Lake. The overall

condition of existing boat ramps in Skagit County is moderate for area lakes. The condition of boat ramps for saltwater access is also moderate. The condition of boat ramps on local rivers is poor. The reason for poor boat launch conditions on our local rivers is partly due to the fact river ramps are much more susceptible to erosion. SCPR with the WDFW is currently making plans for improving three boat ramps on Skagit County Government property along the Skagit River. The partnership (County ownership with WDFW management) dates back to the 1960's. Two of the new boat launches should be completed in 2012.

Camp Units

Skagit County has numerous lake, rivers, and saltwater shoreline areas which attract outdoor recreational enthusiasts. Numerous agencies in Skagit County provide overnight camping which provide for these recreationalists. According to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), camping is maintaining popularity with 24 percent of the state population camping in the month of July. Also, pre-prepared camping units such as camping cabins and yurts are becoming increasingly popular throughout the Pacific Northwest. Skagit County has only two Adirondack style cabins, two new traditional cabins, and no yurts within its inventory at Howard Miller Steelhead Park. Adequate camping areas are clustered on the far west side of the county and distributed sporadically elsewhere. The Rockport area of the North Cascades Scenic Corridor is served adequately. Shortages persist along the majority of the corridor. There is a great need for a campground on Lake Shannon. The overall condition of County campgrounds is fair to excellent depending on the site. SCPR campgrounds at Sauk River and Grandy Lake have been recently upgraded, although they are still very primitive. An adequate operation and maintenance fund is needed to properly care for these camp facilities. Public meetings suggest an interest in equestrian camping in more remote (back-country) locations.



Group Picnic Areas

Group picnic areas are needed throughout our community and regional parks. The public has stressed a need for covered facilities with cooking capabilities. Also, there is a need for a picnic shelter on Lake Shannon. Skagit County has added covered picnic shelters at the Northern State Recreation Area and Pressentin Park. Over all condition of local Group Picnic areas is fair. Most parks would be improved with a simple shelter. Donovan Park is especially in need of such a facility. The park is used to capacity by a diverse group during the summer months. The Hispanic community has called on many occasions in their pursuit of a shelter with cooking capabilities.

Public Shoreline

Skagit County shares a shoreline with the surrounding Puget Sound waters, is drenched with splendid valley rivers, and is peppered with a multitude of lakes. These waters characterize Skagit County as a unique and beautiful place. The enjoyment of County waters is crucial to its residents. Private landholdings continue to be swallowed up by development and residents are finding fewer places for recreation along the shorelines.

Recreation Trails

Trails continue to be the most requested recreational need in Skagit County. County residents are interested in loop and linear type trails. While numerous trails exist throughout the county, residents like trail systems within walking distances of their homes. Even though trails are prevalent throughout many of the neighboring counties, the number and mileage is inadequately inventoried and accurate comparisons are difficult. Citizens of the county continue to ask for trails that connect regional trail systems. Linear trail systems such as the Centennial and Evergreen trails have missing links and acquisition will be necessary to see them for completion. Recent development projects on the Centennial Trail in Snohomish County will place user pressure on Skagit County to continue this corridor. Trails are relatively cheap to build and maintain. Because of their low cost and popularity, SCPR will continue to provide trails when opportunities arise. Motorized trails are currently being provided for at an adequate level. The Walker Valley Trails provided by the DNR have been reduced and were closed on a couple of occasions, resulting in a shortage of facilities for local motorized trail enthusiasts. If the closures become a normal occurrence, there will be renewed pressure to accommodate their needs. SCPR will have to continually monitor the Walker Valley situation.

Swimming Pool

Skagit County is deficient in pools for its residents. Anacortes has a multi-purpose pool, there are two small pools in Mount Vernon—one for health club members, and another at the YMCA. Shelter Bay on South Fidalgo Island has two pools for use by their homeowner association. There is a need for a pool to accommodate the people of central and East County. Although County and State surveys have indicated a strong need for a multi-purpose swimming facility, the cost of maintaining such a facility would require strong partnerships and dedicated funds.

ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES

Active recreational activities generally involve a court or field and typically require the use of a ball.

Gymnasium Space

A cross-agency indoor gymnasium facility would serve both in an active and passive recreational capacity. Although Skagit County is limited in its ability to provide for adequate active recreational opportunities, the expense of an Indoor Recreation Center is cost prohibitive, at least without a stable and dedicated funding source. A shared indoor gymnasium center would provide SCPR and its partners with the ability to better provide lucrative basketball leagues, volleyball leagues, tournament facilities, and a variety of other recreational opportunities. Skagit County should look to partner with empty building owners for possible short term space.

Population growth has led to a reduction of available gym space. With youth leagues growth at 25% since 2006, and youth basketball leagues offered year-round, there is a growing deficiency in available indoor facilities. This deficiency is further pronounced during the winter and early spring months when school sports programs are taking place. This has forced Skagit County to schedule games outside of the county. This problem keeps enrollment lower than what it may otherwise be. A cross-partnership recreational facility would provide a year-round facility for youth sports camps and a much needed location for tournaments. In addition, adult volleyball and basketball league enrollment has declined due to a lack of available facilities resulting from the growing amount and length of youth leagues. Adult sport leagues are a large contributor towards the yearly revenue and further declines could erode County revenue potential.

Senior Baseball Fields

In Skagit County, the senior youth baseball programs are managed by several organizations. This includes Skagit Valley College, the local high school programs, Junior and Senior American Legion, Babe Ruth, Sandy Koufax, and Senior Little League. Although the county is deficient in senior baseball fields, the pressure to build more is being primarily directed toward municipalities. Skagit County currently provides a Senior Baseball facility (the Dream Field) at the College complex. Central and western portions of the county are being adequately served at this time. The east side of the County has deficiencies. The SCPR provided Dream Field is in excellent condition. To properly maintain the field, resources will need to be continually available. The agreement to care for the Dream Field expires in 2013 and SCPR should evaluate this agreement with Skagit Valley College for any changes that would best suit both agencies. SCPR is negotiating the transferring of the Dream Field to the college for upkeep. This field is currently used primarily and almost exclusively by college teams.

Adult/Junior Soccer Fields

The soccer program in Skagit County is managed by several organizations. This includes but is not limited to Skagit Valley College, local high schools, Skagit County, municipalities, and private groups. Soccer fields have a lower cost of Maintenance and Operation costs than other facilities and because of this are more abundant. Currently, there are sufficient facilities to meet the demand in Skagit County. A growing Hispanic population may increase the future needs. The condition of the field SCPR provides at Skagit Valley College is good. Grandstands and lights would improve the field and extend its use. The City of Burlington is currently meeting the local regional need for soccer fields in Skagit County.

Softball Fields

The softball program in Skagit County is managed by several organizations. This includes but is not limited to Skagit Valley College, local high schools, Skagit County, municipalities, and private tournament providers. Skagit County Parks and Recreation is a regional provider of Adult Softball leagues in Skagit County with its large and central complex. Recent capital projects included an upgraded restroom, new concession stand, lighting of the 4th field, and improved drainage on a third field. A need for softball fields exist in sub-regions throughout the county. A proper Operations and Maintenance fund will have to be established to adequately care for The Skagit Playfields.

Youth Baseball Fields

In Skagit County, there are several organizations involved in youth baseball. This includes four Little League programs (South Skagit, Burlington-Edison, Sedro-Woolley, and Anacortes) and the YMCA. Currently, the local needs are being met, although the conditions of several fields need improvement. Lighted fields are increasing in demand and are needed throughout the county.

Special Use

Special-use facilities are provided by the private and public sectors, often in partnership. SCPR has proposed the establishment of a shooting/training range for County gun enthusiasts, although legal wrangling has delayed its construction. Golf courses are being provided by the private sector and the need is currently being met. Motorized trails are being provided for by state (such as the DNR Walker Valley Lands) and municipalities (such as the Anacortes Community Forest Lands). Currently 4% of the state residents ride horses in any given month. Partnerships with equestrian user groups should be pursued. Other activities and facilities such as hang gliding, spray parks, skateboard parks, disc golf, etc. will be continually monitored for status of need.

CHAPTER 10

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

No single level of determining need is perfect. To determine Skagit County Parks and Recreation program and facility needs, the following methods of determining need were combined. The score derived from these combined elements will be used in establishing project priorities. In this chapter, “park type” is analyzed first, followed by “programs and facilities”.

1. **Level of Service (LOS) Standards**, which provide service levels from other Washington Counties and provide guidance in establishing LOS standards for Skagit County.
2. **Public Input - Survey Results**, a month long public opinion survey to distinguish the recreational desires of Skagit County residents.
3. **Use Patterns and Other Factors**, which provide fundamental information from those who use or oversee facilities and programs in Skagit County and indicate facility or program need.
4. **Public Input – Other Factors** Input comes in many forms: park advisory board meetings, informal conversations, letters addressed to county staff, field experience, and special meetings and all provide forums to listen to the concerns and vision of County residents. Geographic dispersion of facilities and financial constraints are recurring concerns with the public and are factored within this category.

The analysis is based on the following formula:

1. Skagit County **Level of Service** as compared to Snohomish, Whatcom, and Spokane County (SWS) aggregate.
 - a. SCPR service levels are below those of the aggregate (5 points)
 - b. SCPR service levels are essentially the same as the aggregate (<10%) (3 points)
 - c. SCPR service levels exceed the aggregate (1 point)

2. Needs as expressed in the **Public Opinion Survey**
 - a. Highest level of need (5 points)
 - b. Some need (3 points)
 - c. Low level of need (1 point)

3. **Use Patterns** based on Skagit County’s existing programs and facilities and Statistically Valid recreation trends reported in the State of Washington SCORP.
 - a. Use Patterns consistently exceed capacity of facility/program. (5 points)
 - b. Use Patterns generally accommodated by facilities/programs. (3 points)

- c. Facility/program can handle additional use. (1 point)

4. **Public Input** and other factors

- a. Factors warrant significant increase. (5 points)
- b. Moderate increase is necessary. (3 points)
- c. No current need to increase capacity (1 Point)

ELEMENT SCORES

The scores will be combined and averaged to make a final determination of need for facilities and/or programs. The scores will indicate the needs based on the following levels of need:

4.0-5.00	High level of need.
2.0-3.99	Moderate level of need
1.0-1.99	Low level of need

ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTS

For the Public Opinion section, results from two separate surveys and Open House results were used to arrive at the score. The LOS score was derived by comparing current Skagit County service levels with those of comparable counties. Use patterns were scored based on knowledge of current facility and program deficiencies and/or sufficiency.

With this information, a consensus driven process made up of a planning team consisting of SCPR Staff and Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members analyzed the aforementioned need components to derive at a score which will represent SCPR priorities. The scores for park types are listed in Table 10.1.

ANALYSIS OF “PARK TYPES”

Skagit County parks are currently made up of four different “park types” as defined below. These parks are analyzed as to how they rank according to the data available. The rankings will help determine priorities.

**Table 10.1
Point Rankings of Park Needs**

Park Type	LOS	Public Input Survey	Use Patterns	Other Factors	Total	Average
Regional	5	5	5	3	18	4.5
Community	5	3	3	5	16	3.5
Neighborhood	3	1	3	1	8	2.0
Open Space	1	5	3	5	14	3.5

Point rankings of park needs: According to the analysis, there is a high level of need for increasing the LOS of regional parks in Skagit County. There is a moderate to high need for community parks and open space. Neighborhood park rankings indicate a moderate need. Open Space acquisition may become of further importance if land currently listed as open space becomes developed.

REGIONAL PARKS

Average Score: 4.5

Level of Need: High

Regional Parks are generally larger sites, that offer a variety of unique features or recreational experiences that serve the entire county population. These may include one-of-a-kind natural, cultural, or historic features, water access, or a concentration of facilities that can accommodate large-scale events.

1) Level of Service: The current LOS in Skagit County is 5.46 acres/1000 people and the LOS of the tri-county aggregate is 10.1 acres/1000 people. In acreage, the Skagit County Regional Park deficit calculates as 542 acres in 2010 and 1 207 acres in 2020. Northern State Recreation area in transition and once fully developed would increase the county regional park system by over 200 acres and greatly reduce the anticipated LOS deficit. The addition of a park in the Bayview Subarea, and the Frailey Mountain Shooting/Training Range could further reduce the anticipated deficit.

2) Public Input Survey: The public input survey shows a high level of need for regional park type by specifying needs which are generally accommodated by such a facility. This regional park need includes trails (walking, hiking, and biking), shoreline access, Park and picnic areas,

indoor recreation facilities, pool, and camping facilities. All of these facilities would fit well within the definition of a Regional type park.

3) Use Patterns: Use patterns at current regional parks indicate a facility need in Skagit County to accommodate athletic fields, gymnasiums, recreational vehicle camping units, and trails. Use Patterns at current Regional Parks leave obvious gaps in program offerings. Local gymnasiums are occupied to full capacity in the winter months, reducing program services for basketball and volleyball programs and campgrounds are full during weekends for most of the summer months. This deficiency also limits SCPR's ability to obtain important revenues.

4) Other Factors: The East Skagit community has stressed the importance of drawing tourists off of the Highway 20 scenic corridor. This would increase the economic benefit to Sedro-Woolley, Concrete and other communities along the North Cascades Highway. Tourists often drive the corridor on their way east of the mountains. Adding destinations on the west side of the mountains increases the amount of economic gain from an increased tourist base. A regional park could help an economy that suffered a setback when the timber industry declined during the 1970's and 1980's. Other contributing factors include the trend for vacations to be more local and less costly due to the recession. Regional Parks will provide close and affordable destinations for residents in and out of Skagit County alike.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Score: 3.5

Level of Need: Moderate+

Community Parks are generally bigger than Neighborhood Parks, and host a larger number and type of ball fields, facilities and a variety of activities such as open space, BBQs and picnic areas for larger gatherings.

1) Level of Service: The current LOS of Skagit County Community Parks is .42 acres/1000 people. By comparison, the aggregate county LOS is .95 acres/1000 people. This leaves a 49 acre deficit in Skagit County for 2010 and a 113.5 acre deficit for 2020. Skagit County service levels are approximately 50% below the aggregate.

2) The survey: The survey showed a moderate level of need for community parks by demonstrating needs for facilities/programs that are generally provided for at this type of park. Surveys have shown a strong need for group picnic areas, playgrounds, wetland and wildlife viewing and other community park type accommodations.

3) Use Patterns: The SCORP report indicates a high need for sports fields, nature viewing, picnicking, and fishing, all appropriate community park activities. Unincorporated urban growth areas are increasing a need for parks for relatively high-density areas. The Bayview Sub area has increased a need for services in that region of the county.

4) Public Input and Other Factors: The citizens of Skagit County are in need of parks within short driving distances of their homes. Community Parks are distributed poorly throughout the county leaving service inequality in several areas. The uneven distribution of Community Parks is an issue in areas which are deficient of facilities and/or programs.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Score: 2.0

Level of Need: low

Neighborhood Parks are generally small, pedestrian oriented and situated to serve residents of an immediate area. Recreational activities may include both passive and active uses as well as multipurpose facilities such as basketball, tennis or play equipment. Passive uses include open play areas. Age appropriate needs of the surrounding neighborhood should be emphasized as a neighborhood park.

Neighborhood parks may also feature natural or conservation areas. Passive recreational development includes boardwalks, nature trails, picnicking facilities, shelters, park benches, picnic tables, environmental, cultural or historic interpretive facilities, and parking. Natural areas include streams, wetlands, forestlands, or even a unique natural feature. Such neighborhood parks may also function as a greenbelt or view shed on which there is no public access. Skagit County recognizes the provision of neighborhood parks ultimately being the responsibility of local cities.

1) Level of Service: The LOS shows Skagit County to be 15 acres deficient (>10%) in neighborhood park land in comparison to the aggregate service level. Although most county governments continue to have neighborhood parks within their inventories, most are not looking to add more. Municipalities are better situated to provide neighborhood parks than are counties.

2) Public Input Survey: The survey shows Skagit County residents like playgrounds and a moderate need for neighborhood parks is warranted.

3) Use Patterns: Skagit County neighborhood parks are used moderately. The state SCORP does not analyze uses traditionally found in neighborhood parks other than “walking” which does rank high.

4) Public Input and Other Factors: SCPR recognizes that provision of neighborhood parks will ultimately be the responsibility of cities. SCPR is reluctant to add neighborhood parks to county inventories unless they can be accommodated within regional or community parks.

However, SCPR will remain receptive to helping guide small communities in developing neighborhood parks. A new means to assist citizens in Urban Growth Area’s may be needed to

obtain park land and build park facilities. Once UGA's have been annexed, the land and park construction would be the responsibility of the city.

OPEN SPACE

Score: 3.5

Level of Need: Moderate+

Open Space Parks and Undeveloped Parks are identified as available for passive outdoor recreation, offering trails for viewing, parking, and other limited improvements. Open Space and undeveloped Parks often allow for passive recreation in the form of wildlife viewing via trails as well as day-use activities.

1) Level of Service: The aggregate LOS of comparable counties indicates current open space acreage in Skagit County is sufficient. These numbers may change as Skagit County develops land currently listed under open space.

2) Survey: The surveys show a desire to acquire open space lands in Skagit County, with 20% listing it as a top priority.

3) Use Patterns: Open Space lands with trails are used consistently in Skagit County.

4) Public Input and Other Factors: Open Space Lands with trails serve an important need of Skagit County residents. Recent community support to purchase open space lands show how important open space acquisition is to county residents. The acquisition of open space lands in Skagit County has many avenues. Local non-profit agencies such as Preservation Trusts, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmlands, The Skagit Land Trust, and others have been involved with acquiring open Space Lands. Partnerships reduce or eliminate the burden of Skagit County taxpayers while still allowing Skagit County citizens to reap the benefits of the acquired open space lands. Because of these factors, SCPR staff and Board will carefully evaluate each potential acquisition as to the cost/benefits to County residents.

ANALYZING PROGRAM AND FACILITY NEEDS

Park types serve as the vessel for programs and facilities. For the purpose of analyzing program and facility needs, a similar formula used for measuring the need for “park type” was used for establishing more specific park needs. LOS comparisons for programs and facilities were inventoried by the counties with which SCPR is making comparisons. Due to data insufficiencies in regards to comparable county service levels, SCPR ranks program/facility need by evaluating public input, use patterns and survey results.

Table 10.2
Point Rankings of Facility/Program Needs

Facility Type	LOS	Public Input Survey	Use Patterns	Other Factors	Total	Average
Non-motorized Trails	N/A	5	5	5	15	5
Public Shoreline	N/A	5	5	5	15	5
Boat Launches	N/A	5	5	5	15	5
Camping - RV and Tent	N/A	3	5	3	11	3.7
Swimming Pools	N/A	5	5	1	11	3.7
Indoor Recreation Center (gym)	N/A	3	5	3	11	3.7
Softball Fields	N/A	3	3	3	9	3
Group Picnic	N/A	3	3	3	9	3
Motorized Trails	N/A	3	3	3	9	3
Shooting/ Training Facility	N/A	3	3	3	9	3
Equestrian Activities	N/A	3	1	5	9	3
Adult/Junior Soccer Fields	N/A	3	3	3	9	3
Disc Golf	N/A	1	3	3	7	2.3
Senior Baseball Fields	N/A	3	3	1	7	2.3
Youth Baseball Fields	N/A	3	3	1	7	2.3
Youth Soccer Fields	N/A	3	3	1	7	2.3
Env Education Center	N/A	3	3	1	7	2.3
Golf Course	N/A	3	N/A	1	4	2

Non-motorized Trails Score Derivation

1. **Survey Results:** The survey shows a strong desire for the addition of trails in Skagit County. The surveys consistently rate trail facilities as the highest need with walking / hiking trails the top need and bike trails the second ranked need.
2. **Use Patterns:** The statewide patterns is consistent with local information, trails are the top ranked activity. Trails provide opportunities for wildlife viewings, bike riding, hiking, photography, walking pets, transportation, etc.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Trails continue to be the number one park need of both Skagit County and Washington State residents. People like to have an array of trail choices throughout the County. Linear Trails often provide connectivity from parks, towns, resources, and other locations. With adequate widths, they can also provide important wildlife corridors. Additional ADA trails are needed in Skagit County. There are three types of trails that recreationalists specify in their needs analysis: linear transportation trails, loop trails, and destination trails.

Public Shoreline Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Shoreline access and shoreline fishing are very highly ranked.
2. **Use Patterns:** Water activities and nature viewing are top SCORP activities.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** When river fish are running, the SCPR department is inundated with phone calls and visits from concerned recreationalists about the deficiency in regards to river access. Currently there are almost 50 miles of public shoreline in Skagit County. Of the fifty miles, about 30 are saltwater, 5 miles are lake, and 13 miles are River/Creek. Most of the public shoreline is in the western portion of Skagit County, and along the Skagit River in the eastern portion of the County. There is a deficiency in the amount of public shoreline access in Skagit County, especially in regards to lakes and rivers. Fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, sailing, canoeing, water skiing, and many other recreational activities are connected to water access.

Boat Launch Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** surveys show a strong demand for additional boat ramps.
2. **Use Patterns:** Water Activates are a top SCORP activity. River access is declining as many sites have become inoperable. The sites that do exist are distributed sporadically.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Puget Sound boating for fishing, wildlife viewing, and general pleasure is increasing in popularity statewide. As the state age trends move towards an older and retired population, the demand for this type of recreation is going to increase further. The San Juan's are especially popular and launching sites can be used to capacity at peak season. Marinas have been moored to capacity in some years. Improved access for those that can't afford marina moorage is needed. The Swinomish

Boat Launch serves many of the crabbers. River access is becoming scarce as previous sites are in poor condition, and improvements are difficult due to current permit requirements. Lake access is also declining as development around the lakes increase and access sites that were once thought to be public but were actually privately owned are becoming more restrictive.

Day-Use/Group Picnic Areas Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Surveys indicate a moderate desire for group picnic areas.
2. **Use Patterns:** SCORP has picnicking ranked as a top priority. There are 18 group picnic areas in Skagit County. Skagit County operates three which are often reserved to capacity during the summer.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** The residents of Skagit County like to see picnic shelters as a part of their regional and community park facilities. There is also a need for shelters with “kitchen type” cooking capabilities. The growing Hispanic population is increasing the need for picnic shelters.

Softball Field Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** surveys indicate a low to moderate need for additional softball fields in Skagit County.
2. **Use Patterns:** The Skagit Valley Playfields are a regional draw for league play and tournaments. The fields are used to capacity the summer months. The number of leagues and teams are showing trends of increase. SCORP ranks fields high.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** SCPR is a primary provider for regional softball tournaments and league play.

Swimming Pools Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** The survey shows a desire for a large indoor pool. Previous surveys indicated as high as 79% residents indicating an indoor aquatic facility is needed.
2. **Use Patterns:** A centrally located indoor swimming pool has been a long-term existing need in Skagit County. The Fidalgo Pool in Anacortes is not accessible to users in the central and eastern portions of the county. The YMCA Pool in Mount Vernon is used by three high school swim teams and has programs starting at 5am and going until 9pm daily. Current participation in swimming is about 35% lower than other regions surveyed. Much of the difference is likely due to the lack of facilities.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** The economic reality of maintaining a pool would require a significant cross-agency partnership, private or other, along with a fee system. The County does not have the capacity to support a pool. The YMCA Pool was built many years ago and is aging rapidly. Other pools are privately owned or require monthly

memberships. Swimming pools are often forced to depend on levies and history shows a fluctuation in community support.

Indoor Recreation Center (gymnasium) Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** The survey indicated a strong desire for an indoor recreation center. Past surveys indicated that respondents expressed interest in attending youth activity & enrichment classes offered at a proposed indoor recreation facility.
2. **Use Patterns:** Gymnasium space is used to full capacity and the lack of space has limited SCPR's ability to run basketball and volleyball programs at desired levels. The ability to provide for enrichment programs is also very limited. Historical partnerships between the County and local school districts have provided the majority of enrichment opportunities to Skagit County youth. However, access to school facilities has become more limited due to the County's growing population and the increased scheduling constraints of the facilities. The SCORP indicates a high level of participation for team sports.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** A recreation center with multipurpose rooms would provide space for enrichment programs when schools are not available. A regional space for basketball/volleyball tournaments would establish Skagit County as a destination and assist the economy. An indoor recreational center would have to be done through a partnership with many agencies, both public and non-profit.

Disk Golf Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Surveys have shown a low need for disc golf facilities.
2. **Use Patterns:** SCORP does not comment on disc golf. Use patterns at existing courses indicated a high level of use, comparable to trail usage.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** This use is attractive in that it can be a low impact overlay use on trails or open space, providing recreation with a minimal investment. The new course at NSRA was built almost exclusively by user group volunteers.

Camping: RV and Tent Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Surveys point to a consistent desire for additional campgrounds in Skagit County.
2. **Use Patterns:** There is a deficiency in the amount of sites in Skagit County, but this deficiency is somewhat offset by the amount of primitive camping opportunities there are in the thousands of acres federally/state managed lands in Skagit County. RV and cabin camping remain as modest recreational demands in Washington State (SCORP 2007). Currently, Skagit County provides minimal camping cabins, yurts, or any other fully enclosed fully camping units. There is a need for adequate camping facilities at Lake Shannon to accommodate anglers. Camping arrangements at Lake Shannon are deficient.

- 3. Public Input and Other factors:** Although there is an abundance of primitive camping opportunities, RV camping is less available. Also, ready-made facilities such as yurts and camping cabins are being provided for in neighboring counties with great success. Campgrounds provide more than just recreational opportunities. They also attract tourism and help the local economies. Camping opportunities situated along the Highway 20 corridor attract tourists who may otherwise make a non-stop trip through Skagit County on their way to the east side of the mountains.

Motorized Trails Score Derivation

- 1. Surveys:** Surveys show a moderate need for motorized trails.
- 2. Use Patterns:** Motorized trails are available in The Anacortes Community Forest Lands and Walker Valley. The current trails adequately provide for the users. SCORP reports a slight increase in Off Road Vehicle use. Most popular are 4x4 vehicles, followed by All Terrain Vehicles, and finally off-road motorcycling.
- 3. Public Input and Other Factors:** Walker Valley periodically shuts down trails for motorized use. If the trails are permanently closed to County residents, a void will be created. Motorcycle/ORV use is constrained by the availability of desirable land and facilities. Much of the public trail inventory, for example, is closed to motorcycle/ORV use.

Shooting/Training Facility Score Derivation

- 1. Surveys:** The surveys indicate a medium-low need (5.68% as a top priority) for a shooting/training facility in Skagit County.
- 2. Use Patterns:** Approx 7.3 percent of the Washington State population participates in shooting/hunting. These percentages are generally much higher in rural counties. Without a safe public facility for shooting/training, many County residents are forced to use private timberlands and quarries, public open space, and residential properties to accommodate their recreational interest.
- 3. Public Input and Other Factors:** Local law enforcement has an interest in the establishment of a training facility in Skagit County. A shooting range may help alleviate safety concerns that currently exist as local gun enthusiasts practice their sport in unsanctioned areas. Hunting licenses have gone up in the past few years and gun sales have hit record highs. A need persists for shooting enthusiasts.

Equestrian Activities Score Derivation

- 4. Surveys:** The surveys indicate a medium-low need (5.68% as a top priority) for development of Equestrian activities in Skagit County.

5. **Use Patterns:** A small percent of the Washington State population participates in equestrian activities. This is not a use currently featured in the Skagit County inventory other than multi-use trails.
6. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Though the percentage of equestrian users is modest, the location of such a large amount of state and federal public lands in Skagit County makes equestrian use, particularly back-county equestrians use, logical and attractive. Private and public partnerships should be explored. The meetings we had throughout the County were attended heavily by equestrian enthusiasts.

Adult/Junior Soccer Field Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Soccer field surveys indicate a moderate need.
2. **Use Patterns:** Although SCPR ran several soccer camps in the past, the niche has been taken up by other providers. The current supply of soccer fields is adequately accommodating the demand. Burlington fields generally satisfy the need for soccer fields in Skagit County.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Although soccer fields are relatively abundant, Hispanics are the largest growing ethnic group in Skagit County. Soccer is popular with the Hispanic population and demand increases as their local numbers increase.

Senior Baseball Fields Score Derivation

1. **Survey:** Survey respondents indicate a moderate need for adding Senior Baseball fields.
2. **Use Patterns:** Skagit County currently provides three senior sized baseball fields. Allen and Burlington-Edison Regional Park (BERP) fields are used moderately because of their limitations. Allen is adequate only for practices and BERP, which is used primarily by Burlington School District, is closed in July for maintenance. Skagit Dream Field has a high use request which has been expanded with the recent addition of field lights.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Municipalities have traditionally been the major providers of baseball facilities. Skagit County should allow others to fill this niche.

Youth Baseball Fields Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Indicate a continual need for additional youth baseball fields.
2. **Use patterns:** The needs are being adequately met in Skagit County.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Little League size fields are traditionally provided for by municipal park departments. Elite select leagues and little leagues are often competing for fields.

Youth Soccer field Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Soccer field needs rated moderately in the surveys.

2. **Use Patterns:** The current number of soccer fields is adequately satisfying the need in Skagit County.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Municipalities have traditionally been the local providers of youth soccer fields.

Environmental Education Center Score Derivation

4. **Surveys:** There was a low to moderate interest in an Environmental Education Center
5. **Use Patterns:** The Eagle Festival has become expanded in the building located at Howard Miller Steelhead Park and reports a growing seasonal interest and participation, including record numbers of visitors in 2011/2012.
6. **Public Input and Other Factors:** This is a project that would necessitate various partnerships but due to the abundance of high quality natural environments in Skagit County it is worth consideration.

Golf Course Score Derivation

1. **Surveys:** Surveys show a low need for the addition of golf courses.
2. **Use Patterns:** Privately owned golf courses are used to full capacity four months of the year, used to approximately 50% capacity four months, and utilized under capacity for four months.
3. **Public Input and Other Factors:** Golf courses are being adequately provided for by the private sector.

CHAPTER 11

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION LIST

The following projects are based on the needs compiled from the surveys, use patterns, level of service comparisons, public input, and other factors. Project priorities are sorted in order of preference as to which programs/facilities the project encompasses and how those projects/facilities rank using the aforementioned needs formula (analysis-chapter # 10). In sorting projects by priorities, financial issues are also considered. Considerations can include constraints due to a lack of resources required to develop, maintain and operate facilities. The ability to draw revenue from the proposed development, facility, and/or program is also factored in. Within a broad range of project priorities, the county needs to be flexible to changing conditions and opportunities that may arise. The priorities are categorized as follows:

Level 1 Need (High Priority):

Projects in this category typically fall under the department's first priority of "taking care of what we have." In addition, these projects may have demonstrated the highest level of need in some or all of the categories of public input use patterns, level of service, or survey results (from chapter 10 needs rankings). Finally, economic feasibility or potential cost recovery is considered.

Level 2 Need (Moderate to High Priority):

Projects in this category have a moderate level of need as measured by a composite of public input, level of service analysis, survey results, and/or economic feasibility.

Level 3 Need (Low to Moderate Priority):

Projects in this category have some level of need as measured by a composite of public input, level of service, survey results, and/or economic feasibility.

Level 4 Need (No to Low Priority):

Projects in this category have no projected need as measured by a composite of public input, level of service, survey results, and/or economic feasibility. These projects are not listed in analysis.

INDEX TO RECOMMENDATIONS & RANKINGS

Level 1:

- Northern State Recreation Area Trails Plan
- Centennial Trail
- Sares Bluff Trail Development
- Clear Lake Improvements
- Skagit Valley Playfields Improvements
- Similk Bay Shoreline Access
- Other Trail Development and/or acquisitions

Level 2:

- Howard Miller Steelhead Park Improvements
- Indoor Recreation Center (gym)
- Evergreen Trail
- Bayview Community Park Development
- Northern State Recreation Area Development
- Proposed Shooting/Training Range
- Big Rock Access and Parking
- Other Open Space Development and/or acquisitions
- Other Lake Park Development and/or acquisitions

Level 3:

- Lake Shannon Trail
- Lake Shannon Park Development
- Presentin Park Improvements
- Northern State Recreation Area Ball Fields
- Grandy Lake Development
- Nichols Bar Development
- Sauk Park Development
- Conway Park Renovation
- Rexville Overlook Development
- Skagit River Interpretive Center at HMSP

PROJECT AND RENOVATION DESCRIPTIONS

Following is a description of the above recommended projects. To assist in comparison they will be presented within the following categories.

- 1. Trail Plans**
- 2. Park Development Plans**
- 3. Open Space Plans**
- 4. Shorelines Plans**
- 5. Sports Fields Plans**

1. RECOMMENDED TRAILS PLAN

Trails continue to be the most demanded recreational facility asked for by Skagit county residents. The 2007 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) surveys show similar trends. The (SCORP) document makes recommendations for local agencies and encourages trail opportunities. The plan specifically states, "If there is a weakness in the local response statewide, it may be in addressing high-participation activities that take place away from a traditional park, especially bicycling and walking. Health professionals increasingly regard walking and bicycling, both for recreation and transportation, as valuable tools that can help people build healthier lifestyles. Community oriented trails, paths, and routes for walking and cycling can encourage people to participate in health oriented activities; encourage children to walk or bicycle to school; and encourage adults to commute without a car".

Trails and paths, therefore, can provide multiple benefits for the states citizens including recreation, health, and transportation. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) encourages local government to work more closely with transportation and health professionals on non-traditional recreation projects such as bicycle lanes and walking routes to and from schools and businesses. They also encourage local governments to consider outdoor recreation sites and facilities as integral elements of the public infrastructure, as important to the public health and welfare as utilities and roads. The safety of trail-users will continue to be a priority.

Trails need to be provided for at every opportunity. Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley identified proposed trail corridors in their plans as well as connection points to the County-wide system. Anacortes completed the popular Tommy Thompson Parkway Trail and is

looking to extend the trail along the Guemes Channel, towards Washington Park. A proposed trail connecting the Anacortes Community Forest Lands to the Deception Pass Park is perhaps the longest unfulfilled need in Skagit County. The trail has been in every SCPR comp plan dating back to the first edition, written in 1972. The connections provide valuable Fidalgo Island recreational and transportation routes of east and west as well as north and south, respectively. Skagit County will work in finding regional trail links to this and other outside agency trails. City, County, State, and Federal agencies should continue to work together to assure a healthy and user-friendly trail system in Skagit County.

Skagit County residents have identified a need for more primitive trails. Burlington has proposed these types of trails on Burlington Hill and Mount Vernon has recently expanded their trail system on Little Mountain. Anacortes has over 50 miles of primitive trails in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. Skagit County has proposals for more trails at Sharpe Park, Northern State Recreational Area and Pilchuck Forest. Skagit County Public Works and the City of Sedro-Woolley have been promoting the extension of the State Route 20 Trail between Burlington and Sedro-Woolley. ADA paved routes are proposed for sections of this trail. There is also a mile of ADA trail proposed at Lake Shannon.

The recommended recreational trails plan includes a combination of loop, destination and linear type trails. To complete these sections it will require in some cases, access easements or outright purchase of property. In other cases where no other options exist, the route may need to utilize existing road right-of-way to complete a segment. A description of the major recreation trails found in the plan is described below.

Trail Design Guidelines

Trail Corridors – The trails are to be routed so as to maintain a natural setting, to avoid unnecessary disturbance to private landowners adjacent to the trail and to preserve wildlife habitat and important vegetation. While the minimum acceptable trail easement is 25 feet, the more practical and desirable easement width is 35 feet except in riparian areas where it is 100 feet.

Road Crossings – Road crossings should occur at points of good visibility, perpendicular to the roadway (if possible) and at natural crossings, if possible. Full access sections should be equipped with curb cuts.

Signage – Trails should be signed at road crossings and all other public access points with signs that define uses and restrictions. More primitive trails should be signed only at the main entrances. These signs should describe uses, trail surface conditions, limitations, such as ADA degree of access.

Northern State Recreation Area Trails Plan

Level 1

The NSRA trails component is the development of an integrated non-motorized trail network throughout the Northern State Recreation Area property that provides for at least six miles of trail. Trails were identified as the highest priority type of facility to include at NSRA in the countywide survey administered in the NSRA planning process. Several trail types are included in the master plan for NSRA, including multiple use trails, interpretive trails, limited use trails, and exercise trails. The entire master plan for NSRA can be viewed in the appendices. Connecting neighborhoods to the NSRA trail system is a priority. The new berm trail around the alluvial fan will be an interpretive trail. Connecting the interpretive berm trail to form a loop has been mentioned by park users as something they would like to see accomplished. The trail accessing the park from the west at McGarigle Road needs to be improved. A boardwalk type trail should be established parallel to SR 20 to connect the two north and south berm trails at NSRA.

Centennial Trail

Level 1

The Centennial Trail is a regional trail system with the potential to run continuous through Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom County. These neighboring counties have been actively buying and creating connections with monies dedicated within their capital facility plans, with scheduled completion planned for 2012. The Skagit portion is divided into two segments. The northern segment between Sedro-Woolley and Whatcom County will follow State Route 9. Because this segment is on-street, it will probably be used primarily for bicycling. South of Sedro-Woolley, the Centennial Trail follows abandoned railroad corridor. The County has purchased

approximately eight miles of this route but anticipates that the remaining portion could be located within street rights-of-way, at least in the near-term. This is an excellent opportunity to create multi-use trails for bicyclists, walkers, horseback riders and other users. This is envisioned to be part of an overall off-street trail one day connecting British Columbia to Seattle. The initial segment of the trail is located near the Snohomish/Skagit County boundary and was once owned by the Pilchuck Tree Farm. Within the boundaries of the site, three separate creeks converge. Immediately south of the site, Snohomish County owns an additional parcel of land, which has been identified as a potential trailhead for the Centennial Trail. A master plan should be developed for the Pilchuck site. Possible plans could include a wetland interpretive area containing boardwalks, signs and shared interpretive facilities.

Sharpe Park Trail Extension

Level 1

Sharpe Park encompasses conifer lowland forest, a wetland, rocky bald, a seasonal stream, and coastal frontage property. These combined land characteristics make the property very unique biologically due to the habitat interface of these differing features. Sharpe Park is also a vital connecting link between shoreline and the Montgomery-Duban Headlands. Together, Montgomery-Duban Headlands and Sharpe Park comprises a 110-acre natural area including almost a mile of rugged, natural shoreline on Rosario Strait. The property features a spectacular view, encompassing most of the Olympic Range, the straits, and Lopez, Allan, Burrows, and other islands. A mile of trail is proposed on the south end of the property, extending from the Bluff and dropping down to Fox Beach. A community group has approached SCPR to financially partner with the county on the potential purchase of a land-locked parcel at the south end of the park.

Cascade Trail Improvements

Level 1

The Cascade Trail will need some improvements made to trestles and pedestrian bridges in the coming years. Plans are being put together to regularly look at the structural integrity of the structures and prioritize maintenance needs based on the reports that come from these visits. A board walk at Wiseman Creek is needed to elevate the trail above the directional changes in flow location. The first mile of the trail should be paved west of Fruitdale Road. The trail should be maintained and enhanced to a higher standard near towns and cities.

Burlington to Sedro-Woolley Trail

Level 1

The City of Burlington paved a section of the trail and when budgets allow, Skagit County should finish the section they agreed to pave. A paved section will increase use significantly. Skagit County should work closely with the City of Sedro-Woolley to find a way for greater connectivity to their town.

Other Proposed Trail Development and/or acquisition

Level 1

In addition to the major trail routes described above, primitive trails should be developed in existing and proposed Open Space and day-use areas. Some of the specific areas should include:

- Squires Lake
- Chuckanut Mountain Area
- Skagit River Access
- Nichol's Bar
- Pressentin Park
- Sauk Park
- Swinomish Channel
- Bayview Ridge and Connections to Skagit Port Trails
- Other publicly owned lands and/or open space areas.

There is considerable desire for the public to have more access onto this regions dike and levee systems for recreation trail access. Skagit County parks should continue to be open to opportunities to assist and partner with the local dike districts to facilitate where appropriate access onto the dike systems.

Lake Shannon Trail

Level 2

A short ADA loop trail is planned for the Lake Shannon Boat Launch/camping area as part of proposed park plan. Also, a linear trail linking Concrete with Lake Shannon and Baker Lake may be possible with a long-term adaptive management fund made available through a recent Puget

Sound Energy relicensing process. Skagit County should remain involved with PSE and other recreational providers in the area to ensure the needs of County residents are being met.

Evergreen Trail

Level 2

This is a cross-island corridor trail on Fidalgo Island. It links Anacortes, San Juan Ferry Terminal, Washington Park, Heart Lake, Campbell Lake, Mount Erie, and Deception Pass. Most of the linkages utilize existing public land. Additional linkages need to be acquired and some physical obstacles need to be addressed. This trail program should be a coordinated effort between the City of Anacortes, Washington State Parks, Skagit County, non-profit organizations, and private landowners. A missing link currently exists between city and state owned lands. This void can be filled in a number of creative ways, including but not limited to:

- Voluntary conservation or trail easement grants
- Development of a revolving “conservation” fund that could purchase available properties and resell them after placing appropriate easements on the property.
- Purchase of available properties or trail easements in critical areas in cooperation with the City of Anacortes and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

WSPRC currently has some property in this area designated as potential acquisitions.

This proposed trail could also include the creation of a wildlife corridor between the Anacortes Community Forest Lands and Deception Pass State Park. The open space corridor would provide for important wildlife connections in that part of Fidalgo Island. The wildlife corridor can help to accommodate the movement of wildlife between the State and City Forestlands. Wildlife corridors are important for the long-term genetic health of island wildlife by providing links for subpopulations. Such an Open Space Corridor can be created by purchasing properties, by keeping existing rural zoning, by conservation easement, etc. Habitat connectivity in this part of Fidalgo Island is very important for the long-term health the biotic community. Since there will be more and more pressures to develop these properties on Fidalgo Island, the pursuance of wildlife corridors are important at present time. Once these lands are lost to development, the opportunities may never again become available. Potential funding in partnership with a local

land trust should be pursued. This trail proposal has been in the comp plan since the inception of Skagit County Parks and Recreation.

2. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Proposed Bayview Community Park Development

Level 2

The Bayview Ridge area is unincorporated but designated by Skagit County as an area of urban growth. It is located on the hill west of I-5 and is being developed at a much higher density than neighboring unincorporated lands. To provide park services in this area, a community park site and trails are proposed. The timeline for the development of this park should parallel the timeline for other Bayview sub area infrastructure. The park should therefore be completed as the subarea reaches capacity. Trail corridors should be acquired as made available. Connections to the Skagit Port Trails are highly recommended.

Proposed Northern State Recreation Area Development

Level 2

A master plan has been prepared for this site and includes about 525 acres or 72% of natural open space. Other recommended facilities include a significant trail system, an adult softball complex, a day-use park, environmental education center, camping area, a multi-use event center and RV camping. Initial plans for development include trails, restrooms, and parking. Subsequent development is dependent upon the acquirement of funds. It is strongly recommended that the entire 726-acre site be included within the urban growth area of Sedro Woolley to accommodate proposed future facilities at urban levels of service throughout the site. A cross-country course has been developed here and is used by local schools. A user group has approached the county expressing an interest in developing a dog park in a portion of the site. The historic buildings should be renovated and preserved. A strong focus should remain on trail improvements and equestrian opportunities. The property was purchased with RCO funds and need to be protected for recreational use that fit within the guidelines of the received grants.

Proposed Shooting/Training Range:

Level 2

The need for a shooting range has become apparent because of random shooting in sand and gravel quarries or other unmanaged areas. Because of the concern for safety, shooting in many of these areas is now restricted. A survey done by the state in 2007 shows 7.3% of its residents enjoy hunting and/or shooting. This figure is assumed to be much higher in rural counties such as Skagit. Hunting license sales in the State have remained steady and these hunters have a need to practice their skills at an organized, safe, and reliable facility. Gun sales are at record sales and these gun owners need places to fire their weapons. Hunting licenses are up in the past few years and often call requesting places to site their guns.

To accommodate the need for a safe and reliable recreational shooting area, an advisory committee made up of approximately fifty people studied several site locations. The Frailey Mountain site was chosen through a selection process in which two environmental impact statements were prepared and six separate sites were looked at in detail. The Frailey Mountain Site is located in the south central portion of the County on land was reconveyed to Skagit County from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The site consists of approximately 400 acres.

The County has prepared an environmental impact statement for the Frailey Mountain Shooting/Training range, which includes the development of a recreational and qualification level shooting facility. The facility will provide a local area for law enforcement training. The land will be owned by Skagit County but developed, operated and maintained by private leaseholders.

Since this park has been acquired, the DNR has restricted the access from Granstrom Road. Skagit County needs to work with DNR to keep this access open for recreational open space.

Indoor Recreation Center

Level 2

Although the survey indicated interest for indoor recreation space for sports, recreation classes and swimming, the previous proposal has moved down the priority list from its level 1 position in 2003, mostly due to a lack of support for comprehensive funding. Currently, there are no indoor recreation centers in Skagit County and because of this void and the continual outcry for greater aquatic opportunities; we are placing the facility at a level 2 need. The efforts to create a

recreational center will have to have support from a broad spectrum of private, public, and non-profit supporters, along with a central champion that is prepared to rally a strong campaign. Ultimately, the proposal will almost certainly require a separate taxing district and approval by the voters. The municipal park departments within Skagit County are currently not large enough to financially support a facility on their own.

Design Requirements:

- The facility should provide a wide range of facilities and activities that will be of interest to all age groups
- Space should be provided for competitive and active sports as well as places for recreation and instructional classes, small and medium sized meetings, receptions and large group gatherings, aerobics and other exercise programs, etc.
- Multi-use spaces should be favored over single purpose spaces. Flexibility is very important.
- The building should be attractive with a comfortable environment suitable for leisure activities. Active recreation spaces should be clearly separated from passive spaces.

It is paramount to have joint collaboration with other public entities, non-profits and/or private groups who provide recreational services. A parcel of land located near Skagit Valley College and currently owned by SCPR is available for consideration of such a facility. A “first right-of-refusal” should be granted to the Skagit Valley College for this parcel. Many schools have built-in recreational facility fees to better accommodate and encourage the health of their students and staff. These fees help pay the capital and maintenance of the recreational facility.

Community groups have suggested the possibility of an interim use of one of the many vacant high ceiling or “big box” retail stores in the county as a temporary indoor recreation center. The chance to re-program some of this un-used space for a short period is worth exploring and may be beneficial to both individuals seeking increased indoor recreation opportunities as well as private property owners.

Skagit River Interpretive Center

Level 3

The Skagit River Bald Eagle Awareness Team, in conjunction with SCPR, actively pursued an interpretive/office building at Howard Steelhead Park. In 2009, we were able to renovate the old ranger quarters on the north end of the park for the Skagit River Bald Eagle Awareness Team (SRBEAT), to do their winter operations. Although this facility was thought of as temporary, it will most likely be the facility for interpretive activities for the foreseeable future. SRBEAT had successfully operated a seasonal facility at the Rockport Fire Hall for the seven seasons prior, offering educational programs on topics ranging from North Cascades geology to local history. There have been thousands of visitors and SRBEAT provides a valuable service and economic boost to the upper reaches of the Skagit River watershed. Although the new interpretive center is no longer able to adequately provide for the growing demand for interpretive services, it will need to suffice until the day in which partnership funding becomes available for a new facility. A multi-purpose environmental/interpretive center at Howard Miller Steelhead Park would provide a permanent location for increasingly popular recreational opportunities, more commonly known as Eco-Tourism or Nature Tourism.

Over 5.5 million people live within a 90 mile drive of the Skagit Basin and the Interpretive Center would provide a year-round facility for a multiplicity of events and activities. The economic benefit potential will be very strong as the groups it will draw to the region will include travel professionals, families, seniors, conservation organizations, outdoor groups, bicycle groups, eagle/bird watchers, bus tour operators, fishing groups, rafters/boaters, Elderhostel, teacher workshops, school groups, vacationers, County Park and Recreational groups, and general visitors.

The Interpretive Center with a 200+ capacity would work as a visitor center with interpretive opportunities and enhance Skagit County's ability to benefit from our abundant natural resources. The center will provide a variety of recreational learning experiences that promote an understanding of the natural processes that make the Skagit River System valuable and install a sense of stewardship and a conservation ethic.

Rexville Overlook Development

Level 3

This site is located off Bradshaw Road, in the community of Rexville. It is a small hillock covered in blackberry bushes and is the former site of Rexville School. There is a small roadway turnout that provides parking opportunities. A short climb up the moderate slope affords wonderful views across patterned agricultural lands to the distant coastline and islands. Skagit County should develop a master plan for this property. The plan should include a viewing platform with picnic tables. The cost to develop this park is nominal. The community should be reached out to in an effort to ease their concerns about such a facility.

Pomona Grange Park Development

Level 3

This site is located off Old Highway 99, about eight miles north of Burlington. It was purchased via a grant from the RCO. It contains a group shelter, five picnic sites, a portable restroom, a short nature trail and creek frontage. It is named for the volunteer group who constructed the shelter and has annual work parties to maintain the site. It is located across the creek from a state fish hatchery.

A master plan should be developed for this site. The plan should include a paved trail for the interpretive walkway for the disabled. Also, the State should be encouraged to make the hatchery site available for educational programs currently being held at the park. This would allow learning about artificial as well as natural fish production and rearing.

3. RECOMMENDED RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE PLAN

Depending upon one's point of view, the definition of Open Space varies widely. For some it includes land designated primarily for the preservation of wildlife habitat or agricultural farmland. To others, it may take on a broader meaning to include environmentally sensitive areas, lands used to buffer, and space to create a sense of seclusion.

In this report, Recreational Open Space (ROS) is defined as undeveloped land left primarily in its reported natural condition and used for passive recreational purposes, creation of separation and seclusion, and as buffers between urban uses. Sites designated primarily for agricultural farmland and wildlife habitat are not considered in this category of Open Space. ROS is further

defined as large parcels of land that because of unique or scenic quality should be carefully monitored, planned and used. They may permit a variety of land uses as long as open space qualities are conserved. Maximum development is low impact day-use activities and trails.

Currently, most public open space acres and some wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas in the County are managed by state and federal agencies or the City of Anacortes. Both Burlington and Mount Vernon have proposed open space corridors in their comprehensive plans. LaConner has policies related to open space areas but no specific areas have been set aside. The largest open space area in the County is the Wild and Scenic River Corridor, which is managed by the US Forest Service.

Skagit County currently has some undeveloped park sites which function as recreation open space areas. These are sites which permit public access but provide little or no facilities or services. Some of them will eventually be developed, providing both recreational open space and active play areas. On the other hand, some of the County park sites are not anticipated to be developed for a long period of time and will remain as reserves for future generations.

Another open space classification is recommended and is called Recreation Resource Areas (RRA). These are large areas of land that because of unique or scenic quality should be carefully monitored, planned and used. This is not to say that they cannot be used for a mixture of land uses but because of their unique characteristics, the open space quality should be promoted. When applying this classification it means that special studies and efforts should be made to balance the open space qualities with other land uses.

Four of these areas have been identified and include Chuckanut Mountain, Pleasant Ridge, Butler Hill, and the lower Skagit River Corridor (downstream of the wild and scenic river designation). These areas have high value as both urban wildlife habitat and recreational open space, and deserve consistent and coordinated management. The RRA designation does not mean the County should acquire these areas in their entirety, but instead makes effort to ensure careful consideration is given to their natural and recreational values. This plan recommends that 10-20% of each of the recommended RRA's be made available for public use as Recreational Open Space. Many of the Lands owned by the WDNR have revenues from sales dedicated towards schools. These lands need to be fully controlled by the WDNR for timber practices.

The Skagit County Planning Department has recently completed a full review of potential open space areas under GMA requirements. Recreational Open Space areas were forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration and the Plan was officially adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2009. The plan should be thought of as an extension of this parks and recreation plan.

There are a variety of tools available to protect other open space areas. Acquisition is an option and most likely necessary to provide broad public access. Other options include scenic and access easements, development restrictions, etc. It will be necessary to work closely with the Planning Department to ensure appropriate land use controls are in place to achieve open space objectives. It should be kept in mind that much of the natural open space now exists as sensitive lands and will be preserved through current land use controls. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate for the county to purchase these parcels when other mechanisms now exist to maintain their natural environment.

Proposed Open Space Development and/or Acquisition

Level 2

Opportunities to acquire open space lands should be pursued when possible. Skagit County should coordinate and cooperate with both public and private sector interests to further park and recreation opportunities. Park planning and land acquisition efforts should consider existing and planned infrastructure, population served, environmental constraints, and available resources. Partnerships with local land trusts and other non-profit agencies should be pursued as a way to find recreational opportunities at a low cost to Skagit County taxpayers. parklands, as we have at Big Rock Park.

Proposed Big Rock Park Improvements

Level 2

Permanent, safe, and legal access needs to be established to this park. Although the property is currently landlocked, it was given to the County with the intention for recreational use. Formal parking and trailhead will also need to be established. Skagit County should stay engaged with Mount Vernon Planning processes to ensure the creation of a safe and legal access to the Big Rock property. Adjacent development proposals should be looked at for trail access

opportunities that will benefit the neighbors and general public. Future properties need to be acquired with the necessary safe and legal access.

4. RECOMMENDED SHORELINES PLAN

The ability of Skagit County residents to gain access to their shorelines has been a persistent issue over the past couple of decades. The loss of shoreline to development and the loss of shoreline access are occurring at a more rapid rate. Concern has been growing that not enough avenues to reach Skagit County's shorelines remain and pressure is mounting on existing access ways.

Demand for public access seems to be rising as participation in recreational boating, fishing, and shellfish harvesting grows while traditional access sites and affordable shorefront lands suitable for access diminish. Clearly, public access to Skagit County's shorelines is an issue that will not go away. Once lands are lost to development, the ability to access shorelines will be lost forever. Because of the popularity of shoreline and the diminishing ability to access these shorelines, the priority for the acquisition and enhancement of these properties ranks fairly high. The monies available for these improvements vary.

Our County abounds with tideland recreational resources—miles of beaches and many important estuaries, in particular the Skagit and Samish River basins. In many ways, they are the legacies of Skagit we want to appreciate and preserve. To that end, we recommend and support working with local governments and non-profit agencies to find ways to acquire intertidal lands for the enjoyment of our public. In 2010, we partnered with the WDNR and The Skagit Land Trust to keep tidelands on Samish Island available to the public. We will continue to look for creative ways to protect similar properties in the years to come.

Howard Miller Steelhead Park Proposal

Level 1

Only 13 acres of this site are currently developed with the remaining 80 acres lying across a small stream channel to the west, all of which is in flood plain. The existing developed site includes picnic areas, picnic shelters (one enclosed), a dump station, boat launch, park manager residence, 54 RV units, an office building, two Adirondack shelters and a tent camping area. We currently have two camping cabins for rent as well and would like to add four more in the coming

years. HMSP has a club house and an interpretive center. With the addition of a new rail car bridge across Regan Creek, we are proposing to add a dozen dry camping (no utilities, walk in only) sites to the west end of the park. The park receives many regular users from outside the region. Approximately 80% of site users are non-County residents and many are seniors.

There are currently two entrances to the park, one from Sauk Valley Road and the other through the local neighborhood on Alfred Street. The site is not gated and no entrance fee is charged for day-use. During the Eagle Festival and the eagle viewing season, 200 or more cars may attempt to park on the site. This heavy use period occurs mostly on weekends from December to March. Many boaters who ride commercial rafts park their cars on the site prior to being transported upriver to a boat launch area. A portion of the developed site in the floodway and noise from the nearby tavern is occasionally a disturbance.

It is recommended that the open meadow located west of the developed portion of the site be utilized for other active recreation uses. This should include additional camping, group shelters, river access and facilities for local community use. Any of these projects should be developed with consideration of the location of the floodway so that there is not an expected repair cost when the expected flooding occurs.

The heavily wooded portion found at the west end of the park should not be developed and remain as a wildlife corridor linking riparian habitat with other surrounding land. One of the most important tasks to complete should be an overall park site master plan to determine the impact boundaries of development and permitted uses. The plan could include a new office, interpretive center, parking for 200 cars, a gated entrance system, signage, electrical upgrades to the lower end, and shoreline stabilization. A new boat ramp and asphalt has been added to the park in the recent years. The upper road is chip-sealed and needs to be maintained regularly.

Clear Lake Park Renovations

Level 1

Whereas this waterfront area once was a lifeguarded facility, we have moved into a new era in which Clear Lake will be a park with passive recreational amenities, including picnicking and sunbathing. The park has had some major renovations in the past few years, including the upgrading of the playground structure and the removal of the swim based infrastructure. The site

currently contains picnic tables, a playground structure, a lawn for sunbathing, a sand volleyball court, and a small picnic shelter. A substantially sized, abandoned bathhouse is central to the grounds, reducing the useful square footage of the overall park. The park is fenced and the gate has been closed at dusk. Over the past couple of years, we have had the Clear Lake fire department reopen the gate after dawn of each day. Improvements that can further enhance the park include improved parking and access at the entry. The aging concession building/bathhouse is beyond its useful life and with more space needed to accommodate picnicking, there is a call to raze the structure. In its place, there is a proposal to add a large covered picnic shelter with accommodating barbeque facilities. The picnic shelter will bring a level of health and safety to the park by providing some much needed shade and protection. This will increase the parks conduciveness to families. The picnic shelter will not add impervious surface to the site since it will sit directly on the footprint of the razed bathhouse structure. With strong demand from the community, a self contained restroom should also be considered in the near future. Partnerships may have to be established to care for the facility, especially if future capital upgrades progress beyond the ability of a thinly stretched parks department to adequately care for the facility on its own.

Throughout the year, the beach is open for public use at no fee and is as popular as ever. An annual summer event, the Clear Lake Triathlon, is sponsored by the department and brings around 300 triathlon entrants plus 200-300 spectators each July. SCPR will continue to host this event.

Proposed Similk Bay Shoreline Access

Level 2

This proposed shoreline access area is privately owned and once featured grass with picnic tables and a portable restroom. In the past, the owner has indicated some interest in partnering with Skagit County Parks. The developed area is adjacent to a berm leading to an extensive tidal flat with evidence of a former pier. An oyster house and an old restroom are also found on the site. The intertidal area was once used for raising oysters. This property could one day serve as a tidal access, both for neighbors and for community residents, much like the beach access at Samish Island.

Proposed Lake Park Development and/or Acquisition

Level 2

Lakefront recreational resources are extremely rare in Skagit County. A long-term objective of SCPWR and its partners was to develop a major regional park on a centrally located lake in Skagit County (Big Lake or Clear Lake would best fill this void). Skagit County is bestowed with a number of beautiful lakes and public access is limited. The site should include an array of day-use opportunities.

Proposed Conway Park Renovation

Level 3

This park is located adjacent to the bridge over the South Fork of the Skagit River, near Conway. This site is not fully developed but because of its location, receives considerable use. The site contains a paved boat launch, a portable restroom and is used primarily for fishing and launching fishing boats. A fenced, grass playfield/Little League baseball field is also part of the site but lies on the other side of the dike. There is an opportunity to connect the main portion of the site to the playfield on the south with a trail under the bridge. Formalized parking and an open grass multi-use play area and other improvements should be considered for the baseball field.

The boat launch site is subject to seasonal flooding and was almost completely inundated during recent floods. Because of this, it is no longer conducive land for overnight camping and active day-use activities. The site is important for parking trailers and launching boats. It is a popular site for launching boats during the salmon fishing and duck hunting seasons.

Proposed Lake Shannon Park Development

Level 3

Baker Lake, in Whatcom County, has a variety of recreational developments, while Lake Shannon to the south has a primitive recreational site with no legal road access to the lake. At Lake Shannon, surrounding lands are mostly in private ownership (except DNR lands on the western shore) and shorelines are steep. Osprey and Loons regularly use the lake and shoreline. It is recommended that safe, legal and permanent access is provided to Lake Shannon. The site should include day-use facilities, overnight camping, and a boat ramp. Lakefront recreational resources are extremely rare in Skagit County. Survey results indicate shoreline access to be a primary need of County residents. Standards developed for public access in this plan should

focus on the types and scale of facilities developed at other Northwest reservoirs. The formation of this lake has created a demand for its use. The project proponent (Puget Sound Energy) must provide facilities to accommodate this demand (through the current relicensing process).

Currently, public access to Lake Shannon is across public and privately owned lands. Although Puget Sound Energy (PSE) provides portable restrooms and dumpsters at one southeastern lakeshore site, there are no formal public recreational facilities and services available to the public at this reservoir. The southeastern shoreline site is an open dirt-surfaced area with minimal shade where visitors park RV's and erect tents to camp. Visitor surveys that were done as a part of the relicensing process, show low satisfaction with access roads, availability of potable water, cleanliness of the area, facility maintenance, and quality of the parking area. Lake Shannon had the highest level of user dissatisfaction of all project sites that were surveyed by PSE. The lack of developed facilities means the users have very few limitations when visiting Lake Shannon leading shoreline degradation and long term tenants.

Skagit County has proposed a measure that would require a public easement for roaded access to the Lake Shannon southeastern site and a one mile loop trail along the shoreline. Although PSE has resisted to the request for some of the amenities, the community has demanded through surveys, use patterns, and with comments, SCPR continues to advocate for all of the activities addressed, including: one family campground with up to 24 sites, a group campground, a designated boat trailer parking area, vault restrooms, potable water, trash containers, fire rings, tables, and a kiosk. These amenities were all part of the original measure proposed by the parks department based on the needs analysis. A day-use area should also be provided with a picnic shelter and fire grills and tables. The proposed measure would provide the first and only developed recreational facility at Lake Shannon.

Proposed Grandy Lake Development

Level 3

This primitive camping area is located off Baker Lake Road about five miles northeast of highway 20. This site was given to the county and includes picnic tables, a portable restroom building, and undeveloped parking spurs. The site is used to capacity on the opening weekends of fishing and hunting season. The site has become an overflow to the Baker River recreational developments and many of the users of the Baker Lake facilities stop by to use our rest stations. Because of this,

mitigation costs should be recovered for rest station pumping and new rest station facilities. New sites need to be added and a group camping site should be constructed in the near future. A master plan should be developed for this site.

Pressentin Park Proposal

Level 3

This proposed regional park is located off Highway 20 in Marblemount. It was acquired in 1990 with the assistance of an RCO grant. More acreage was added in 2009. Currently developed only for trail use, Pressentin is comprised of three distinct areas, an upper forested area, a middle open meadow, and lower (across a drainage swale) floodplain terrace. The middle of the meadow or terrace was formerly used to graze pack animals and was assumed to be the site for a park development (about 20 acres). Most of the site fronts a secondary channel of the Skagit River. A new assessment should be done on the amount of developable parkland due to a new assumption that most all of the land is periodically flooded and would be difficult to manage as a formal campground and/or day-use area. The river island opposite the site belongs to the Nature Conservancy, and is maintained as eagle wintering habitat (specifically, nighttime roosting area). Deed restrictions for the site are relatively flexible. Concerns regarding adjacent eagle wintering habitat caused abandonment of proposals for a boat launch at the site.

The long-term plan is for this site was for it to be developed as a destination park for county-wide and regional use with additional facilities placed for local community use. This plan needs to be revisited and a feasibility study needs to be conducted. Future park plans should be slated for areas that aren't prone to flooding.

Proposed Sauk Park Development

Level 3

This existing site is located about ¼ of a mile north of Lower Government Bridge off Sauk Valley Road. About half of the site is located on the upland side of the road. The park currently provides primitive camping opportunities but is very minimally developed. Changes to the site occur with each flood event. A boat launch used to exist on the site but eroded away during a high-water event. The access point, near the campground provides good walking access to a broad, sandy riverside area. This sand bar grew with the flood of 2006 and is a very nice day-

use area for picnicking, fishing, and walking. Camp units are mostly situated on a relatively steep bank along the river. Camping continues to grow in popularity at this campground and more sites may become necessary in the coming years. Uncontrolled access from units to the river has caused some bank erosion, resulting in escalating gradients in some areas. This situation could be considered a hazard in at least one camp unit. A group site camp or horse camp area may be considered for the upland side of the road.

The site is adjacent to DNR lands, which abuts National Forest Lands. A power line crosses the roadway just north of the site. Though timber harvest and management is active in the area, there are trail opportunities. A master plan should be developed for this site. Several acres of the Sauk Parklands are across the river from the campground. Careful consideration should be given to equestrian opportunities when developing the site plan.

5. RECOMMENDED SPORTS FIELDS PLAN

Considerable analysis was given to evaluating the role the County should take in managing and maintaining sport fields. While organized sports have historically been the function of local communities, Skagit County assumed this role because a clear need was expressed.

Since there is a great demand for more sport fields and the County is already managing a major complex, it is recommended that the County continue with managing the fields they currently have, while supporting agencies that are making efforts create new fields.

Proposed Skagit Valley Playfields Improvements:

Level 1

Skagit County obtained 25 acres of land in 1979 through a 50 year lease from the State. The surrounding properties and the concession building belong to Skagit Valley College. The site is heavily used, averaging 20 weekends of scheduled softball tournaments. SCPR adult softball leagues play weeknights on all 4 softball fields up to 55 games per week. The softball fields are used for league play from the first of March through the middle of October. Drainage problems remain on Walberg softball field and should be improved during this plan cycle. Improved drainage was done on Memorial Field in 2011. Ultimately, we would like to finish drainage, dugouts, fencing, and bleachers on all fields.

Site recommendations include:

- Increase the number of paved parking stalls
- Renovate, including new drainage, fencing, dugouts, backstops, and lighting.
- Bleachers/seating on softball fields (some current bleachers do not meet ADA or needs or safety code).
- Improvement of internal pathways, including ADA accessibility.

Northern State Recreational Area Ball fields

Level 3

The ball field component at NSRA includes a destination youth and adult ball fields complex that creates an exciting baseball environment by providing state of the art play fields, integrated parking, concessions, restrooms, maintenance facilities, and picnic areas. An additional goal is to incorporate aesthetic values as well as conservation and restoration of natural resources into the planning of the ball field area. The ball field component includes the following elements:

- 5 youth/adult softball fields
- 4 youth baseball fields
- 1 youth/ adult baseball field
- Adequate parking for the fields
- Sufficient space for maintenance and operations
- Adequate concessions
- Play areas

There is not currently adequate funding or staff to care for the build out of the master plan. For now, SCPR is pursuing the completion of the trail system.

MEETING ADA REQUIREMENTS

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and in 2011 provided an update which is the most recent in a series of laws relating to handicap access. The intent of this law was to strengthen the accessibility requirements for all facilities used by the public. As it relates to park and recreation facilities, the law is intended to insure that a person with a disability has the same opportunity to achieve their recreation goals as those without a disability.

Essential to the ADA is the belief that services, programs and facilities shall be provided in the most integrated setting possible. A public agency is not obligated to guarantee participation but to only provide the opportunity. In addition, structural changes are not necessarily required if other methods will result in equal access.

The definition of disability varies widely and includes a variety of impairments and limitations. This includes people with mobility impairments, visual limitations, hearing impairments, mental disabilities, learning impairments and emotional disabilities. In addition, it includes elderly citizens

as well as people with temporary disabilities, such as a broken arm or leg. It is estimated that 57% of the population has some sort of disability or physical limitation.

MEETING ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING FACILITIES

The approach to meeting accessibility requirements for existing parks and recreational facilities is based on the significance and/or relative level of development of the site. The more significant and intensively used a recreation area becomes, the greater the accessibility must become. Recreation areas that are highly developed such as neighborhood parks, community parks or special use areas require a high level of accessibility. These types of recreation areas should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities. In contrast, a very passive area, such as natural open space that has little development and is seldom used, requires less accessibility.

Where evaluation of existing facilities becomes difficult is when an accommodation would result in a substantial economic burden or would require a major change to the nature of service. Under these conditions, a park and recreation agency may refuse to make the accommodations. However, determining a substantial economic burden is difficult.

Factors that should be considered include: the cost of change as it relates to the overall operating budget of the agency, the actual cost of the change, the number of individuals who would benefit and the availability of existing funds within the current operating budget.

MEETING ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW FACILITIES

Meeting ADA requirements for new development is easier and slightly different. The development of new parks and recreation facilities allows a greater flexibility in terms of design opportunities for disabled. Because the intent of ADA is to provide a disabled person with the opportunity to experience a full range of recreational opportunities, new park and recreation facilities should be designed to provide experiences for all ability levels. Individuals with disabilities who enjoy a challenge should be accommodated as well as those who prefer easier outdoor recreation experiences. Ideally, individual sites should provide a full range of opportunities for those disabilities.

However, due to the size and physical characteristics of some sites, offering a variety of ability levels is not always possible. Due to their size, larger sites often have a greater opportunity for

accommodating varying levels of development and as a result may require greater accessibility. In general, recreational facilities should provide the highest practical level of access to people with disabilities, though sometimes, that access to facilities may be limited due to physical features of the site.

ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following is the basic accessibility requirements as identified by the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. These standards should be modified according to the level of accessibility required of the site.

1. Parking/Access Routes

- a. One designated handicapped space per 25 total spaces
- b. Eight wide parking spaces with 5' wide access state for cars and 8' access aisle for vans.
- c. 50% of handicap spaces for cars and 50% spaces for vans.

2. Pathways/Trails/Ramps

- a. A handicap accessible pathway must be provided to all features of the park.
- b. Ramp required if slope is greater then 1:20 (5%).
- c. Maximum slope on ramp is 1:12 (8%).
- d. Ramp landings 5 feet by 5 feet for every 30 inch rise.
- e. Ramp width is 3 feet minimum.
- f. Two inch high curbs are required along edge of ramp.
- g. Ramp must have a hard non-slip surface.
- h. Handrails are required on ramps and trails with steep cross slopes.
- i. Pathways and trail grades should not exceed 1:20 (5%).
- j. Width of pathways and trails for one-way access is 4 feet and for two-way is 5 feet.
- k. Tactile warnings should be provided along surfaces of potentially dangerous areas.

3. Fishing Facilities

- a. The connection between the fishing pad and pathway should be hard surfaced.
- b. A curb and/or railing should be provided at water's edge.
- c. Two accessible fishing stations are required for each accessible parking space.
- d. Each fishing station should consist of a linear foot of fishing on a dock or 5 linear feet of fishing area on shore pads.
- e. Shade and shelter should be provided for each station.

4. Boating Facilities

- a. Docks, piers and gangways must meet accessible pathway and ramp requirements.
- b. Curbs and/or railings are required.

5. Restrooms

- a. Connection between restrooms and pathways should be hard surfaced.
- b. Facilities such as toilets, stalls and sinks should be designed to meet accessible requirements.

6. Playgrounds

- a. Connection between playground and parking should be hard surfaced and meet required design standards.
- b. Entrance to the playground should be appropriately signed.
- c. Pathway from the entrance of the playground to the primary play area shall be fully accessible.
- d. At least 30% of the play equipment shall be accessible and easily reached from the playground path of travel.
- e. The playground equipment should encourage interaction between children with and without disabilities.
- f. The sensation of activity (such as swinging, spinning, etc.) shall be equally available to those with disabilities.

- g. Surface material beneath the play equipment should be firm and level to permit unassisted travel by a person in a wheelchair.

7. Picnic Areas

- a. Locate on level grade
- b. Pad beneath the picnic pad should be hard surfaced
- c. Connection between picnic pad and pathway should be hard surfaced
- d. Facilities such as tables, benches and grill should be designed to meet accessible requirements.

8. Beach/Waterfront

- a. Some portion of the beach must be firm to the water's edge.
- b. Access into the water must be firm and safe.

9. Information/Signage

- a. Site information related to accessibility should be made available in public documents.
- b. If the park has an entrance that is not accessible, then a sign must be provided indicating where an accessible entrance is located.
- c. Site signage is required that designates if the park is accessible for those with disabilities.

CHAPTER 12

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Recommendations for park sites, recreational open space, trails, and other facilities are discussed in the preceding chapter. Resources to develop these improvements are identified in this section and will come from many sources. Some of these funding sources are new to the County, whereas others have been used in the past. The intent of this chapter is to identify a six year strategy for funding park and recreation improvements. Whereas many counties have established County funds for real estate acquisition and capital projects, Skagit County has no dedicated source. Most Counties use Conservation Futures Funds for funding parklands. In Skagit County, these funds are exclusively used for the Farmland Legacy Program. Because of this, Skagit County Parks and Recreation is required to find creative means of finding monies to fund projects. Funding can come from grants and non-profit organizations. SCPR is constantly looking for ways to fund acquisition and development projects. Some of those potential sources are listed in this chapter.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

The following themes will guide the implementation of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan:

Parks Will:

- Focus on the maintenance and upgrade of existing parkland for regional and community use.
- Pursue opportunities for expanded use of existing developed and undeveloped parks.
- Pursue land-banking as a way to preserve threatened parkland and critical area.
- Develop and maintain partnerships to improve the delivery of regional and community parks.
- Explore innovations in planning, development, and ongoing stewardship/management of parks and recreation.
- Solicit community input and support through programming and public involvement.
- Work with the Skagit Land Trust and Skagit County Natural Resource staff to partner in land acquisition and protection.
- Work with other community groups, agencies, and individuals to partner in park acquisition and development

Acquisition Priorities:

- Acquisitions which expand and improve existing parks.
- Acquisition of critical habitat and natural area.
- Acquire property and/or facilities that fill priority needs of Skagit County residents.

CAPITAL FACILITY PLANNING

Major Park capital improvement projects funded by Skagit County are through an established planning tool known as the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). It identifies, prioritizes and determines capital needs for the County. The CFP is the major planning tool for park related facilities including parkland acquisition, development, redevelopment and renovation. The CFP is a 6-year financing plan, evaluated and updated every year by the Skagit County Board of Commissioners.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL FACILITY PLANNING

In 1989 the Growth Management Act fundamentally changed the way in which public infrastructure was provided. Essentially, the GMA required jurisdictions to identify necessary infrastructure needs, and develop clear funding plans to meet those needs. This narrowed the list of projects on many jurisdictions' capital improvement programs; only those projects with a reasonable chance of funding were to be included. By creating finite plans which are tied to the available financial resources, the GMA essentially mandated that governments "live within their means."

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

1.) Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition Fund:

A special fund created by a coalition of recreation and wildlife groups with the intent of preserving wildlife habitats and open space and developing recreation areas. For the 2011-2013 Biennium, the legislative appropriation is \$42 million. In recent years this budget has been as high as \$80 million.

2.) Property Transfer Excise Tax (Real Estate Excise Tax - REET):

A tax assessed on the sale of property and administered by local counties and cities. Revenue can only be used to finance capital facilities specified in the local government's

Capital Facilities Plan. This fund is well below historical averages due to the lack of activity in real estate sales.

3.) County General Fund:

This category includes general funds allocated to the Skagit County Department of Parks and Recreation for annual expenditures and capital development. This has been reduced significantly over recent years.

4.) Park Impact Fees:

Development fees imposed by a county or city for park land acquisitions and development. Fees charged to developers are typically based upon a set amount per residential unit. This amount is calculated to represent the development's share of public improvements necessitated by growth.

Credits can be given to developers that contribute land, improvements or other assets. Funds must be used for capital facilities required by growth, and not for current deficiencies in levels of service. Fee revenues cannot be used for operations.

This fee is currently voluntary in Skagit County and does not represent a significant revenue stream. In the public opinion survey conducted as part of this plan, 82% of the respondent indicated "YES" when asked the question "Recognizing that it may increase the cost of new housing, should Skagit County require developers to pay a fee for parks, open space and trail systems." More intensely zoned subareas, including PUDS, should set aside land and pay for adequate park construction in their developments.

5.) Short Term Special Levy:

A property tax for construction and/or operation levied for a set number of years (typically 1-3 years). A special levy requires a 60% voter approval.

6.) General Obligation Bond:

A property tax for the sale of construction bonds. The tax assessment can be levied up to 30 years. Passage requires a 60% majority approval of 40% of the voters who voted at the last election. This approach is usually used for major projects.

7.) Revenue Bonds:

Revenue from the operation of the facility pays for the capital cost and debt service. This does not require a vote of the people.

8.) LWCF:

These are grants distributed from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Grants pay matching funds of the cost of acquisition and development. At one time, this was a major funding program for recreation programs. The program is administered locally by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The Skagit County Parks Department should partner with the Public Works Natural Resource Division to identify and acquire lands that fit within the needs of both departments.

9.) Department of Ecology:

Grant monies are available from the Coastal Zone Management account and pay up to 50% of the project cost. They are primarily used for shoreline acquisition and public access.

10.) HUD Grants:

Grant monies are available from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development for a wide variety of projects. Most are distributed in the lower income areas of the community. Grants can be up to 100% of project cost. Funds may not be used for maintenance or operation of existing facilities.

11.) Aquatic Land Enhancement Fund:

This program, funded by the State Department of Natural Resources, will fund for acquisition and development of waterfront parks, public access and environmental protection. Within this fund is the "Wetland Stewardship Grant Program." This program will fund for the acquisition of locally significant wetlands.

12.) Initiative 213 Boating Funds:

Funds received from boating gas taxes are allocated to marine-related projects. A 50% match is required.

13.) Certificates of Participation:

A lease purchase approach in which a City or County sells Certificates of Participation (COP's) to a lending institution. The City or County pays off the loan from revenue produced by the facility or from its own general operating budget. The lending institution holds title to the property until the COP's are repaid. This procedure does not require a vote of the public.

14.) Volunteer Efforts:

Volunteers can be quite effective in terms of contributing cash, materials, or labor.

15.) Transfer of Development Rights:

This is a process wherein the development rights of a specific parcel of desired open space land is transferred to a second parcel of land more suitable for development. The second parcel is then permitted a higher level of development. If the two parcels are owned by two different land owners, the increased value of the second parcel is given to the owner of the first parcel.

16.) Work Release Program:

An alternative to jail time is for offenders to provide community services such as working on a park maintenance crew or providing other recreation services.

17.) Conservation Futures Levy:

Counties can levy up to \$0.065 per \$1,000 assessed valuation for the acquisition of shoreline and open space areas. The money cannot be used for development and/or maintenance. In Skagit County, these funds have been levied for the preservation of farmland. A percentage of these dollars should be considered for park and open space acquisition.

18.) Centennial Clean Water Program:

This is a state program administered by the Department of Ecology and financed by a tax on cigarettes. The program is designed to provide grants and loans on projects that will enhance water quality. Typical projects related to parks and open space could include lake maturation, storm water retention, wetland enhancement and other water quality mitigation measures. Grants are available for planning, design and construction up to 70% of the total project cost.

19.) Utility Tax:

Counties can charge a tax on the gross receipts of electric, gas, garbage, telephone, cable TV, water/sewer, and stormwater service providers. Revenue can be used for capital facilities acquisition, construction and maintenance.

20.) Urban Forestry Grants:

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers two funding grant programs in the art of urban forestry. The first is funded by the US Small Business Administration and provides grants to purchase and plant trees. Urban street tree planting programs are sometimes funded by this method. A 25% match is required. The second program is for educational and technical assistance and is funded by the US Forest Service. A local match is also required for this program.

21.) ISTEA:

The "Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991" provides funding for bicycle transportation facilities, including new or improved lanes or paths, traffic control devices, shelters and parking facilities.

22.) Donations/Foundations:

Private donations and foundations are important sources of funding for park projects.

23.) Councilmatic Bonds:

Bonds issued by a City or County. Does not require a vote of the people but must be paid out of the annual operating budget.

24.) User Fees:

Cities, counties, and special purpose districts can charge fees for use of facilities or participating in programs. They are often entrance fees or registration fees. Since 2009, our recreation program and fairgrounds have paid their own way in Skagit County.

25.) Transportation Improvement Account:

Cities, counties, and transportation benefit districts can apply for these funds through the State Transportation Improvement Board. Funding is provided annually for projects to alleviate and prevent traffic congestion caused by economic development or growth. The proposal should be multi-agency, multi-modal, congestion related, related to growth, and have a 20% local match.

26.) Local Option Vehicle License Fee:

Counties can charge up to \$15 per vehicle registered in the county, with proceeds to be used for "general transportation purposes". Revenues are distributed back to the county

and its cities on a weighted per capita basis-- unincorporated areas receive a larger share, per capita, than do cities. The state parklands have used "optional" licensing fees for their park budgets.

27.) Life Estate or Living Trusts:

This is the donation of a property to a public agency with the provision that the donor may live on the site as long as desired.

28.) Resource Management:

The County could acquire and dedicate the revenues of specified properties to certain programs or departments. For instance, revenues from timber sales, grazing leases, concessions, etc. could be allocated to recreation programs or used to acquire and develop park properties.

29.) Washington Community Economic Revitalization Team (WA-CERT)

The Washington Community Economic Revitalization Team was created as part of the Economic Adjustment Initiative (EAI) that began in 1993. This program provides technical assistance and financing support aimed at encouraging economic diversification in timber dependent communities.

30.) Hydroelectric Relicensing Opportunities

Projects that generate hydroelectric power fall under the regulations of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Any new hydroelectric project, or one requiring relicensing, must submit a new license application. Part of the application process includes a plan for mitigating open space and recreation opportunities lost as a result of the project.

Local regulatory authority over hydropower development falls under the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58). The Skagit County Department of Planning and Community Development and the State Department of Ecology have entered into a Coastal Zone Management Grant Agreement addressing amendments to the Skagit County Shoreline Management Master Program relating to the site and development of hydropower generation facilities.

The rationale is the fact that a for-profit corporation intends to use Skagit County's resources to generate a service for residents who live outside the County. As a result, these corporations are asked to pay for the right to use the County's resources. Lake Shannon has been created by hydroelectric companies and these companies should create and maintain adequate recreation facilities at this site.

Summary of Public Meetings / Open Houses

Appendix A

January 20th, 2011	Anacortes Senior Center	6:30 – 8:00
Category	What I like most about this...	What I'd like to see different
Open Space / Natural Areas	Sharpe / Duban is perfect!	Frailey Mt; Please keep the 400 acres on the comprehensive plan for a gun range. Keep in contact with the SSTA as to the progress and availability to our sportsmen, police and gun owners.
Trails and Pathways	Nice Trails	Fidalgo Island comprehensive trail connection plan Sharpe Park needs some mountain bike trails. Finish the trail from Pass Lake to Campbell Lake and into the Forestlands
Day Use / Picnic Areas / Playgrounds	Scenic and accessible; well maintained	--
Athletic Fields / Courts	Fitness Trails	--
Sports Programs / Leagues	--	Bring back the Pink Cheeks run
Water Access	--	Ban on gas motors on small lakes like Lake Erie
Campgrounds	Clean and well maintained	Keep affordable

January 27 th , 2011		
Mount Vernon Senior Center		6:30 – 8:00
Category	What I like most about this...	What I'd like to see different
GENERAL	One of the nicest things is how many parks there are and how close to each other they are and how easy to access	A combined city/county department would be more efficient and less confusing to the public. It would allow coordination and avoid "holes" in offerings or duplication.
		I regret that there seem to be fewer activities for elderly people. The county has cut back on those. I take some of Lauren Woodmansee's trips because I can afford them. Not everyone can.
Open Space / Natural Areas		Frailey Mt. Park needs public access from county road. Need an easement from DNR first.
		Big Rock needs public access.
Trails and Pathways	The parks in this county (and in fact in the state) are wonderful. It's one of the reasons we live here. We use trails often. I appreciate that the parks leave as much of the natural environment as possible but still have necessary amenities. They're well maintained	How about signed bike trails at Northern State.
		More good bike trails
Day Use / Picnic Areas / Playgrounds	The new Disc Golf course at NSRA is very well used!	It would be great to see another Disc Golf course within the parks system.
Campgrounds		It would be great to camp and play disc golf at the same location

February 3rd, 2011		
Howard Miller Steelhead Park - Rockport		
Category	What I like most about this...	What I'd like to see different
GENERAL		Cultural Resources and preservation; save the barn at Pressentin
		A year-round interpretive center (HMSP). I feel there is a need.
		Make permitting easier
		Make it easier for concessioners to sell.
Day Use / Picnic Areas / Playgrounds	Playground (at HMSP) is challenging and interesting for all ages; grow with it!	A building or meeting place for 4-H kids at Pressentin park.
	Open Space at west end of Steelhead Park. Wonderful place to walk year round.	Horse Camping at Pressentin/
	Playground (at HMSP) is wonderful! Kids love it.	Horse Trails at Pressentin and Steelhead Park. Open RR grade for riding access.
	I appreciate having a simple day use only place (at HMSP) to go walk without the presence of overnight campers	Horse Trails, Hitch post, etc in both Steelhead and Pressentin.
		Trails for horses on old railroad grade above west end of Steelhead Park and a hitch rail.
		Restore the Barn at Pressentin. There is funding available since he was a packer. Seems like a good save.
Water Access	Nice Launch (Swinomish). Like your self-pay station	Lots of boaters don't pay.
		More parking spaces for truck and trailers for all day fishing
		No boat launch fee for canoes and kayaks
		No boat launches fees for canoes and kayaks as we don't need the ramp pr the same amenities as power boaters, just an eddy w/o trees would do.
		5\$ boat fee seems too high for kayaks and canoes. These only need to be carried, not trailered. There are no cars driving at a ramp, etc.
		The need to improve boat ramps on the Skagit river. Most of them are on County Road Right-of-way.

Campgrounds	Thank you for installing 'Greener' showers – keep it up! Saves \$ in long term, better for everyone!	No parking / use fees for day use by local residents.
	Trail at HMSP is wonderful! I appreciate having it here in the park	Horse camp at Pressentin with more horse trails
	Love the Park Ranger	More defined site at Sauk. Tables in these sites.
	Howard Miller Park is one of the best kept and best secrets I've ever seen. Keep up the GOOOD work. Thanks.	Horse camping area at Pressentin would honor that family, etc...
	Sauk OK primitive trail.	Please make any new campsites relatively "primitive" to be compatible with wildlife
	I really appreciate the trails associated with campground parks	Parking for winter
	The Rangers do an excellent job. Thank you.	More camping sites should be primitive or walk-in tent. Enough RV's. Enough Grass
	Grandy Lake looks fabulous. A lot of hard work has gone into it. Thanks.	More tenting opportunities in the trees at Steelhead
		Convert (at HMSP) more sites to Adirondack type shelters.
		Plant a few more trees, more natural landscaping, save staff time, provide privacy between sites, encourage birds etc...
		The existing campgrounds are valuable but please do not expand them into the open areas.
		Horse camp at Pressentin. That's what Warren (Pressentin) wanted when he donated the land. Look at the Duckabush horse camp on the peninsula. It's great and it's a county park with mini-corrals, hitch rails, water and manure compost bins.
Open Space / Natural Areas	Love the west end meadow at Steelhead. Thanks.	More is good
	Thank you for Natural Areas	Don't do anything to the existing open space – please keep it as is.
	I appreciate and enjoy the open space at Pressentin and Howard Miller. Keep it open space and primitive! Don't develop / no RV's / don't cut trees	Please keep the open space mostly undeveloped. Adding trails is OK. Camping facilities if developed should be primitive.
	This is what I value most about the county park system – simple open space without development	
		Long term restoration of the site and grounds and buildings (at NSRA)

Trails and Pathways	Great Job, keep up the good work	Is there a way to maintain the full trail along the Skagit at Howard Miller?
	Very good personnel.	Extend Cascade Trail to Marblemount. Kids and bikers up here have to walk on SR 20 – dangerous and not fun.
	I absolutely love the Cascade Trail, Padilla Bay trail and the trails at Howard Miller. Thank you for fixing / maintaining	Expand Northern State parking for horse users and have over-night parking
	I'm a walker of many trails in county Would live trail map	Connect trail system across tribal lands and Sierra Pacific Inc to the Harry Osborne Forest out of Hamilton
	I like the pimate state of trials at Pressentin. No development necessary	Connect Northern State to Pacific NW trail to the east
	I love running and hiking on county trails! Thanks!	I know this is difficult, but more trails along dikes in the flats like the Padilla Bay trail. The Tourism opportunity, especially with the Tulip Festival, for more dike trails is huge!
	We love the trails but keep the signage to a minimum along trails	We need more trails and the need to connect them to the Cascade Trail.
	Please keep trails west of Steelhead accessible.	I would like to see our county trails expanded and connected wherever possible. Thanks for the rails to trails! More of that!
	I've hiked and rode horses on many of your trails.	Map of all at Trail Heads
	The Cascade Trail is great, but I am worried about the maintenance of it.	Pressentin needs a trail map.
		Open railroad grade to horses again. Extend it up to Marblemount. End at Pressentin and horse camp there.
		Work with the town of Concrete to help improve and connect Cascade Trail to the towns trail system.
		Off leash area for dogs
		Horse Trails
		Pressentin Horse Trails and camp.
		Save the barn (historic restoration partnership possible with North Cascades Nation Park and Ebey's Landing.
		I'm a horseback rider. I would like to see facilities for all users, hikers, stock, bike riders, and motorcycles.
Athletic Fields / Courts	College Gym Programs	
Sports Programs / Leagues	Thanks for Special Olympic Program	I'd like to see a race (10K? Half Marathon) on the Cascade Trail to benefit the Skagit Land Trust.

		Involvement Concrete School (fun for kids, local track teams get involved etc) I would volunteer to help organize
	Love the youth programs	Dance classes, Zumba, Yoga
	Thanks for supporting these programs	I like the race idea above

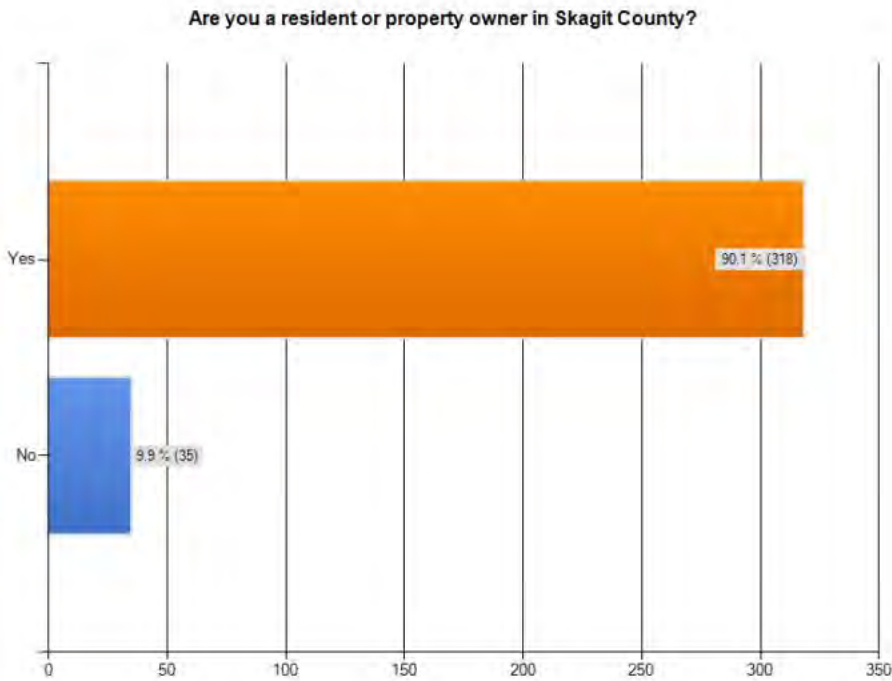
February 17 th , 2011		Clear Lake	6:30 – 8:00
Category	What I like most about this...	What I'd like to see different	
Athletic Fields / Courts	--	--	
Sports Programs	Good! Available for all!! At any age	Send a flyer to voters of Clear Lake about the Triathlon	
		Please let the people who live on the Clear Lake triathlon route know the date and time of it as soon as you can!	
Day Use		What happened to fences in Clear Lake water?	
		Put swimming docks back at clear Lake. A real need	
		Building should come down	
		Picnic Shelter	
		Restrict numbers of users of Clear Lake on hot days	
		Make the clear Lake Restrooms usable	
Water Access	Love the swim boat launch	We need equipment at Clearlake to circulate water when beach is being used for swimming	
		Lifeguards at Clear Lake Beach Please	
		Restore dock and life guard at clear lake beach	
		Swim docks, life guards and restrooms at Clearlake	
		Remove buildings from Clear Lake Park, Put in vault toilet. Put in covered picnic shelter	
Campgrounds	Love camping at Howard Miller	Sauk Park – Restrooms needs at this park!!	
	Please keep these parks open		
Open Space / Natural areas		Mark where trail head is at Big Lake (centennial)	
Trails and Pathways	Love the trails a Northern State and horse access	Get together with the city of Sedro-Woolley and finish the trail between Burlington and Sedro-Woolley. Pavement will increase users.	
		No more 'Rails to Trails' without the agreement of adjacent property owner	
		Mark the Frisbee (golf) tee boxes and holes better (at NSRA)	
		Needs Rails to Trails added! Centennial Trail!	
		Centennial Trail extended north through	

		Skagit County
		Would like to see interpretive signs at the old buildings at Northern State
		A map of Frisbee golf course at Northern State
		Would like to see bicydes allowed on trails

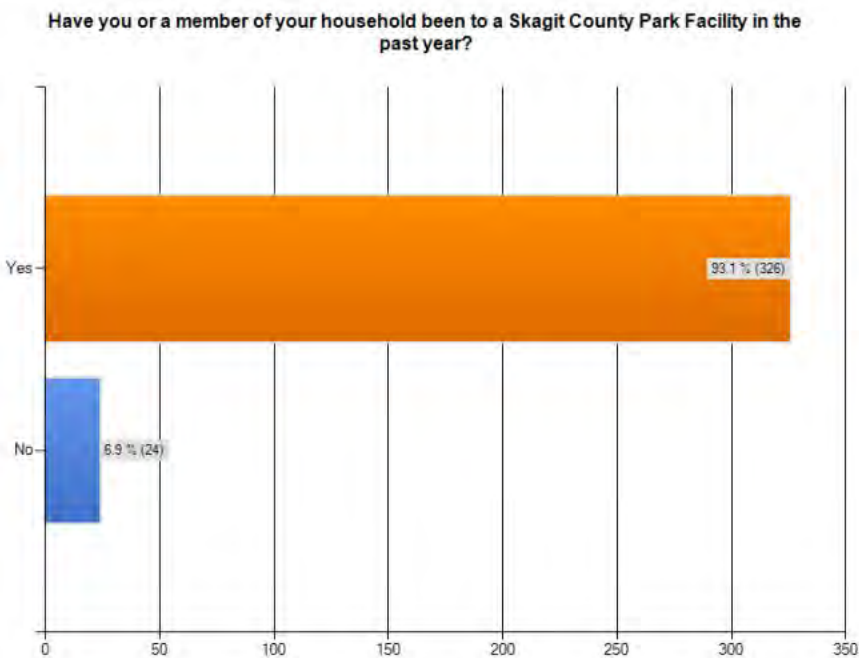
Appendix B

Public Opinion Survey Data Summary
June 1, 2011 through July 11, 2011
Number of Households responding n= 353

Question 1

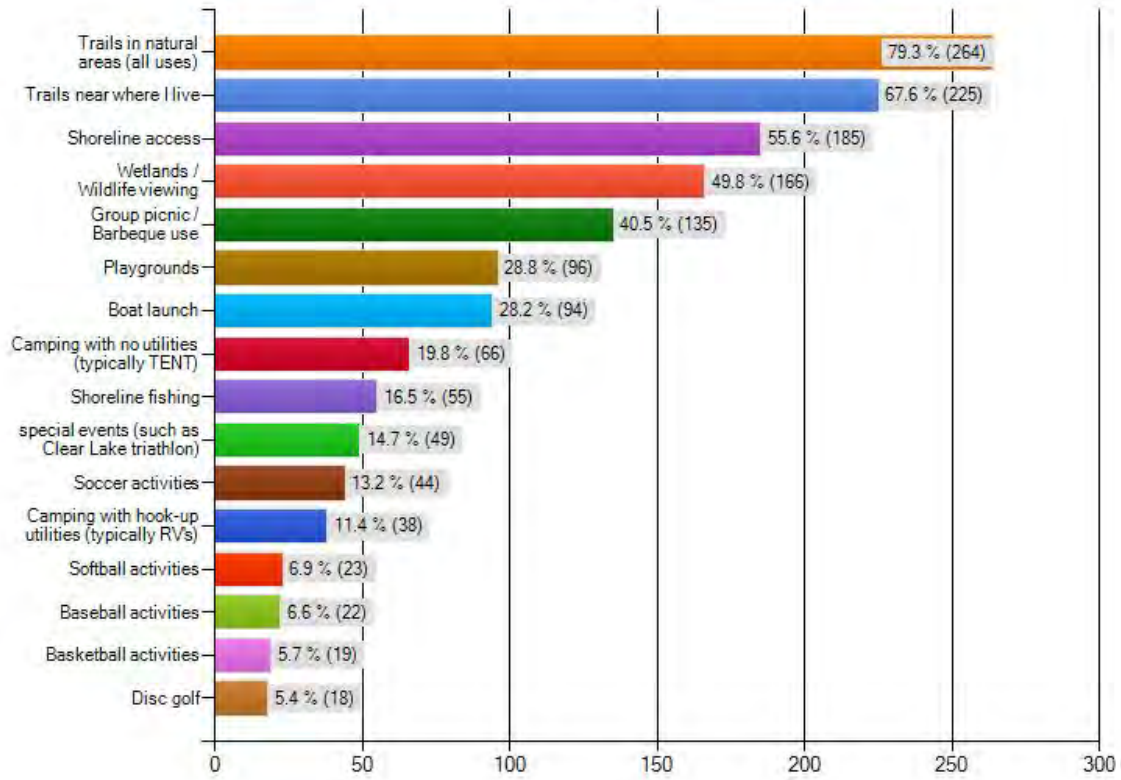


Question 2



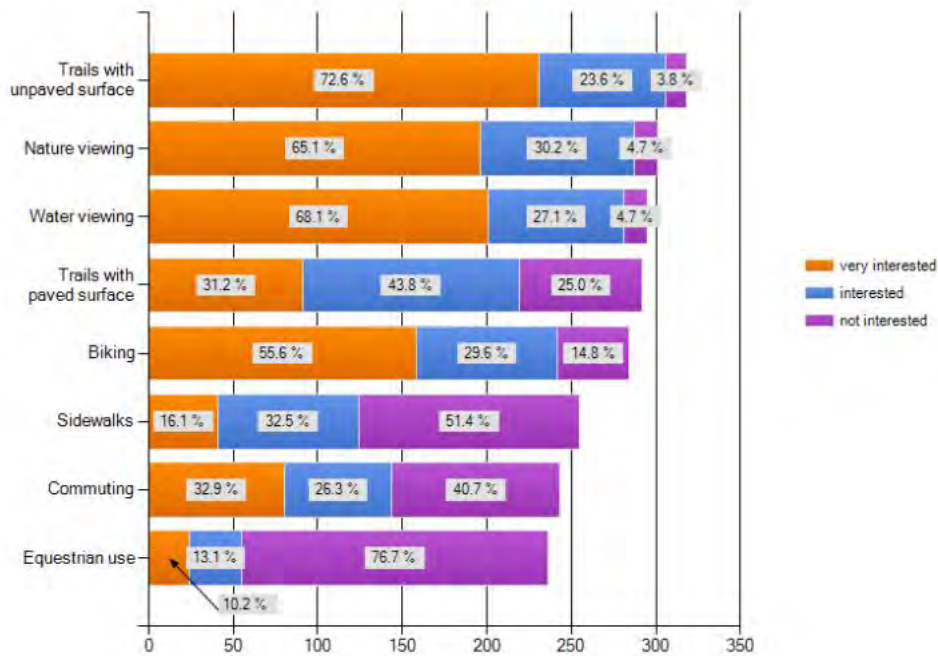
Question 3

Skagit County Parks and Recreation currently offers the following activities. Please CHECK the activities your regularly participate in at Skagit County Parks



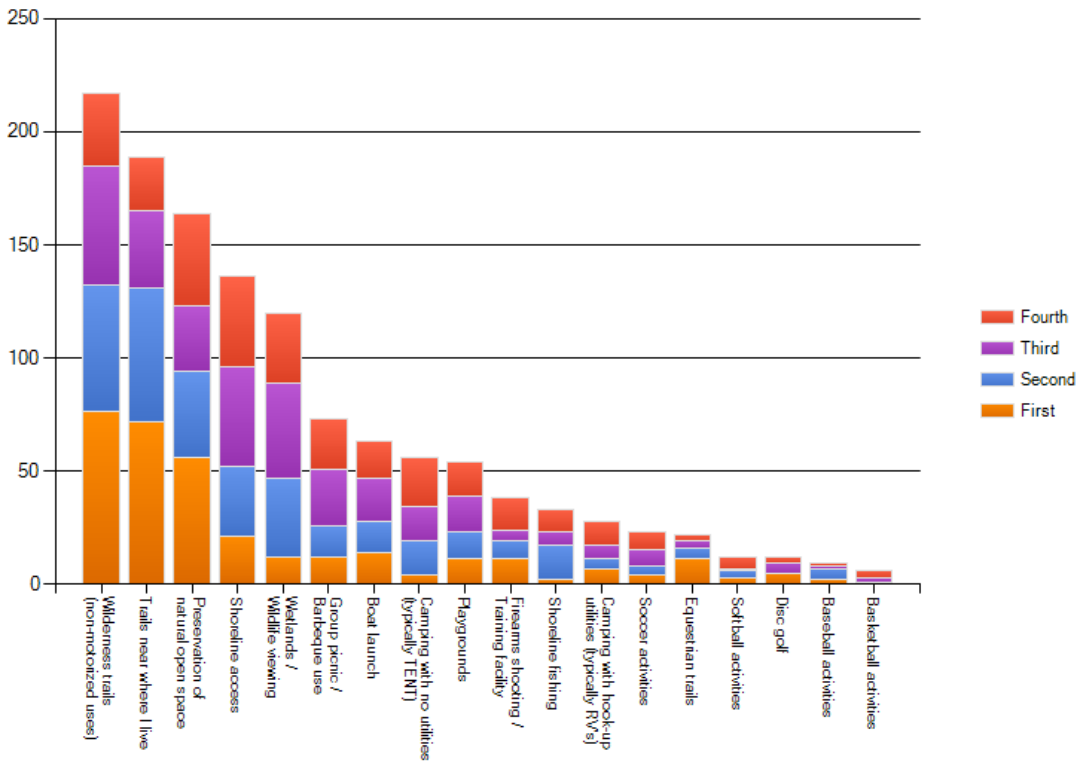
Question 4

A previous question asked about using trails. What TYPES of trails are you most interested in.



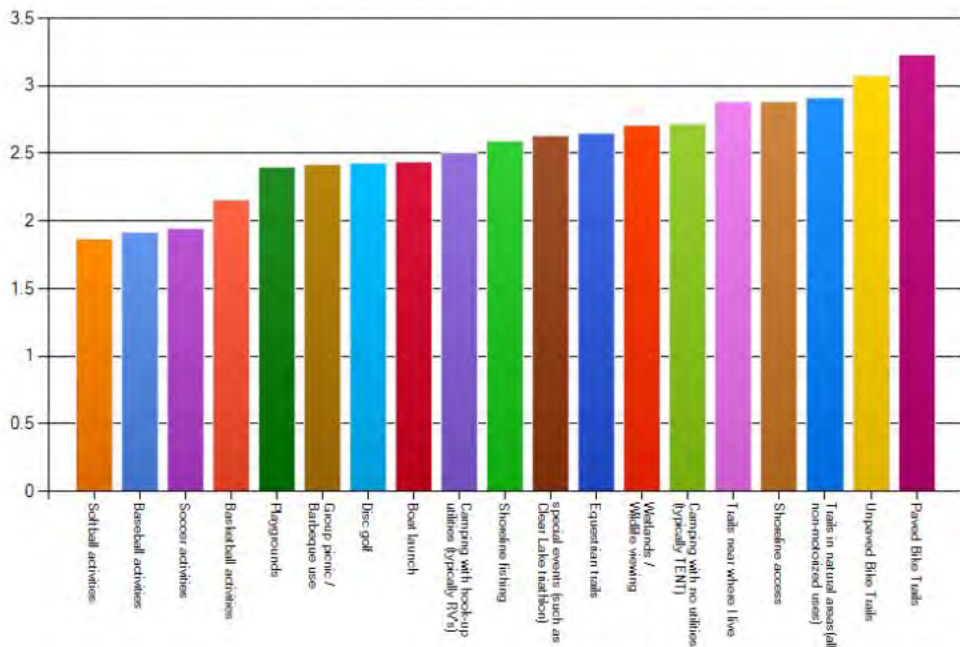
Question 5

What are your top four priorities from the following list



Question 6

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT QUANTITY. In your opinion, please rate your satisfaction with the QUANTITY of the following facilities in Skagit County Parks



Lower number means a greater satisfaction with QUANTITY of facility type. Higher number means a greater perceive need. Response shows weighted average based on the following scale.

- 1 = Abundant Amount
- 2 = Sufficient Amount
- 3 = Not Quite Enough
- 4 = Very few, not enough

Enough...

...not enough

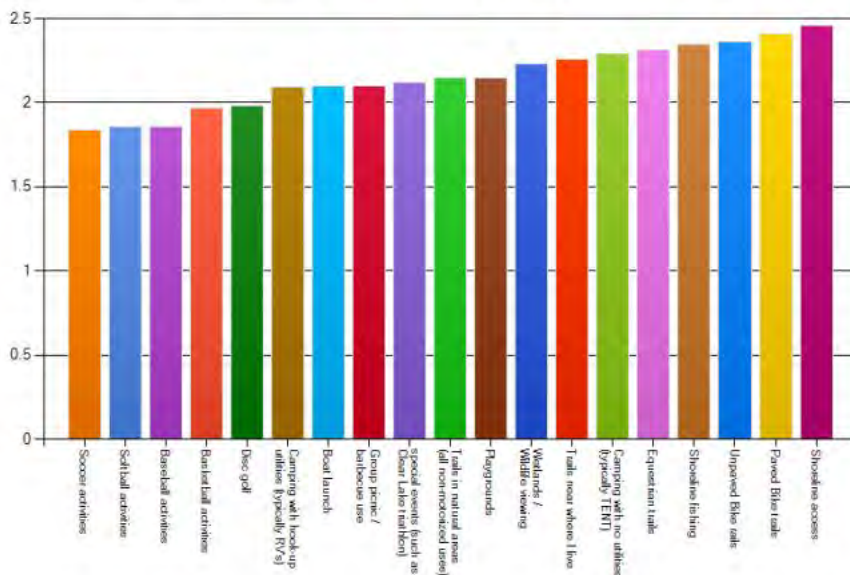
Question 7

“What do you feel are the three most needed recreation facilities or activities in Skagit County? This is not a ranked list.” This was an open ended question in which the responses were grouped by the survey team.

Top Development Priorities N=353	
Walking / Hiking Trails	69.43%
Bike Trails	50.66%
Shoreline Access	25.76%
Open Space and Wetland	20.09%
Park / Picnic areas	15.28%
Outdoor Sports Fields	13.54%
Swimming Pool	13.10%
Indoor Rec Courts / Center	10.48%
Camping Facility	10.04%
Playground	9.61%
Boat Launch	7.42%
Equestrian Facilities	5.68%
Shooting Range	5.68%
Dog Park	2.62%
Education / Env Center	1.75%
Motorized Trails	1.75%
Disc Golf	1.75%
Golf	1.31%
Fairgrounds	1.31%

Question 8

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT QUALITY. In your opinion, please rate your satisfaction with the QUALITY of the following facilities that Skagit County Parks currently offers



Lower number means a greater satisfaction with QUALITY of facility type. Higher number means a greater perceive need. Response shows weighed average based on the following scale.

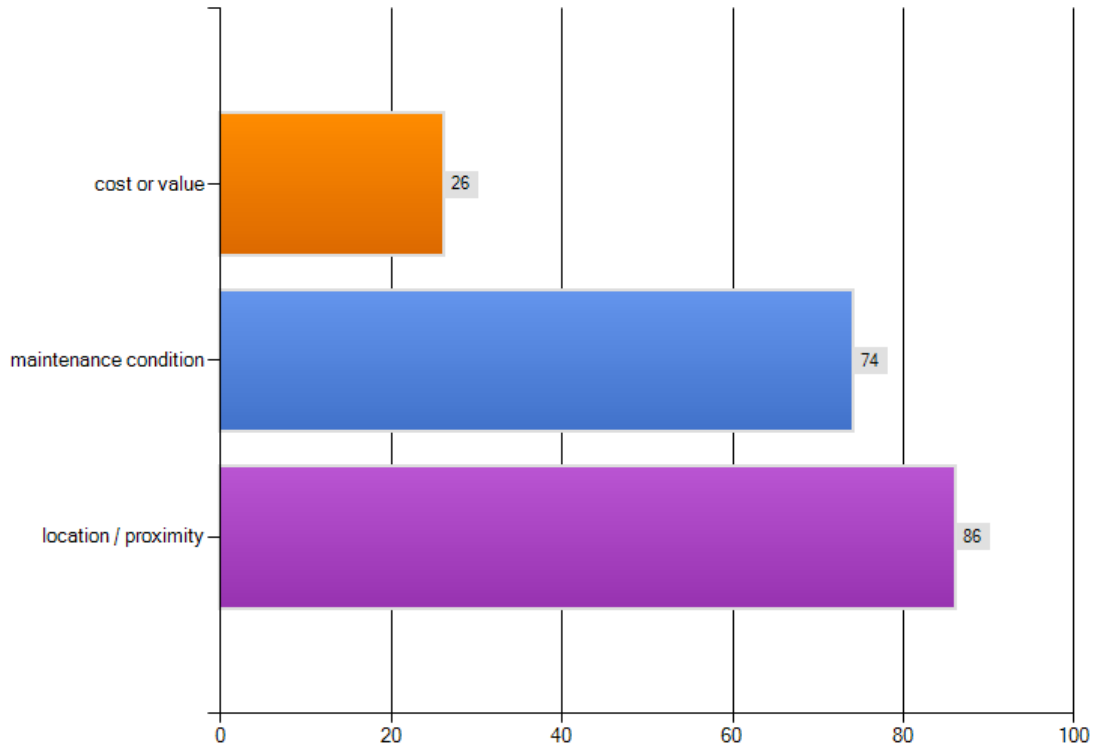
1 = High Quality
 2 = Acceptable
 3=somewhat unacceptable
 4=Very unacceptable

Higher quality...

...lower quality

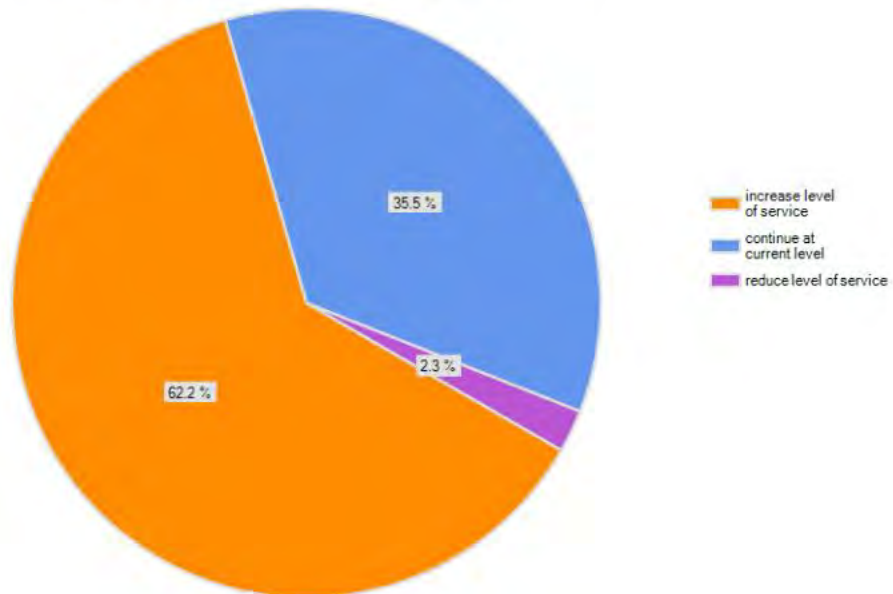
Question 9

If you indicated that you were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the above activities please indicate what the contributing reasons may be?



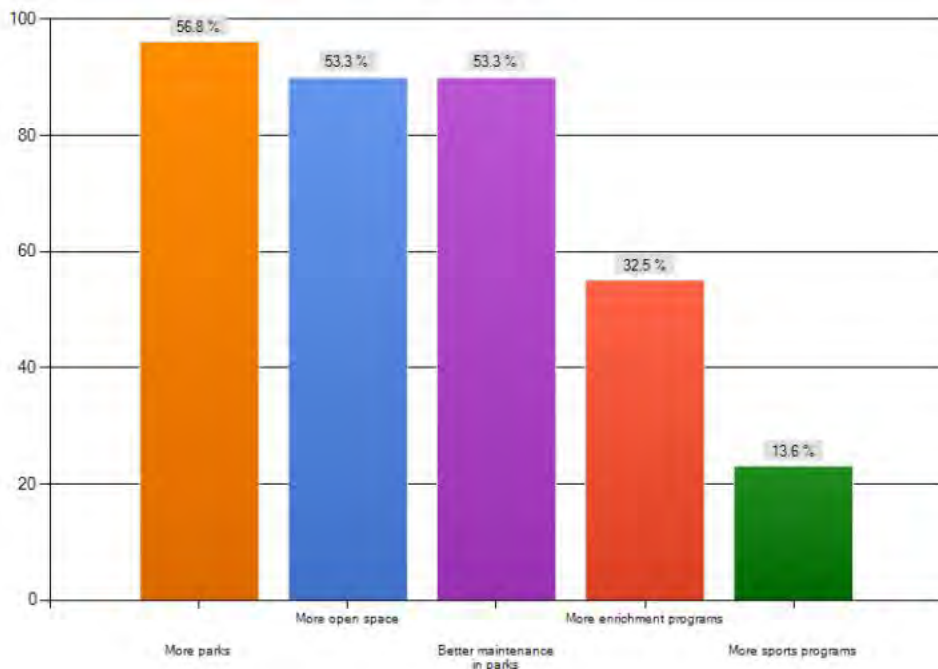
Question 10

Skagit County Parks and Recreation has downsized significantly over the past 5 years due to budget constraints. Currently our department manages the operations of the 26 parks listed on the first page of this survey with 11 full time employees and seasonal workers. In the future, what role do you feel the County should take in providing parks and recreation services?



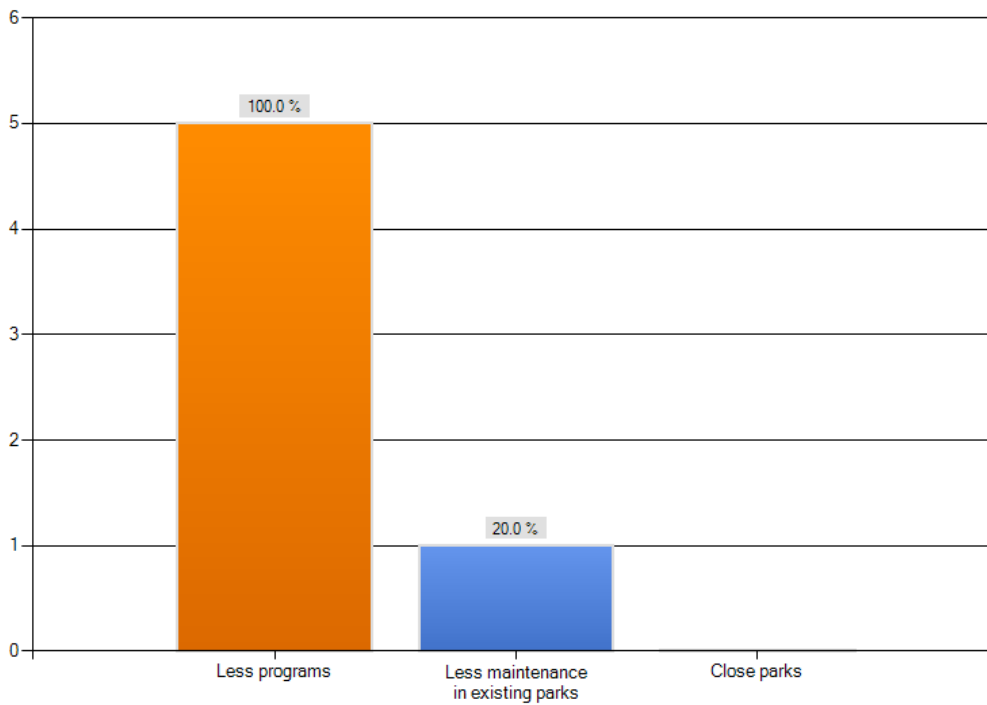
Question 11

How should service be increased?



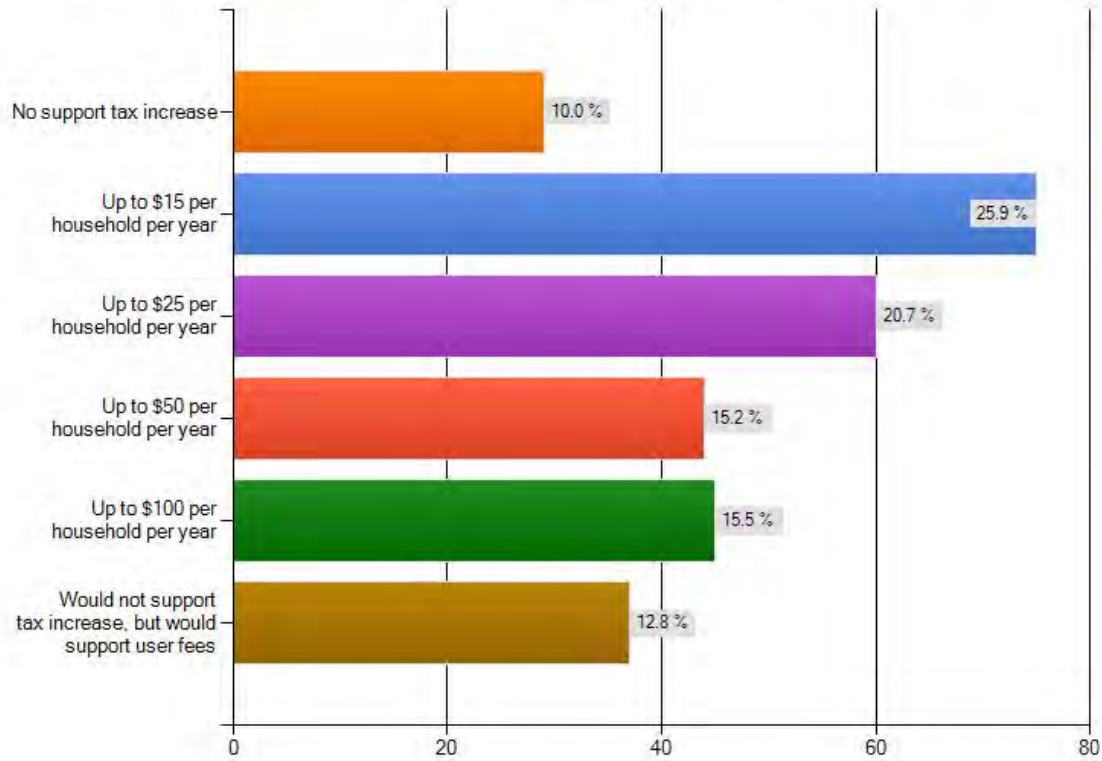
Question 12

How should service be decreased?



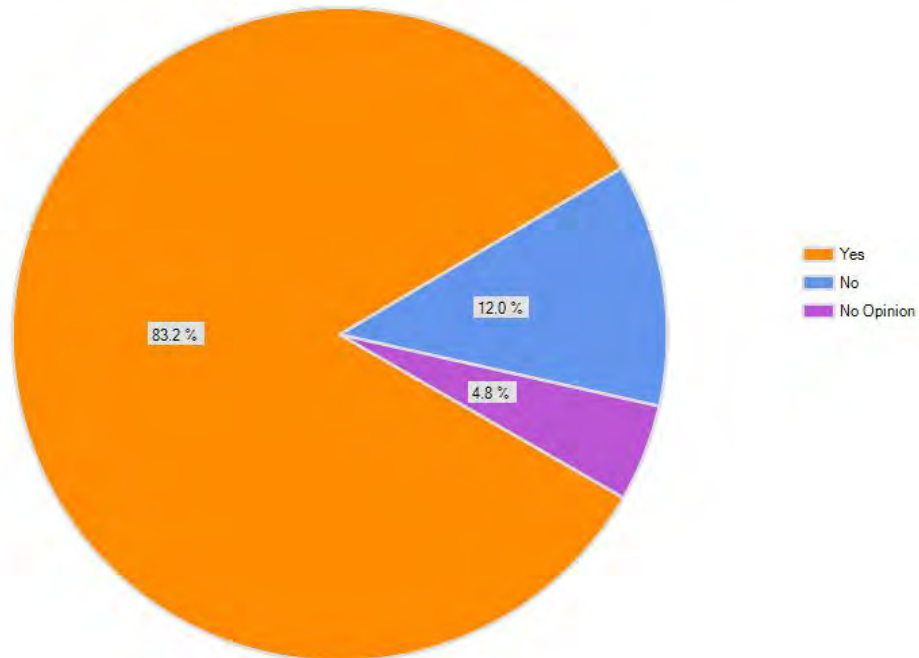
Question 13

If a park or program in the Skagit County Parks system was created or developed in line with YOUR priorities, would you support a tax increase



Question 14

Recognizing that it may increase the cost of new housing, should Skagit County require developers to pay a fee for parks, open space and trail systems?
(Current fee is voluntary)



Open Ended Comments

1. Finish the centennial trail from Lake McMurray to Sedro Woolley.
2. Re-open lifeguarded swimming area @ Big Lake! It was self-funded, so no tax increase needed.
3. The park on 18th street needs a fence along the grass area, too many young children run out into streets. The traffic is very heavy and fast. A fence like Lions Park would be great.
4. Better use of money
5. Incorporate more volunteer-driven mountain bike trails
6. Use shooting range funds for indoor recreation fund
7. consider private-public partnerships
8. I understand the budget constraints, and while it would be nice to increase service, I understand that this may not be our county's highest overall priority at this time, and think our current quality is just fine. I don't think it's reasonable for me to expect expansion of our parks at this time.
9. In reference to Mtn bike trails, we need a more diverse trail system with trails of different skill levels and trails to travel the county.
10. All businesses are making do and working harder with fewer employees. Government should be no different.
11. A lot of the financial woes are due to poor government management. Too many administrative folks and not enough workers. Limited top paying jobs.
12. Clean up beach areas so they are safe for children to play
13. In a society of increasing obesity and decreasing outdoor/physical activity, I believe our parks should not only be maintained or grown, but also well publicized. This should be an active, rather than a passive approach. For example, I have lived in Skagit for most of my 26 years, yet am mostly unfamiliar with the park system, despite growing up in an active outdoor family. Your survey mentioned disc golf, which I was not even aware was present. I'd like to see more of a budget for community outreach (such as participation in Chambers of Commerce and Events like the Arts and Crafts Fest) in order to further promote the parks department. This community outreach would likely make households more likely to support tax increases as well, as users would have a vested interest. When answering the next question, I thought that a tax increase would be well justified if I was knowledgeable enough to use the parks system.
14. charge a low cost use fee
15. As for a shooting range let the private sector build it, very little interest, by most
16. just concern with the economy, budget pressure, and where will funding come from...?
17. add more camping for tents
18. Given the budget situation, I think you do a good job. Use volunteers and work days, perhaps to do projects
19. dogs on beaches off leash!
20. Skagit County has an unlimited number of opportunities. However, not enough resources are put into creating and maintaining them.
21. You are doing the best job considering the funding. However, in a recession, parks and recreation become an even more important resource for a cash stressed populace. It is very shortsighted to cut back in this area.
22. Little Mountain Trail Builders seem to have been successful in their efforts to obtain volunteers and meet their goals. Should other goals need to be set for other departments despite lack of funding, using LMTBs as a model may be an option.
23. "I would support user fees for programs, such as sports leagues.
24. I STRONGLY oppose user fees at hiking trailheads. A walk in the woods should not be taxed."
25. Continue building interconnected trails in urban areas for recreation and commuting
26. Assess level of use at existing facilities. Conduct cost-benefit analysis and consider eliminating facilities that don't pencil out and/or align with results of this survey.
27. Biking trails not only promotes healthy returns, it promotes tourism. People will come from out of town to enjoy them.
28. More parks for children & adults
29. SCPR: develop more opportunities for disabled folks to participate in county park activities
30. Make sure that the work release personnel actually do work and that it is quality work.
31. Get rid of whomever had the bright idea to dismantle the Highly Respected Recreation Department.
32. We need more mixed use recreational activities considered in short and long term planning.
33. should receive better funding

34. Levees should be opened up for public access - what a great opportunity for shoreline access and miles of walking!
35. More signs! Interpretive signs are great, as well as those welcoming you to parks and showing how to get there from main highways.
36. Why is the Centennial Trail not included in the Sedro Woolley city limits?
37. It would be great to pave and connect some of the urban trails already available. A great trail to pave would be the Sedro-Concrete trail. Also, I am looking forward to the centennial coming to Skagit County. I would be nice to have it extended further north from Lake McMurry.
38. Have more covered areas for large groups in outdoor parks
39. Dedicated Mountain Bike Trails.
40. I travel to Skagit County to ride on the new parks trail at Little Mountain. I usually stop at dinner in town afterwards, and usually pick up some snacks at the Co-op. Bike trails bring my money to Mt Vernon.
41. Thanks for seeking our input
42. I just want to say good job on all the new trails at little mountain. Very happy with the results
43. Keep allowing groups like the trail builders enhance little mountain. Also consider future development of the rock quarry for climbing when complete with operations
44. Better use of volunteer expertise and labor
45. That there be a "pay back" from the users. You use it, you spend ten minutes cleaning up some aspect of the park.
46. I will be able to vote soon, and I will surely be voting so long as you work towards sustainability.
47. Great staff
48. Bring back Clear Lake Beach! It is the only beach for kids in the whole county. Last year it was horrible when you closed the bathrooms and the concession stand and took down the slides. We need more public beaches, not less!!!
49. I realize the budget is tight. I don't expect things to change over the next two years and cuts could close parks in the interim.
50. I would like the idea of user fees if I thought it would result in a safer, more pleasant social element if people had to pay to use parks. I don't think the Hispanic populations (which represent the majority of users at many of the parks we frequent) are tax-payers, so a tax increase would not sit well with me at all as a tax-payer.
51. Staffing must be improved significantly. We don't want to lose what we have! Recreation for Skagit County residents should have higher priority.
52. Advertise parks better - I didn't know about Frailey mountain park
53. Would support household tax, but not user fee. This option appears to be missing.
54. STOP WASTING MONEY ON FRAILEY SHOOTING RANGE & RETURN PROPERTY TO DNR
55. pool / aquatic center
56. Get Rid of Shooting Park
57. Community fundraisers such as fun run, banquet, spaghetti/pancake feed, flea market
58. Dukes Hill area for walking trails
59. Is there a possibility of sharing the management with some of the cities? e.g. the parks within the city limits could be managed by that city...
60. Would like more unpaved walking trails in Mt. Vernon
61. Too much emphasis on sports.
62. People are less able to afford to pay for entertainment. Parks are a great way for families to do something together without cost...
63. continue interagency endeavors
64. Get out of the programming business such as baseball, soccer, softball & baseball leagues and clinics. Put efforts & resources in parks & trails only!
65. Have brochures and maps more readily available
66. I would like to see the Centennial Trail continued from Snohomish County throughout Skagit County.
67. Only offer programs in locations that others cannot offer them!
68. Open a shooting range (or a couple). Many of our residents own and shoot firearms. A safe place to do this is needed rather than on some side road or gravel pit. A safe simple range would not be expensive or difficult to operate
69. Have local law enforcement officers patrol parks often when possible.

70. Maybe user fees so we can support more. I see below it says taxes- I would support that too up to \$100 a year.
71. Mountain Bike trails
72. More rails to trails, bike paths, pedestrian-friendly areas
73. Parks allow people to enjoy open space for very low cost, as Skagit County grows and density increases our parks will be more valuable than ever.
74. The Parks Dept has always been under appreciated by elected officials and therefore under budgeted - this needs to be turned around.
75. give in city facilities, like ball fields and small parks, to the cities to take care of
76. Work on getting trails connected
77. So much waste of time by employees, Recreation is a privilege not a public service. Users of trails must start paying for that privilege instead taxpayers paying for the wishes of very few. County parks has a very bad image because of the Parks Dept takings of private property and spending tax dollars on a illegal trail.
78. more camping cabins
79. more picnic shelters
80. more primitive trails
81. more paved trails"
82. Reinstate the rec. program run by Woodmansee. Those trips were great and enjoyed by many.
83. Working with other groups to set aside areas for use. Humans have a need for green space. Programs that encourage all residents of Skagit County to at least be introduced to care of wilder lands.
84. We use the Guemes Island Park - we would like to see more tetherball court, improve baseball area, more benches, etc.
85. We have a world class river flowing through the county and limited opportunities to experience. Open the dikes up to walking and biking and create greenways along the river. These would be huge boost to our quality of life and make this a place worthy of increased tourism and economic investment.
86. Cameras to catch vandals
87. Everything comes at a cost. The users should shoulder some of the burden the up keep and improvements
88. You guys do a great job with what you have and provide great activities, please make these activities available to the entire county not just Mt Vernon and Burlington. The entire county deserves your services.
89. Please pave one lane of Cascade Trail, and add a public pool in the Eastern half of the County.
90. Maintain the infrastructure. Keep basic facilities operational
91. It's way past time that Skagit County had a modern swimming facility. Your survey completely excludes the topic even though it is one of the most requested items in past surveys. I would gladly pay a tax to build it and support it and I'm not a wealthy person. The community needs it, and I don't mean leave it to the YMCA.
92. The equestrian facility that has been proposed for Northern State area should be pursued. It would serve Skagit residents AND bring revenue to Skagit County.
93. An across the board tax is the way to go, as every citizen will have a degree of "ownership" and "investment" in public parks. User fees exclude those who cannot afford the fees. That is wrong.
94. Try to partner with volunteer organizations to assist in development and/or maintenance, e.g. NW Trails Assn, Boy Scouts, community organizations.
95. More options for safe commuting via bike or walking, cross town, cross county trails
96. I would suggest citizen participation in taking responsibility for their impact on the parks, zero waste, animals, leave no trace, etc. I believe it is citizens responsibility to participate in maintenance as it reflects by and respect for systems.
97. possible user fees for some parks
98. The current level is sufficient for most who use it... but the county parks are dwarfed by our city parks as well as our state and national ones. I simply have no use for grass and playgrounds... I can do that at home. For many families, this is great though. However, if I were to go to a park, it'd be Hillcrest (MV) or Riverfront (SW), not Cleveland. Most of the County parks aren't close enough (all the upriver stuff, etc). If I'm going upriver... I'll go to more remote places.
99. Broaden your mission to community education and local self-sufficiency otherwise we are toast.
100. User fee like Discovery Pass and Nat Forest Trail Pass- Significant tax on users that require high maintenance like fields (soccer, baseball etc.).

101. Unpaved trails/paths can be used for horse, bicycle, walkers, hikers. They are multi use, biggest bang for your buck
102. Within development, open space and parks should be considered as part of the community requirement so those who acquire homes there will be able to use, enjoy but also consider maintain. Builders would then be subject to the fees involved with the planning and establishment, but I don't think it fair to have to pay extra on top. It is not fair to them nor impacts then existing neighborhood users or their work provided.
103. This survey is way to wordy, long and complicated to produce valid results.
104. The department is doing an amazing job with such drastic budget reductions over the last several years. The staff is very dedicated to the community. We are lucky.
105. Overall, I think we have a great system. Skagit Parks has always been more than helpful supporting our efforts to the Dog Island Run on Guemes Island. Whenever I have had questions, I always get a prompt, friendly reply.
106. Most of the Conservation Futures Fund should go towards open space, trails, and greenways. No new taxes - just utilize this existing tax.
107. Perhaps, campers and visitors might want to volunteer an hour or more to specific tasks in the parks (volunteer park hosts could try enlisting help from visitors). I know when I visit a park, I always pick up litter and tidy up the bathrooms.
108. "Joint Parks with Mount Vernon
109. More Open Space, Natural Trails"
110. More open spaces
111. Need Park Rangers
112. "More Disc Golf!!!!Maybe on Guemes?" yeee haaa!
113. Like to see cities and county working together with an overall plan. Pool resources.
114. This used to be a great county parks and rec program, but budget cuts destroyed that...let's see it rebuilt and be able to offer our kids a great experience with nature, once again!

APPENDIX A

REPORT FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR SKAGIT COUNTY

**A.R.N. TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH REPORTS
VOL. 2003 No. 1**

JUNE 2003

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INTRODUCTION

In Spring of 2003, Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department (SCPRD) contracted with Applied Research Northwest (ARN) to conduct a scientific study. The purpose of the study was to inform the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department Comprehensive Plan – a growth management tool that provides the SCPRD managers with a clear direction in terms of where the community is (existing conditions) and where it is going (future desires). The goal of the study was to provide SCPRD with estimates of residents' preferences for parks and recreation facilities development and priorities for future planning. The study consisted of the administration of a community survey to a random sample of Skagit County residents and included items on recent activities, desired expansion of existing facilities (including athletic fields, campgrounds, trails, etc.) and the addition of a new public indoor facility including classrooms and a multi-purpose gym. Development of the Northern State Recreation Area (NSRA) was also included in the study.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section of the report describes the sample, data collection methods, response rates, indicators of the generalizability of the sample, the survey instrument and margins of error. Greater detail on any of these issues is available from the authors. Readers who are not interested in these research methods can safely skip to the results section. Also, the complete text of the survey, with response frequencies, can be found in appendix A of this report.

SAMPLING

For the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department (SCPRD) Community survey, the target population was residents of Skagit County. The survey was administered by telephone to randomly selected, listed household members in Skagit County. Of the 926 households contacted, 378 telephone numbers were disqualified (see Table 1: invalid contacts). Thus, the valid telephone sample consisted of 548 qualified households. Each household was telephoned (attempted) up to 5 times over a two-week period in June. Attempts included at least one weekend and one daytime call, with the majority of calling occurring between 5:30 pm and 9:00 p.m. on weeknights.

The average survey length was 9 minutes. Fifty-five percent (55%) of qualified participants completed a survey for a total of 300 completed surveys. The results of all calls made for the community survey are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1. Skagit County Parks and Recreation Community Survey Call Results Summary	
	<u>N</u>
Complete	300
Total Completes	300
Refused	97
Soft Refusals	84
Refused Incomplete	7
No Answer - no pick up	11
Busy	3
No Answer - machine / voice mail	30
Callback	16
Total Valid Contacts	548
Bad Number	110
Physical/Mental - Unable	18
Unable - Language	19
Maximum Attempts reached (5)	231
Total Invalid Contacts	378
Total	926
Response Rate (completes/valid)	55%

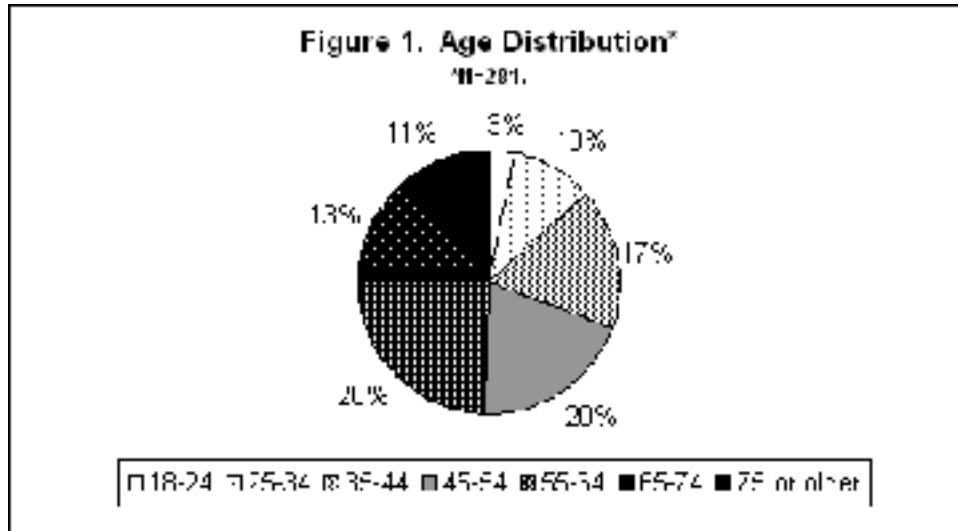
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Sex

Of the 300 residents in Skagit County who responded to the SCPRD Community survey, 40% were male and 60% were female. The sex distribution of Skagit County is close to 50-50 based on 2000 U.S. Census data. The survey did not attempt to randomize the selection of the household member. Since females are more likely to answer the telephone than males, telephone surveys like this one typically over represent the perspectives of females. Most of the questions are worded to elicit information about the entire household, so it is likely that this information closely resembles what would have been found with a more even sex distribution.

Age

Of the 300 residents in Skagit County who responded to the SCPRD Community survey, 3% were between the ages of 18 and 24, 10% were between 25 and 34, 17% were between 35 and 44, and 20% were between 45 and 54 (see Figure 1). The largest proportion of respondents (26%) was between the ages of 55 and 64. Thirteen percent (13%) were between the ages of 65 and 74 and 11% were 75 years of age or older. An additional 3 respondents did not answer this question so identifying information for these respondents is not available.



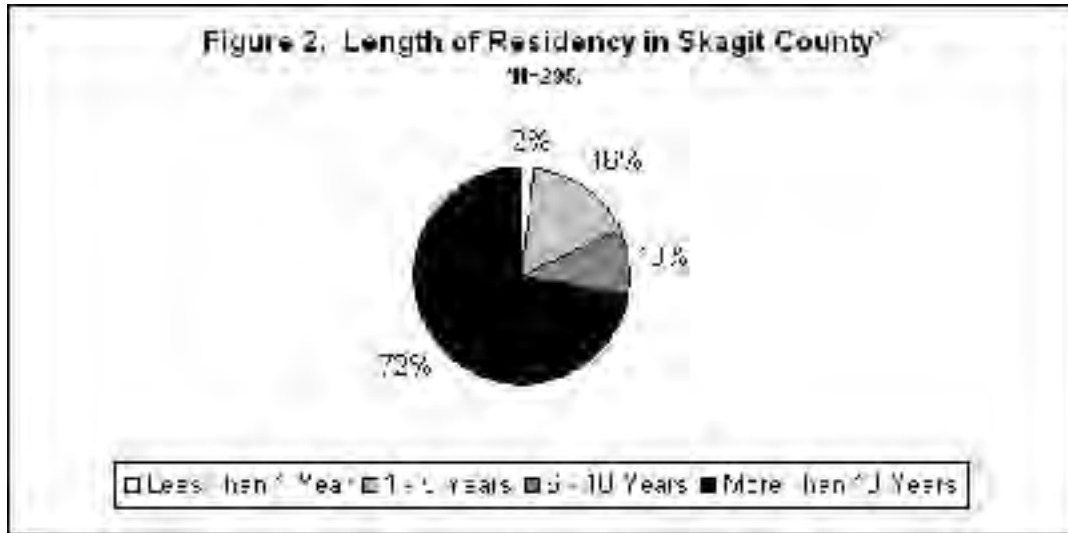
It is important to note here that the 18 to 24 and the 55 to 64 age categories were disproportionate to the actual age distribution of Skagit County. The youngest category was somewhat under represented and the older age category was slightly over represented. This sort of response pattern is common when using listed phone numbers, as younger people tend to move more often and be out of the house more than older residents. However, since respondents were asked to report on behaviors of all household members it is likely that the results reported closely resembles what would have been found with a more even age distribution.

Youth (age 18 or younger) Living in Household

Of the 300 residents in Skagit County who responded to the SCPRD Community survey, over half (62%) reported that there are no children age 18 or younger living in their home. The remaining 38% said there was children age 18 or younger living in their home. This question was asked to measure significant differences in response to the survey questions between households with children and those without children.

Length of Residency in Skagit County

When asked how long residents had lived in Skagit County, about three-quarters of respondents (72%) reported living in Skagit County for more than ten years (see Figure 2). Ten percent (10%) of respondents had lived there six to ten years. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents said they lived there for one to five years and 2% said less than one year.



Geographic Distribution

The distribution of respondents according to zip code and city of residence for completed survey cases (N=300) compared to the randomly sampled listed cases (N=1000) were within 2.5% of one another for all 17 areas (see Appendix B). The distribution was within 1% for 14 of those 17 areas. Therefore we can have confidence that proportionate representation of each area of Skagit County is described in this report.

MARGINS OF ERROR

The findings described in this report are estimates because we use the responses of 300 households to estimate the behaviors of all households in Skagit County. The key to the success of survey research is that such estimates are remarkably accurate, but they are not perfectly accurate. For a survey of 300 cases, we would estimate an error margin of plus or minus six percent (6%). That is, we can be 95% sure that the true percentage, had we been able to survey all people in Skagit County would have fallen within 6% above or below the percentage we report. For example, because 17% of survey respondents reported being 35 to 44 years of age, we can be quite sure that the actual percentage of people in Skagit County who are in this age category are somewhere between 11% and 23%. When the number of respondents is smaller, the error margin is greater.

RESULTS

This section describes the findings of the analysis for all 300 respondents of the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department Community Survey. A complete listing of the survey results can be found in the appendices to this report, however this section provides complete descriptive text and highlights statistically significant findings.

PARK USAGE

The first section of the SCPRD Survey asked respondents to report on their household's general use of parks and recreation facilities during the past twelve months, considering use both inside and outside of Skagit County. Respondents were asked to report on their past use regardless of geographic location because past behavior tends to be the most accurate indicator for projecting future behavior.

Nearly all (92%) of respondents reported their household had used a park facility in the past 12 months. More SCPRD Survey respondents reported household members spending time at a public seashore, lake or river (water access, 78%) in the past twelve months than any other of the listed facilities. Trails¹¹ (67%) were a close second (see Table 2, below). Spending time at a park playground was ranked third with just over half (55%) reporting spending time at a park playground. Use of an indoor athletic facility and an indoor public pool were the least used parks in the past 12 months. About one-quarter (27%) of respondents reported household use of an indoor public pool and 18% reported use of an indoor athletic facility.

Table 2. Parks Used in the Past 12 Months*

Water Access	78%
Trails	67%
Park playground	55%
Campground or RV	47%
Other parks	43%
Outdoor Athletic Facility	40%
Boat launch	34%
Indoor public pool	27%
Indoor Athletic Facility	18%

*N=299. N is an average. Sum of percentages greater than 100 due to use of multiple facilities.

Relationships Between Variables

There is a statistically significant relationship between most of the parks used in the past 12 months. In other words, most survey respondent households were likely to report using more than one facility in the past 12 months. The most significant findings were households who used outdoor athletic facilities were also likely to use indoor athletic facilities ($r = .45$) and households who used a public seashore were also likely to use trails ($r = .42$).

There were also significant findings for park use in the past 12 months for households that reported having children eighteen years of age or younger. Households with children were

significantly more likely to use all park facilities (except boat launches) in the past 12 months than households without children. Households with children were significantly more likely than others to use water access (88%), trails (80%), playgrounds (76%), outdoor athletic facilities (61%), RV/campgrounds (58%), indoor pools (40%), and indoor athletic facilities (31%).

In general, households with fewer years living in Skagit County, younger-aged households and households with children were more likely to report using parks in the past 12 months. As expected, younger aged households are more likely to have lived in Skagit County a fewer number of years and are more likely to have children living in the household. Because younger people are generally more active, more likely to move or to have just “settled down” and to have children living in the home these findings suggest a strong demographic relationship with park use.

PARK NEEDS AND PROJECTED USE

SCPRD Survey respondents were asked to report on specific kinds of parks that could be a part of Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department’s future plans. Respondents were asked to report *how much* the additional facility is needed in Skagit County and *how likely* their household members would be to use the additional facility.

Needs for Additional Facilities

Respondents reported an indoor aquatic center, a multi-use gymnasium, and multi-purpose rooms as the top three additional facilities most needed in Skagit County (see Figure 3). Over half (58%) of respondents said that Skagit County needs an indoor aquatic center “a great deal” or “quite a bit”. Almost half (46%) of respondent said that Skagit County needs a multi-use gymnasium and 39% said the county needs multi-purpose rooms “a great deal” or “quite a bit”.

Respondents reported a low level of a need for additional athletic fields in Skagit County. Forty percent (40%) of respondents said additional athletic fields are needed “not much” or “not at all”.

It is important to note two patterns in the data. First, substantially similar numbers of respondents reported at least “somewhat” needing all of the facilities (minimum 60%, maximum 79%). In addition, the proportion of respondents who reported not needing the facilities at all are not systematically ordered (as often is the case with items like these). These patterns suggest that there is no powerful mandate for or against specific facilities, and that there is an overall interest in seeing additional parks and recreation facilities in Skagit County.

Respondents who reported the need for trails or athletic fields were also asked to identify the types of trails or fields they felt were needed. Those findings are detailed in tables 3 and 4 below.

As with their reports of use in the past 12 months, respondents from households with children, who had lived in the county for fewer than 10 years, and younger aged-respondents generally reported slightly higher levels of needs for many of the items than households

without children, or who had lived in the country for 10 years or more, or with older-aged respondents.

Figure 3. Skagit County Additional Facility Needs*

*N=262. It is an approximate. Sorted by % Reporting "A Great Deal" or "Quite A Bit."

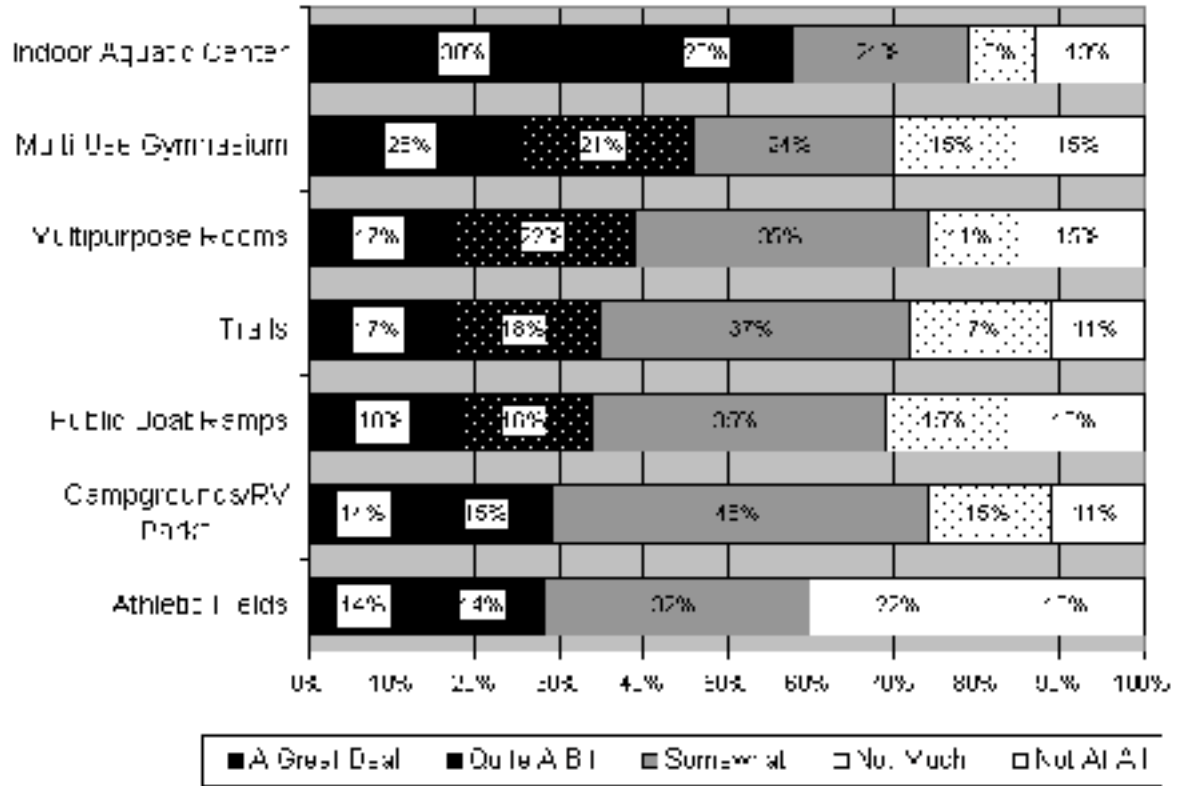


Table 3. Types of Trails Needed*

Hiking	80%
Bicycle	53%
Equestrian	18%
Interpretive	17%
Other	14%
Motorcycle	9%

*N=93 "Other" responses are detailed in the appendices

Table 4. Types of Fields Needed*

Youth Baseball	79%
Soccer	62%
Adult Baseball	47%
Youth Softball	34%
Adult Softball	23%
Football	17%
Other	6%

*N=70 "Other" responses are detailed in the appendices

Likelihood of Use of Additional Facilities

After reporting on the needed facilities, respondents were asked how likely members of their household would be to use such a facility. An indoor aquatic center and additional trails were the top two additional facilities respondents reported their household would likely use (see Figure 4). Two-thirds (66%) of respondents reported their household "probably" or "definitely" would use additional trails²¹. Slightly fewer (64%) respondents reported their household "probably" or "definitely" would use an indoor aquatic center, though a higher

proportion reported they would “definitely” use such a center. Just over half (53%) of respondents reported their household “probably” or “definitely” would use multipurpose rooms or additional campgrounds and RV parks.

Of those respondents who reported their household “probably” or “definitely” would use additional trails; hiking and bicycle were ranked most likely to use (see tables 5 and 6). Eighty percent (80%) of these respondents said their household would use additional hiking trails and about half (53%) said their household would use bicycle trails.

Respondents reported a low likelihood of using additional athletic fields. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents said their household “probably” or “definitely” would not use additional athletic fields. Since respondents reported a low level of need for additional athletic fields in Skagit County it is expected to have a low level of likelihood of use of the additional facility as well.

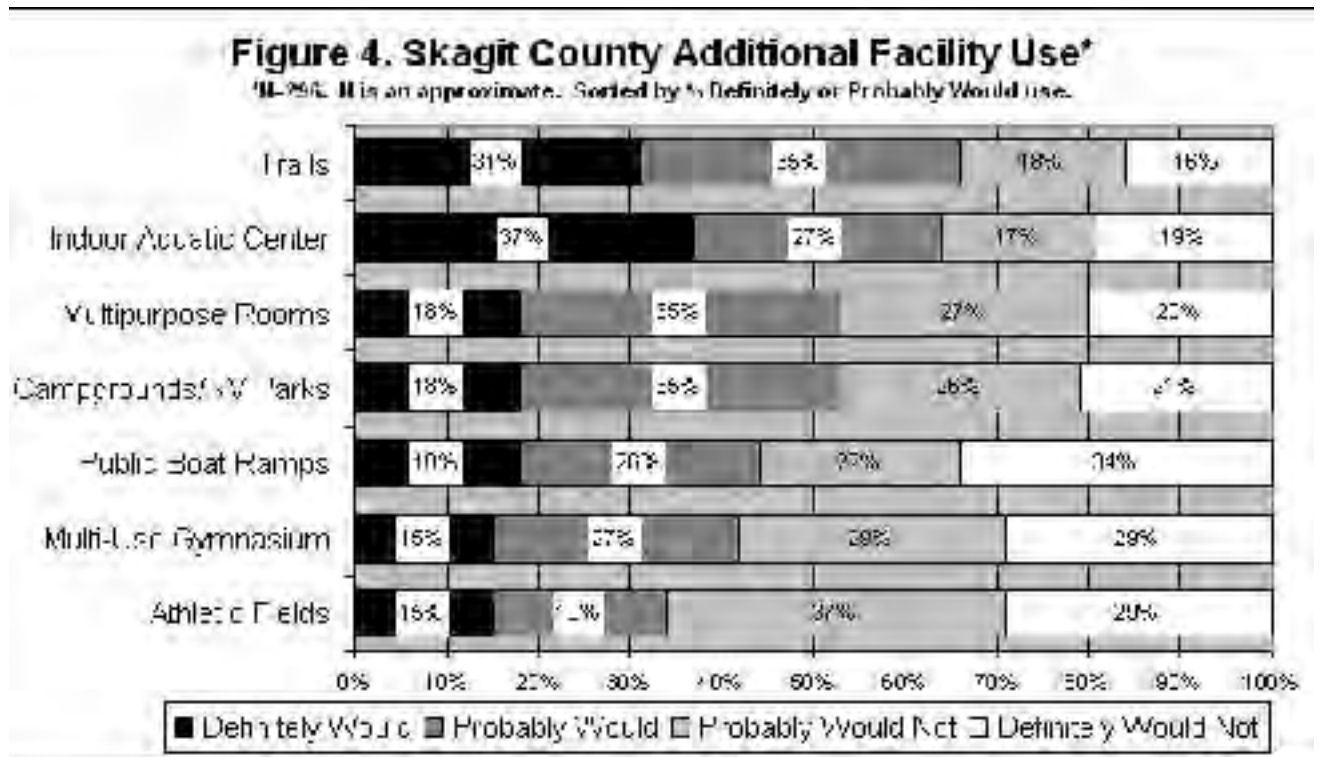


Table 5. Types of trails likely to use*

Hiking	82%
Bicycle	37%
Interpretive	16%
Other	12%
Motorcycle	8%
Equestrian	6%

*N=194. Sum of percentages greater than 100 due to use of multiple facilities.

Table 6. Types of fields likely to use*

Youth Baseball	66%
Soccer	50%
Adult Baseball	32%
Youth Softball	25%
Adult Softball	19%
Other	12%
Football	5%

*N=98. Sum of percentages greater than 100 due to use of multiple facilities.

Similar to reports of needs, respondents from households with children, who had lived in the county for fewer than 10 years, and younger aged-respondents generally reported slightly higher likelihood of use for many of the items than households without children, or who had lived in the country for 10 years or more, or with older-aged respondents. No strong patterns were noted.

Analysis of Needs, Likelihood of Use and Prior Use

Responses to the items were analyzed in combination to determine if those households who had previously used certain facilities were more likely to report a higher need for such facilities, as well as whether they would be more likely to use additional facilities if they were provided. For example, if people had used a public indoor pool in the prior 12 months, were they more likely to report that there was a need for an indoor public pool? Were they more likely to say they would use one? Responses were also examined to evaluate whether those who report a stronger need also reported a higher likelihood of use of the facilities.

For the most part, people who had used a particular facility in the past 12 months were twice as likely to report needing the same type of additional facilities “a great deal” compared to those who had not used them. For example, 17% of respondents who *had* used a campground or RV park in the past 12 months reported needing additional campgrounds “a great deal” compared to 9% of those who *had not* used them.

There are some notable exceptions:

- q Those who used outdoor athletic facilities were four times more likely to report needing additional athletic fields “a great deal” (26% of outdoor athletic facility users vs. 6% of non- users).
- q Users of public boat launches were three times more likely to report needing such a facility “a great deal” (30% vs. 11% of non-users).
- q Those who had used a public indoor pool were a little less likely to report a strong need for such a facility – perhaps due to the presence of a nearby public pool not run by the county (51% vs. 33% of non-users).

The greatest value of knowing people’s activities in the prior 12 months comes in seeing the degree of association with their reported likelihood of using additional local facilities like those they said they had used. The more strongly prior use and likelihood of use are related, the better we can estimate the likelihood of use in the area for the additional facilities.

For each item, use of a similar facility in the prior 12 months at least doubled the likelihood that the respondent would report that someone in their household would “definitely” use such a facility in Skagit County. Particularly notable are:

- q Outdoor athletic facilities (29% of household that used this type of facility in the prior 12 months reported their household “definitely” would use such a facilities in Skagit County vs. 5% of *non*-prior users)
- q Boat launches (47% of prior users “definitely” would vs. 3% of *non*-prior users that “definitely” would).

- q Indoor athletic facility users are also much more likely to make use of a multi-use gymnasium (41% vs. 9% of *non*-prior users).
- q An indoor aquatic center has wide appeal to both prior users and *non*-prior users of public indoor pools, with 51% of prior users saying they “definitely” would use such a facility and 31% of *non*-prior users.

Although fewer than half of respondents reported using outdoor athletic facilities and public boat launches in the past year (40% and 34% respectively), those two groups reported higher likelihoods of using such facilities if additional ones were provided than did any other facility user ($r = .55$ and $.69$ respectively). While other reports of needs, in addition to likelihood of use are not as strong, it is clear that for the most part, distributions of use in the past 12 months (Table 2 above) provide an accurate tool for predicting reported likelihood of use in all cases, but particularly for some of the low-frequency and relatively low-need items (use of boat launches and indoor and outdoor athletic facilities).

Discussion

There is no magic formula for determining which facilities would be the best use of the county’s resources – this study is not sufficient for such predictions and would require a great deal of information about the costs of creating and maintaining each facility and other competing needs in the county. In addition, the likelihood of use/prior use analysis is limited by the fact that some facilities are already more rare in Skagit County – in particular public indoor pools and indoor athletic facilities.

The more common use of trails, water access, and playgrounds is conditioned in part on the current availability in conjunction with people’s propensity to use them. It is difficult to surmise with certainty whether people’s propensities are strong enough to support additional facilities when the particular types of facilities being discussed are harder to find. This is of particular concern for the public indoor aquatic center, since the costs of maintaining such a facility are very high, yet people who have not used any public indoor pools in the past year are rather likely to report that they “definitely” would use such a facility if it existed. Despite those reports, it appears that using a public indoor pool would be an uncommon undertaking for many of the county’s residents.

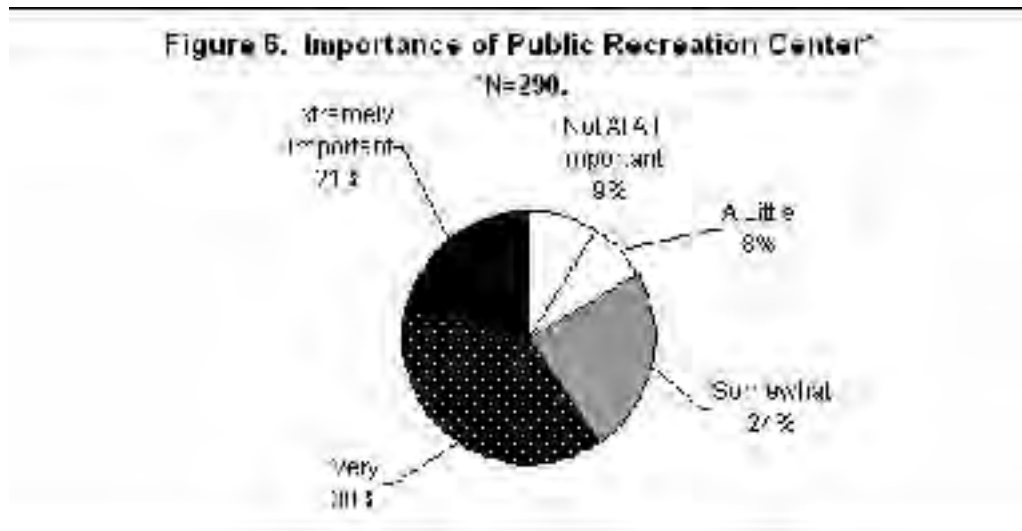
COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Recreation Center

The current Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan includes the construction of a public indoor recreation center³¹ as a future goal. SCPRD Survey respondents reported a high level of importance on a public indoor recreation center for the people of Skagit County. Sixty-one percent (61%) of respondents said the facility would be “extremely” or “very” important to the people of Skagit County. About one-quarter (24%) of respondents said it would be “somewhat” important and the remaining 17% said it would be “a little” or “not at all” important.

Use of the multi-use gymnasium or the multipurpose rooms that would be part of an indoor public recreation center can be ascertained in part by the previous survey items that asked about the need and likelihood for using such facilities. One in six respondents (15%) said

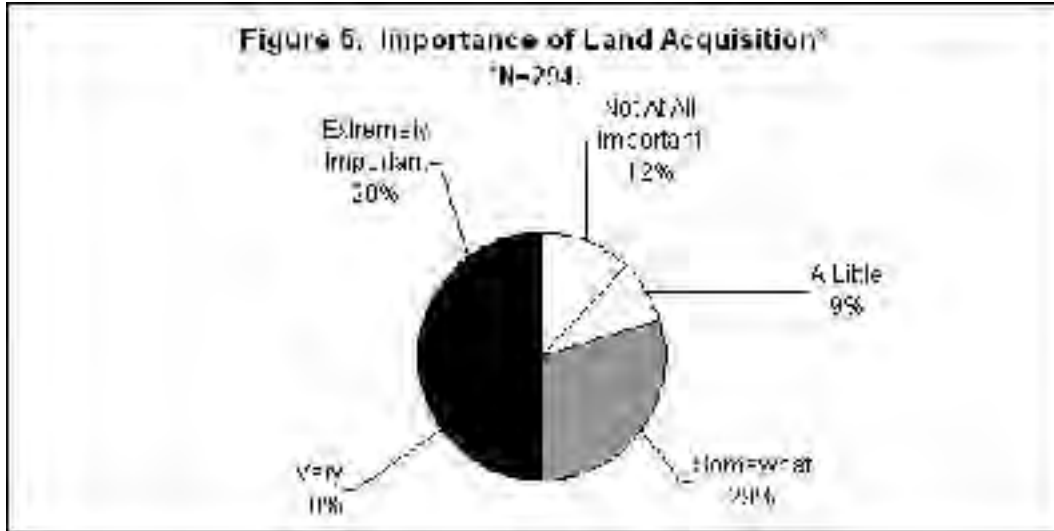
they “definitely” would use a multi-use gymnasium, and nearly a fifth (18%) of respondents said they “definitely” would use multipurpose rooms (see Figure 4). However the users would likely be drawn from somewhat different populations, since less than half (7%) said they would “definitely” use both facilities. One-third of respondents (33%) said they either “definitely” or “probably” would use both facilities. Fifteen percent said they “definitely” would NOT use either facility. With a margin of error for this survey of about 6%, this suggest that between 9% and 21% of Skagit County residents would be highly unlikely to use the gym or multipurpose rooms, while between 79% and 91% might use it.



In general, females responding on behalf of their household were more likely than male respondents to report a higher level of importance on a public indoor recreation center for the people of Skagit County. In addition, households with youths and younger aged households were more likely to report a higher level of importance.

Acquiring Land

Respondents were asked to report on the importance to their household that Skagit County acquire land to support new parks and provide recreation, while maintaining the existing facilities at the current levels or better. Half of respondents (50%) said that it is “extremely” or “very” important to their household that Skagit County acquires land. Thirty percent (30%) said acquiring land is “somewhat” important and the remaining 20% said “a little” or “not at all”.



Typically, younger aged households were more likely to report a higher level of importance for their household on land acquisition for Skagit County.

Northern State Recreation Area

Most (63%) of respondents reported being *unfamiliar* with the plan for developing the Northern State Recreation Area. The remaining 37% said they were at least “sort of” familiar with the plan.

Of the respondents who said they were at least “sort of” familiar with the plan for developing the area, 28% reported “trails” as the most important plan element to their household. The second most important elements were “ball fields” and “playgrounds” with both elements being reported as the most important element by 14% of these respondents.

Table 7. Most Important Element in NSRA Development Plan*

Trails	28%
None are important	20%
Ball Fields	14%
Playgrounds	14%
Campgrounds	12%
Can't Choose Only One	9%
Interpretive Center	2%
Equestrian Center	2%

*N=102 Those unfamiliar with the plan were not asked this item.

Additional recreation program suggestions

Respondents were asked to recommend additional recreation programs to the SCPRD. A complete listing of suggestions for additional recreation programs can be found in the appendices of this report.

SUMMARY

Results of the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department Community Survey suggest that Skagit County is most in need of an indoor aquatic center, followed closely by a multi-use gymnasium and multipurpose rooms. Additional athletic fields were the least likely to be report as a need for the County, in this survey. However, substantially similar numbers of respondents reported at least “somewhat” needing all the facilities (Figure 3). The study shows that there is no powerful mandate for or against specific facilities, but that there is an overall interest in seeing additional parks and recreation facilities in Skagit County.

Strong demographic patterns showed up consistently for most items throughout the analysis. Respondents who are between 25 and 54 tend to be more likely to report to report for their households a need and likelihood of using additional facilities, as are respondents with children in the home, and those who have lived in Skagit County less than 10 years. These demographic characteristics tend to coincide with one another.

Likelihood of using the facilities was somewhat differently ranked from the needs reported, though additional analysis suggested that some of the low-likelihood of use items such as the gymnasium, boat ramps and athletic fields, may be patronized more reliably than users of the higher ranked facilities. Reliability of use reports was gauged by people’s reports that they had used similar facilities over the past 12 months.

Likelihood of use is complicated by the fact that some facilities are harder to find in and around Skagit County than others. For example, the prevalence of playgrounds, trails and water access in part explains the high rates of use and propensities for use. By contrast, the lack of a public gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms or and aquatic center limits the probability that respondents would have used such a facility in the past 12 months. All these factors must be weighed when interpreting these results.

Nearly 60% of respondents reported that a public recreation center was “very” or “extremely” important to Skagit County. Fifty-percent reported that land acquisition was “very” or “extremely” important to their households.

Finally, most respondents (63%) said they were unfamiliar with the plan to develop the NSRA. Of those who were familiar with the plan, 28% prioritized trail development over the other plan elements.

APPENDIX A: SPCRD COMMUNITY SURVEY TEXT WITH RESULTS

INTRO:

Hello, my name is \$. I'm calling because the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department is seeking community input for its future plans. They'd like to know your household's priorities for parks and recreation facilities and programs. Your participation is extremely important, even if you don't use local parks or recreation facilities. May I speak with someone in your household 18 years or older... Would that be you? Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions?

N =		300
100%		
Able to Complete..... 01...	=> V1_1	300
100%		
Unable..... 02...	=> INT	0
0%		

V1_1:

My first questions have to do with your use of parks and recreation facilities in general. When answering these questions, please consider the activities both inside and outside of Skagit County for everyone in your household. Thinking about the past 12 months, has anyone in your household... [v1.1] Used Any campgrounds or RV parks?

N =		300
100%		
Yes..... 1...		140
47%		
No..... 0...		160
53%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...		0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...		0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...		0
0%		

V1_2:

[v1.2] (Used) Walking, hiking, riding, or biking Trails?

N =		300
100%		
Yes..... 1...		201
67%		
No..... 0...		97
32%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...		1
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...		0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...		1
0%		

V1_3:

[v1.3] (Used) Any Outdoor Athletic Facilities like ball fields, basketball or tennis courts? [spectators are users]

N =	300
100%	
Yes..... 1...	119
40%	
No..... 0...	180
60%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	1
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V1_4:

[v1.4] (Used) Any Indoor Athletic facilities like basketball, tennis or volleyball courts?

N =	300
100%	
Yes..... 1...	54
18%	
No..... 0...	245
82%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	1
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V1_5:

[v1.5] Spent time at the public seashore, lake or river?

N =	300
100%	
Yes..... 1...	233
78%	
No..... 0...	67
22%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V1_6:

[v1.6] (Used) A public boat launch?

N =	300
100%	
Yes..... 1...	103
34%	
No..... 0...	197
66%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	0
0%	

[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	0
0%		

V1_7:

[v1.7] (Used) A public indoor pool?		
N =		300
100%		
Yes.....	1...	80
27%		
No.....	0...	220
73%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	0
0%		

V1_8:

[v1.8] (Used) A park playground?		
N =		300
100%		
Yes.....	1...	165
55%		
No.....	0...	134
45%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	1
0%		

V1_9:

[v1.9] (Used) Any other kind of parks?		
N =		300
100%		
Yes.....	1...	129
43%		
No.....	0...	169
56%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	2
1%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	0
0%		

V2_1A:

My next questions ask about specific kinds of park and recreation facilities that could be a part of future plans. I'm going to read a list of some facilities the County could provide beyond what is currently available. For each item, please let me know how much the additional facility is needed and also how likely your household would be

to use it. So... how much does Skagit County need... [v2.1a] Additional campgrounds or RV Parks? Would you say...

N =		300
100%		
A Great Deal..... 4...		35
12%		
Quite A Bit..... 3...		39
13%		
Somewhat..... 2...		117
39%		
Not Much..... 1...		40
13%		
Not At All..... 0...		29
10%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	37
12%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...		2
1%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...		1
0%		

V2_1B:

[v2.1b] How likely would the people in your household be to use additional campground and RV parks? Would you say...

N =		300
100%		
Definitely Would..... 4...		54
18%		
Probably Would..... 3...		104
35%		
Probably Would Not, or..... 2...		79
26%		
Definitely Would Not..... 1...		62
21%		
[Do Not Read] Don't Know	7...	1
0%		
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable..... 8...		0
0%		
[Do Not Read] Refused..... 9...		0
0%		

V2_2:

So... how much does Skagit County need... [v2.2] Additional Trails? Would you say...

N =		300
100%		
A Great Deal..... 4...		45
15%		
Quite A Bit..... 3...		48
16%		
Somewhat..... 2...	=> V2_3	101
34%		
Not Much..... 1...	=> V2_3	47
16%		

Not At All.....	0...	=> V2_3	29
10%			
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	=> V2_3	28
9%			
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	=> V2_3	2
1%			
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	=> V2_3	0
0%			

V2_2A:

	Yes	No	[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable	[Do NOT Read] Refused
[v2.2a] Bicycle	49 (53%)	44 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.2b] Equestrian	17 (18%)	76 (82%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.2c] Hiking	74 (80%)	19 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.2d] Motorcycle [two-wheeled motorized vehicles only]	8 (9%)	85 (91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.2e] Interpretive [signage and muting to educate the user on a specific feature of the area utilized by the trail.	16 (17%)	77 (83%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.2f] Other [Do NOT Read]	13 (14%)	80 (86%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

V2_2O:

[v2.2o] Other [Hit ENTER and Type in Response]	
N =	13
100%	
..... Y...	13
100%	
..... 0...	0
0%	

V2_3:

(How likely would the people in your household be to use...) [v2.3] Additional Trails? (Would you say...)	
N =	300
100%	
Definitely Would.....	91
30%	
Probably Would.....	103
34%	
Probably Would Not, or.....	55
18%	=> V2_4
Definitely Would Not.....	48
16%	=> V2_4
[Do Not Read] Don't Know	2
1%	=> V2_4
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable.....	1
0%	=> V2_4
[Do Not Read] Refused.....	0
0%	=> V2_4

V2_3A:

	Yes	No	[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable	[Do NOT Read] Refused
[v2.3a] Bicycle	71 (37%)	123 (63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.3b] Equestrian	12 (6%)	182 (94%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.3c] Hiking	159 (82%)	35 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.3d] Motorcycle [two-wheeled motorized vehicles only]	15 (8%)	179 (92%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.3e] Interpretive [signage and muting to educate the user on a specific feature of the area utilized by the trail.	31 (16%)	163 (84%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.3f] Other [Do NOT Read]	24 (12%)	170 (88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

V2_3O:

[v2.3o] Other [Hit ENTER and Type in Response]

N =	24
100%	
..... Y...	24
100%	
..... 0...	0
0%	

V2_4:

(How much does Skagit County need..) [v2.4] Additional Athletic Fields? (Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
A Great Deal..... 4...	35
12%	
Quite A Bit..... 3...	35
12%	
Somewhat..... 2... => V2_5	79
26%	
Not Much..... 1... => V2_5	53
18%	
Not At All..... 0... => V2_5	45
15%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7... => V2_5	53
18%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8... => V2_5	0
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9... => V2_5	0
0%	

V2_4A:

	Yes	No	[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable	[Do NOT Read] Refused
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[v2.4a] Adult Baseball	33 (47%)	37 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4b] Youth Baseball	55 (79%)	15 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4c] Adult Softball	16 (23%)	54 (77%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4d] Youth Softball	24 (34%)	46 (66%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4e] Football	12 (17%)	58 (83%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4f] Soccer	43 (61%)	26 (37%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.4g] Other [Do NOT Read]	4 (6%)	66 (94%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

V2_40:

[v2.4o] Other [Hit ENTER and type in Response]

N =	4
100%	
..... Y...	4
100%	
..... 0...	0
0%	

V2_5:

(How likely would the people in your household be to use...) [v2.5] Additional Athletic Fields? (Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
Definitely Would..... 4...	43
14%	
Probably Would..... 3...	55
18%	
Probably Would Not, or..... 2... => V2_6A	111
37%	
Definitely Would Not..... 1... => V2_6A	87
29%	
[Do Not Read] Don't Know 7... => V2_6A	4
1%	
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable..... 8... => V2_6A	0
0%	
[Do Not Read] Refused..... 9... => V2_6A	0
0%	

V2_5A:

	Yes	No	[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable	[Do NOT Read] Refused
[v2.5a] Adult Baseball	31 (32%)	67 (68%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5b] Youth Baseball	65 (66%)	33 (34%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5c] Adult Softball	19 (19%)	79 (81%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5d] Youth Softball	24 (24%)	74 (76%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5e] Football	5 (5%)	93 (95%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5f] Soccer	49 (50%)	49 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
[v2.5g] Other [Do NOT Read]	12 (12%)	86 (88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

V2_50:

[v2.5o] Other [Hit ENTER and type in Response]	
N =	12
100%	
..... Y...	12
100%	
..... 0...	0
0%	

V2_6A:

(How much does Skagit County need...) [v2.6a] Additional Public Boat Ramps?
(Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
A Great Deal..... 4...	43
14%	
Quite A Bit..... 3...	38
13%	
Somewhat..... 2...	81
27%	
Not Much..... 1...	36
12%	
Not At All..... 0...	38
13%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	61
20%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	2
1%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	1
0%	

V2_6B:

(How likely would your household be to use...) [v2.6b] Additional Public Boat Ramps? (Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
Definitely Would..... 4...	53
18%	
Probably Would..... 3...	76
25%	
Probably Would Not, or..... 2...	63
21%	
Definitely Would Not..... 1...	97
32%	
[Do Not Read] Don't Know 7...	9
3%	
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	2
1%	
[Do Not Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V2_7A:

(How much does Skagit County need...) [v2.7a] A multi-use gymnasium where you could play basketball, indoor tennis, volleyball, soccer and that sort of thing? (Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
A Great Deal..... 4...	70
23%	
Quite A Bit..... 3...	57
19%	
Somewhat..... 2...	65
22%	
Not Much..... 1...	40
13%	
Not At All..... 0...	42
14%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	23
8%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	3
1%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V2_7B:

(How likely would your household be to use..) [v2.7b] A multi-use gymnasium where you could play basketball, indoor tennis, volleyball, soccer and that sort of thing? (Would you say..)

N =	300
100%	
Definitely Would..... 4...	45
15%	
Probably Would..... 3...	80
27%	
Probably Would Not, or..... 2...	87
29%	
Definitely Would Not..... 1...	85
28%	
[Do Not Read] Don't Know 7...	2
1%	
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	1
0%	
[Do Not Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V2_8A:

(How much does Skagit County need..) [v2.8a] Multipurpose rooms that could be used for enrichment programs, classes, crafts, fitness and aerobics, meetings and receptions? (Would you say..)

N =	300
100%	
A Great Deal..... 4...	45
15%	
Quite A Bit..... 3...	58
19%	
Somewhat..... 2...	95
32%	
Not Much..... 1...	30
10%	

Not At All.....	0...	40
13%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	31
10%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	1
0%		

V2_8B:

(How likely would your household be to use...) [v2.8b] Multipurpose rooms that could be used for enrichment programs, classes, crafts, fitness and aerobics, meetings and receptions? (Would you say...)

N =		300
100%		
Definitely Would.....	4...	54
18%		
Probably Would.....	3...	105
35%		
Probably Would Not, or.....	2...	81
27%		
Definitely Would Not.....	1...	58
19%		
[Do Not Read] Don't Know	7...	2
1%		
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do Not Read] Refused.....	9...	0
0%		

V2_9A:

(How much does Skagit County need...) [v2.9a] An Indoor Aquatic Center for swimming, water play and therapy? (Would you say...)

N =		300
100%		
A Great Deal.....	4...	107
36%		
Quite A Bit.....	3...	55
18%		
Somewhat.....	2...	59
20%		
Not Much.....	1...	23
8%		
Not At All.....	0...	36
12%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	19
6%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	1
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	0
0%		

V2_9B:

(How likely would your household be to use...) [v2.9b] An Indoor Aquatic Center for swimming, water play and therapy? (Would you say...)

N =	300
100%	
Definitely Would..... 4...	109
36%	
Probably Would..... 3...	82
27%	
Probably Would Not, or..... 2...	50
17%	
Definitely Would Not..... 1...	57
19%	
[Do Not Read] Don't Know 7...	2
1%	
[Do Not Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	0
0%	
[Do Not Read] Refused..... 9...	0
0%	

V3_1:

The current County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan includes the construction of a public indoor recreation center as a future goal. The rec center might include things like a multi-use gymnasium, and multipurpose rooms like those I described earlier. [v3.1] So... How important do you think this facility would be to the people of Skagit County? Would you say...Extremely Important... Very... Somewhat... A little... or Not at all Important.

N =	300
100%	
Extremely Important..... 5...	62
21%	
Very..... 4...	110
37%	
Somewhat..... 3...	70
23%	
A Little, or..... 2...	22
7%	
Not At All Important..... 1...	26
9%	
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7...	7
2%	
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8...	1
0%	
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9...	2
1%	

V4_1:

[v4.1] How important is it to the people in your household that the parks and recreation department acquire land to support new parks and provide recreation, while maintaining the existing facilities at the current levels or better? Would you say it is... [Parks have traditionally been acquired by donations and grants as well as being prioritized by elected leaders so that bonds and other capital funds may be sought and used.]

N =	300
100%	
Extremely Important..... 5...	59
20%	

Very.....	4...	88
29%		
Somewhat.....	3...	87
29%		
A Little, or.....	2...	25
8%		
Not At All Important.....	1...	35
12%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	5
2%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	1
0%		

V5_1:

[v5.1] Are you familiar with the plan for developing the Northern State Recreation Area?

N =		300
100%		
Yes.....	2...	68
23%		
Sort Of.....	1...	43
14%		
No.....	0... => V7_1	188
63%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7... => V7_1	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8... => V7_1	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9... => V7_1	1
0%		

V6_1:

[v6.1] What element in the development plan is most important to the people in your household? [Choose Only One, Prompt if respondent doesn't recall plan elements]

N =		112
100%		
Trails.....	1	29
26%		
Interpretive Center.....	2	2
2%		
Ball Fields.....	3	14
13%		
Equestrian Center.....	4	2
2%		
Campgrounds.....	5	12
11%		
Playgrounds.....	6	14
13%		
[Do NOT Read] Can't Choose Only One.....	7	9
8%		
[Do NOT Read] None of The Above.....	8	20
18%		

[Do NOT Read] Don't Know the most important..... 77... 4%	5
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable - unfamiliar with plan elements..... 88... 4%	5
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 99... 0%	0

V7_1:

[v7.1] Do you have any suggestions for additional recreation programs in Skagit County?

N = 100%	300
Yes..... 1... 31%	93
No..... 0... 69%	206
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 7... 0%	0
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 8... 0%	0
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 9... 0%	1

V8_1:

Finally, these last few questions are to help us better understand who takes part in our survey. [v8.1] May I ask your age?

N = 100%	300
18-24..... 1 3%	9
25-34..... 2 10%	30
35-44..... 4 17%	50
45-54..... 5 19%	58
55-64..... 6 24%	72
65-74..... 7 13%	39
75 or older..... 8 11%	33
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know 77... 1%	3
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable..... 88... 0%	0
[Do NOT Read] Refused..... 99... 2%	6

V8_2:

[v8.2] Are there any children age 18 or younger living in your home?

N = 100%	300
Yes..... 1... 38%	113

No.....	0...	184
61%		
Don't Know	7...	0
0%		
Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
Refused.....	9...	3
1%		

V8_3:

[v8.3] How long have you lived in Skagit County?

N =		300
100%		
Less Than 1 Year.....	1...	6
2%		
1 - 5 Years.....	2...	48
16%		
6 - 10 Years.....	3...	29
10%		
More Than 10 Years.....	4...	212
71%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	1
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	1
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	3
1%		

V8_4:

[v8.4] I know this sounds silly, but are you...

N =		300
100%		
Male, or.....	1...	119
40%		
Female.....	0...	179
60%		
[Do NOT Read] Don't Know	7...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Not Applicable.....	8...	0
0%		
[Do NOT Read] Refused.....	9...	2
1%		

INT99:

Thank you for your time. Have a good evening.

N =		300
100%		
Complete.....	08...	=> END 300
100%		

F8:

How did you get my number?

Your number was randomly selected from all the households with listed telephone numbers throughout Skagit County.

Where did the funding come from for this survey?

The Skagit County Commissioners approved funding for the comprehensive plan update in the 2003 budget. This support comes from the general fund.

How long will this survey take?

It depends on your answers, but it averages nine minutes.

Who can I contact for more information about Parks/the survey/the results?

You can contact Bob Vaux (V-oh), Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. His phone number is 336-9414.

What if I do not use the parks?

The Parks and Recreation Department is seeking input from everyone in the community, whether they use the parks or not. They hope to find out what both park users and non-users see as priorities for Skagit County. If you participate, the findings will better represent all residents in Skagit County, giving the department more complete information.

Can I see the results?

The results will become part of the updated comprehensive plan as well as posted on the county parks website.

Will there be fees/costs for the indoor facilities (multi-use gym, multipurpose rooms/classes etc.)?

Like current programs, fees would be attached to all use of the facility.

APPENDIX B: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION, SAMPLED VS. COMPLETED

Table B-1. Geographic Distribution by Zip Code: Sample Distribution vs. Survey Respondent Distribution					
Zip Code	Sample Distribution	Percent	Respondent Distribution	Percent	Difference Between Distributions
98232	60	6.0	25	8.3	2.3
98233	101	10.1	33	11.0	0.9
98221	209	20.9	65	21.7	0.8
98274	124	12.4	39	13.0	0.6
98229	2	0.2	1	0.3	0.1
98238	2	0.2	1	0.3	0.1
98235	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
98241	3	0.3	1	0.3	0
98267	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
98283	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
98222	1	0.1			-0.1
98255	2	0.2			-0.2
98263	5	0.5	1	0.3	-0.2
98237	50	5.0	14	4.7	-0.3
98273	191	19.1	55	18.3	-0.8
98257	72	7.2	17	5.7	-1.5
98284	157	15.7	42	14.0	-1.7
Total	1000	100	300	100	

Table B-2. Geographic Distribution by City: Sample Distribution vs. Survey Respondent Distribution					
Zip Code	Sample Distribution	Percent	Respondent Distribution	Percent	Difference Between Distributions
BOW	60	6.0	25	8.3	2.3
BURLINGTON	101	10.1	33	11.0	0.9
ANACORTES	209	20.9	65	21.7	0.8
BELLINGHAM	2	0.2	1	0.3	0.1
CONWAY	2	0.2	1	0.3	0.1
CLEARLAKE	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
DARRINGTON	3	0.3	1	0.3	0
MARBLEMOUNT	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
ROCKPORT	7	0.7	2	0.7	0
BLAKELY ISLAND	1	0.1			-0.1
MOUNT VERNON	315	31.5	94	31.3	-0.2
HAMILTON	2	0.2			-0.2
LYMAN	5	0.5	1	0.3	-0.2
CONCRETE	50	5.0	14	4.7	-0.3

LA CONNER	72	7.2	17	5.7	-1.5
SEDRO WOOLLEY	157	15.7	42	14	-1.7
Total	1000	100	100	100	

APPENDIX C: SPCRD COMMUNITY SURVEY OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

These tables show the verbatim responses recorded by interviewers. The tables show responses to open-ended questions and responses recorded to “other” response categories, which are selected when the respondent did not recognize a response category as being an appropriate description of what they used.

V2_20. Other Additional Trails NEEDED?
More walking trails and access to wooded areas.
Nature trails.
Paved trails for jogging, strollers and scooters
Rock climbing, with metal pegs.
Safe walking trails for families
Shoreline trails and community woodland.
Something you can walk on.
Trails in the woods, on the water or on the lake. Trails away from densely populated areas.
Walking
Walking
Walking trails in the woods
Walking trails.
Wheelchair accessible.

V2_30. Other Additional Trails would USE?
An asphalt roller blade trail.
Birding trails
Easy walking trails
Forested trails, trails in the wood or around lakes
Just about any trail that has scenery or nature.
Paved trails for jogging, strollers and scooters
Scenic trails
Sightseeing trails, and horse trails.
Trails through the woods.
Trails with accessibility for disabled and trails that go someplace like stores.
Walking
Walking
Walking
Walking
Walking
Walking
Walking trails
Walking trails
Walking trails with access to the outer areas.
Walking trails for two day hikes
Walking trails or trails for walking dogs.
Walking trails
Walking trails, not a great big hike.
Walking

V2_40. Other Additional Athletic Fields NEEDED?
Basketball and versatile fields for multiple sports.
Fields that can be used for more the one activity.
Frisbee golf
Tennis

V2_50. Other Additional Athletic Fields would USE?
Basketball
Basketball and tennis
Basketball courts
Basketball, softball, and Frisbee golf
Basketball
Big fields like soccer or football
Big open fields for running and kite flying.
I'd like to see volleyball nets and racquetball courts.
Multipurpose fields
Riding and biking
Tennis
Use soccer fields for ultimate Frisbee

V7_1. Do you have any suggestions for additional recreation programs in Skagit County?
A bigger center for kids after school and weekends would be great.
A place to ride BMX bikes with ramps and things like that.
A public access TV station, if that's possible.
A public indoor pool would bew onderful.
A public pool
Accessibility would be nice for people who need to motor or wheelchair in there.
Any kind of park that doesn't charge a fee for parking would be useful. We don't use state parks because of the fees.
Anything related to a swimming pool. Make that top priority.
Aquatic center.
Acquiring more land is a good idea for people and animals.
Buy the adjacent land next to Sharp County Park.
Don't forget Anacortes.
Eastern Skagit County needs more development.
Extension of the walking trail by Padilla Bay, Bay view. I have always thought it would be nice to extend it all the way to Samish island.
Gymnastics and ice-skating. Also, the Walker Valley off-road vehicle park is important to the county, which people are trying to get closed, which could potentially generate a lot of revenue for the county. A campground at this site would also generate a
I do believe the highways should have a separate bicycle track (farther from the highway) -I think that should be one of the top priorities. Also, they have beautiful parks right now and they're trying to close a portion of them. If they don't have money

I enjoy being able to drive somewhere and being able to look at the water or to have a picnic and that sort of thing without having to be charged five dollars.

I just think they should have maybe more swimming pools that are open to the public and more campgrounds.

I like the walking, biking, and hiking trails.

V7_1. Do you have any suggestions for additional recreation programs in Skagit County? CONTINUED

I think if some of the existing programs like FFA and four h were better funded they would fill a large gape.

I think the charging for parking has hurt a lot of people I know. People I know would go for a half an hour walk everyday. Now it costs five dollars to park. Elderly people can't afford five dollars for a half an hour walk.

I think they need to build something more for the people who are handicapped; I am talking about the people who are physically handicapped.

I wish there were more handball facilities. Often time's handball and squash can be done in the same court and that's what I hear a lot of moaning about. I don't think you can purchase too much parkland.

I would like larger park in south Mt. Vernon

I would always like to see more dive sites. And by that I mean scuba diving not high diving.

I would like a fun park with swimming and rides.

I would like after school programs for students of all ages.

I would like an aquatic center at North state recreational Area.

I would like programs for children with physical or mental disabilities.

I would like Programs for teenagers.

I would like to see a paved trail; I think the most important thing is to be able to use a stroller on it.

I would like to see a small childcare service provided for only about an hour or so while the parents swim or work out.

I would like to see more exercise classes and for the different abilities ones that are out there children, youth, adult and elderly. For the trails and I would like to see the trails be appropriate for the age groups. Intermediate and the ones where there

I would like to see more interpretive trails such as nature, wildlife, and birding trails.

I would like to see s Model airplane fields in this area. Lots of senior citizens and youth.

I would like to see the dykes developed and more organized exercise activities for free for people who don't have money.

I would like wheelchair accessible trails and dike access.

I'd like to see a boxing gym.

I'd like to see more kayaking. I don't see many young people kayaking because it's so expensive. We live in one of the best places in the world for kayaking and not enough young people participate because it's too expensive. A public program would be help.

I'd like to see some programs available for the older population that would help maintain good health. Also, programs concerning preventative issues.

If we don't do something to get the children involved now, the children here won't be the kind of people we would want taking care of us later. I would like to see more kids in activities in small towns like this one.

Improving the fairgrounds.

It is unfortunate that all families can't afford to go to the park because they have to pay every time to get in.

It would be great if they did more classes for both adults and kids - classes for cooking, crafts, pottery, or things for kids to do.

It would be great to have a swimming pool. The YMCA makes you pay charge to use it if you are not a member.

It would be nice if gymnastics were offered in town. I know a lot of people who want to do gymnastics but don't want

to drive to Mount Vernon to do it.

It would be nice if the dykes were hiker friendly.

It would be nice if we could have organized walks with a knowledgeable guide.

It would be nice to have more water access such as the beach at Clear Lake.

V7_1. Do you have any suggestions for additional recreation programs in Skagit County? CONTINUED

It would be nice to see a trail along the water and it would be long and not hills. It would be good to the view.

I've been on the Cascade Trail an awful lot and horses are all over the trail. It makes bike riding difficult and sometimes impossible. There needs to be a bike lane - if only a two feet wide lane that the horses would respect as being only for bicycles

Just need some more

Just take care of the kids, and that gets into a family issue.

Lacrosse would be good - my kids have asked about that. Also, more skateboarding parks.

Lets not develop a bunch if we can't afford it.

Little kids need more places for recreation. Teenagers also need somewhere to go, instead of the mall.

Make more fields.

Make places for the kids to play.

Maybe another archery facility, for outdoor bow hunting.

More convenience, some parks and campgrounds don't have electricity of any kind. So if they had restrooms with electrical access - one per bathroom - especially for disabled people and people that need nebulizers or to recharge a battery.

More swing sets.

My priorities would be access to the rivers and/or lakes in Skagit County, and my indoor priorities would be basketball, racquetball, and swimming.

Need to focus more on the youth sports and youth centers. It keeps them out of trouble.

One thing I would love to see in this town: it would be nice to be able to launch a day sailor or a row boat down at Mariners Park. There's a great place where it could be set up to launch small boats.

Public transportation increasing number of people who might need assistance to get to the places

Quit spending county money.

Something for the Quadra and paraplegics to do. There is nothing for them.

The fairgrounds should move to the Northern state recreation area. The biggest thing I would like to see a swimming pool. A pool is good for all age level and schools that can't afford pools. There needs to be an increase in programs that increase awareness of

The kids up here have nothing to do, the swimming pool idea is wonderful. An arcade room to keep kids out of trouble is a great idea. We need something that we can do every day.

The pool area is a big consideration, as well as trails and interlinking trails.

There is no therapeutic type of pool in the whole Skagit county area that I know of. There is a fantastic Easter seal sponsored pool in Ventura that would make a good model for a therapy pool for Skagit County.

There needs to be a public swimming pool in the Sedro Woolley area.

There needs to be more play rooms for kids of all ages. In Everett there is a petting zoo and a place for swimming for kids and adults, something like that park would be great for this area. A single place where you can do all sorts of different activities

There needs to be more youth programs for teenagers. They don't have a youth group type programs for high school kids.

There needs to be some places to do yoga and tai chi - things that don't jar the joints, and safe places to walk or ride a bike. If there are some beautiful natural areas that aren't currently protected by the federal, state, or city government, then the

They need to have something for the kids to do, like a skate park.

They really need a public facility that can hold 250 to 500 people.

They should have an Off Road Vehicle park.

V7_1. Do you have any suggestions for additional recreation programs in Skagit County? CONTINUED

They should put in another fishing pond for the kids.

Swimming pools with a diving tank

More boat launches

We could use one or two more good golf courses.

We live at Clear Lake And there are people who are swimming there now. It makes it so hard to use the boat ramp there because of the swimmers.

We need a new county fairground.

We need a place to dance.

We need a shooting range.

We need more places for our great grandchildren to play.

We need something closer to us because the kids here would have to travel more than 70 miles to get to a facility. And 70 miles back. Darrington does have things but they are not always included in those.

We need to maintain the facilities we have. We need to grow conservatively.

We really need a public wading pool for kids

What they need are some bicycle trails. They should be letting the bikes use road shoulders or at least widening the roads, and they haven't been doing that. Also, the shooting range: they stop wasting money on other proposals and do that one.

Yes we would like to see a shooting range.

You've got the trail from concrete to Woolley; it's really hard to walk on because it's so soft. Needs to be done something so people can walk on it and ride bicycles on it. Needs to be partially paved. Basically you've got a lot of potential.

QCMT. Comments

A multi-use facility for children would be nice.

A pool both indoor and outdoor is high priority. I would like to see seashore trails, as well as easier trails for children to hike.

Children do not live at her residence but it is a daycare facility.

Fish and wildlife have signs and they say do not park beyond this sign. People still do park there. They use it as a garbage drop off at times. And the sheriff does come by to patrol the area but not nearly enough.

I do not like motor vehicles on the trails or on the waters. I think that the trails should lead somewhere like to a store a park or something that way people can use them as a daily routine. We need to have trails that the elderly people can use. It

I don't want new development on the farmlands or the flood plains.

I don't want to support it [parks and recreation development] if it involves raising taxes, but I do appreciate what the parks and recreation department does. If they can find a way to make it happen more efficiently or without raising taxes, I support it.

I feel they should clean up the current trails. The high schools could be used as multi purpose rooms and extra gyms.

I feel we need to improve the public boat launches instead of adding more. For example, make them wider so you can launch two boats at once.

I just have one thing to say and this is that Seattle City light had bought property here and then donated it back to the county. This then took the land off the tax rolls.

I just am not certain what the parks and recreation department, what their mandate covers. I am not certain their mandate covers. I would prefer to see conservation and smart development as a priority.

QCMT. Comments

I know that there isn't a need in Anacortes and I assume that there is a larger need in Burlington or Mt. Vernon.

I location of trails and habitat diversity they provide are important in considering new trails.

i think fairgrounds are most important for the North state development plan.

I think some parts of the county are served well with indoor facilities, while some parts of the county are not. In addition, I think that the northern state complex could address some of the needs now in that portion of the county.

I think that location of new development is important, I won't use a recreation center if it is not located near where I live (Mt. Vernon).

I think that the most important aspect of the plan is an indoor basketball court.

I think they forget how many thousands visit this area each year that don't live here. This puts a lot of pressure on the parks.

I think they should keep it natural and preserve the historical aspect of it. I think the swimming would be very good for this area because right now we have to be a member at YMCA. Maybe even an outside pool would be nice and natural trails.

I think we need more camp grounds near the water.

I use the Private Health Club facilities.

I would like multi-use trails that include biking, hiking, and horseback riding all in one trail.

I would like to see a public pool provided. We go to watch the games and things. The kids need something to keep them out of trouble.

I would like to see accelerated penalties for deviant violations occurring within the county's parks and recreation boundaries. If a person is caught littering, painting graffiti, etc, the fines should be more extreme than they currently are.

I would like water therapy programs.

If the recreation center is one big unit, rather than several small ones, it would only benefit the people nearby, and it wouldn't be fair if the whole county would have to pay for it.

If they can't maintain the parks they have now, how are they going to acquire new parks?

If they did build these the rates would be so high that the people who really need them would not be able to afford them.

If we were going to spend money to develop the Northern State property for various projects then we should go forward with doing that so that the zoning laws don't change and prevent us from doing so. Our current fairgrounds are also inadequate. I think

I'm not a big proponent of building more buildings. I'd prefer to see more outdoor activities.

Info on the web about the parks and recreation would be nice.

It seems kind of silly to be asking questions of elderly people that do not use the parks or other things. I live alone and I do not use any of this. We don't need these kinds of things. The county needs to handle the money better for things we really need.

Multi purpose rooms and gyms could be good depending on where they are located.

On question V6.1 the suggestion was to turn it back into a mental health facility. Why are there no mentions of golf courses here? We are spectators of soccer.

Public school facilities would be a good place to gather for sports and activities in the evenings, weekends, and summer.

That I am encouraged that you are looking and asking questions because it will give our kids something to do and more family things.

The boat ramps need to be maintained, updated, and fixed. Also, for the multi-use gym, the county needs to utilize what we have. The recreation center would be great if it included a pool. For acquiring new land, its importance depends on where the land comes from.

QCMT. Comments

The district closed down the dike system. I don't understand why we can't use the system as a walking trail. The dyke systems are used in Europe for trails.

The fees for some facilities, the Clear Lake area for example, are exorbitant, and if the public facilities were less expensive, they would be used. It should not be for profit; it should be public.

The multi purpose rooms and recreation center would be very important to Skagit County if they are geared to all age levels. Also, the costs for park and trail access keep going up. This is sad for families of lower income that won't be able to afford to visit

The Padilla Bay trail at the south end, where the parking is most convenient for the disabled you have to go all the way to the Interpretive Center to get the key to open the gate. It's so inconvenient that it's not even worth going there.

The questions need to separate RV parks and camping grounds because they are two different things.

There are people that are low income that can't afford to go to the parks even though they want to. Also, there are senior citizens that would like to have access to parks and recreation areas but can't afford the day use charges.

There is a disparity of programs; they're mostly located in Mt. Vernon and not easily accessible to other Skagit county residents. Developing recreation is extremely important to the people of Skagit County. There needs to be programs that are inclusive a

There is more need for restrooms.

There was one question for V3_1. It was with this building: Is there going to be a public pool there? Or is this just the gym and multipurpose rooms?

They need to re-evaluate the fees you have to pay just to sit at the park. Maybe they should have time frame to have users pay \$2 for a few hours. Racer Park is where we used to take the kids to ride their bikes.

They need to send out information about the amount of occupancy in each park, to determine the need for the park. I would also like to see how the money is being used.

V2.8B. Would this include a weight room? If it does then the family would use it more.

We have a lot of parks and recreation options available to the public; we don't need any additional land acquisition. Clear cooperatives need to be established between the schools and the parks. We have plenty of gyms right now. We need to support keeping

¹¹ Trails, in this section of the survey, were described as walking, hiking, riding or biking.

¹² Trails, in this section of the survey, were described as bicycle, equestrian, hiking, motorcycle, and interpretive.

¹³ The recreation center was described as a center that would include a multi-use gymnasium and multi-purpose rooms. A multi-use gymnasium would be used to play indoor basketball, tennis, volleyball, soccer and that sort of thing. Multipurpose rooms would be used for enrichment programs, classes, crafts, fitness and aerobics, meetings and receptions.