

Review Comments from conversations and email responses with community members, stake holders and park volunteer stewards.

Comment: The plan doesn't address recreational (people) use of Coulter Creek Heritage Park.

- Response: The Forest Stewardship Plan for the Ecological Restoration of Coulter Creek Heritage Park is meant to address the current natural resource condition of the park. Park planning to encompass the recreational use of the park are expected to begin in March 2018. This planning process will include the following:

Landscape Classification Process: Conduct landscape analysis and land-use classifications determinations, involving resource professionals and collaborating agencies (stakeholders).

Tasks/Product: Form a Coulter Creek Resource Technical Steering Committee

[Representative from agencies and conservation organizations]

1. Analyze resource data and landscape capabilities.
2. Recommend landscape scale stewardship directions and priorities.
3. Develop a Landscape Classification Map – recommending resource protection, public access, and recreation facility needs and opportunities.
4. Conduct Public Review Process.

Public Access & Recreational Use Determination – understand the need/demand for recreation opportunities in this part of Kitsap County and facility needs.

Tasks/Product: Form a Citizens Conservation/Recreation Steering Committee

1. Survey recreational interests and current public access and use patterns.
2. Assess landscape capability for types of recreation activities.
3. Assess potential for environmental education and interpretive opportunities.
4. Draft a Stewardship and Public Use Management Plan to include:
 - a. Stewardship and Ecological restoration needs/priorities
 - b. Facility development needs/priorities
 - c. Management needs and operations impacts
 - d. Funding & grant strategies
 - e. Immediate management actions and priorities
 - f. Public Review process

Response was incorporated into the Plan – Resource Category VIII: Aesthetics and Recreation - page 11.

Comment: Aquifer recharge, and wetland and forests preservation are important.

- Response: Washington State Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Brittany Gordon has stated: "Coulter Creek is arguably THE top priority stream for WDFW in Kitsap County". Therefore water quality, aquifer recharge and fish habitat protection and enhancement are the priority for this park. All buffers for wetlands and riparian areas will exceed current Forest Practices Rules.

Response incorporated into Plan – Resource Category V: Fish and Wildlife – page 7.

Comment: What will the impact of the thinning be on wildlife, specifically birds?

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- General observations on previous restoration thinning projects in similar forest park conditions have resulted in increased use by all wildlife and specifically birds. For example, more raptors have been observed hunting in areas that have been thinned. With more light reaching the forest floor, understory vegetation will increase and thrive providing improved habitat and food for all wildlife.
- Baseline bird surveys have been conducted at Coulter Creek Heritage Park and reported into a national ornithology data-base by one member of Audubon and that individual plans to conduct post thinning survey in 2018 and beyond.

Responses incorporated into Plan – Resource Category V: Fish and Wildlife – Page 8

Comment: Forest wetlands and other biologically unique areas of the park should be protected to preserve critical micro habitat for terrestrial amphibians.

- It's park policy to provide protection beyond what is required under the Forest Practices Rules. All forest wetlands are buffer by 50 feet and other sensitive areas are protected from equipment access. Marking all of the trees that are to be removed also provides a higher level of control over thinning operations. The ecological goal is to have a relative density that favors wildlife.
- The type of harvesting system used leaves the branches and wood chunk debris in the forest which enhances habitat for both small mammals and amphibians.

Responses incorporated into Plan – Resource Category V: Fish and Wildlife – Page 9

Comment: Thinning's impact of understory vegetation and mushrooms.

- An Oregon State University study looking at thinning impact on natural mushroom production in young Douglas fir forests showed that chanterelles recover quickly in lightly thinned fir forests. Observation that have been made at other Kitsap parks where restoration thinning has occurred over the past four years have normal amounts of chanterelle mushrooms the following year.
- The type of harvesting equipment being used has the least amount of impact on soil and understory vegetation. Branches and wood debris is placed on access routes used by both the processing and forwarder. Post-harvest observations at Newberry Hill Heritage Park show the rapid reemergence of salal, huckleberry and ferns in the understory of project sites.

Comment: Impact of thinning on existing wildlife

- Some areas of Coulter Creek Heritage Park as so densely stocked with trees that few wildlife benefits exist. These areas lack food sources and habitat conditions needed for most mammals and birds. Although the actual thinning operation can disrupt wildlife, the long term benefits to wildlife is the goal. Displacement or mortality is minimal due to the conservative harvesting methods used.

Comment: How does revenue impact the way trees are mark for thinning?

- Restoration thinning criteria is totally based on what is best for the overall health of the forest and wildlife. The thinning criteria is basically the same regardless of the age of forest stand.

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Stands with older, larger of trees benefit the same as area with younger, smaller diameter trees. Experience has shown that an annual mixture of both younger and older forest stands that meet the restoration criteria operationally works well.