

Chapter 12

PARKS AND RECREATION

Inventory of Existing Facilities

Historically, Birch Bay has met recreation needs of both year round and seasonal residents in three ways. One is the Bay itself. It provides year round opportunities for an array of activities ranging from clamming, swimming, biking and kite flying to more passive pursuits such as viewing sunsets, photography and bird watching. Another primary recreation provider is the private sector. Golf courses, water slides and amusement centers are available to tourists and residents. In addition, some recreation needs are met by the recreation amenities provided for owners and guests of RV resorts, housing subdivisions and condominium complexes.

Besides Birch Bay State Park, public beach access is provided at various points with limited public facilities such as portable rest rooms and parking. Historically, public trespass on privately held tidelands, the definitions of public and private tideland ownership, and public rights to access have been continuing community issues.

Existing park and recreation lands are shown in Figure 12 -1. Table 12-1 shows total acreages for developed and undeveloped parks as well as public beach access points.

Developed Public Parks

A. Bay Horizon Park - Central Uplands Neighborhood

- 68 acre upland Whatcom County Park located about .5 miles from the Birch Bay shoreline.
- Indoor Facilities – Recreation / Resident managers housing building, gymnasium, 4 dormitory buildings which can accommodate 200 overnighters, dining hall / kitchen, administration / meeting building.

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- Outdoor Facilities – perimeter trail, abandoned ball fields, group campfire area, group picnic area, community playground with basketball court and play equipment.
- The Park has two primary leaseholders; The Lions Camp Horizon Foundation operates Camp Horizon and hostelling accommodations are provided by Hostelling International.

**Table 12-1
Existing Public Park & Recreation Lands**

Developed Public Parks	Acres
Central Uplands Neighborhood	137.5
State Parks Neighborhood	194.0
Total	331.5
Undeveloped Public Parks and Reserves	
Cottonwood Reach Neighborhood	4.3
Central Uplands Neighborhood	5.0
State Parks Neighborhood	196.1
Total	205.4
Number of Public Beach Accesses	
Cottonwood Reach Neighborhood	2 accesses
Central Reaches Neighborhood	6
State Parks Neighborhood	4
Total	12 accesses

Figure 12-1
Birch Bay Parks and Public Lands

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B. Sunset Farm Equestrian Center - Central Uplands Neighborhood

- 69.5 acre Whatcom County Parks horse facility located on Blaine Road 0.3 miles south of Birch Bay – Lynden Road.
- Indoor facilities – manager’s residence, hay barn and 16 stall stable.
- Outdoor facilities - training corrals, riding fields.

C. Birch Bay State Park - State Parks Neighborhood

- 194 acre marine park with 8,255 feet of saltwater shoreline and 14,923 feet of freshwater shoreline on Terrell Creek.
- Day use – kitchen shelter with electricity and 120 picnic tables.
- Boat launch – under 16 feet.
- Overnight Accommodations - 147 camp sites, 20 utility sites, RV dump station, restrooms with showers, 10 primitive sites.

Undeveloped Public Parks and Reserves

A. Whatcom County Park - Cottonwood Reach Neighborhood

- Intersection of Cedar Avenue and Anderson Road
- 4.33 acres
- Partial upland-flat / partial ravine
- No current plans for development

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B. Whatcom County Parks - Central Uplands Neighborhood

- Bay Road & Kickerville Site
- 5 acres
- Flat
- No current plans for development

C. Washington State Dept. Of Wildlife Property – Terrell Creek Estuary

- 11.1 acres
- Wildlife habitat

D. BP Cherry Point Heron Reserve

- 77 acres
- 250 nest Great Blue Heron Reserve

E. BP Cherry Point Natural Reserve

- 108 acres
- Buffer / habitat reserve

Public Beach Accesses *

A. Beachway Ave. Public Access - Cottonwood Reach Neighborhood

- 37 parking spaces
- Seasonal restroom
- Approx. 550 ft. of public shoreline / tide flats

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B. Cottonwood Drive Public Access - Cottonwood Reach Neighborhood

- 25 parking spaces
- Seasonal restroom
- Approx. 550 ft. of public shoreline / tide flats

C. Harborview Road Public Access - Central Reaches Neighborhood

- 55 parking spaces
- Seasonal restroom
- Approx. 800 ft. of public shoreline/tide flats

D. Two Golf Course Public Accesses - Central Reaches Neighborhood

- 7 parking spaces north of golf course
- 30 parking spaces at golf course

E. Alderson Road Public Access - Central Reaches Neighborhood

- 5 parking spaces
- Permanent restroom facility

F. Two Public Accesses Between Alderson & Jackson Rd. Central Reaches Neighborhood

- Each with 4 parking spaces

G. Jackson Road Public Access - State Park Neighborhood

- 22 parking spaces

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- Seasonal restroom
 - Asphalt / crushed surface
- H. North Cotterill Blvd. Public Access - State Park Neighborhood**
- 3 parking spaces
- I. Middle Cotterill Blvd. Public Access - State Park Neighborhood**
- 3 parking spaces
- J. South Cotterill Blvd. Public Access - State Park Neighborhood**
- 4 parking spaces

* Some accesses have questions to be resolved regarding the type of public access allowed.

Needs Assessment, Parks and Recreation Standards

Recreation is the heart of Birch Bay's identity. Recreation related commerce continues to be the community's primary industry. The significance of Birch Bay's shoreline as a recreation resource cannot be overstated. It provides high quality passive and active recreation experiences for both residents and visitors. Because Birch Bay is a regional recreation destination for day use and overnight visitors, it provides an opportunity for private sector recreation businesses to thrive.

These two factors; a natural, marine feature that provides recreation opportunities and a recreation oriented private sector, mean that the community's recreation needs are currently being met in a less than typical manner. People only have a certain amount of time to recreate and in most communities, that time might be spent at neighborhood and community parks taking part in organized sports activities or walking and bicycling on formal, constructed trails. In Birch Bay residents appear to have alternative ways to recreate. They live here partially

because they enjoy the unstructured recreation the marine environment provides. Consequently, there is less demand for publicly provided parks, facilities and programs.

Nonetheless, the needs expressed at neighborhood meetings i.e. shoreline enhancement, trails, and neighborhood parks are important and worthy of community action. There is potentially, a long-range community/cost benefit if the Birch Bay community has the desire and can find innovative ways to acquire lands for future park and open space needs as well as easements for a system of trails. Acquiring these lands now rather than later provides an opportunity to significantly shape the community atmosphere and sense of well being in the future. In addition, there are intangible economic and marketing benefits for future commercial and housing projects by having parks, recreation facilities and trails systematically woven into the land use map for the community.

Needs Assessment

Park and recreation needs vary from community to community. The residents of a major city's urban core have recreation needs that are much different than those of Birch Bay with its natural "playground"- the saltwater tide flats. Nonetheless, all communities share a need to provide open spaces, outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, and trails for present and future generations. The Growth Management Act does not require that comprehensive plans address parks and recreation. However, it is very unusual for a community to look at the future without recognizing that a positive sense of community is diminished by not systematically providing for parks and recreation.

The challenge lies in how a community prioritizes desired park and recreation facilities and then how to find the means to implement given the community's responsibility to provide police, fire and school services as well as streets and utilities. The first step is to assess the needs and desires of current residents and then project as realistically as possible into the future.

The tools available for assessing Birch Bay recreation needs include:

- Standards based on service area.
- Levels of service based on population.
- Citizen input.

Standards

Since the 1960's the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) has provided definitions of park types and standards for both parks and recreation facilities. The following is based on their most recent update in 1996.

Residential Pocket Parks. Residential pocket parks are the smallest park type specified by the NRPA. Usually they are less than one acre in size. They are most often intended to serve children under 12 years old and senior citizens. However, they can provide other functions such as view points and ornamental neighborhood landscaped areas. NRPA standards recommend that these parks should be within a 1/4 mile walking radius of the residential area they are intended to serve.

Non Residential Pocket Parks. Non-residential pocket parks are not standardized in location, size or number of people served. Their function can vary widely depending on the type of population served. Some are designed to provide places where motorists can stop to look at views or to read about local history. Others can provide a place for shopkeepers and visitors to have a brown bag lunch and to socialize with others.

Neighborhood Parks. In an urban environment neighborhood parks form the backbone of a park system. Neighborhood parks combine informal active and passive recreation at a level that fosters neighborhood identity and cohesiveness. They typically provide space for a variety of activities, such as playgrounds, play fields, sport courts and picnic areas. Generally there is no on-site parking. Lighting may or may not be appropriate. The NRPA recommends that neighborhood parks serve people within a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile walking radius. Recommended size is 1 to 10 acres.

Community Parks. Community parks serve more than one neighborhood and have facilities for organized recreational activities such as soccer, baseball and basketball leagues for both youth and adults. Community parks often double as neighborhood parks for nearby residents and therefore should provide for informal and passive neighborhood needs when possible. Community parks

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provide on-site parking and lighting. The service area is 1/2 to 3 miles. Recommended size is 15 to 50 acres.

Regional Park. Regional parks usually accommodate many different types of recreational activities simultaneously and/or have specialized natural resource, cultural or historical significance. Often these parks are provided by county and state agencies. Birch Bay State Park and Hovander Homestead Park in Ferndale are examples of regional parks. The NRPA recommends a minimum size of 50 acres. The maximum size and the service area can vary widely depending on the type of recreation provided.

School Parks. School sites function primarily as playgrounds, fields and indoor recreation facilities for school needs. If there is a cooperative relationship between a school board and a parks and recreation board, these facilities can be utilized for general community use. Size and service areas will vary depending on whether the school is elementary, middle or high school level.

Natural Resource Reserves. Natural resource reserve areas refer to lands that have been set aside for preserving significant natural resources/open space and for visual, aesthetic, or industrial buffering. Examples in Birch Bay are all in the State Park Neighborhood; the BP Heron Reserve, the BP Natural Reserve, and the Washington State Game Department Wildlife Reserve.

Trails. Trails vary from informal paths to projects such as the Coast Millennium Trail which, when complete, will link White Rock, B.C. to Skagit County, WA. Trails can provide for a variety of users; commuters to work and school, road and off-road bicyclists, walkers and hikers, equestrians, off-road motorcyclists and snowmobilers. There is a wide range of trail standards. Effective trail planning requires that a separate Trails Master Plan be prepared.

Levels of Service

Another method of calculating needs for parks, trails, and outdoor/indoor recreation facilities is to use the NRPA Level of Service (LOS) standards. Table 12 –2 shows LOS standards for a variety of park

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types. Table 12 – 3 shows LOS standards for selected outdoor recreation facilities located within parks.

**Table 12 - 2
Level of Service Standards for Parks**

Type of Park	Acres/Miles per 1,000 Population
Residential Pocket Parks	0.5 acres
Non-Residential Pocket Parks	n/a
Neighborhood Parks	2.5 acres
Community Parks	2.5 acres
Regional Parks	n/a
School Parks	n/a
Natural Resource Reserves	n/a
Bicycle trails (includes off-street paved)	0.4 miles
Pedestrian/urban hiking trails	1.1 miles
Equestrian trails	1.0 miles

**Table 12 - 3
Level of Service Standards for Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

Type of Facility	Population Needed Per Facility
Softball	1 field per 3,200
Baseball (Lighted)	1 field per 15,000
Baseball (Not lighted)	1 field per 4,960
Soccer	1 field per 4,130
Football (Not lighted)	1 field per 5,680
Multi-purpose	1 field per 4,000
Basketball	1 court per 1,170
Tennis	1 court per 1,170
Swimming pool	1 pool per 26,000

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Table 12-4 shows park and recreation needs if the level of service standards were to be applied to the population projections used for this plan. Table 12-5 compares year 2000 supply to year 2000 needs.

**Table 12-4
Parks and Recreation Needs Based on Level of Service Standards**

Parks	2000 Aactual Population (4961)	2012 Projected Population (7,193)	2022 Projected Population (9,619)
Residential Pocket Parks	2.5 acres	3.6 acres	4.8 acres
Non Residential Pocket Parks	n/a	n/a	n/a
Neighborhood Parks	12.5 acres	18.0 acres	24.0 acres
Community Parks	12.5 acres	18.0 acres	24.0 acres
Regional Parks	n/a	n/a	n/a
School Parks	n/a	n/a	n/a
Natural Resource Reserves	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bicycle trails (incl. off-street)	1.8 miles	2.9 miles	3.8 miles
Pedestrian/urban hiking trails	5.5 miles	7.9 miles	10.6 miles
Equestrian trails	5.0 miles	7.2 miles	9.6 miles
Softball	1.6 fields	2.2 fields	3.0 fields
Baseball (Lighted)	.3 fields	.5 fields	.6 fields
Baseball (Not lighted)	1.0 fields	1.5 fields	1.9 fields
Soccer	1.0 fields	1.7 fields	2.3 fields
Football (Not lighted)	.9 fields	1.3 fields	1.7 fields
Multi-purpose	1.2 fields	1.8 fields	2.4 fields
Basketball	4.2 courts	6.1 courts	8.2 fields
Tennis	4.2 courts	6.1 courts	8.2 fields
Swimming pool (Outdoor)	.2 pools	.3 pools	.4 pools

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**Table 12-5
Current Parks and Recreation Facilities Supply Compared to Needs**

Parks/Facilities	2000 Supply	2000 Needs	Difference
Residential Pocket Parks	0 acres	2.5 acres	- 2.5 acres
Non Residential Pocket Parks	9 acres *	n/a	+ 9.0 acres
Neighborhood Parks	0 acres	12.5 acres	-12.5 acres
Community Parks	68 acres **	12.5 acres	+55.5 acres
Regional Parks	194 acres ***	n/a	+194.0 acres
School Parks	0 acres	n/a	n/a
Natural Resource Reserves	196 acres ****	n/a	+196.0 acres
Bicycle trails (incl. off-street)	6.5 miles*****	1.8 miles	+4.7 miles
Pedestrian/urban hiking trails	6.5 miles	5.5 miles	+ 1.0 miles
Equestrian trails	0 miles	5.0 miles	-5.0 miles
Softball	0 fields	1.6 fields	-1.6 fields
Baseball (Lighted)	0 fields	.3 fields	- .3 fields
Baseball (Not lighted)	0 fields	1.0 fields	-1.0 fields
Soccer	0 fields	1.0 fields	-1.0 fields
Football (Not lighted)	0 fields	.9 fields	- .9 fields
Multi-purpose	0 fields	1.2 fields	-1.2 fields
Basketball	0 courts	4.2 courts	- 4.2 courts
Tennis	0 courts	4.2 courts	- 4.2 courts
Swimming pool (Outdoor)	0 pools	.2 pools	- .2 pools

- * Beach access points
- ** Camp Horizon Park
- *** Birch Bay State Park
- **** Game Dept. Reserve and BP Reserves
- ***** Besides Birch Bay Dr. and the State Park, includes 1.3 miles on the Birch Bay-Lynden Rd. from Harbor view to the eastern boundary of the planning area.

Factors Influencing Application of Standards

The needs shown in Table 12-4 are averages compiled at the national level. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, communities are not alike and have different needs. Tables 12-4 and 12-5 are useful in that they provide a basis for discussion and refinement. There are other factors that affect the Birch Bay needs analysis. Among them:

- A. The shoreline and tide flats partially fulfill neighborhood park needs for the four neighborhoods that have low bank shoreline access. In addition the shoreline serves, in many respects, as a community park for the upland neighborhoods.
- B. The tide flats provide a high quality “trail” which does not require construction and maintenance funding.
- C. Birch Bay demographics and specialized recreation interests skews application of the standards. The motivation to live in Birch Bay is influenced by an appreciation and enjoyment of the specialized recreation amenities and activities that a warm water, marine environment provide. Clamming and crabbing are not activities appearing on the standards list but they are obviously important to those who live here. Demographic differences also affect application of standards i.e. the average age of the population in Birch Bay is older than national averages.
- D. The housing and RV subdivisions provide recreation opportunities for residents. Pools are perhaps the best example – Birch Bay Village, Leisure Park, Jacobs Landing, Mariners Cove, Latitude 49, Beachwood and others all have pools used by both year round and seasonal residents.
- E. Birch Bay State Park may fulfill some recreation needs for residents although there did not seem to be much usage expressed by those attending neighborhood meetings.
- F. Not all of the factors that influence the application of standards result in a reduction of community recreation needs. With a large day use and overnight temporary population comes pressure on existing facilities especially along the shoreline. Private sector facilities such as the Wet ‘N’ Wild Waterslides, Borderland

Mini-Golf & Family Fun Center and Miniature World Family Fun Center help to alleviate increased recreation demand.

Citizen Opinions

The third, and most important, means to assess park and recreation needs is to have organized citizen input. When a community is preparing a Parks and Recreation Plan there is usually an effort to survey citizen desires. There have been two such efforts used in the Birch Bay process:

Birch Bay Residential Survey: This survey was conducted by Hebert Research, Inc. in the spring of 2000 and was published as part of the Birch Bay Economic Development Action Plan published in September 2000. It was obvious from the survey that the existing recreational atmosphere of Birch Bay is considered to be a core community value.

Respondents were asked three open-ended questions that are relevant to assessing recreation needs:

1. What do you like best about Birch Bay?

Responses

* Beach	57.8 %
* Quiet & tranquil	54.7 %
* Climate	19.8 %
* Fun & friendly	16.7 %
* Environment	16.1 %
* Recreational activities	15.6 %

2. What are the most desirable additions to the community?

Responses

* Biking trails	25.0 %
* Retail centers	24.0 %
* Additional restaurants	20.8 %
* Beach boardwalk	18.8 %
* Parks & recreation	17.7 %
* Community center	15.6 %

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* Industry	4.2 %
* Hotels	3.1 %

3. What are the key issues facing Birch Bay in the next five years?

Responses

* Water & sewage	26.0 %
* Economic Development	22.9%
* Population growth	17.7 %
* Traffic	16.1 %
* Road improvements	12.5 %
* Shoreline management	10.4 %
* Housing	9.4 %
* Law enforcement	8.9 %
* Pollution	8.3 %
* Incorporation	7.8 %
* Protection of natural resources	5.7 %
* Increased littering	5.2 %
* Storm water drainage	5.2 %
* Annexation to Blaine	4.2 %
* Parking	3.1 %
* Parks	3.1 %

It can be seen from the survey responses that while Birch Bay residents would like to have additional recreation amenities, they are not considered to be a key community issue.

Neighborhood Meetings: In February and March of 2001, two rounds of meetings were held in each of the ten neighborhoods to identify what residents valued most about their neighborhood and what they saw as neighborhood issues. Two hundred and forty one residents attended these meetings. Discussion at the meetings backs up the survey results. Residents in all neighborhoods described their neighborhoods as quiet and tranquil. They placed high value on views, enjoyment of the beach and the fun and friendly atmosphere in Birch Bay.

Discussion of issues varied from neighborhood to neighborhood but essentially were in line with the survey results. Recreation needs were expressed but not with the emphasis of issues

such as shoreline management, traffic, retail and economic development. Drainage, erosion and natural resource protection issues appeared to be more important at neighborhood meetings than in the survey.

The recreation issues that were discussed the most were:

- Shoreline enhancement and access (both pro and con)
- Pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails
- Neighborhood parks (a need for youth)
- Boat launch/marina facilities

Parks and Recreation Vision, Goals and Policies

Vision Statement

The following is a section of the Birch Bay vision statement as it relates to parks and recreation. The entire vision statement, including goals and policies, is presented in Chapter 5.

Public Spaces. Public spaces, namely parks, open space, pedestrian and bicycle trails, and recreation sites have increased significantly during the past twenty years. The new pedestrian and bicycle trail, running from the Canadian border to Bellingham and south, has gained in popularity. Pedestrians and bicyclists along the trail stop at Birch Bay for restaurant and other services, contributing to the economy of the Community. Open space has been set aside and parks and recreation facilities have tended to locate near or adjacent to wetland sites. Appreciation and respect for Birch Bay historic and archeological cultural resources has been woven into community policies and planning.

Goals and Policies

Goal PR 1: To provide parks, trails and open spaces, which meet the needs of year round residents and are compatible with neighborhood needs and desires.

Policy PR-1a: Establish the means to assess and refine the recommendations in this plan in more detail.

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Policy PR-1b: Assess community park and recreation desires in a systematic manner at least every five years.

Policy PR-1c: Encourage and facilitate individual neighborhood efforts to identify projects that help to create and maintain neighborhood character and cohesiveness.

Policy PR-1d: Work cooperatively with the City of Blaine, Whatcom County Parks, the State of Washington, and any other governmental agencies and non-profit/private entities to provide and/or enhance recreation facilities and programs.

Policy PR-1e: Integrate park, trail and open space planning with that of transportation, commercial and housing planning.

Policy PR-1f: Acquisitions of lands and easements assume a willing seller.

Goal PR 2: Recognizing that Birch Bay is one of Washington's Shorelines of Statewide Significance, to develop a long-range course of action that provides for high quality recreation use while protecting the resource itself and respecting the rights and ambiance of private property owners.

Policy PR-2a: Coordinate recreation use of the shoreline with the goals and policies of the Shorelines and Critical element of this plan.

Policy PR-2b: Enhance public access and recreation usage in an environmentally sensitive manner.

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Policy PR-2c: Devise methods to balance public/private ownership and recreation usage of the shoreline.

Goal PR 3: To recognize Birch Bay's historic and archaeological attributes and identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historic or archaeological significance

Policy PR-3a: Prepare a comprehensive cultural resource inventory that incorporates existing archaeological and historic studies pertaining to the planning area.

Policy PR-3b: Work cooperatively, and in close communication, with agencies and organizations to assure consistency and compliance with local, state, and federal cultural resource policies and legislation. Work closely with local Native American archaeological efforts.

Policy PR-3c: Recognize the potential tourism related economic benefits and the educational value of cultural resource preservation and enhancement. Pursue funding sources to realize these benefits.

Policy PR-3d: Assure that historic designation of buildings, sites and structures are voluntary by owners and in accordance with State registration policies.

Future Park and Recreation Needs

Shoreline Recreation Plan

1. Acquisition or preservation through other means, of the property on the Terrell Creek spit from the north boundary of the Bay Rim Condos ownership to the mouth of Terrell Creek. Based on community discussion, this acquisition is of the highest priority. A first step could be the establishment of a committee to formalize the community's intent and the strategies for accomplishing the project. Issues to be dealt with include such things as:
 - a. Whether the property should be acquired for public access and activity or, as an alternative, acquired (or preserved through other means) for the purpose of maintaining the property as undeveloped open space.
 - b. If the decision is to acquire the property for either development as an actively used park or to simply hold as open space, a working relationship should be established with the Whatcom County Park and Recreation Department to have the project become a high priority item in their Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. In addition, solicit the Department's assistance in defining the project and preparing grant applications.
 - c. If the decision is to pursue the alternative of preserving the property as open space without acquisition, then work with Whatcom County Planning to explore methods whereby the property owners could dedicate the property in exchange for density bonuses on their property on the east side of Birch Bay Drive.
2. Purchase of two or three 1 to 3 acre properties on the east side of Birch Bay Drive within walking distance of the shoreline from Alderson Road to Cottonwood Street to provide public parking, rest rooms and possibly showers in a park-like setting.

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3. Create a new boat launch site and/or work with State Parks to resolve any issues and improve the existing boat launch at the south end of the State Park.
4. Acquire and develop high bluff pocket parks in the Point Whitehorn and Birch Point neighborhoods to serve as viewpoints.
5. Implement a signage program along Birch Bay Drive from the North boundary of the State Park to Birch Bay Village that provides two primary functions:
 - a. Communicates to the public behavior that respects the environment and the rights of private property owners.
 - b. Provides interpretive information for the benefit of both residents and visitors similar to the signage in Birch Bay State Park.
6. Work with property owners along Birch Bay Drive to better define and resolve issues relating to road right of way, road-ends and beach/tide-flat ownership.
 - a. Identify and resolve issues relating to road-end ownership and usage especially in the Central Reaches and State Parks neighborhoods.
 - b. Continued effort to work with property owners along Birch Bay Drive with a goal of widening and improving the pedestrian/bicycle shoulders.
7. Acquire the Birch Bay Seafood restaurant building on the waterside of Birch Bay Drive. This assumes a willing seller.

Uplands Recreation Plan

1. Encourage the Whatcom County Park and Recreation Department to work with the community and the Lions Club to prepare and/or refine a Master Plan for Bay Horizon Park.
 - a. There are both indoor and outdoor potential community resources at Bay Horizon Park including abandoned baseball fields at the north end of the

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property, a gymnasium and outdoor basketball courts. This property could serve as a community park for The Terrell Creek, Point Whitehorn, State Park, Central Uplands and Central Reaches neighborhoods. The development of community fields and other projects could be accomplished partially with volunteer effort and by entering into partnerships with other public, non-profit organizations as well as the private sector.

2. Work with the Blaine School District to explore the possibility of purchasing a site in Birch Bay for a future elementary school and community park to meet the needs of residents in the northern part of Birch Bay. The School District has expressed enthusiasm for the concept. Development of this site could be expanded in scope to include other community facilities such as a public library.
3. Explore possibilities for relocation of some or all of Sunset Equestrian Center if the community and the Whatcom County Park & Recreation Department can come to a determination that it is the best interests of all concerned to so.
 - a. This issue is complicated by the fact that the County has an obligation to represent the intent of the family from whom the property was obtained.

Trail Plan

1. Identify and clarify all public ownerships, easements, and conditions of past plat/project approvals that provide for full or partial public access.
2. Provide linkage between existing parks:
 - a. A trail connecting Birch Bay State Park and Camp Horizon Park emphasizing interpretation of both the shoreline and upland environments. Consider developing an indoor interpretive center at Camp Horizon that could be utilized for programs conducted by the Lions Club, Whatcom County Parks, the community and State Parks.

- b. An equestrian trail connecting the Blue Note Stables, Sunset Equestrian Center and Peace Arch Equestrian Center.
3. Look at the potential for developing east-west trails that provide off street pedestrian travel from the upland neighborhoods to the shoreline.
 - a. There are existing public rights-of-way that can provide the foundation for these corridors. Another potential resource for this concept is the ravines and creeks, most of which run east-west.
4. Work with Whatcom County Public Works to assure that road improvements meet desired community standards for bicycle/pedestrian lanes whenever possible. It is a Birch Bay Community Plan goal to make all arterials safe for both bicyclists and pedestrians.
5. Provide trails that allow for bicycle and pedestrian travel to both neighborhood and general commercial centers.
6. Work in conjunction with the development of the Coast Millennium Trail as shown in Figure 12-2.

Structure and Implementation

Determine the organizational structure needed to accomplish the above including coordination with the following agencies.

- a. There is currently a Special District called the Northwest Park & Recreation District. It has the same boundaries as the Blaine School District. While it has been in existence for a number of years, the District has been inactive and not exercising its option of presenting for voter approval a levy and/or bond issue for the purpose of providing parks, recreation facilities and recreation programs. The District Commissioners are apparently currently discussing what the District could or should be doing. The community should establish the means to communicate effectively with the District to determine what part the District

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should play in the provision of parks, facilities and programs in Birch Bay. The primary tool would be to continue to have Birch Bay representation on the 5 member District Commission.

- b. The Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department is currently the primary provider for Birch Bay public recreation. The Department is overseen by a seven member Advisory Commission to the Whatcom County Council. Birch Bay should seek to have a representative on the Commission.
- c. There is a need to formalize communications with the Whatcom County Public Works Department. Road and street enhancement projects can reflect community desires for pedestrian and bicycle lanes and paths. In addition, the Department can be a resource in inventorying and implementing a program to deal with the issues of public vs. private ownership as well as rights of ways for trails.
- d. The Blaine School District can play a significant role in meeting future Birch Bay outdoor and indoor recreation needs. Every effort should be made to work closely and continuously with the Administration and School Board to explore possibilities.
- e. There are numerous Washington State agencies which can act as recreation resources for the community. Each has its own expertise and access to significant funding sources. Among them:
 - Washington State Parks
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - Department of Ecology
 - Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - Office of Economic Development (Tourism)

Figure 12-2
Coast Millennium Trail

Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources Definition

For this plan, the definition of cultural resources comes from the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historical Preservation

“The foundation of historic preservation planning is the identification of cultural resources, including, archaeological, historic and traditional cultural places. These can be buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects and landscapes. Together they comprise Washington's cultural heritage.”

What Are They and Why Are They Important?

A nation, state or community's sense of place includes the influence of past events, both natural and man-made. Respect for the past (or lack of) is reflected in present day community decision-making ranging from land use to economic development. Past events can be significant natural or man-made occurrences that taken together have shaped the present day landscape of a community. The Mount Saint Helens eruption is a prime example of a natural event that had a recent major influence on the physical landscape and the cultural and economic decision making of an entire region. Closer to home, Whatcom County residents reflect on the steam that periodically is visible from our own active volcano, Mount Baker and speculate on the effects of an eruption.

Man-made past events that shape today's actions include historic and pre-historic settlement patterns and the buildings, sites, and artifacts associated with that settlement. Hovander/Tenant Lake Park and Pioneer Park in the Ferndale area are examples of the educational and economic benefits that a community can derive from preserving historic lands and structures.

Birch Bay exists as a somewhat unique and very significant example of a natural marine formation that has lent itself to a certain type of human settlement. According to existing archaeological studies, Birch Bay functioned primarily as a seasonal summer place for Native Americans and settlers in the late 1800s. It is not difficult to imagine that a recreation atmosphere has existed here for a long time. The warm and shallow water and the exposed tide flats with abundant and easily accessible food sources

have been the underpinnings of a relaxed and benign atmosphere for human settlement.

Cultural resource planning is based on an assumption that there is a community awareness and appreciation of the value in defining, inventorying, and prioritizing the elements that make up a community's cultural heritage. Birch Bay may be young in terms of post Native American settlement heritage relative to other communities such as those on the east coast or other parts of the world. Post Native American local historical significance will build as time goes by, but the foundations can be laid today. In the meantime, there is a need and value in addressing especially the archaeological and historic Native American past. There is an opportunity for the community and the local Native American tribes to work together to develop tourism related projects that are based on an opportunity to educate.

The cultural resource discussion in this plan can set the stage to better assure that cultural resource planning becomes an integral part of Birch Bay decision-making.

Cultural Resource Legislation and Administration

Cultural resource awareness, protection, and preservation at the local level are influenced to by federal and state legislation. The primary control is at the state level through legislation and administration of that legislation by the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP). Whatcom County has limited legislative and regulatory cultural resource tools and operates under the State's procedures. The following is a taken from a summary statement from OAHP:

“Environmental laws and review processes at the federal, state, and local level require consideration be given to protecting significant historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural sites from damage or loss during development.

Environmental laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and the Shoreline Management Act require that impacts to cultural resources be considered during the public environmental review process.

The National Historic Preservation Act requires that all federal agencies consider cultural resources as part of all licensing, permitting, and

funding decisions. As part of that process, each agency must consult with OAHP to assure that cultural resources are identified, and to obtain the formal opinion of the Office on each site's significance and the impact of its action upon the site.

Under SEPA, the Office is the sole state agency with technical expertise in regard to cultural resources and provides formal opinions to local governments and other state agencies on a site's significance and the impact of proposed projects upon such sites."

Significant Cultural Resource Legislation:

National:

- 1906 Antiquities Act
- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act – Section 106
- 1979 Archeological Resources Protection Act of
- 1992 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation ACT

State:

- RCW 25.48 - Archaeological Excavation and Removal Permit
- RCW 27.34 – State Historical Societies- Historic Preservation
- RCW 27.44 – Indian Graves and Records
- RCW 27.53 – Archeological sites and Resources

Local:

- County SEPA Ordinance
- County Shoreline Management Program
- Whatcom County Goals and Policies – Chapter 10

Cultural Resource Survey and Reporting Guidelines

The following is another summary from OAHP discussing cultural resource surveys.

Agencies are required to assess the effects of their proposed projects on significant archaeological and historic properties under both federal and

state law. In order to accomplish this, agencies and the public consult with the Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (OAHP) concerning the significance of discovered properties and the effect of proposed projects upon any significant archaeological or historic properties.

This document details the general principles and methods in conducting a cultural resource survey for compliance purposes and lists the organizational format of a professional cultural resource survey report and the kinds of information needed to make a reasoned evaluation of the data by independent third party reviewers.

Because varying federal and state laws may be involved in any specific project, this document provides only general summary information. Specific references for further detailed information as of this publication date for identifying archaeological properties are provided. For specific procedural and legal details, we refer you to the lead federal or state agency.

These guidelines are not regulatory and do not set nor interpret any agency's policies, regulations, or permit requirements. The document is intended to provide general technical advice about cultural resource activities and methods. Agencies conducting multiple small scale surveys are encouraged to contact OAHP regarding field strategies and reportage requirements for classes of projects requiring cultural resource inventories.

These guidelines are in large part adapted from the Department of Interior, National Park Service, Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Federal Register, Vol. 90, No. 140:44716."

Cultural Resource Identification and Survey Efforts

Survey efforts are undertaken to gather information about historic properties in a specific area. The scope of the inventory, or determining the area of potential effect, will depend on: existing knowledge about properties, the type of project area, the nature of the undertaking and the goals of the cultural resource inventory.

Principle 1: Identification and Survey of Historic Properties are Undertaken to the Degree Required to Make Specific Decisions

- Archival research and on site inspection activities should be designed to gather the information necessary to

achieve defined identification goals. The objectives, chosen methods, techniques, and expected results are specified in the research design.

- Identification activities should use a search procedure consistent with the management needs for information and the character of the area to be investigated. Careful selection of methods, techniques and level of detail is necessary so that the gathered information will provide a sound basis for making decisions.

Principle 2: Results of Identification Activities are Integrated Into the Planning Process

- Results of cultural resource inventories are reviewed for their contribution to existing planning data. Archival research or field data may refine the understanding of one or more historic contexts or property types. Incorporation of the identification activities into the planning process is necessary to ensure that the planning efforts are based on the best available information.

Principle 3: Identification Activities Include Explicit Procedures for Record Keeping and Information Distribution

- Information gathered in identification activities is only useful in other preservation planning activities and scientific studies when it is systematically gathered and recorded, made available to those responsible for planning and scientific research, and communicated to the interested public.
- The results of identification activities should be reported in a format that summarizes the design and methods of the identification activities, provides a basis for others to review the results, and states where information on identified properties is maintained.
- Sensitive information, like the location of archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties, must be safeguarded and consistent with public disclosure requirements.

Principle 4: Survey Activity Entails Effective Consultation with Concerned Tribes, Local Governments, Interested Public, Professional Community and Other Governmental Agencies

- Cultural resource inventory and research requires effective communication and consultation with concerned Native American Tribes, local governments, historical organizations, and state and federal agencies that have review responsibility. All identification activities should be coordinated with concerned entities to assure that their concerns and data are incorporated into the cultural resource report and environmental process.
- Archaeological information such as inventories, surveys, and maps must be appropriately safeguarded due to the sensitive nature of the sites. Under federal, state and local policies and procedures general public access to this information is limited.

Action Strategies

1. Periodically assess and update cultural resource data and policies in a systematic manner.
2. Due to the quantity and quality of known and potential Native American archaeological sites along the Birch Bay shoreline, encourage the County to enhance efforts to work closely with the affected Native American tribes and Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
3. Education programs should be pursued to the fullest extent possible regarding both archaeological and historic resources. Birch Bay State Parks is currently doing some of that work. They, and the community, would benefit significantly from the establishment of an indoor facility that would include archaeological and historic elements as part of an overall interpretive program. Such a facility would provide a vehicle for enhancement of a closer working relationship with local Native American tribes.
4. Encourage Whatcom County to refine shoreline related archaeology and history issues as needed when the County's Shoreline Management program is updated.

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5. Include affected Native American tribes in efforts to implement the community's berm project.
6. Encourage the County to consider the establishment of a Whatcom County Archaeological and Historic Preservation Commission. The establishment of such a commission could lead to more effective efforts to secure available funding.