Under Pressure: The Urgency to Acquire Public Land
(and How to Keep Up with Growth)

Urban Habitat Symposium
Center for Urban Horticulture, January 30, 2019
Presentation Goals

• Introduce King County Parks and open space
• Highlight challenges / opportunities
• Case studies: Partnerships
• *Inspire thinking about partnerships, collaboration, innovation!*
MISSION & VISION

Mission
Steward, enhance and acquire parks to inspire healthy communities.

Vision
Parks, trails, and natural lands for all, sustained with the cooperative efforts of our community.
LEVY GOALS

• Take care of what we have
• Grow, connect and protect our open space and natural lands
• Improve regional trails and non-motorized mobility
• Make parks and recreational opportunities more accessible
PARKS BY THE NUMBERS

• **200** Parks

• **175** Miles of regional trails

• **28,000** Acres of open space

• **215** Miles of backcountry trails

• **145,000** Acres of conservation easements
The urgency to conserve...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks Levy Goal (2014 – 2020): Acquire 2,700 Acres of Open Space</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres Acquired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges

• King County is big!
• Growing demand
• Diverse land types and expectations
• Condition of lands
• Ongoing care of inventory
• Providing equitable access
Challenge: Limited resources and large area
Challenge: Growing demand

The Seattle Times

Gene Balk / FYI Guy

Instagram effect? Number of Seattle-area hikers has doubled in less than 10 years, data show

Originally published April 2, 2016 at 6:00 am Updated May 2, 2016 at 6:35 am

Day hikers from Seattle trek up the trail toward Snow Lake in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. (Steve Ringman / The Seattle Times, 2011)
Challenge: Diverse Land Types and Expectations
Challenge: Condition of land
Challenge: Ongoing care for inventory
Challenge & Opportunity: Equity

King County Land Conservation Initiative — Open Space Equity Objective

Priority Areas used to estimate funding need for Open Space Equity Objective

Priority Areas = households that lack open space access and simultaneously fall in the bottom 1/3 of census tracts for income and health metrics.

Note: Map incorporates cities and King County's identified open space acquisition priorities.

Map updated: 12/13/2017
Opportunities!

• Improving internal coordination
• Innovative programs
• Strategic Climate Action Plan
• Innovative outreach
• “Leaning” our processes
• Partnerships
Invasive weeds in your open space?
Get help from the Healthy Lands Project!

• King County’s HeLP provides invasive weed control for new open space
  • For properties King County will purchase
  • Anywhere in King County including cities
  • No cost for services

• After weeds are controlled, HeLP assists with planning for long-term stewardship

• Conservation is good, but conservation with stewardship is even better!
“Leaning” and innovating

- Parks Operations re-organized
- Backcountry trail programmatic permit
- Videos: Maintenance activities / equipment
- More efficient equipment
- Strategic approach to managing vegetation
Opportunities!

• Formal partnerships
  o Funding and acquisition
  o Strategy
  o Outreach
  o Restoration
  o Trail development and upkeep
  o Equity and inclusion
King County Parks Volunteer Program
Relationships to Highlight

• Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group / King County / Tom Douglas Restaurants
• Muslim Association of Puget Sound
Case Study:
Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group / King County / Tom Douglas Restaurants
The Site: Sammamish River / Woodinville
The Relationships...
Case Study: Muslim Association of Puget Sound at Marymoor Park
The Site: Marymoor Park
The Relationships...
Next steps

• More creative thinking
• Broaden the tent
• Urban greenspace acquisitions
• Volunteer Program