Summer weather opens door to county's parks system

With pleasant weather hopefully here to stay, I want to remind you of the incredible county parks system you have at your fingertips.

Snohomish County Parks boasts more than 10,000 acres, 103 parks and about 35 miles of trails offering residents the chance to hike, bike, walk, ride horses, camp in the forest or sweeping meadows as well as spend the night in one of our cabins or ever-popular yurts.

You can also picnic with family and friends at a lakeside park, whale watch at one of our saltwater parks and play with your dog at one of our off-leash areas.

Despite difficult economic times, we’re still finding ways to open new parks, enhance existing facilities and try new ideas. Here’s a few:

We’ll soon begin construction on the 40-acre Tambark Creek Park near Mill Creek, and plan to have a new playground, off-leash dog area, trails and at least one ball field open by autumn.

Arson last year at Lake Goodwin Park’s playground left much of the community devastated, but with generous donations and volunteer hours, we’ve since rebuilt and rededicated a new playground, giving residents there a chance to play again with their children.

And earlier today, we kicked off a new Friday Farmers’ Market, offering locally produced and very fresh foods between 3 and 7 p.m. throughout the summer at Willis Tucker Community Park. Vendors there include the Snohomish Bakery, Hawaiian Paradise’s shaved ice, Hayton Farms, Martin Family Orchards and Patty Pan Grill.

But standard such as McCollum Pool, where I learned to swim, are still a well-loved part of our parks system. The pool opens June 25, and you can sign up for swim lesson here.
And while you’re there, enjoy the cool water yourself. I do with my family!

Sincerely,

 County takes steps to protect 3,000-plus acres of sensitive land

Snohomish County took steps this week to protect more than 3,000 acres of land, much of which will be used as open space and for recreational uses.

Purchased through Conservation Futures funding, approved projects include 98 acres in Japanese Gulch for trails, habitat for salmon and wildlife and water quality protection for the Puget Sound; 23 acres near Granite Falls; and 30 acres at Quinn’s Crossing near the Echo Lake community to preserve a sole source aquifer that serves 15,000 water users as well as to protect the headwaters of Bear Creek, a critical salmon habitat area.

It also includes 2,885 acres of forest land that will provide new recreation opportunities for the residents of Snohomish County on the west side of Lake Roesiger in conjunction with the state Department of Natural Resources, which is expected to finalize its part of the project next week.

“The protection of these properties as open space and for recreational use is of huge benefit to the residents of Snohomish County,” Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said. “Not only will they support our nationally recognized parks system, they’ll also protect sensitive habitat for fish and wildlife.”

Funding is made available from a property tax assessment, and state law requires that it be dedicated “to acquire interests or rights in real property for the preservation of open space land, farm and agricultural land and timber land.”

Snohomish County received 10 applications for proposed projects to be funded with Conservation Futures revenues. The list was reviewed by the Conservation Futures Advisory Board, which recommended seven projects for full or partial funding.

A full list of the projects to be funded may be found here.

doing?

Did you know that you can track how well the County is meeting its performance goals?

The SnoStat system tracks how well the County is delivering services, the costs of those services, and the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Simply visit our SnoStat Web site.

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Send me an email,
$2.2 million will assist homeless families, individuals

Snohomish County recently awarded more than $2.2 million to 23 projects designed to help end homelessness.

This is the fifth year Snohomish County has distributed Ending Homelessness funds, keeping in line with County Executive Aaron Reardon’s plan to assist families and individuals in need of housing as well as to prevent more families from slipping into homelessness.

“These projects put us closer to our goal of ending homelessness in Snohomish County,” Reardon said. “They are innovative and successfully show our dedication to eliminating this very real problem.”

Ending Homelessness funds, which are collected from local document recording fees, are used to support agencies that are working within the goals of Snohomish County’s 10-year affordable-housing plan “Everyone at Home Now.”

Projects selected continue to advance the county’s efforts to reduce homelessness through innovative programs and best practices models. While 20 projects selected this year have received program funding in the past, three new projects were chosen, based on the merits of the project applications.

New Ground Everett, a Friends of Youth project, is a six-unit apartment complex that provides supportive housing and intensive case management services to 12 young adults at a time.

Mercy Housing Northwest will provide housing and case management for 22 homeless families with children at Family Tree Apartments in Everett. Families will receive intensive case management services to help them achieve family stability, self-sufficiency and success in permanent housing.

The VOAWW’s Housing First for Jail/Prison Releasees will serve homeless individuals being released from jail or prison who suffer from severe mental illness, a substance-abuse disorder, or who are developmentally or physically disabled. They will be placed in housing coupled with intensive case management.

In addition, an ongoing housing subsidy program for veterans and people with disabilities has been recently subcontracted to Catholic Community Services to provide recipients with an additional year of housing subsidy coupled with intensive case management. The ultimate goal is for all
voucher holders to be placed in some form of permanent housing that they can afford by June 2012.

For a complete list of projects, click here.

The future of rail in Snohomish County, Tuesday, June 7

Join Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen and other key government and industry leaders as they discuss the future of rail service in Snohomish County.

This free Future of Rail Summit will help develop a strategy, as well as support, for the inclusion of innovative rail elements into the county’s evolving transportation network.

Hear presentations on the issues and opportunities involved in integrating rail into the county’s evolving multimodal transportation network. Presentations will be followed by a moderated panel discussion.

WHEN: Tuesday, June 7, 9 a.m.–Noon

WHERE: Edward D. Hansen Conference Center, Comcast Arena, 2000 Hewitt Avenue, Everett, WA 98201

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my electronic newsletter.

If you would like to send me your comments and feedback, or if you would like to unsubscribe, simply reply to this message.

You may also contact me directly by phone at 425.388.3460.