

**SUPPLEMENTAL MASTER PLAN**

**FOR**

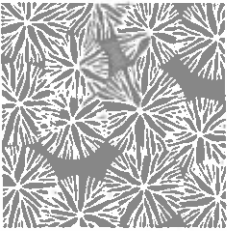
**LORD HILL REGIONAL PARK**

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by

**OSBORN PACIFIC GROUP INC.**

December, 1996



# OSBORN PACIFIC GROUP INC.

December, 1996

Landscape Architecture  
Recreation Planning  
Environmental Planning

Snohomish County  
Parks and Recreation Division  
M/S #303  
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Gentlemen/Ladies:

The official grand opening of Lord Hill Regional Park in October 1995, marked a significant achievement for the Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Division. The many years of acquiring property, planning, design, and construction resulted in a project promising enduring value, protection, and perpetuation of the exceptional resources on Lord Hill and is one with which Osborn Pacific Group Inc. is proud to be associated.

It is with pleasure that we transmit this Supplemental Master Plan Report. Our involvement with Snohomish County has been extremely enjoyable, both personally and professionally. We wish to thank the Parks Department staff and the many others who officially and unofficially participated in the planning, design, and construction process and making Lord Hill Regional Park an outstanding asset in the Snohomish County Park system.

Respectfully submitted,

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ELEMENTS OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Land and Shoreline Use	
Noise	
Aesthetics	
Public Services and Utilities	
<b>ISSUES AFFECTING PARK DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Ownership and Park Development	
Zoning	
Park Access and Circulation	
<b>ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES ...</b>	<b>11</b>
Design Objectives	
Access and Circulation	
On-Site Water and Sewage Systems	
Park Landscaping	
Signage	
Site Furnishing and Equestrian Facilities	
Ranger's Residence	
<b>PHASING.....</b>	<b>17</b>

**LIST OF FIGURES**

---

**LOCATION MAPS .....3**

**PROPERTY OWNERSHIP .....7**

**1995 TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....9**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Lord Hill Regional Park Master Plan was prepared in 1988 following a thorough investigation of the site, environmental analysis, and extensive public and citizen advisory committee involvement. During the ensuing years there were significant changes relating to park land ownership. This supplemental master plan is intended to describe these changes and identify resultant modifications necessary to implement development at Lord Hill Regional Park.

In 1988, the land comprising Lord Hill Regional Park was not totally owned or controlled by Snohomish County. Snohomish County owned 360 acres, the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owned 882 acres, and approximately 70 acres was privately held. The DNR managed the property for timber production since 1944, with timber harvests occurring on 40-50 acre units on a 60 year rotation. In order to resolve the conflicts between timber management and park use, Snohomish County sought ownership of the state trust lands.

During the 1988 session of the State legislature, the DNR Lord Hill holdings were conveyed to Washington State Parks. In an agreement with Snohomish County, development and management of the site became the responsibility of the County. In 1992, Snohomish County acquired two privately-held parcels located within the park boundary, and purchased an additional 23.5 acres located at the northwest corner of the site. Washington State Parks conveyed their interest in the former DNR holdings to Snohomish County in December 1994. Since 1988, Lord Hill Regional Park has grown from 360 acres to 1,310 acres.

With the cessation of timber harvesting, second growth forests and understory are infilling previously clear-cut areas. The density and robust growth of the forest canopy is gradually altering the long-distance vistas. There are no changes to the existing wetlands, ponds, river frontage, and fauna. The Northwest Pipeline Corporation continues to control and retard vegetation growth along the natural gas pipeline easement.

Following Phase One construction of the Preliminary Park Access Project, Lord Hill Regional Park officially opened to the public in October 1995. The first phase of construction included a new park entrance access road and parking lot for cars and car/horse trailer combinations; a 10-mile multi-use trail system for hikers, horses, and mountain bikers; directional signage and information kiosks along the primary park trails; ADA-accessible restroom facilities; and conversion of an existing residential structure into an on-site ranger's residence and community/regional meeting conference center.

Snohomish County intends to acquire additional contiguous property that will be suitable for developing ADA-accessible trails. Steep slopes

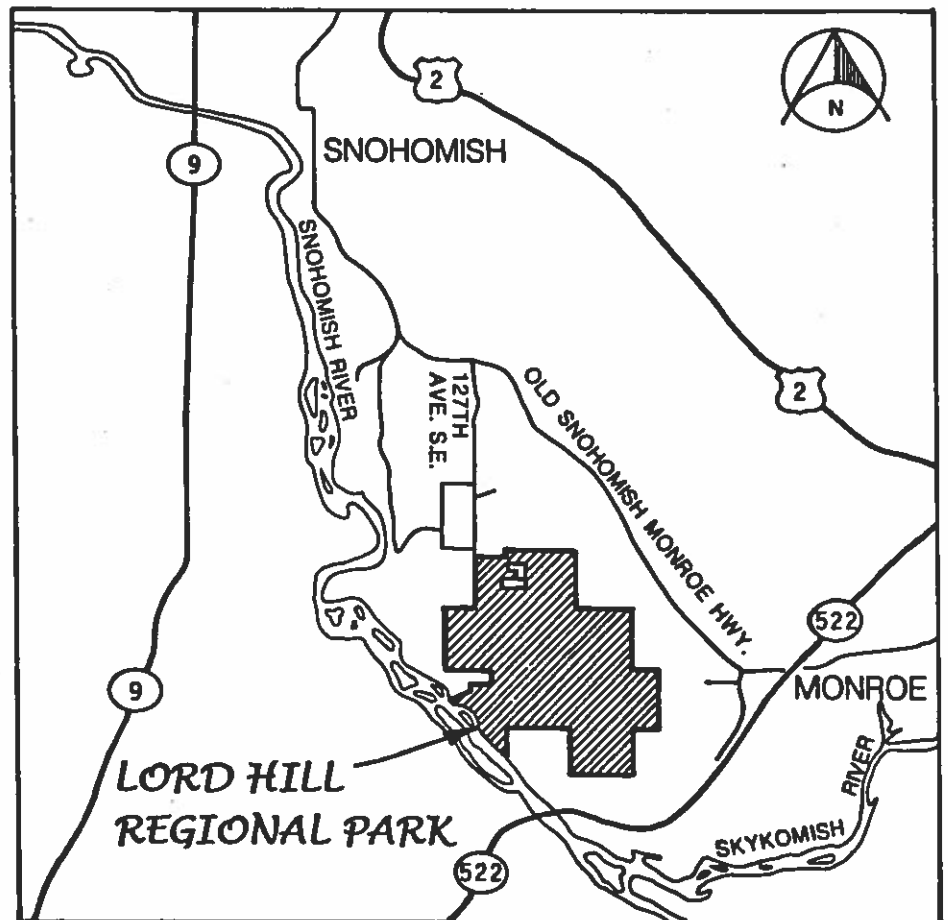
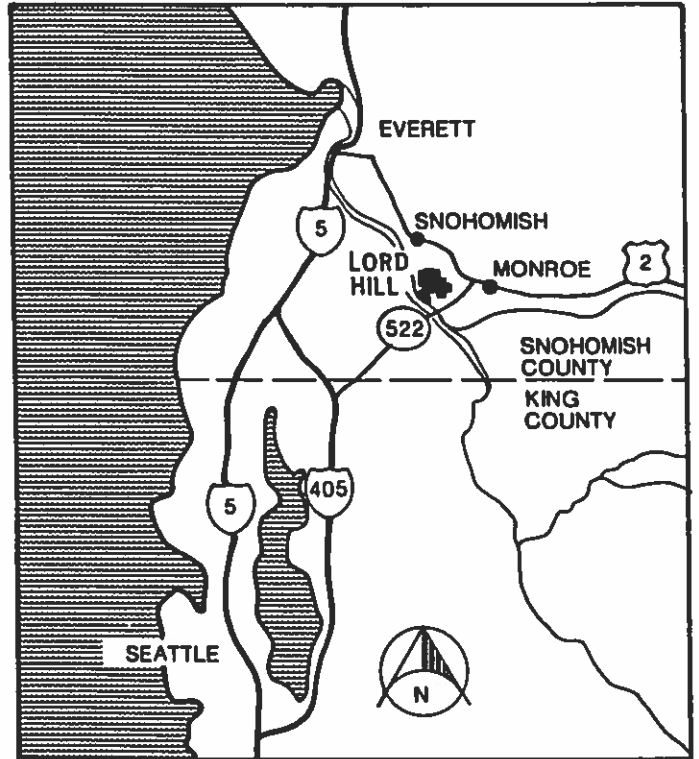
## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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and soils in the vicinity of the current park entrance preclude such development.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**ELEMENTS OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Conditions described in the Lord Hill Regional Park Master Plan largely remain unchanged.

**ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Land and Shoreline Use**

Lord Hill Regional Park is officially open to the public for passive, day-use recreation opportunities. All of the park property is zoned "Forestry," and pursuant Title 18 of the Snohomish County Zoning Code, public park and recreation use in the "F" Zone is a permitted use.

**Noise**

With the end of timber harvesting on Lord Hill and the closing of Twin Rivers Quarry located immediately south of the park property, noise levels on and around the property have been significantly reduced. Approximately the same level of noise currently emanates from the AAA Quarry, located east of the park property, and from the surrounding housing communities. A slight increase in automobile traffic, partly attributable to the park opening and partly as a result of increased housing in the vicinity of the park, has caused a slight increase in noise.

**Aesthetics**

With the cessation of timber harvesting, long distance views of the Cascade and Olympic Mountains and views of the valley and rivers are gradually being obscured by the maturation of the second-growth forest. Open second-growth forests and clear-cut meadows have become densely vegetated largely as a result of DNR's reforestation practices. Although long-distance views from Lord Hill exist, they are not as prevalent as they were 10 years ago.

The park access road and parking lot were located in concert with the topography and with existing adjacent residential development. These park facilities, however, are observed by distant residences on the ridge immediately north of the entrance. Overall, views to the site have not significantly changed as a result of the park.

**Public Services and Utilities**

With the acquisition of the private property and residence at the northwest corner of the park, electrical and water utilities are now present on-site. The residence was converted into a ranger's residence and meeting center and is accessed via an asphalt drive.

This access road was widened and realigned as part of the Preliminary Park Access construction phase. A lockable gate was installed at the park access road and park hours are posted. Emergency access requirements for the driveway and parking lot were designed with 22'-0" road widths and with 20'-0" inside and 40'-0" outside turning radii. The parking lot has a compacted gravel surface capable of supporting emergency vehicles.

The fire hydrant is existing and is located alongside the asphalt drive. (See Preliminary Park Access drawings for location.)

Two handicap-accessible chemical toilets have been placed at the beginning of the trailhead. A wooden fence provides screening for these facilities.

A 5'-0" wide wood chip path has been constructed for pedestrian access from 127th Avenue SE to the parking area. This path is located south of and parallel to the preliminary park access drive.

The 1988 Master Plan recommended a horse trough be located by the horse trailer parking area. The horse trough has been revised to a horse watering area, utilizing the existing water lines and spigots from the Sky Meadows Water District at a barn located on-site and south of the parking lot. These lines will eventually need to be updated and serviced.

## ISSUES AFFECTING PARK DEVELOPMENT

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### OWNERSHIP AND PARK DEVELOPMENT

Since 1988, when the Lord Hill Regional Park Master Plan was prepared, there have been significant changes related to park land ownership in and around the site. These changes involve Snohomish County, the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State Parks, and private property holdings.

Prior to 1988, Snohomish County owned 360 acres, DNR owned 882 acres, and approximately 70 acres was privately held. The DNR managed the property for timber production since 1944, with timber harvests occurring on 40-50 acre units on a 60 year rotation. In order to resolve the conflicts between timber management and park use, Snohomish County sought ownership of the state trust lands.

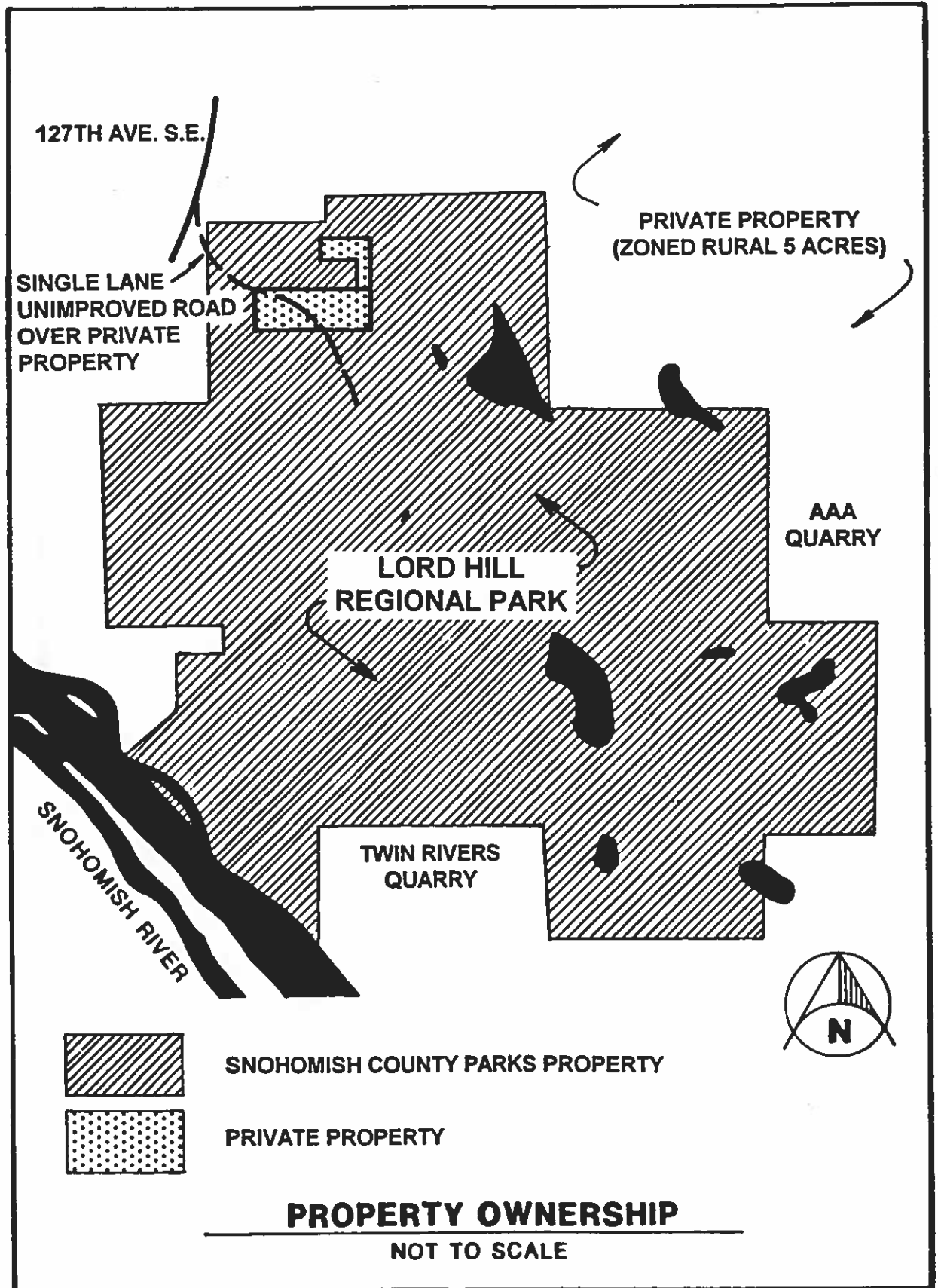
In 1988, Washington State Parks purchased the Lord Hill property owned by DNR. Subsequently, State Parks deeded this land to Snohomish County for recreation use only. Should Snohomish County discontinue recreation uses at the site, ownership would revert back to Washington State Parks.

In 1992, Snohomish County acquired two privately-held parcels located within the park boundary and purchased an additional 23.5 acres located at the northwest corner of the site. The acquisition of the private properties within the park eliminated potential concerns for future access to these parcels and afforded access to a high point which overlooks the Snohomish River and the Snohomish River valley. The purchase of the property at the northwest corner of the park provided many advantages: new public access/entrance to the park, a residence that could be used as both a ranger's residence and a community meeting hall, and existing, on-site utilities — water and electricity.

Two adjacent privately-held properties impact park use and development. Presently, neither property owner intends to sell their land. One property is accessed via the new park entrance road. The other property is accessed via a single lane, unimproved driveway/roadway where the new park entrance road intersects 127th Avenue SE. To preclude conflicts between park users and the private property owners, Snohomish County installed lockable gates, fencing, and signage, and rerouted some of the trail alignments.

Thus, since 1988, Lord Hill Regional Park has grown from 360 acres to 1,310 acres. Eventually, Snohomish County Parks would hope to acquire both the previously mentioned properties to prevent conflicts between park users and private property owners, accommodate future

ISSUES AFFECTING PARK DEVELOPMENT



## ISSUES AFFECTING PARK DEVELOPMENT

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park expansion, develop a day-use area with additional parking, provide for ADA-accessible recreation facilities on the less steep terrain, and take advantage of utilities extending deeper into the Lord Hill site. The existing parking area will then be used as overflow parking for Lord Hill park users and for visitors to the ranger's residence/conference and regional meeting center. No timetable is available for this acquisition.

Twin Rivers Quarry, located south of the park property, is no longer in operation. Currently, the owners of the quarry have a re-zoning application pending to change the zoning from Mineral Conservation (MC) to R-5, Large Parcel Rural Lots. From the Snohomish County Parks perspective, it would be desirable to develop a secondary park entrance through the quarry site. Regardless of the future development plans, it will be necessary for an in-depth review of environmental impacts to confirm compatibility of the new development with existing recreation use and that the on-site perched water table remains undisturbed so as not to affect the wetlands on Lord Hill.

The AAA Quarry, located east of park property, remains in operation. Mineral extraction and blasting operations continue and adversely affect recreation use and development with noise, dust, and potential safety hazards. The trail alignment in the vicinity of the quarry has been designed to maximize user safety and warning/danger signs are to be installed.

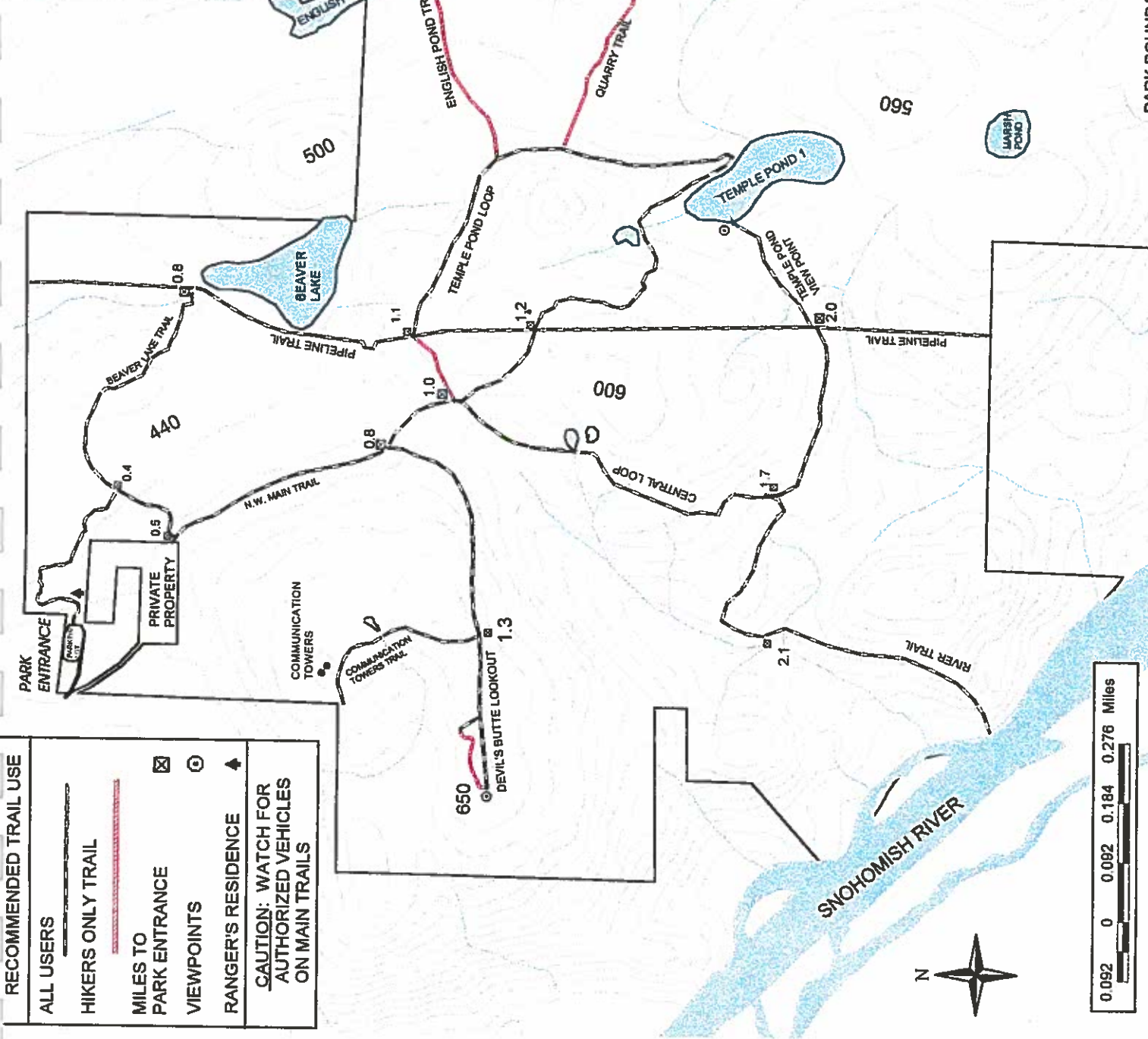
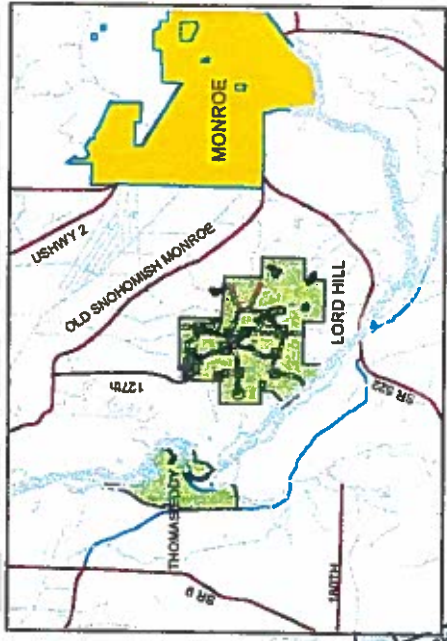
### ZONING

Lord Hill Regional Park is currently zoned "Forestry" pursuant the Snohomish County Zoning Code. Pursuant Title 18 of the Snohomish County Zoning Code, public park and recreation use in the "F" Zone is a permitted use. Snohomish County has projected future land uses for county property in the *Snohomish County GMA Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use - General Policy Plan*, dated June 28, 1995. In this plan it is proposed that Lord Hill Regional Park be classified as Low Density Rural Residential (1DU/20 Acres). In this zoning classification, recreation is a permitted use.

### PARK ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Prior to acquisition of the parcel at the northwest corner, park access was proposed via an easement across private property held by Charles Baker. This access alignment was abandoned in favor of improving the driveway and developing a parking lot on the newly acquired property.

RECOMMENDED TRAIL USE	
ALL USERS	
HIKERS ONLY TRAIL	
MILES TO PARK ENTRANCE	
VIEWPOINTS	
RANGER'S RESIDENCE	
CAUTION: WATCH FOR AUTHORIZED VEHICLES ON MAIN TRAILS	



## **ISSUES AFFECTING PARK DEVELOPMENT**

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Snohomish County is interested in acquiring adjacent private properties to develop additional roadway, parking, and a day-use area. The existing parking area will then be used as overflow parking for Lord Hill park users and for visitors to the ranger's residence/conference and regional meeting center.

Because of the changes in land ownership, internal circulation and the trail development plan have been modified. Former railroad routes, existing logging roads, and an existing utility corridor have been designed to be used as the primary trail for multi-user groups. This allowed for minimal construction efforts prior to official park opening and resulted in loop trails to most of the park property. Secondary trails were designed to access specific destination points such as viewpoints, the river, and ponds. These trails are typically "hikers and horses only" trails or "hikers only" trails; the designation is based on the sensitivity of the natural resources adjacent to the trail alignment. Primary trails have been brushed, cleared, and signed and are currently in use. Volunteer groups have constructed some of the secondary trails. There is considerable interest on the part of volunteer organizations to continue renovating/constructing trails in the park.



## **ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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### **DESIGN OBJECTIVES**

The development objectives for Lord Hill Regional Park remain as stated in the 1988 Master Plan:

1. Preserve the natural, undeveloped character of Lord Hill and protect wildlife and their associated habitats. Discourage development in the interior of the site; develop areas such as the park headquarters near the property line at the park entrance.
2. Create a series of circulation routes throughout the park to provide opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and other non-motorized trail uses. Provide for handicapped accessibility.
3. Provide observation opportunities at the wetlands and ponds, but restrict the number of access points. Protect the wetlands' edges by constructing viewing platforms. Discourage off-trail use and prohibit horses in the wetlands areas.
4. Create educational experiences for all ages.
5. Develop the park to be a year-round recreational facility, open only during daylight hours.
6. Provide for an on-site ranger residence near the park entrance.

Additional objectives have been defined and are being implemented.

7. Provide a directional trail signage system for park users.
8. Allow mountain bikes on trails on a trial-basis. Evaluate conflicts between user groups and any degradation to sensitive areas/natural resources attributed to mountain bike use to determine if the park should remain open for mountain bike use.
9. Evaluate degradation to sensitive areas and/or trails and adjacent land due to over-use or misuse. Determine if a trail should be temporarily closed for restoration or if a trail should be realigned to preclude further degradation.

These objectives were then translated into elements of the overall master plan and into design guidelines. The following discussion updates the guidelines in the 1988 Master Plan.

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## ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

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### ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

#### Roads

Off-site access to Lord Hill Regional Park is off of 127th Avenue SE (also known as Lord Hill Road), a Snohomish County two-lane paved road.

#### Preliminary Access Road - CONSTRUCTED

An entrance drive has been constructed off of 127th Avenue SE. This drive is a two-lane, 22-foot wide asphalt road that provides access to the parking area, trailhead, ranger's residence/community meeting center, and one private property. It has been designed to support emergency vehicles.

#### Service Road

At this time, it is not necessary to construct a service road. However, as the park's interior is developed, it may become necessary to do so. The service road will be gravel-surfaced and 10 feet wide. Vegetation along the road will be limbed up 15 feet to provide clearance for emergency vehicles. A turn-around will be provided at the end of the road and will be sized to accommodate pumper and fire trucks. The road will be signed to indicate that only service and emergency vehicles have motorized use of the road. In addition to the signage, locking, removable bollards will be installed to discourage unauthorized vehicles.

#### Trails

As described in the 1988 Lord Hill Regional Park Master Plan, the trail system will use existing logging roads, former roads, and the abandoned railroad routes in order to minimize construction efforts. New trails will be introduced to serve specific destinations and connect to other trails. Snohomish County has developed the park's trail system for multi-user groups.

The Snohomish County park's trail system for multi-user groups and naming conventions for the trail system are as follows:

#### Preliminary Access Trail

The preliminary access trail brings users from the parking lot to the primary trail system within the park property. The 8-foot wide, one-half mile trail is principally surfaced with wood chips. Sections of raised boardwalks are constructed over wetlands. The boardwalks are designed with two parallel paths — one for hikers and one for horses. The boardwalks are signed accordingly.

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## **ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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### **Primary Trail System**

The primary trail system is located along existing abandoned roadways and within the utility corridor. These trails are constructed with a minimum clearing width of 8-feet and minimum clearing height of 10-feet to accommodate multi-user groups, such as hikers, horseback riders, mountain bike riders, and maintenance vehicles. The primary trail forms a looped path system and extends through much of the park property. Its solid roadbed is ideal for varied park uses.

### **Secondary Trail System**

The secondary trails will connect to the primary trail system and provide access to destination points within the park (e.g., Temple Pond, the Snohomish County-wide trail system, or the Snohomish River). These trails will be limited to hikers and horseback riders with some "hikers only" trails. Hiking and horse trails will vary from 24 to 36 inches wide with a 10-foot vertical clearance and a 6-foot horizontal clearance. To the greatest extent possible, boardwalks will be provided in wetland areas for both hikers and horses. Where this is not feasible, use will be restricted to hikers only in order to protect the wetland habitats. Volunteers are actively constructing the secondary trails with training and guidance from Snohomish County park rangers and Volunteers for Outdoor Washington (VOW).

### **Interpretive Nature Trail**

The interpretive nature trail is envisioned to be a handicapped-accessible looped trail system extending from a future parking lot to the wetlands area. The trail will be a 5-foot wide asphalt path with a less than 5 percent grade throughout its length. Interpretive signing will depict the natural attributes along the trail. Because of the steep slopes in the vicinity of the current park entrance, design and construction of the interpretive trail will be deferred until a new entrance drive and parking lot can be constructed, if and when the County acquires the two adjacent properties near the park entry.

### **Snohomish River Loop Trail**

The trail to the riverfront will have a net difference in elevation of about 450 feet between the park entrance and the riverfront and will be approximately four miles in length. An 8 percent maximum grade will be maintained along the trail.

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## ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

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### PARKING AREAS

A preliminary park access parking lot has been constructed. It is a gravel-surfaced lot, providing 10, 90 degree parking spaces for cars and 8 back-in angled spaces for car/horse trailer combinations. The lot has been edged with 8-inch diameter logs salvaged during on-site trail-clearing activities. Native landscape screening surrounds the parking area. A 12-foot wide wood chip path extends from the parking lot to an information kiosk, restroom facilities, and the preliminary access trail. Because the capacity of the lot is being exceeded, Snohomish County will soon need to expand the existing lot north towards 127th Avenue SE.

### ON-SITE WATER AND SEWAGE SYSTEMS

#### Toilet Facilities

Two portable toilets have been located at the trailhead. They are mounted on a concrete slab and are ADA-accessible per Snohomish County standards. A wooden fence has been constructed around the toilet facilities and provides screening that is sensitive to the rural atmosphere of the park.

Additional portable chemical toilets are to be located in the interior of the site. They will also be mounted on a concrete slab and surrounded with a wooden fence to provide screening that is sensitive to the rustic park setting.

As visitor counts and use increase, a four-fixture restroom building will replace the portable toilets and be constructed near the trailhead. A septic system and drainfield will service this building and a drinking fountain will be provided.

### PARK LANDSCAPING

In addition to the landscape improvements described in the 1988 Master Plan, landscaping will also be provided, as necessary, in parking areas and at trailheads. The plant materials will be native and will blend in with the park's natural rural environment.

### SIGNAGE

A signage system has been designed to communicate information to park users. The signage system components include:

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## ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

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### Park Entrance Sign

A very visible 5 1/2-foot high by 8-foot wide entrance sign, placed at the intersection of the entrance driveway and 127th Avenue SE, is used to denote the park entrance.

### Traffic Signs

Standard Snohomish County traffic signs have been strategically located along the access drive and in the parking lot to direct and control traffic.

### Park Directory Sign

The park directory sign has been constructed within a large, approximately 6 feet wide by 9 feet high, wooden kiosk at the trailhead. The directory sign includes a map of the park trail system, park rules and a bulletin board.

### Directional Signage

Directional signs are sited at intersections of primary and some secondary trails and provide information regarding the trail name, directional arrows, the direction to the ranger's residence, and icons depicting hiker, equestrian, and/or bicycle use appropriateness. The directional sign is mounted on a bollard-like post with information on two or three of the four sides.

### Informational Kiosks

Three kiosks will be located at the major trail intersections/nodes: Devil's Butte Lookout/Lord Hill Trail, Pipeline Trail/Temple Pond Loop, and Central Loop/River Trail. The design is a scaled-down version of the park directory sign and will contain the park directory map and bulletin board space.

### Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signage will be located along the nature trail and throughout the park site to call out historical and natural points of interest. The signage will have brief explanations of the natural processes exhibited at that sign location and will describe, for example, beaver dams, wetlands and pond systems, former timber clear cut areas, and evidence of the railroad system.

## SITE FURNISHINGS AND EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES

Park furnishings and equestrian facilities, including a picnic area; viewing shelters, platforms, and blinds; and hitching posts will be developed as described in the 1988 Master Plan.

## **ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES**

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Trash receptacles will not be provided. Snohomish County park use rule states, "Carry out what you carry in."

A horse watering trough will not be constructed. An existing water source for the horses is located at the barn, immediately south of the parking lot.

### **RANGER'S RESIDENCE**

With the County's acquisition of the property in the northwest corner of the park site, an existing home now serves as the ranger's residence and a community and regional meeting conference center.

**PHASING**

Phase One construction is complete and provides a preliminary entrance drive and parking lot; trailhead; preliminary access trail; primary trail system; some of the secondary trail system; park entrance sign, directory sign, and directional signage; ranger's residence and meeting center; chemical toilets; and horse watering facility. Through volunteer efforts, additional secondary trails are being constructed.

To implement the full master plan for the Lord Hill Regional Park, future development should include:

- Additional parking lot to accommodate current demand
- Parking lot for future day use area
- Day-use area with picnic facilities
- Dispersed picnic areas
- Restroom building with water and sanitary system
- Two additional chemical toilets located near interior picnic sites
- Expansion of the internal trail system to include specific destinations and viewpoints
- Hitching posts at destinations and viewpoints
- Viewing platforms and blinds for wetland habitat observation
- Directional signage
- Storage yard and shed
- Interpretive nature trail and ADA accessible trail system
- Service road