



Introduction

These meetings were an opportunity for trail enthusiasts to provide input and ideas on how to preserve and develop Seattle Parks and Recreation soft surface walking and hiking paths. Trails and related activities rank very high on the list of activities that Seattleites enjoy and these meetings and results from the public survey will provide essential direction in how Parks protects and improves these assets.

Seattle Parks and Recreation is using its trails inventory to not only plan work for the next 5 years, but is taking this opportunity to work with stake holders, citizens, and community organizations to develop partnerships and a longer term VISION for our trail system through 2020 and beyond.

Public Meeting Summary – April 19, 2011--Rainier Community Center

Approximately 21 persons attended the first public meeting for Seattle's urban park trails. The meeting began with an overview of the Seattle Trails Program background, including how trail mileage has doubled to 115 miles in 2011. Also discussed were the recently completed trails inventory and the program's current maintenance deficit gap. The floor was then opened up for public discussion of expectations and priorities for the current system and long term visions for the future. Public comment will be tracked through written survey forms submitted at the meetings or online at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JG2ZYHX>. The survey will close May 5th.

What did we hear at the meeting?

Based on surveys received, participants from the first public meeting rated their top three priorities for the current program as follows:

- 1-2. Improved forest habitat and maintenance to fix muddy trails (tie); and
3. Maintenance to keep trails clear of brushy vegetation.

Their top three long term visions were:

1. Increased maintenance (additional staff dedicated to trails working with volunteers);
2. Greater integration of the trail system with neighborhood and major regional pedestrian, bicycle, and bus routes; and
3. Electronic media mapping downloads.

During the discussion, additional comments and suggestions related to long term program visions were offered. Add volunteer coordinator positions (trail stewards) and create a program to train volunteers. Use a holistic approach to create design standards/criteria

for locating new trails. Create downloadable maps and guides instead of adding recreational staff. Manage encroachment on public property. Increase maintenance to take care of what we have before expanding the trails system. Complete gaps in connectivity in the current trail system. Close unnecessary social trails to protect vegetation and control erosion. Ticket owners of off-leash dogs. Integrate the trails system with schools. Use multiple languages in educational materials aimed at trail users. Leave downed trees on site as habitat structures instead of using staff resources to chop them up and haul them away. Coordinate erosion and invasives removal issues with Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Department of Transportation to effectively deal with problem sources.

Public Meeting Summary –April 21, 2011—Meadowbrook Community Center

Approximately 18 persons attended the first public meeting for Seattle’s urban park trails. The meeting format was the same as the first meeting (see description above).

What did we hear at the meeting?

Based on surveys received, participants from the second public meeting rated their top three priorities for the current program as follows:

1. Maintenance to fix muddy trails;
2. Improved forest habitat; and
3. Maintenance to keep trails clear of brushy vegetation

Their top three long term visions were:

1. Expanded trail systems;
2. Electronic media mapping downloads; and
3. Increased maintenance (additional staff dedicated to trails working with volunteers).

During the discussion, the following comments and suggestions related to long term program visions were offered. Install trails where they make sense and take them out of higher maintenance areas, such as flood plains or poor drainage areas. Create a network of trails across the city as a form of transportation for walkers and bikers, an alternative to motorized travel. Design and designate some trails as acceptable for bike use at appropriate speeds, for example the main trail within Ravenna Park. Designate some areas for mountain biking. Design trails to protect wildlife areas. Work closely with neighborhood groups to close unneeded social trails that cause erosion or damage to habitat areas. Focus new projects on connecting wildlife corridors. Where practical, expand the trail system to provide equitable, ready-access to nature within 5-10 minutes away from all citizens. Include primitive meandering trails with lots of interest. Create trail difficulty ratings and maps to guide users.