



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2008

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams
John Barber
Terry Holme
Donna Kostka
Christine Larsen
Jackie Ramels
Amit Ranade

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent
Rebecca Salinas, Policy Unit Manager
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was approved.

Superintendent's Report

Deputy Superintendent Williams reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Meadowbrook begins Eco-Fridays. The kickoff for our Eco-Fridays special event series began as participants viewed the award winning film "An Inconvenient Truth." The staff also provided information on the nuts and bolts of the city's recycling program and gave everyone the chance to check out one of Parks' electric cars.

South Park Community Center. Parks is committed to supporting community events at South Park Community Center if they are open and free to the public. Parks has directed staff to waive fees for facility rentals for community events this center.

Golden Gardens Bathhouse. Golden Gardens Bathhouse, the most popular Parks rental facility, is now completely booked on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through September.

Customer service and graffiti. Parks continues to convene an interdepartmental team on graffiti abatement. The team recently met to discuss and review the proposed process map and make refinements to the charter and scope of work.

Park Rangers. All seven of the Park Ranger positions have been filled. As a team, they comprise expertise that is both wide and deep and we're very much looking forward to working with them to develop as strong a program as possible. Training begins April 30.

Cheslahud Lake Union Loop - Mayor Greg Nickels announced the new six-mile trail around Lake Union will be named Cheslahud Lake Union Loop in honor of a Duwamish chief who led a village located on Lake Union. The mayor chose the name from suggestions submitted by the public in a naming contest, in which four people suggested Cheslahud be used as part of the trail name. Two winners each received a bicycle donated by REI; one winner a cruise for four around Lake Union donated by Argosy Cruises, and the fourth-place winner received a \$50 gift certificate donated by Outdoor & More.

Earth Day Service Project. The Outdoor Opportunities teens joined a service project sponsored by Georgetown's Nature Consortium for their annual Earth Day project. During the project, the group worked in the West Duwamish Greenway, on the eastern slopes of West Seattle. Throughout the day, youth planted madrone trees as well as bare root western red cedar trees. After the hard work was completed, the group attended the Duwamish Earth Day event in Georgetown.

Strategic Action Plan. This week marks the end of Phase 2 of the planning process in terms of conducting public and all staff meetings on the draft Strategic Action Plan. On-line and mailed in comment cards are still welcome until April 30th. Last week's meetings at Rainier, Southwest, and Garfield were all well attended, even by teens.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business.

Bill Farmer: Mr. Farmer is a supporter of Friends of Athletic Fields. He had previously forwarded information to the Board regarding synthetic surfaces. While there have been some recent allegations of health risks from synthetic fields, Mr. Farmer is not aware of any risks. He stated that inhalation of fumes from synthetic off-gassing is not an issue on outdoor fields. There has been no history of this type of problem. Also ingestion is not an issue: if people get rubber in their mouths they will spit it out. Water quality is not an issue as studies have shown that drainage coming off synthetic fields is not toxic. The benefits of synthetic turf are more play, less operations and maintenance costs, and no fertilizer or mowing required.

Mr. Adams asked what the conflict is about the synthetic fields. Mr. Farmer responded that neighbors feel the impact from increased use of the fields, and have tended to grasp at anything to oppose the synthetic surface. At Magnuson, the neighbors first fought regarding noise, moved to opposing lights and now are against synthetic turf.

Mr. Barber asked about heat effects, noting that when it is hot rubber surfaces are forty degrees hotter. Mr. Farmer responded that, while true for some areas, here the rubber is under the grass part of the turf, so will not get as hot. Also there are not as many really hot days here. Mr. Holme commented that fields are generally hotter because there is no shade.

Briefing: Lake Union Loop Trail

David Graves, Senior Parks Planner, presented a briefing on the Lake Union Loop Trail Project. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a briefing on the Lake Union Loop Trail project. The Board of Park Commissioners has not yet been briefed on the project and staff wanted to outline the project for the Board in advance of beginning the public process for the Lake Union Loop Trail Master Plan.

Project Description and Background

The Mayor included \$1 million in Parks' 2008 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Lake Union Loop Trail. The vision for the project is a seamless urban loop trail that affords pedestrians and cyclists the opportunity to circumnavigate Lake Union and take advantage of associated parks, street ends, other natural features and the neighborhoods that abut the Lake. The original idea for the loop trail came from the Seattle Parks Foundation's Bands of Green report.

The loop exists today: it is a conglomeration of distinct segments such as the widened sidewalk along the businesses on Westlake Avenue on the west side of lake Union; the Burke-Gilman Trail across the north of Lake Union; and Fairview Avenues East and North along the east side of the Lake. To improve this haphazard collection of segments, there are two significant construction projects which will be undertaken in 2008:

- Improvement of the approach to the south end of the Fremont Bridge from Westlake; and
- A new sidewalk connection to get from the Burke-Gilman Trail up to Peace Park and the University Bridge.

The remaining significant component of the project and of particular interest to the Board will be the preparation of a Master Plan for the loop. The focus of the Master Plan will be to give the trail an overall element of consistency while maintaining the integrity and unique nature of each distinct segment. This Master Plan will be subject to review by the Design Commission and review and recommendation by the Board of Park Commissioners. In addition, the Seattle Department of Transportation will be installing signs in early summer directing people to and along the trail. Signage is based on the City's Center City Wayfinding project and is similar to what has been installed in Freeway Park.

Public Involvement Process

The public process will likely consist of one open house/workshop to allow the public to talk about the issues and existing conditions, and one public meeting to allow the public to provide feedback on draft concepts and solutions proposed in the Master Plan. In addition there will be two Design Commission briefings and at least two Board of Park Commissioners meetings.

There will also be an ad hoc advisory group composed of representatives from the Eastlake, Wallingford, Fremont and South Lake Union neighborhoods, marine business, the floating homes community and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Boards. The purpose of this advisory group will be to assist City staff and the consultant in working through issues and encouraging public participation. Meetings will be advertised using a variety of print and electronic media. The two public meetings will likely be held in late May/early June and September. Presentations to the Design Commission and Board of Park Commissioners will be this summer and fall. Details are still being worked out.

Issues

Overall, the public is generally very supportive of the project. The public meeting will be the opportunity for the public to really get into how the trail will work and what any potential impacts might be. We

anticipate there will be issues associated with the trail alignment along portions of Fairview Avenue, pedestrian/bicycle/business conflicts along Westlake and any potential loss of parking.

Environmental Sustainability

The Master Plan will identify opportunities for natural drainage. The trail itself affords people a new opportunity for recreation and portions may serve as a slow speed bicycle commute option for less experienced cyclists.

Budget

The 2008 CIP provides \$1 million for Phase 1 of the project which includes the Master Plan, signage and wayfinding and other improvements such as the Fremont Bridge approach and the connection to Peace Park. Recommendations from the Master Plan will be undertaken in subsequent phases, likely funded as future CIP projects

Schedule

Signage will be installed this summer; the improvements will be under construction by summer and completed by fall 2008. The draft Master Plan will be ready for review by September 2008 and the final by December 2008.

Additional Information

David Graves; ph.: 206.684.7048; e-mail: david.graves@seattle.gov. There will also be a project website shortly.

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Mr. Graves stated that this briefing is to update the Board on current actions regarding the Lake Union Loop Trail, noting that there will be more opportunities later in the year for the Board to weigh in on Trail issues.

The Trail basically exists today. It is in segments that can be used by walkers and bike riders. The purpose of the current project is largely to advertise the Trail and to provide signs. The loop is 6.2 miles, and while bicycles are allowed, it primarily is a pedestrian trail. The focus is not on bicycle commuters, especially as the part of the Trail on Westlake is narrow.

In 2008, Phase 1 implementation of the Trail Project will occur, funded by \$1 million in Parks Capital Improvement Program. The approach to the Trail at the Fremont Bridge is in design and will include a ten foot wide sidewalk. The second project for 2008 is to connect to the Burke Gilman Trail to the University Bridge in the area of Peace Park.

New signs for the Trail will be up in July and will be similar to the signs that were made for the Center City Wayfinding Project. Also this year a Master Plan for the Trail will be developed. A consultant has been hired to work on the Master Plan, which will focus on how to make the loop understandable through mapping and signs. There will be a public workshop on the Master Plan in mid-June, and in mid-summer the project will come back to the Board. An additional public workshop will be scheduled in the fall, with Park Board final review to follow.

Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that the idea for the Trail came from the Seattle Park Foundation's Bands of Green project which identified connections between parks. The Foundation has been a partner in the Loop Trail project, participating in developing Trail graphics and signs and will be on the Master Plan Advisory Group.

Commissioner Ramels asked why the signs for the project were different from Parks usual rainbow signs. Mr. Graves responded that this is because most of the Trail is on City street right-of-way, not Park land.

Commissioner Kostka asked what size lettering would be used on the sign, noting that the mock-up displayed by Mr. Graves had very small lettering, and that the symbols used on the sign should be bigger than the lettering. Mr. Graves responded that the actual sign lettering would be about twice the size as the example, and is being designed to be readable by pedestrians, not geared for bike commuters. He noted that the signs could be re-visited if they proved too small to read.

Commissioner Barber noted the narrow configuration of Fairview and the need for the street to be shared by walkers, bicyclists, cars and parking. Mr. Graves stated this part of Fairview is designated a “green street” by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), and is intended to be a shared street, also known as a woonerf.

Commissioner Adams asked what the Master Plan development process would be. Mr. Graves responded that an Advisory Group is being formed, and would include people from the various communities around the Lake, representatives from the marine business community, from the floating home neighborhoods, and members of the city Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Boards. Mr. Graves outlined the upcoming schedule:

- May – First Advisory Group meeting;
- June – Public open house;
- Mid-summer – Park Board update;
- August- September – Draft Master Plan;
- September – Public workshop on the Draft Plan;
- October – Park Board and Design Commission review; and
- End of 2008 – Final Master Plan completed.

Commissioner Ramels asked if there was any Bridging the Gap Levy funding for this project. Mr. Graves responded that there was not.

Commissioner Holme asked if the Mayor decided who would be the lead agency for this project. Mr. Graves responded yes, that the Mayor selected Parks and Recreation to be the lead, with SDOT an equal partner. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that the Mayor came to Parks to conduct a public naming process for the Trail and this led to our taking the lead on the total project.

Commissioner Holme asked about the extent of parking displacement that will occur at Peace Park when that segment of the Trail project is completed. Mr. Graves stated that all of the parking that occurs at the Park now is illegal and all will be removed.

Commissioner Holme noted the challenge of busy, narrow Fairview. He also stated it was difficult to distinguish the symbols on the signs regarding a boat launch and waterway. Both symbols look like they allow boat launching. Mr. Graves stated that you cannot launch a boat at a waterway, and will remedy the symbol confusion.

Commissioner Kostka asked that safety be given more consideration, and wondered if there shouldn't be some areas with no parking so there would be more room for the Trail. She also suggested posting speed limit signs for bikes, especially as this Trail is intended to be primarily for pedestrians.

Commissioner Larsen asked what future phases of the project would include. Mr. Graves stated the Master Plan will identify projects for Phase two and three of the project. Ms. Larsen stated the importance of safety and was pleased to see a better link with the Burke Gilman Trail.

Commissioner Ranade asked whether the University of Washington had been involved. Mr. Graves said not yet, but Parks will reach out to them as part of the Master Plan process. Also, Mr. Graves noted that there is Pro Parks funding for this project and that it will be spent on the Peace Park connection to the University Bridge. Construction for this will begin in June.

Regarding the name of the Trail, Cheslahud is the name of the Suquamish Tribe that lived along Lake Union, and means Lake People. Descendents of the Cheslahud attended the Trail naming ceremony.

Briefing: Graffiti

Rebecca Salinas, Manager of Parks Policy Unit, briefed the Board on graffiti. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This agenda item is an informational briefing on the issue of graffiti vandalism. The Park Board will hear how graffiti vandalism is affecting the Department and be provided information regarding best practices for addressing the graffiti issue. The Board will also receive an update on the work of the Graffiti Task Force, one of the Mayor's 12 Customer Services Improvement Projects.

Background

Graffiti vandalism is marking, drawing, etching (or other methods) on public or private property without the owner's permission. It is a crime of vandalism. Most vandalism has little to do with art. It stems from larger and more complex problems in society.¹

Impact

Graffiti sends the message that no one cares, attracting other forms of crime and street delinquency to the neighborhood. Graffiti decreases a resident's feeling of safety. Neighborhoods with graffiti see a decrease in property values, loss of business growth and tourism, and reduced ridership on transit systems.

It is estimated that a city the size of Seattle spends about \$1 million dollars annually on graffiti clean up. However, in speaking with a city official from Portland, Oregon, they estimated the cost to be about \$3 million dollars annually. Graffiti is significantly increasing in Parks owned property. During the first three months of 2008 there were 990 reports of graffiti, compared to 737 for the same period in 2007. The five parks with the highest number of calls in 2008 are:

- Cal Anderson Park 51
- Freeway Park 51
- Green Lake Park 37
- Meadowbrook Playfield 26
- Loyal Heights Playfield 25

Attached is a table showing the total number of graffiti calls in 2008 by district.

¹ **The Role of Local Lawmaking in Community Anti-Graffiti Planning**, by Robert Hills, National Council to Prevent Delinquency

Parks Response

- The majority of reported graffiti is called into the jobline (684-7250) by Parks employees. A small number of citizens call the line directly and a few come in via e-mail from Seattle Public Utilities's graffiti hotline.
- The dispatchers enter the information in the form of a work order in SPAN FM (the work order system). Work orders are printed at the end of the day, delivered to crew chiefs who dispatch the work the next day. However, if the reported graffiti is gang related, sexual or racist in nature, the dispatchers contact either the crew chief or staff removing graffiti with removal within a few hours.
- A recent pilot program created by Information Technology staff allows SPAN FM to send graffiti work orders as e-mail to the staff doing graffiti removal, at the beginning of every work hour.
- There is one full-time maintenance laborer in the paint dispatch shop dedicated to graffiti removal on unpainted surfaces. Painters sandblast and paint over graffiti on painted surfaces.
- At the end of the day, work orders are cleared, indicating the amount of time spent and materials used.
- The work orders are then turned back into the jobline dispatchers who record the information in SPAN FM.

The Parks' performance objective is to eradicate graffiti within 48 hours of it being reported. During 2008, the Department has been able to achieve this target between 80 and 89% of the time. However, this can result in other paint projects being delayed.

There are many factors affecting the removal of graffiti, but the biggest is weather. In rain or temperatures below 40 degrees, it is difficult to paint some surfaces. Seattle had 161 days of measurable rain in 2007. The Department is reducing the number of paint colors used on its facilities to make stocking trucks and matching colors easier for the painters.

Research

Best practices center around three strategic areas: education/prevention, abatement and enforcement of laws. Some examples are:

- Education and Prevention – education, especially targeting children, youth and parents using formal curricula; increasing access to alternatives for youth including arts opportunities; involving youth in development of prevention strategies; urban design practices such as those recommended in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Abatement – rapid removal of graffiti, ideally within 24 hours; enlisting property owners and volunteers in painting out graffiti; use of private contractors for maintaining frequently vandalized public property.
- Enforcement of laws – creation of a Graffiti Ordinance; holding parents of minors accountable; instituting penalties such as restitution, community service hours, suspension of driver's license; creating a centralized database; laws covering sales and possession of graffiti implements.

Many cities across the country are addressing each of the above three strategy areas through a city-wide Task Force that makes recommendations for anti-graffiti strategies and monitors results on an on-going basis.

Seattle has established fines for graffiti vandalism up to \$5,000 and 1 year imprisonment. However, without an assigned detective and centralized database, conviction is difficult. There is a Graffiti Nuisance Property ordinance which gives property owners up to 10 days to remove graffiti. The City provides property owners with free paint and has awarded matching fund grants up to \$1,000 for community volunteers to remove graffiti. Seattle Public Utilities department has a .50 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Education Specialist to support volunteer involvement.

Graffiti Task Force

The Task Force, comprised of representatives from several city departments, was established as one of the Mayor's 12 Customer Services Improvement Projects. The initial charge for the Task Force is the development of recommendations to enable all city departments to quickly eradicate graffiti on city owned property, ideally within 24 hours. The current deadline for recommendations is late May, 2008.

Graffiti Web Sites www.graffitihurts.org Provides good information regarding best practices.

www.nograffiti.org Compares graffiti related ordinances from cities around the country.

www.anti-graffiti.org Sponsored by the National Council to Prevent Delinquency provides guidance in establishing anti-graffiti programs and legislation.

www.denvergov.org/graffiti Denver is implementing a number of best practice strategies.

Additional Information

Rebecca Salinas: rebecca.salinas@seattle.gov; 684-7279

Graffiti – Reported Incidences
January through April 2008 by Park District

District	2008- Jan.	2008- Feb.	2008- March	2008- April	Total
Northwest	31	72	66	39	208
Central East	41	56	62	15	174
Northeast	40	35	63	15	153
Central West	37	44	52	10	143
Southwest	35	34	58	9	136
South Central	18	40	45	8	111
North Central	20	24	46	7	97
Central West Downtown	10	12	40	5	67
Southeast	8	12	30	1	51
Magnuson Park	3	4	8	1	16
Cross-district		3			3
Zoo		1	1		2
Grand Total	244	337	471	110	1162

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Ms. Salinas briefed the Board on the city-wide effort to combat graffiti. She noted that in some communities graffiti is considered art, but in Seattle it is officially vandalism and a crime. Graffiti sends a negative message, has a negative economic impact, and attracts other anti-social behavior. Parks and Recreation spends \$1 million to eradicate graffiti from Park property; the City of Portland spends up to \$3 million. Graffiti has been increasing: to date in 2008 we have had 909 incidents reported, and there were 737 during the same time period in 2007. Because of heightened awareness among city staff, there may be some increased reporting over last year, and also it may be that some neighborhoods that are repeatedly hit with graffiti do not report as often.

Paul Wilkinson, Parks Interim Facilities Manager, reported on a recent pilot project that parks is doing to improve graffiti removal. Parks is now able to e-mail the latest graffiti work orders to staff blackberries. This enables staff to address a problem right when they are in the field and is working well. Our maintenance staff can cover graffiti with gray paint, and then it is up to Parks paint shop to paint the surface to match the surrounding paint. The Mayor has made a pledge to citizens to remove graffiti within two work week days. Parks has met this goal about 80% of the time. One of the major challenges is weather, as we can't paint in the rain. The emphasis on graffiti removal does delay other Parks painting projects.

Ms. Salinas researched best practices for graffiti control in Portland, Denver, Dan Diego and cities in Arizona. All had similar graffiti problems and approached the solution from three fronts: education/prevention, abatement/eradication, and enforcement. All three areas need to be addressed to be effective. In some cities spray paint is not available for purchase right off the shelf. In Denver drivers' licenses are suspended after a vandalism conviction. Ms. Salinas found enforcement to be effective with these techniques showing success:

- Requiring community service from violators;
- Drivers' license suspension or revocation; and
- Holding parents responsible for the childrens' graffiti infractions.

In Seattle graffiti prosecutions have lessened since the detective dedicated to graffiti was re-assigned

Seattle recently created a Graffiti Task Force to focus on how the city deals with graffiti. It is an internal process with the goal of improving efficiency. A report from the Task Force is due in May.

Commissioner Ramels asked whether there is a priority for removal based on the type of graffiti; for example, shouldn't gang tagging be the number one priority for removal? She suggested educating staff about gang graffiti. Mr. Wilkinson responded that Parks works with the Seattle Police Department so that we are notified when gang tags go up on Park property, and we remove them right away. We pay a lot of attention to gang graffiti. Ms. Salinas noted that the police calculate that ten percent of all graffiti is gang related.

Commissioner Larsen asked about the efficiency of Parks approach to graffiti removal, wondering whether all Parks staff could be trained and able to eradicate graffiti. Mr. Wilkinson responded that we are not there, yet, but that a pilot project has begun that has painters training maintenance laborers to remove graffiti. One of the issues in this regard is the toxic substances that are sometimes needed for graffiti removal and the need for training in their use.

Ms. Larsen asked who was responsible for graffiti on art projects that are in parks. Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that for these situations we contact the Seattle Arts Commission which is responsible for graffiti removal from works of art.

Mr. Wilkinson noted that graffiti is cyclical, ratcheting up when school is out for the summer. And while summer is the worst time for graffiti, it is also the busiest time for our paint shop which needs the drier summer weather for the exterior paint projects.

Commissioner Kostka asked what age group is predominantly doing graffiti. Ms. Salinas responded that it is mostly teens, but we are also seeing a rise in the over thirty age group. Ms. Kostka also asked whether preventive recreation programs could be implemented to help with education and prevention. Ms. Salinas responded that increasing art programs for youths, having urban art fairs and graffiti murals may help with prevention.

Commissioner Barber asked what number a citizen should call to report graffiti, and suggested that better advertising of the number is needed. He noted that the Leschi neighborhood has been hit hard. Mr. Adams stated it would help if there was just one number to call, instead of a different number for Parks, SDOT, and Seattle Public Utilities. Ms. Salinas responded that there is a citywide graffiti hot line number, 684-7587. The number has not been well publicized and it is confusing to the public regarding what number to call. The Graffiti Task Force is looking for ways to correct this problem. As mentioned earlier, the Seattle Parks workorder number, which also receives many graffiti calls, is 684-7250.

Mr. Holme asked who was the responsible authority for the I-90 lid. Mr. Wilkinson stated this was Parks responsibility. Commissioner Holme asked whether Parks used private contractors for graffiti removal, and if so what is the union point of view. He remarked that the need for outside help for graffiti removal is important because of the overlap between high incidences of graffiti and good weather needed for outside paint projects. Mr. Wilkinson responded that Parks assigns work of a specific type to the in-house shop (e.g. paint projects to the paint shop) and only if they can not do the work is it contracted out.

Briefing: Wildlife Sanctuaries

Rebecca Salinas, Manager of Parks Policy Unit, briefed the Board on Wildlife Sanctuaries. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action: The Board is asked to make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the proposed Wildlife Sanctuary Policy for Seattle Parks and Recreation owned property.

Staff Recommendation: The Board is being asked to recommend to the Superintendent that he approve the proposed Wildlife Sanctuary Policy, which provides direction for designation and management of critical habitat areas for one or more Special Status Species.

Project Description and Background: There is a significant amount of City legislation, best management practices manuals, and policy documents that provide guidance for creating and managing natural areas, urban forests and aquatic habitats. A Wildlife Sanctuary status would bring more focused attention to preserving and nurturing wildlife within our urban environment by bringing together maintenance practices, educational opportunities and volunteer efforts.

As various species of animals require differing habitats in which to live, and differing habitats can support a variety of wildlife, the policy calls for a site-specific plan to be developed for each designated Wildlife Sanctuary for approval by the Superintendent.

Site-specific plans would be aligned with current local and state habitat protection and management policies, best practices, legislation and planning guidelines. Plans would include strategies for monitoring the plan and evaluating the status of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Superintendent may establish additional restrictions, levels of protection or other actions he determines are necessary in order to protect, restore or enhance the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Public Involvement Process

There have been no prior public meetings to discuss this policy. The policy was developed in response to a request made by Heron Habitat Helpers to designate Kiwanis Ravine as a Wildlife Refuge. Many Parks and Recreation Departments across the country are implementing similar Wildlife Sanctuary designations in response to community requests.

Environmental Sustainability

With the Department managing about 6,200 acres of land within Seattle, the policy will help continue and increase wildlife habitat protection and enhancement efforts by bringing together best management practices, environmental education and volunteer involvement.

Budget

As Wildlife Sanctuaries are designated there will be signs made and installed to identify and control the use of the area. However, it is currently anticipated that these and other costs will be supported by current resources.

Schedule

Over the next several weeks, Department staff will develop a form to be used for the nomination of Wildlife Sanctuaries. Information regarding the Wildlife Sanctuary policy and nomination process will be placed on the Department's website.

Additional Information

For more information contact Rebecca Salinas, Policy Manager, 684-7279; or rebecca.salinas@seattle.gov.

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Continue and increase wildlife habitat protection and enhancement efforts by establishing a procedure for the designation and management of Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- 1.2 Promote public education and volunteer involvement in wildlife and habitat protection and enhancement.
- 1.3 Promote internal Department education in wildlife and habitat protection and enhancement to ensure consistency in Department actions related to wildlife habitats.
- 1.4 Promote interdepartmental and interagency cooperation to protect wildlife habitats.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation
- 2.2 Seattle Public Utilities Department
- 2.3 Other City departments on a case by case basis

3.0 REFERENCES

- 3.1 2000 Urban Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan
- 3.2 2005 Department of Parks and Recreation Best Management Practice Manual, Chapter 5.
- 3.3 SMC 18.12.030 (9, 10) Park Code – Rule of Construction, definition of “Park” and “Park Rule”
- 3.4 SMC 18.12.040 Park Code – Superintendent’s Authority
- 3.5 SMC 25.05.675 (N) Park Code – Specific environmental policies, Plants and Animals.
- 3.6 Park Policy 5.6.1 – Tree Management
- 3.7 2007 Urban Forest Management Plan

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 The Superintendent on an annual basis shall accept and consider nominations for a Special Status Species of wildlife and their habitat to be designated as a Wildlife Sanctuary.
- 4.2 A Special Status Species or habitat to be designated shall meet the following criteria:
 - a. Local populations of native species that are in danger of extinction or likely to be endangered as identified in the federal Endangered Species Act; or
 - b. Local populations of native species whose continued existence in the state and their sensitivity to habitat alteration is of concern as identified by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) ; or
 - c. Local populations of native species of local importance that may have declining populations (based on peer reviewed scientific research), yet are not listed by state or federal governments for protection, and those that are especially valued by Seattle’s citizens as symbolic of the Pacific Northwest; and
 - d. Protection by other county, state, local or federal policies, laws, regulations, or non-regulatory tools is not adequate to prevent degradation of the species or habitat in Seattle; and
 - e. Areas nominated to protect a particular habitat or species have either high-quality habitat or habitat with a high potential to recover to a suitable quality, and the habitat is limited in quantity, highly vulnerable to alteration, or connects habitats.
- 4.3 Nominations shall be in writing, address the criteria listed in section 4.2, and state whether specific habitat features are being nominated (for example, nest sites and breeding areas), or whether the habitat or ecosystem is being nominated in its entirety. Any planned or desired habitat restoration or management practices must be included in the nomination.
- 4.4 The Superintendent shall review the nomination and make the decision to approve or deny the request. If approved, the Superintendent will authorize and approve a site-specific plan developed by Department staff in collaboration with staff from other City departments, along with outside organizations who have expertise in wildlife and habitat management.
- 4.5 Site-specific plans must:

- a. Address habitat restoration and/or habitat and species management strategies critical to the designated Wildlife Sanctuary.
- b. Provide strategies for implementing and monitoring the plan and evaluating short and long-term changes to the designated Wildlife Sanctuary.
- c. Describe and justify any anticipated impacts to the Park infrastructure and/or designated use.

4.6 The Department will support wildlife biology and ecology education for park users of the Wildlife Sanctuary. Where possible, public access routes and viewing areas will be created to allow users to observe wildlife without disturbing it or damaging natural resources.

4.7 The Department will promote volunteer stewardship in the protection and enhancement of Wildlife Sanctuaries.

4.8 Designated critical habitat areas for Special Status Species will become part of Park comprehensive plans, Park master plans, Park vegetation management plans and other applicable plans.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 Wildlife Sanctuary: A critical habitat area for one or more Special Status Species. The major theme in such areas is to preserve integrity and minimize intrusion. (SMC 25.09.200)

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY

6.1 It is the responsibility of the Department staff to monitor and ensure these policies are carried out. Department staff will recommend appropriate actions to the Superintendent including establishing additional restrictions within a Wildlife Sanctuary.

6.2 The Superintendent may establish additional restrictions, levels of protection or other actions he determines are necessary in order to protect, restore or enhance the Wildlife Sanctuary.

6.3 The Department will promote interdepartmental and interagency cooperation to protect Wildlife Sanctuaries.

6.4 Department staff is responsible to have signs made and installed as needed to control and direct the use of Wildlife Sanctuaries.

6.5 The Superintendent's Office will develop permission forms for public or educational use activities within Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Rebecca Salinas briefed the Board on the proposed Wildlife Sanctuary Policy. She noted that the idea arose from Heron Habitat Helpers at Kiwanis Ravine, who are interested in having the heron rookery at the Ravine be declared a wildlife sanctuary. Ms. Salinas stated that Seattle has many regulations currently in place that help manage habitat. Designating an area a Wildlife Sanctuary brings more focus to the special status of species and can help get grant funding for the Sanctuary. She stated that adopting a Wildlife Sanctuary Policy is consistent with Parks Draft Strategic Action Plan which places a priority on wildlife protection, and it is a Parks priority to preserve habitat in an urban environment.

The proposed Policy calls for a special public process and habitat plan for each Wildlife Sanctuary that is created. It is a broad Policy that would not immediately bring about significant changes. Its purpose is to raise the level of public education about habitat; provide for better coordination with other City departments; and better train staff regarding habitat protection.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ramels, Ms. Salinas stated that she looked at wildlife sanctuary practices in other cities, including Portland. In Portland the designation is largely ceremonial because underlying regulations provide protection.

Commissioner Holme asked what park areas might be appropriate for this designation. Ms. Salinas noted the woodpeckers and frogs at Magnuson are potentially appropriate. Commissioner Holme stated there should be a contingency mechanism for removing a Wildlife Sanctuary designation if necessary; that is if development has changed the Sanctuary and the designation is no longer appropriate.

Commissioner Kostka agreed with the need for a means for removing the designation. She stated that last year there were over 60 heron nests at Kiwanis Ravine and this year there are just over 40. She remarked that the heron nesting season would be better defined and protected with a Wildlife Sanctuary designation, and that there would be better public education. Encroachments can be reduced with signs identifying the Sanctuary boundaries and telling people to keep out during nesting season. She asked that the Policy reference State Law.

Commissioner Barber mentioned Frink Park and noted that educational signs could help explain the natural area and could help reduce damage to wetlands.

Commissioner Holme noted the designation would be an added layer of design, and asked what is the added benefit/value of the proposed Policy? He asked for a deeper definition of why you would do this beyond what is done in all natural areas. He said he would like to see a better description in the Policy of the purpose of the designation so that there is a good reason to create a Sanctuary, and perhaps expanded designation criteria.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the designation would be applicable to a specific species. Ms. Salinas responded yes, when the individual Sanctuary processes were done, they would look at the individual species within the area, as well as the bio-diversity of the land. The added layer of regulation would emerge during the site specific review and could include restrictions such as prohibitions based on nesting season.

Mr. Adams suggested that an introductory paragraph to the Policy be added that would provide the reader with an idea of the intention of the Policy.

Commissioner Ranade stated that because there had been no public review of the Policy, the Board would not vote. He asked for a public hearing on the issue to be scheduled for a future Board meeting. The Board agreed by consensus, and the issue was tabled for future review.

New/Old Business

Department of Neighborhoods Project Review: Commissioner Ramels announced that the Office of Ethics and Elections had okayed her appointment to the DON project review team.

Channel 21 Show: Commissioner Barber reported that he had participated on a panel discussion shown on Channel 21. He specifically stated he was speaking as an individual and not as a Park Board member. Privatization of park land was discussed. He will provide material in writing to clarify his comments, as the extent of what he said was not included in the broadcast.

Magnuson Park Building 27: Commissioner Barber expressed concern about a potential 40-year lease for Building 27 at Magnuson Park. He thought it might be pushing out too far, and also expressed concern about a fitness center competing with private businesses. He thought maybe a bare-bones restoration, with lights, no heat, and a skeleton operation might make the building usable for non-profits. Commissioner Barber believes that a bare-bones construction by Arena Sports would cost \$2 to \$2-1/2 million dollars and cost an additional \$4 million to make the building "business usable." Deputy Superintendent Williams agreed that it would probably cost a total of \$6-7 million. No one else came forward when Parks put the proposal out to the public. He stated a long-term lease is needed to amortize the initial pay-out.

Synthetic Turf: Commissioner Holme commented that the replacement of Parks sand fields with synthetic turf will bring a positive health benefit. The sand fields are unhealthy, especially when it is dry and they are dusty.

APPROVED AS AMENDED: _____

DATE _____

Jackie Ramels, Vice Chair
Board of Park Commissioners