

# MOUNTAINS TO SOUND GREENWAY



Linking Forests, Trails, Wildlife, History and Communities along I-90 in Washington State

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Photo Jesse Rogers



*Greenway conservation corps crew members, from left to right, Gina DiCicco, Chuck Kaucic, Holly Shores, Jesse Rogers and Whitney Clark pause with a view of Mt. Rainier after renovating the trail near the top of Granite Mountain. Through a partnership between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, these Washington Conservation Corps members work throughout the year on trail maintenance and ecological restoration projects in the Greenway.*



# Heritage Study Launched

## Building a Cooperative Framework for the Next 20 Years

After nearly 20 years of successfully preserving the Mountains to Sound Greenway, the Greenway Trust is launching an 18-month Heritage Area Study to look at strategies for sustaining the Greenway for the *next* 20 years. This project seeks to involve over 500 stakeholders in a process to outline a framework for conserving and enhancing the ecological, cultural, recreational, and economic assets of the 1.4 million acre Greenway.

### This Cherished Place

With 800,000 acres of public land, spectacular alpine scenery, vibrant communities, thriving working farms and forests and extensive outdoor recreation, the Greenway is a special landscape that embodies this region's natural heritage. But considerable challenges to sustain the Greenway lie ahead. The Greenway coalition recently began discussing ways to address shared challenges, ranging from population growth to shrinking agency budgets for providing safe and accessible recreation.

### A National Model

The National Heritage Area emerged as a model that provides a flexible framework for meeting common needs. The Heritage Study is a process that examines the suitability of this federal designation by taking an inventory of the multitude of Greenway assets, documenting their associated threats and needs, and devising a cooperative framework for efficiently managing them for the long-term.

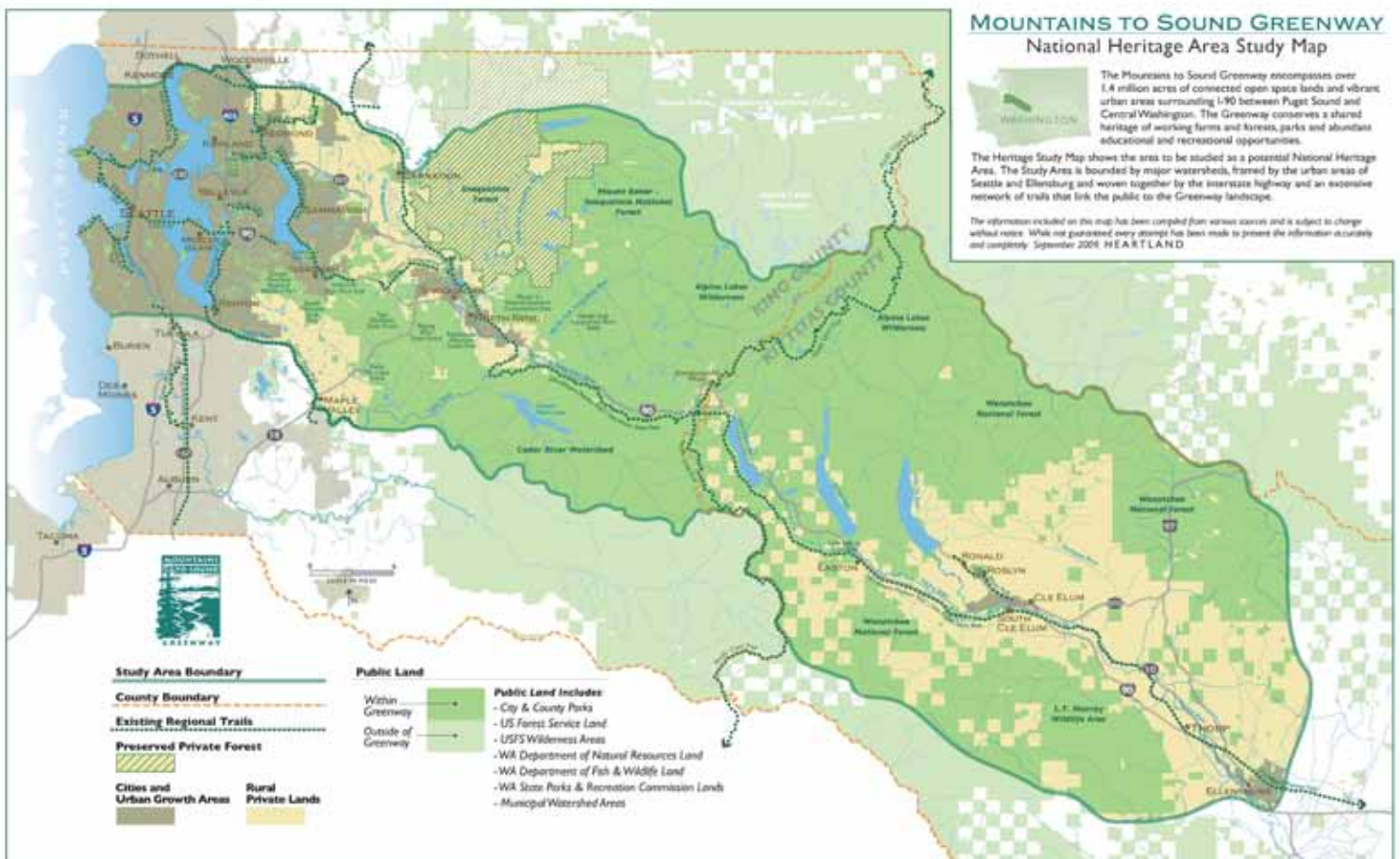
Residents, businesses, and government officials have long recognized the importance of the Greenway. It is key to our quality of life and embraces the interconnectedness of people, places, wildlife and land. But the Greenway didn't happen by accident. In 1991, a broad group of stakeholder groups developed a plan that outlined a set of goals, objectives and strategies for conserving the landscape. These Greenway founders identified priority areas and developed a common vision. Almost 20 years later, many goals have been achieved and the original vision has guided the Greenway ever since, but new challenges and opportunities require a look ahead.

"Building on the amazing successes of the Greenway coalition, the Heritage Study will provide a forum for diverse interests to develop strategies for the integration of conservation, efficient management, and economic prosperity for the next 20 years," says Jim Reinhardsen, Greenway Trust Board Member.

The Heritage Study will unite stakeholders under principles of cooperative management; formalize partnerships, giving direction to future stewards of the landscape by capitalizing on commitments that exist today; and foster an overarching "sense of place" in this region that will build broader public recognition, awareness, and involvement.

### Your Chance to Participate

Public input is critical to the success of the project. Please visit [mtsgreenway.org/heritagestudy](http://mtsgreenway.org/heritagestudy) for more information.





# Coming Soon: A Trail With A View

Ten years ago, the hills south of I-90 between North Bend and Snoqualmie Pass were part of the infamous “Cascade checkerboard” that so frustrates public and private landowners. Today however, much of these lands in the Upper Snoqualmie River Valley are consolidated in U.S. Forest Service ownership. This summer, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust teamed up with the U.S. Forest Service and the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance to kick off a project that will close unneeded logging roads and create a new series of recreational trails over the next six to ten years.

Near Snoqualmie Pass in the Hansen Creek basin, a tributary of the South Fork Snoqualmie, equipment operators hired by the Greenway Trust started work on the first six miles of old roads. Excavators dug out culverts, improved drainage and spread hefty boulders and large pieces of wood along the old road to create a meandering, multi-use trail. Conservation corps crews and Evergreen volunteers will return this fall to put finishing touches on the trail.

“Riders will love the curves and the up-and-down elements of the trail,” says Justin Vander Pol, Evergreen board member. “This trail provides visual interest, and has the potential to be one of the best mountain biking areas in the region.”

“This summer’s project is part of a much larger vision for the South Fork basin,” says Tor Bell, Restoration Program Manager for the Greenway Trust and coordinator of the project. “Over the next ten years, 30 miles of new multi-use trails will be created for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Several new loop trails will connect to the old railroad line that is now the John Wayne Pioneer Trail in Iron Horse State Park, including an eight-mile trail along Mount Washington that has been designed by Washington



*A large excavator, high above I-90 exit 47, begins to place a mountain bike trail over a forest road. Granite Mountain is in the background.*

State Parks and the Greenway Trust. In total, over 45 miles of old logging roads will be decommissioned, converted to trail and/or put into ‘storage.’”

Road storage? Many of these roads won’t actually go away, according to Bell. Many of them will be stabilized, their culverts removed, drainage improved and a trail surface installed which will wind through stumps and other debris spread on top of the intact, disguised road corridor. Because they will remain identified by the Forest Service as roads, these ‘stored’ roads can then quickly be opened to fight forest fires or for other forest health projects or emergencies if needed.

“Decreasing the number of unneeded forest roads or putting them into storage greatly reduces public maintenance costs,” says Jim Franzel, District Ranger for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. “It also provides an increasing number of recreational opportunities through road-to-trail conversions that accommodate demand for more day hiking and mountain biking trails.”

This year’s work has been funded by a National Forest Foundation grant and other Greenway Trust funding as well as a National Recreation and Trails Program grant received by Evergreen. Forest Service funds are committed for next year, and additional funding is being sought to continue the project.

## South Fork Snoqualmie History

Historic Indian Trail followed the South Fork to a foot trail over Snoqualmie Pass.

1970s – Weyerhaeuser owned and managed lands in this area. Many of the trees were logged 35-40 years ago.

2001 – Huckleberry Land Exchange brought over 30,000 acres of forest land into U.S. Forest Service ownership in the Greenway.

2001 – Land exchange between the Department of Natural Resources and a private timber company eventually transferred another 1,000 acres into U.S. Forest Service ownership, partially using federal Land and Water Conservation Funds.

2002 – Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the U.S. Forest Service completed Olallie Area Mountain Bike Trail Study.

2002 – Trailhead at the western terminus of the cross-state John Wayne Pioneer Trail is built at Rattlesnake Lake, giving hikers, bikers and equestrians access to the South Fork Basin.

2009 – Construction of new mountain bike trails begins.



*Justin Vander Pol of the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance walks along what will become a mountain biking trail high above I-90 exit 47, as he talks about using rocks, stumps, logs and curves in the trail to get bikers to slow down before a sharp turn. “We love more meander!” he says.*

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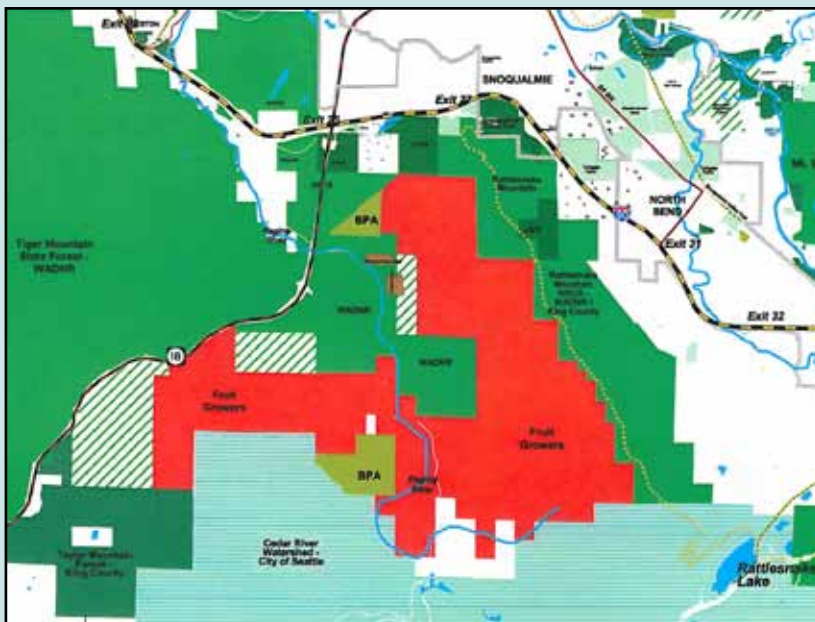
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*Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list of outright and endowment gifts 9/08-9/09. If your name has been omitted or incorrectly listed please contact 206.382.5565 or [stephanie.dunlap@mtsgreenway.org](mailto:stephanie.dunlap@mtsgreenway.org).*

## Raging River Lands Conserved



*The 7,000-acre Fruit Growers property was acquired by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. King County purchased a conservation easement on 4,000 of those acres.*

In May, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and partners announced the acquisition of 7,000 acres of forestland in the Raging River basin, south of I-90 between Issaquah and North Bend. This acquisition completes 15 years of work by the Greenway coalition to connect Tiger Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain, the Cedar River Watershed, and Taylor Mountain into one large swath of public forestland.

“The State Department of Natural Resources and King County really pulled together to make this critical acquisition happen,” says Doug Schindler, Greenway Trust Deputy Director. “This is the largest public acquisition in the Greenway in the past five years, and it fills a huge hole in the heart of the Greenway. Our heartfelt thanks go to Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark, former Commissioner Doug Sutherland, former King County Executive Ron Sims, King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn, their dedicated staff and the folks at the Cascade Land Conservancy for helping make this important acquisition possible.”

For more information:

[www.mtsgreenway.org/newsandpublications/raging-river](http://www.mtsgreenway.org/newsandpublications/raging-river)

# Volunteers Improve the Greenway

## VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Events run 9 AM - 3 PM most Saturdays and some weekdays throughout the year. Half day options are available on restoration projects.

October 3rd

- Invasive removal @ Riverfront Park (North Bend)
- Trail maintenance @ Twin Falls (North Bend)

October 10th

- Tree planting @ Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)
- Tree care @ Greenway Native Plant Nursery (Issaquah)
- Trail maintenance @ Cedar Butte (North Bend)

October 17th

TREE PLANTING KICK-OFF

- Tree planting @ Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)

October 24th

- Tree planting @ Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)
- Trail maintenance @ Rattlesnake Mountain (North Bend)

October 31st

- Tree planting @ Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)
- Tree planting @ Luther Burbank Park (Mercer Island)
- Trail maintenance @ Rattlesnake Mountain (North Bend)

November 7th

- Tree planting @ Lake Sammamish State Park (Issaquah)
- Tree planting @ Timberlake Park (Issaquah)
- Trail maintenance @ Rattlesnake Mountain (North Bend)

Customized events available for groups.

Visit [mtsgreenway.org](http://mtsgreenway.org)

for more information and to register, or contact 206.812.0122 or [volunteer@mtsgreenway.org](mailto:volunteer@mtsgreenway.org)

## Greenway Summer Camps Debut

This summer marked the debut of Mountains to Sound Greenway Summer Camps. Aimed at ages ten to eighteen, camp sessions engaged young people in ecological restoration and trail maintenance projects in the Greenway.

“By cultivating an appreciation of the outdoors and an understanding of conservation work, the hope is that young people will be more likely to come back to the areas where they worked and become long-term stewards of the natural areas they have learned to love,” says Jesse Miller, Greenway Trust Youth Volunteer Coordinator. The summer camp is just one part of a year-round program of volunteer events for all ages.

Week-long day camp sessions were held throughout the summer at Tiger Mountain, Lake Sammamish, Snoqualmie Valley and Mercer Island.

In addition to hands-on restoration work, each day included lessons and instruction from the camp leaders Jesse Miller and Julia Munger. It wasn't all work, however. Leaders engaged the kids in a variety of educational games and getting-to-know-you activities, ensuring that the students were able to meet and make friends.

When asked why they would give up a summer of video games and hanging out for manual labor under a sometimes-hot sun, twin brothers Garret and Braden from Issaquah explained that at first their mom made them come, but that, “it was a lot

more fun than they expected.” Braden mentioned that one of the best things was, “meeting lots of kids with similar interests, and kids from all over.”

Indeed, the program attracted youth from across King County, and a number who had lived or were visiting from as far away as Russia, Poland, France, and Luxembourg. Each of the sessions was at or

near capacity, many with a waiting list.

I walked out to the worksite with the group at about 9:30. The day was grey and overcast, but the mood seemed happy. The volunteers were clearing out invasive blackberry, a job that can be prickly and taxing for the most patient of gardeners, but there was no complaining or grumbling. At the site, Jesse quizzed them on how to



Summer Camp participant Yang Shi removes invasive ivy from Luther Burbank Park on Mercer Island.

identify the non-native Himalayan blackberry and participants boisterously shouted out a variety of reasons. Many knew not only the obvious indicators, like the color and appearance of berries, but also leaf shape, pattern, and thorn type.

By all accounts, the summer camps were a resounding success, and the hope is for the program to continue to grow. The ambitious plan, as Jesse envisions it, will include more in-depth projects, allowing interested youths to grow their curiosity and ambition.

- Maryann Moore, guest writer

## Tree Planting Kickoff

October 17th, 2009 - Lake Sammamish State Park

Join us to help plant over 25,000 trees this fall at seven natural areas in the Greenway!

Bring your family, your friends and your colleagues to improve parks and public spaces for both people and wildlife.

Plant a tree, leave a legacy!

Tree planting funders and partner agencies: Carter Motors; REI; King Conservation District; Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office; Seattle Storm; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Cities of Issaquah, Mercer Island, North Bend; King County; Washington State Parks; U.S. Forest Service.



Photo John and Lisa Merrill



# A Report from the Outdoor Classroom

## Mountains to Sound Greenway Environmental Education Program

The Greenway Education Program teaches over 3,000 students each year about the challenge of sustaining a healthy, natural environment in balance with the needs of a growing population. An environmental educator comes to 5th-10th grade classrooms in King County for an in-class lesson followed by a field study trip to the forest on Tiger Mountain for hands-on, science-based learning.

Surrounded by nature, many students have their first experience of the silence and mystery of the woods. A new stewardship extension component offers an optional day of ecological restoration work, which includes invasive plant removal or tree planting at natural areas in the Greenway.



*Volunteers from Brighton Elementary School in Seattle enjoy the challenge of removing invasive blackberry roots at Lake Sammamish State Park. These students first participated in environmental education lessons and a field study trip, then added this ecological restoration day as part of a new Greenway program for schools.*

### "Why are slugs slimy?"

Alisha\*, a student participating in the Mountains to Sound Greenway Environmental Education Program, distinguished herself within the first five minutes of our field study trip. In the forest at Tiger Mountain, she started the day with her coat pulled up to her nose, hiding behind all the students in her group. Her low slung, baggy jeans dragged on the forest floor and almost hid a halting walk. Poor eye contact, lack of content knowledge, and a delayed speech pattern added to this twelve-year-old girl's challenges.

The forest walk at Tiger Mountain offered Alisha opportunities to emerge from her circumscribed world. As she identified trees, examined slugs, and listened to crows scolding her group she began to emerge from her ski-jacket cocoon. As her coat dropped from her face, her eyes brightened, and she started observing the forest. "What do those crows want?" "Why are slugs slimy?" "Can trees really give you power?"

Captivated by my story that Native Americans believed the Western red cedar gives power to those who lean against its shaggy trunk, Alisha positioned herself against a magnificent cedar, closing her eyes to help focus on "feeling the power." This was not an easy task for a child who moved slowly. But we waited and after she painfully straightened her body and shrugged her pack on she said with a puzzled look, "I feel more relaxed."

Her teacher and I exchanged silent high-fives with our eyes and walked down the trail.

-Sally Kentch, Environmental Educator

*\*not her real name*

## Thank you, volunteer teams!



*Microsoft at Twin Falls*



*HEARTLAND at Meadowbrook Farm*



*Starbucks at Lake Sammamish State Park*



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# A LOOK BACK

## at the Mountains to Sound Greenway



### Ellensburg Depot circa 1910

The Milwaukee Road railway connected Seattle, over Snoqualmie Pass, to a transcontinental rail line that was once promoted as the world's longest electrified railroad. Trains stopped running in 1980. The right-of-way between Cedar Falls, just outside North Bend, and the Columbia River is now the John Wayne Pioneer Trail, the backbone of the Mountains to Sound Greenway regional trail system.

Photo courtesy of the Gene H. Lawson collection.

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Oliver Stiefel, Special Projects Associate

#### Environmental Education Program

Sally Kentch, Nancy Lomneth and Tony Allison  
Mark Sollitto, Land Acquisitions Manager

Photos by Greenway staff unless otherwise noted.

### MISSION

The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust leads and inspires action to conserve and enhance the landscape from Seattle across the Cascade Mountains to Central Washington, ensuring a long-term balance between people and nature.

[mtsgreenway.org](http://mtsgreenway.org)