



Trail through mixed conifer / maple-alder forest

Southwest County Park

In this joint Snohomish County and City of Edmonds trails and open space planning effort, the challenge was to find the balance between public access and habitat preservation. The site's 120 acres of mixed forest is home to several sensitive habitat areas: riparian wetlands, perched wetlands, steep slopes, erodible cliffs, and untrammeled forest.

Bob Birkeland, RDG Senior Landscape Architect, was the lead designer and writer for the master plan and report. The public process involved an assessment of environmentally sensitive wild lands, and a trails and circulation study. Recommendations of the master plan focused on protecting the most sensitive parcels while increasing appropriate public access. The plan called for the obliteration of poorly sited existing trails, siting new trails to provide access to significant site features, and adding loop trails. Loop trails will provide highly desired continuous walking routes and enhance wayfinding in the dense forest landscape.

Vehicular circulation was a key factor in the plan. Divided by a winding arterial that posed an obstacle to pedestrians, vehicular access through the site was a mixed blessing. To increase the park's sense of place and destination, limited on-site parking and improved pedestrian crosswalks and warning systems were investigated in the final plan.



Eroded sandstone gorge

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Master Planning / Trails Surveying /
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Presentations

Planning / \$45,000