

Resolution 2024-4

Illahee Creek Watershed Park Concept Support and Implementation Plans

Whereas the Port of Illahee has in the past been gravely concerned about the effects of Illahee Creek on the Port of Illahee dock and surrounding tidelands with the expanding Illahee Creek delta that threatened to extend to the dock and require dredging at the Port of Illahee, and

Whereas the Port of Illahee hired Aspect Consulting to conduct an early study of Illahee Creek to determine the water sources feeding the stream, beyond those of transporting of stormwater from the outlying areas in the watershed, and

Whereas the Port of Illahee then applied for and received a \$268,000 Centennial Cleanwater Grant from the Department of Ecology in 2007 for a study of the Illahee Creek Watershed to be conducted to determine what needed to be done to prevent the pollution of Illahee Creek as a salmonid stream and the Puget Sound waterways, and at the same time address the excessive sedimentation and deterioration of conditions at the dock, and

Whereas the intensive study found there were many issues that needed to be addressed, with the most serious to the Port being trying to gain control of the stormwater surges plaguing Illahee Creek that were flowing through the deeply incised canyons on the north and south forks and the north tributary of Illahee Creek that were picking up sediment and transporting it along the banks of Illahee Creek, in the culvert, and ultimately out to the extended delta and into Puget Sound, and

Whereas secondly the study found many other issues previously unknown to the Port or the community, but ultimately affecting the Port and the community including the critical aquifer issues, which resulted in the eventual purchase of the Timbers Edge Development by the community and Kitsap County, in several phases, and

Whereas Port began a long-term relationship with County officials (Public Works and the Department of Community Development (DCD), and later with Kitsap County Parks), with the Illahee Forest Preserve (IFP), with the Illahee Community Club, and with the Illahee Community in general during the two-year development of the Illahee Community Plan and the establishment of the Illahee Green Zoning, that was issued in 2008, and

Whereas this long-term relationship continues to this day with the implementation by all parties of the watershed study findings which recommended the purchase of watershed properties to remain in their natural state, rather than be developed, including the purchase of problematic parcels subject to landslides, and

Whereas Kitsap County Parks was the recipient of an RCO grant 20-1742 to purchase roughly half of the Elliott estate (16.8-acres) for wildlife habitat, which is scheduled to close by 30 June 2024, with the other half of the 30-acre property under an agreement to be purchased over the following two years (2025 and 2026), and

Whereas Kitsap County Parks was a recipient of RCO grant 22-1613 to purchase additional properties including two needed to control landslides impacting the North Tributary of Illahee Creek, and

Whereas recently, on 4/2/24, an updated agreement with the Elliott estate was reached for the establishment of a watershed park on the estate's 30-acres to include a scaled down model of the Illahee Creek watershed, and the possibility of an aquifer model, and

Whereas the Port of Illahee would like to see the watershed model extend beyond the mouth of Illahee Creek to the expanded delta that now extends out an eighth-of-a-mile beyond the mouth and is near the Port dock and floats, and

Whereas the Port of Illahee would like to be involved with the design and implementation of the watershed park as it was the Port that obtained the Centennial Clean Water grant that began the process, and


Whereas time is of the essence to begin the planning as the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) 2024 grant cycle has already begun with grant applications due on 1 May 2024.

Therefore, the Port of Illahee hereby: (1) officially recognizes and supports the Watershed Park concept noted on the 4/2/24 agreement to gain control of the nearly one-quarter mile of the South Fork of Illahee Creek, and (2) further requests the watershed model include the Illahee Creek delta that extends out from the mouth of the creek, and (3) authorizes the Commission Chair to work with Kitsap County Parks and others, to complete estate and watershed park grant/s to acquire the Elliott estate properties in support of the watershed park, and the two North Tributary landslide properties.

Adopted by the Commission of the Port of Illahee on 10 APRIL 2024 by the signatures of the Commissioners voting in favor thereof.



Commissioner Hall



Commissioner Aho



Commissioner Rupert

A 'Watershed Park' Option (Preliminary)

For the Illahee Preserve Heritage Park

Current plans for the Phase 1 Elliott estate are for a combination 'Watershed Park' and 'Wildlife Habitat Area' (roughly 50% each) with this writeup covering only the Watershed Park option. (See Attachment 1 showing the planned 3 acquisition phases).

Stormwater parks are becoming increasingly popular within the environmental community and the Elliott estate lends itself to be even more comprehensive and popular as a 'Watershed Park'.

What makes this 'Watershed Park' so compelling is the Elliott estate contains a quarter mile of the South Fork of Illahee Creek and the planned purchase means that nearly the entire core (riparian areas) of Illahee Creek watershed will soon be acquired and saved from development. The Public Works Stormwater Division has previously completed numerous restoration projects in this watershed, and the Phase 2 grant (see Attachment 1) is purchasing additional properties to help with a problem slide area along Illahee Creek's North tributary. A 'Watershed Park' is another way of telling the story presented in the Illahee film 'Saving Puget Sound One Watershed at a Time', only this time it would be amplified through the park design and exhibits at a watershed park facility.

So how can this happen? A document already exists explaining what needs to be done from a stormwater perspective and a watershed would be similar, which is at the following link:
<https://www.psrc.org/media/7331>

Negotiations are providing a pathway to purchase the 30-acre (Elliott estate) in three parcels: a 16.8-acre parcel by June 30, 2024, a 3.8-acre parcel in 2025, and a 9.6-acre parcel in 2026.

In addition to fundraising, another option for help with the 'Watershed Park' conceptual planning and construction is to apply for a Kitsap Public Facilities District (PFD) grant. The overall project would need to expand beyond the watershed park and the Elliott estate, to include the entire Illahee Preserve Heritage Park, which encompasses the greater part of the Illahee Creek watershed. In preliminary discussions with the PFD, it would require a partnership with the city of Bremerton, which borders the Preserve, with its residents already primary users of the Preserve.

PFD projects are major ones, such as the Conference Center in Bremerton, the future Port Orchard and Poulsbo Community Event Centers, and other venues like Port Gamble Heritage Park Trails project. Economic development is a key criteria for funding approval, so the question is whether the Illahee Preserve is already, or has the potential to become a significant regional attraction, as it includes walking trails, a wildlife preserve, Rolling Hills Golf Course, and eventually the envisioned Watershed

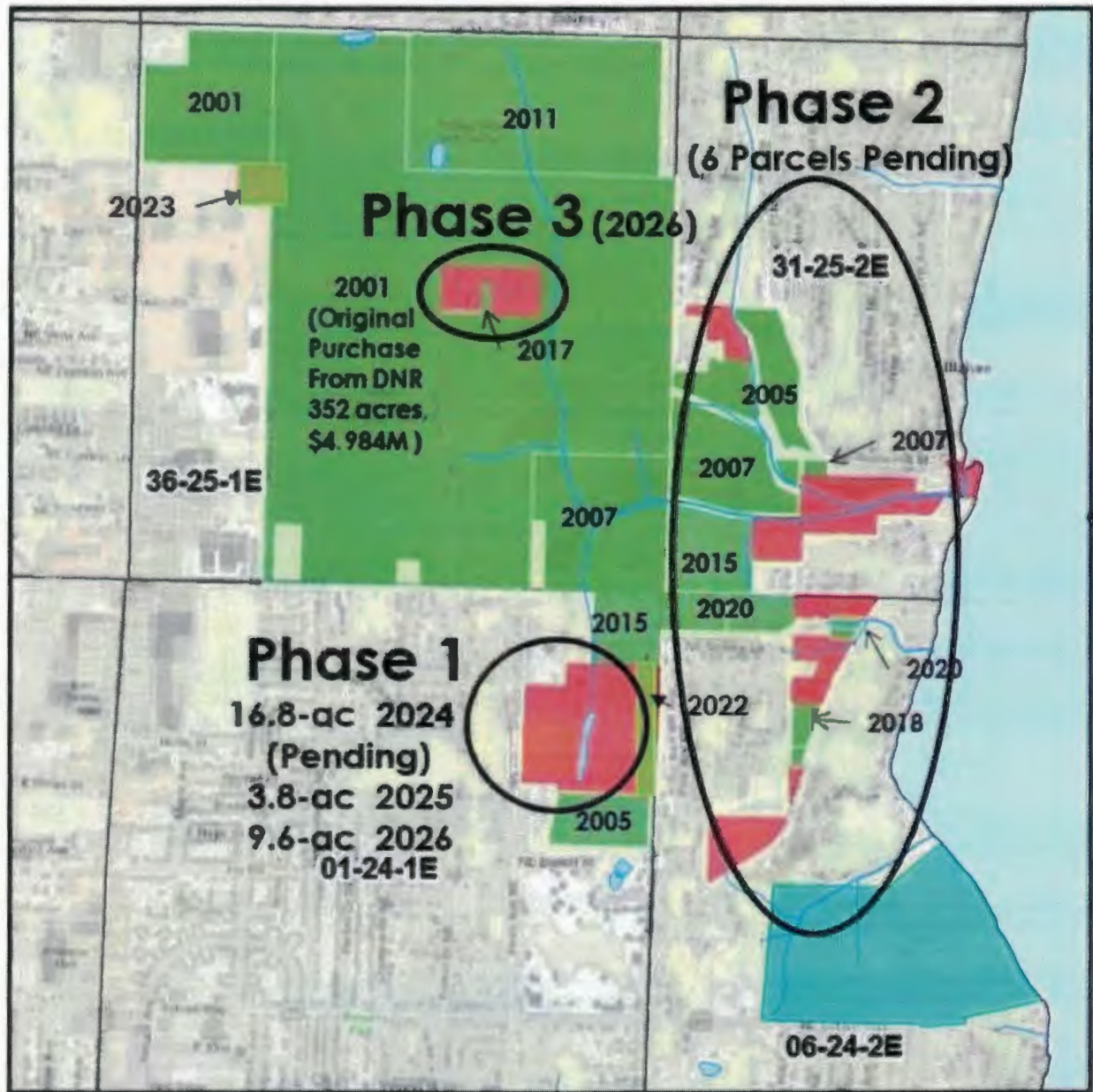
Park, and the potential for other amenities in the future such as an educational salmon hatchery near the mouth of Illahee Creek, suggested years ago when chum salmon were being incubated west of the Illahee Road culvert; all compelling features that would draw outside area visitors to the Preserve, in addition to the popularity that already exists with neighboring communities.

By design the 'Watershed Park' would be the planned environmental learning center that board members of Illahee Forest Preserve (IFP) nonprofit have desired for years. As the Preserve expanded its boundaries from 352 acres to over 600 acres, it has been the studies of the aquifers, wetlands, streams, stormwater, and watershed that have taken the most time and effort to resolve. And now, two more water concepts are being added: an impounded reservoir (Hattie's Pond) and an earthen dam built in the early 1900's, in need of a conduit spillway. These are educational opportunities to be included in 'hands on' exhibits where park visitors of all ages, and especially young people, can learn how important and vital water issues are to our existence.

A layout of the 'Watershed Park' on the 30-acre estate is shown in Attachment 2 map, with the central feature exhibit being a scaled down model of the watershed showing the deeply incised canyons surrounding the creek (see Attachment 3), which can be augmented later by other exhibits related to the many facets of water, such as water purveyors (like North Perry Water and others), water collection and storage features (including dams), stormwater solutions (stormwater parks), wastewater issues (including septic systems and sewers), and water quality monitoring (public health). A model of the underlying aquifers is also being investigated based on the "Illlahee Watershed Aquifer Protection Plan" developed as part of a \$268,000 Department of Ecology 'Centennial Clean Water Grant' the Port of Illahee completed in 2011.

PFD projects are designed to be for larger entities and scopes, i.e., in the \$10M plus range. The Illahee Preserve meets that criterion as it has expanded to now over 600-acres with purchases approaching the \$13M range. The good news is the pending 16.8-acres of Elliott estate project and recently funded Phase 2 Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant with six parcels pending, will result in an over 90% completion of targeted Illahee Preserve property acquisitions. This leaves one more major purchase to complete: the Phase 3 'Heart of the Park' properties (along with several minor ones), and 4 related properties at the mouth of Illahee Creek for possible Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grants which could support the previously noted educational salmon hatchery exhibit.

Water professionals, in addition to hydrology and engineering expertise, will be required to help with the 'Watershed Park' project, along with support from elected officials, volunteers, and non-profit groups. The 30-acre Elliott estate is the last major section of the watershed and with a willing seller, plans are to find the right path and the funding to make this project happen.



Final Planned Acquisition Phases

Attachment 1



Watershed Park Project

Attachment 2



Attachment 3