

Preferred Recreation Recommendations Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan March 2018

Below are the recommended recreation ideas and strategies that package together the various recreation concepts compiled through Recreation Committee meetings and from previous planning documents including the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation and Access Plan. This alternative is based on feedback from the Stemilt Partnership Recreation Committee and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in response to the alternatives initially draft concepts developed by the Recreation Planning Committee to show the variety of ideas and opportunities that could be selected-considered in the Recreation Plan. ~~The initial alternatives ranged from a low to high level of development and change.~~ The preferred alternative seeks to balance enhancing recreation opportunities with reducing impacts to the natural and ecological processes for water and wildlife within the basin. This alternative is open for discussion and input from the Recreation Committee, land managers or owners, the Stemilt Partnership, and the community. Any final recommendations need to be approved by the Stemilt Partnership and land manager or owner of the property.

Recommendations Common to All Zones

Roads:

- Green dot roads:
 - Public motorized access is provided on green-dot roads. The green dot road system within the basin (Orr Creek, Lily Lake, Upper Basin Loop Road, Schaller Road, and Pole Flats Road) contains 16.6 miles of road that are open to all motorized (this total does not include Jumpoff Road or Naneum Ridge Road). Maintain public access by addressing maintenance needs on green dot road system.
 - There should be no net gain in green dot road mileage resulting from any proposed changes to the green dot road system.
 - Green dot road proposals will be brought before the state agencies at the green dot road annual meeting, and go through a public process prior to implementation.
 - Consider a seasonal closure of the green dot roads accessed from the Stemilt Loop Road to protect road surfaces during spring melt-off, prevent illegal mudding, and prevent wheeled vehicles from driving on groomed snowmobile trails. The seasonal closure would begin when snow starts to accumulate and end on fishing opener in April or earlier in dry years.
- Non-green dot roads:
 - Non-green dot roads should be permanently are currently closed to public vehicle access. Implement effective vehicle closures on these roads such as gates, tank traps, or natural obstacles. The current high density of non-legal roads in the basin affects wildlife and resources, and is not compliant with the green dot system.
 - The Stemilt Partnership Roads Committee provides a stakeholder panel to review proposals for closing and placing barriers on non-green dot roads to ensure all access needs, such as private property, irrigation district infrastructure, forestry, etc. can still

be met. The Roads Committee also reviews green dot road proposals such as seasonal closures and re-routes. All closures will be vetted by the Roads Committee prior to installation.

- A comprehensive road inventory and analysis should be completed to evaluate Stemilt Basin roads for the following criteria: resource protection, protection of water user easements, public safety, and importance for recreation and management access.
- Create signs at strategic access points, trailheads, campgrounds, gates, and barriers that describe the green dot road system and allowed uses.

Camping, Day-Use, Trails:

- All improved campsites would include a buffer zone to protect shorelines and meadows.
- Dispersed camping opportunities that are in compliance with the green dot road regulations will remain available along the Upper Basin Loop Road.
- Engage in collaborative effort between land management agencies to seek additional funding for long-term maintenance of any camping/trailhead facilities before they are installed.
- Consider seasonal closures of new and existing trails/routes to protect wildlife, particularly during elk calving season. Seasonal closure dates and locations will be based on input from WDFW wildlife biologists, and would follow the elk calving season of spring-early summer.;
- WDFW recommends completion of a habitat and road inventory and assessment to determine appropriate trail locations to minimize impacts to natural resources. WDFW recommends limiting new trail development to Zone 1.
- Consider new trail development within existing open road buffers, to minimize impact of new trail development on wildlife. This could allow for a north/south trail as noted in the Nanuem Plan, while minimizing fragmentation of habitat and impacts to wildlife.

Education and Enforcement:

- Promote a more active education and enforcement presence, especially along the Upper Basin Loop Road in Zone 1. Coordinate across agencies to provide consistent enforcement of green dot road regulations and to share the burden of law enforcement presence.
- Patrol high use areas to enforce green dot road regulations, stay limits, shooting restrictions, and illegal dumping, and promote resource protection and public safety.
- Focus a collaborative effort between WDFW and Chelan County Sherrifs Office to identify a strategy to meet enforcement needs in the basin.

Noxious Weeds:

- Implement weed control in high use recreation areas, roadsides, and trailheads, and other areas that will be prone to disturbance under the proposed uses in the recommendations. Prior to

and during spring and summer operations land management agencies should undertake a season long noxious weed control program.

Implementation and Maintenance:

- All recommendations will undergo appropriate environmental review and permitting prior to implementation.
- Long term funding and maintenance strategies will be in place prior to implementation.

Zone 1

Use in Zone 1 is concentrated along the green dot road system comprising the Upper Basin Loop Road and ~~Upper Wheeler~~ Orr Creek Road and is primarily motorized access-based.

Zone 1: Summer Preferred Alternative

Roads:

Phase I:

- Grade, gravel, and maintain the green dot roads to high use recreation sites such as Clear Lake in good condition so passenger vehicles can access these sites.
- Grade and gravel sections of the rest of the Upper Basin Loop Road and other green dot roads most needing improvements. The goal for these roads will be to at a minimum maintain access for vehicles with four wheel drive.
- ~~Open a green dot 'connector' road between Upper Wheeler Road and Orr Creek Road in Section 20, to complete a legal motorized access route from Forest Ridge to the green dot road system. This connector could be limited to ATVs to reduce road impacts would be open to public access, and may be subject to seasonal closures for wildlife and road surface protection. Reduction of green dot road mileage elsewhere in the basin would be required to mitigate the increased mileage and meet needed to stay within~~ Open a green dot 'connector' road between Upper Wheeler Road and Orr Creek Road in Section 20, to complete a legal motorized access route from Forest Ridge to the green dot road system. This connector would be open to public access, and may be subject to seasonal closures for wildlife and road surface protection. Reduction of green dot road mileage elsewhere in the basin would be required to mitigate the increased mileage and meet needed to stay within the 'no net gain' green dot road objective.

Phase II:

- ~~Grade, gravel, and maintain the Upper Basin Loop Road in good condition so passenger vehicles can access these sites.~~
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Camping, Day-Use, and Trails:

- For camping and day-use improvements, existing impacted areas will be used; the focus will be on accommodating existing use at peak to average times and reducing spread of impacts.

Lily Lake (Section 22):

- Upon transfer of Sections 22 and 16 from DNR to WDFW, critical wildlife habitat conservation will take management priority. While interest in improvements to recreational facilities at Lily

Lake has been expressed in prior planning efforts, no development is proposed for Lily Lake through this planning effort.

- While acceptable levels and types of use under USFWS habitat protection guidelines are unknown at the time of this document, *increased use and development is not proposed* for these lands.
- Agencies will continue to work collaboratively to find alternatives for any displaced recreational opportunity in other parts of the basin. Options for addressing current recreational impacts in a restorative manner will be assessed.
- ~~Assess for feasibility of options for~~ designating non-motorized trails near Lily Lake, ~~if this is deemed appropriate under USFWS guidelines. Directed, non-motorized access could reduce impacts in Section 22 while still allowing recreation opportunity~~ Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails. Improve ~~Formalize~~ the existing trail around Lily Lake for walking and hiking use.
- WDFW recommends exploring an alternative public access route to Lily Lake to allow for restoration of damage caused by off-road driving along the Lily Lake green dot road.

Clear Lake (Section 23):

- Formalize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. Delineate sites by placing natural edges around the sites. Ensure all campsites have an appropriate fire ring to contain existing campfires and a picnic table. 5-8 walk-in campsites are possible within the current footprint. Allow room to create additional sites in the future if needed.
- Formalize and improve a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, ~~and biking, and ATV~~ use on designated routes. The trailhead should include a vault toilet, trash container, and interpretive and regulatory signs sharing information on rules, expected behaviors, natural and cultural resource information. 15-20 parking spots.
- ~~Formalize and~~ Assess options for designating non-motorized trails near Clear Lake. ~~Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails~~ or occur within road buffers of existing open roads. Maintain and formalize ~~Improve~~ the existing trail around Clear Lake for non-motorized walking and hiking use.

Upper Wheeler Reservoir Access (Section 29):

Phase I:

- ~~Formalize and~~ Improve the parking area and trailhead near the existing gate for day-use including fly-fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include a sign identifying rules and regulations. 5-7 parking spots. Mountain biking on Wenatchee Heights Reclamation District property would not be allowed.
- Extend green dot road designation to include improved parking area. Reduce green dot road mileage elsewhere to accommodate this change.
- Provide additional parking at road junction Orr Creek/Upper Basin Loop Road. 5-7 parking spots.

- Continue to allow dispersed camping at the road junction of Orr Creek/Upper Basin Loop Road, within green dot regulations.
- ~~Designate non-motorized trails near Upper Wheeler Reservoir. These trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.~~

Phase II:

- ~~Develop Assess the need for a vault or pit toilet for day use at the improved parking for Upper Wheeler Reservoir access. and camping use at the Orr Creek/Upper Basin Loop Road junction. This will be phased in to align with the improvements to the road.~~

Steffen's Meadow (Section 28):

Phase I:

- Formalize camping at Steffen's Pond/Meadow to reduce spread of impacts and contain off-road motor vehicle use. Delineate some of the high-use sites by placing natural edges around the sites and restoring vegetation. The campsites will include fire rings to contain existing campfires. 2-3 campsites with vehicle access.
- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include educational and interpretive signage to identify rules and regulations and inform the public of the importance of natural resource conservation. 5-8 parking spots.
- Formalize and designate non-motorized trails near Steffen's Meadow. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails or formalizing user-created trails. Dispersed campsites will remain available in the meadow, with walk-in access.

Phase II:

- Develop a vault toilet for day and camping use. This would be phased in to align with the improvements to the green dot road system.

All Other Dispersed Sites along Orr Creek/Stemilt Road Loop:

Phase I:

- Maintain all existing dispersed sites that are off the primary Stemilt/Orr loop road that are in compliance with the green dot motorized use rule (within 100' of green dot road). Close or convert to walk-in only all other dispersed sites that are more than a 100' off the road. Restore impacted areas if any dispersed campsites are closed.
- Monitor use and impacts at these sites and evaluate use levels to see if additional facilities and vault toilets are needed.

Phase II:

- Provide facilities at the dispersed campsites including delineating sites, picnic tables, fire rings, and vault toilets as needed based on monitoring results.

Other Trails:

- Create a trailhead/ parking area at base of Upper Wheeler Road (Section 10); 5 parking spots. Trailhead should include a sign identifying rules and regulations.
- Continue to assess non green dot roads for conversion to non-motorized trails.
- Assess opportunities to create sustainable new trails along the existing green dot road corridors with a buffer of 50 -100 feet. Evaluate trail opportunities for potential impacts to water and wildlife.

Target Shooting

Phase I:

- Designate no target shooting zones around high areas for day-use and camping, following WDFW Public Conduct Rules. Post signs to help achieve compliance with this rule.

Phase II:

- Designate area(s) for target shooting if appropriate sites are found. Evaluate the potential to create a target shooting area near old quarry (Section 27). This site contains steep sides and steep back hill for bullet containment. Consider time and resources needed for cleanup of debris from homemade targets and shells, collaborate amongst agencies to address this need if establishing an intentional shooting area.

Zone 1- Winter

Sno-Park:

Phase I:

- Create a sno-park at the base of Upper Wheeler Road with a seasonal toilet and 5 parking spaces for non-motorized winter snow sports (snowshoe, backcountry ski, cross-country ski). Alternative non-motorized parking could be located at Orr Creek Road.
- Maintain the existing two sno-parks in Sections 22 (Lily Lake) and 23 (Clear Lake) for snowmobile use. If the sno-park and associated groomed snowmobile trail segment in Section 22 need to be closed based on USFWS habitat restrictions, then consider enlarging the sno-park in Section 23 to accommodate all winter motorized access to the groomed snowmobile trail system. If the existing sno-park in 23 is not adequate, assess feasibility of creating another sno-park in Section 23 on County land.
- As part of the seasonal green dot road closure proposal, close gates at snoparks when snow falls to prevent wheeled vehicles from driving on groomed snowmobile trails.

Phase II:

- ~~Evaluate the feasibility of creating a sno-park in Section 16. low the beginning/steep section of the Upper Wheeler Road to provide easier access for non-motorized snow sports.~~

Trails:

- Maintain existing snowmobile trail system. Discontinue use of groomed trail segment in Section 22 if USFWS restrictions ~~disallow are not compatible with~~ motorized use in this area.
- Designate a non-motorized winter use area per the Naneum plan concept (including the Lake Clara/WDFW Section 23 identified in the Naneum Plan), ~~bordered by the groomed snowmobile trail system to the east~~. The boundary of this area is agreed upon between Apple Country Snowmobile Club and representatives of both winter motorized and non-motorized users. The non-motorized winter use area will be accessible from Squilchuck State Park, Mission Ridge Ski Area, and Section 16.
- Designate a snowmobile route link on the green dot road ~~from Noyd Easement~~ through the winter non-motorized area to link to groomed snowmobile system in Section 28. Create an annual permit system for residents of Forest Ridge authorized to use the Noyd Easement that includes an educational component on the routes available for motorized use and stewardship of the area.

Zone 2

Use in Zone 2 is concentrated around Squilchuck State Park and Mission Ridge expansion area, and is primarily non-motorized.

Zone 2- Summer

Trails

- Mission Ridge plans to implement non-motorized multi-use trails linking the Mission Ridge expansion area with Squilchuck State Park and Scout-A-Vista. Trail connectors will be primarily located in the NW corner of Section 19, and include connections with Scout-A-Vista property and Squilchuck State Park.
- Consider a seasonal closure of trails in this area to protect wildlife, particularly during elk calving season. ~~Mission Ridge plans to create a wildlife preserve area in Section 19 to protect wildlife habitat connectivity outside of the expansion area.~~
- ~~—~~ Noyd Road Easement currently does and will continue to provide designated motorized vehicle access route for Forest Ridge residents to access the green dot road system. Consider an annual permit issued for residents that includes educational material and acknowledgment of the rules and regulations of the area. A seasonal closure may also be implemented as needed to protect road conditions, wildlife, and water.
- Consider strategic fuel breaks and wildfire/fuels reduction planning with trail development.

Trailheads and Signage

- Create a trailhead at the main Mission Ridge parking lot with signage, vault toilet, and garbage collection for hikers going into Stemilt and to Lake Clara. [This trailhead will be for non-motorized access into Stemilt and Lake Clara.](#)
- Develop educational signage [to inform visitors about the risk of fires, ways to prevent forest fires, and seasonal trail closures to protect wildlife and/or the trail during the muddy](#) ~~for fire precaution and seasonal closures~~ at Squilchuck State Park and nearby trails.
- Create signage for clarification of trail use types. Use signage to delineate uses for different trails (hiker, equestrian, mountain bike).

Camping

- Provide additional signage on boundaries of Squilchuck State Park to alleviate private property issues (people camping on private property).
- Expand camping opportunities in Squilchuck State Park (and possibly Mission Ridge property) according to recreation development planning by Washington State Parks and private landowners.

Zone 2 Winter

Trails

- Create a snowshoe/backcountry ski trail from Squilchuck State Park to Mission Ridge/Section 30 non-motorized winter use area (likely utilizing a summer trail platform).
- Create groomed cross country ski trails in Section 19 and NE ¼ Section of 30. Evaluate feasibility of connecting to cross country ski trails in Section 17.
- ~~—~~ Noyd Road Easement provides a designated snowmobile access route for Forest Ridge residents to access groomed snowmobile system. [The link route through the winter non-motorized area would be open to public use, but only those authorized to use the Noyd easement could legally access Forest Ridge by this route.](#) An annual permit will be issued for [Forest Ridge](#) residents and will include educational material and acknowledgment of the rules and regulations of the area [including use of designated routes.](#)

Zone 3

Zone 3 – Summer

Trails

- [Assess feasibility of creating a north-south trail per the Naneum Ridge Plan. This may mostly be in zones 2 and 3. Explore the potential for a high elevation route within the 50 to 100 foot buffer of the existing road corridors along Mission Ridge and Naneum Ridge roads. Consider seasonal trail closures during critical wildlife periods as part of the proposed trail.](#)

- Maintain dispersed hiking opportunities in Zone 3, both off trail and on non-green dot roads that are closed to vehicle traffic. WDFW does not support designated trail development (other than a north-south trail as per Naneum Plan), due to it's high value as core summer elk habitat.
- Create non-motorized trails and other small trails near the site currently used for dispersed camping just below section #33, by converting existing non-green dot road corridors to non-motorized trails.
- Explore potential for higher elevation non-motorized trails, potentially off of the Naneum Ridge Road access points.
- Develop designated non-motorized multi-use trails (out and back or loop trails) using existing primitive non-green dot roads in the eastern part of zone 3/Upper Stemilt Basin (Sections 27, 28, 33, 34).
- Maintain "wilderness feel" of area east between the backside of Mission Ridge ski area and north of Naneum Ridge (west of groomed snowmobile trails and green dot roads) by leaving the area primitive and used by non-motorized users (this concept applies for both summer and winter).

Roads:

- Consider seasonal closure of Pole Flats Road (closed for core summer elk habitat, open in fall for hunting) to off-set development of additional green dot roads elsewhere in the planning area.

Zone 3 – Winter

- Create a seasonal warming hut at Four Corners on the groomed snowmobile trail system with a seasonal toilet permanent CXT that would be removed during summer months. bathroom WDFW review confirms that a permanent hut and toilet is not consistent with the Naneum Plan for this area, and could cause increased vehicle traffic and human disturbance in critical summer elk range. for snowmobile use.
- Create a seasonal back-country hut or yurt on Naneum Ridge in Section 36 for non-motorized wintersnow sport use, with a seasonal vault toilet. Again, a permanent structure here is not compatible with summer elk use, but a seasonal winter hut or yurt is acceptable.
- Maintain a non-motorized play area in the high elevation terrain east of Mission Ridge Ski Area, as per the winter non-motorized area mentioned above. This area is accessible to non-motorized travelers due to it's proximity to the ski area and Squilchuck State Park, and separating ski and snowmobile use increases safety for both user groups.
- Maintain quality high-elevation play areas for snowmobile access in terrain closer to the groomed snowmobile routes, traditionally used for off-trail snowmobiling (see winter recreation map options).
- Maintain "wilderness feel" of area between the backside of Mission Ridge and Naneum Ridge (west of groomed snowmobile trails) by leaving the area primitive and used by non-motorized users. This area is steep and provides opportunities for backcountry skiers seeking untracked snow. It is easy accessible from Mission Ridge parking area. Allowing both motorized and non-

motorized winter users in this area creates a safety risk for non-motorized users given the steepness of the terrain and speed the users are traveling.