

Preliminary Recreation Alternatives Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan September, 2017

Below are the preliminary recreation alternatives that package together the various recreation concepts compiled through recreation committee meetings and from previous planning documents. These alternatives show the variety of opportunities that could be selected in the Recreation Plan and range from a high to low level of development and change. These alternatives are preliminary for discussion and input with the Recreation Committee and Stemilt Partnership. Any final recommendations would need to be approved by the Stemilt Partnership and land manager or owner of the property. The recreation concepts would utilize the existing impacted footprint.

Alternatives

Alternative A – Seeks to provide improved rustic recreational opportunities for visitors while reducing impacts to the natural and ecological processes for water and wildlife within the basin. Emphasis on reducing motorized use and recreational impacts. Represents minimal development of recreation resources.

Alternative B – Seeks to achieve balance between enhancing recreational opportunities for visitors and reducing impacts to the natural and ecological processes for water and wildlife within the basin. Represents moderate development of recreation resources.

Alternative C – Emphasizes the enhancement of recreational opportunities and facilities within the basin. Developed areas and facilities would be maintained where appropriate to protect natural processes, water, and wildlife. Represents highest level of development of recreation infrastructure.

Recommendations Common to All Zones

Roads:

- Green dot roads:
 - Public access is provided on green-dot roads. The Upper Basin Loop Road serves as the primary access to zone 1. Maintain public access.
 - Consider converting Lily Lake connector to a green dot road. This road is part of the primary loop currently used by recreation users, but is not officially a green dot road.
 - Consider converting Upper Wheeler/Orr Creek connector to a designated motorized use access road or green dot road.
- Create signs at strategic access points, trailheads, campgrounds, gates, and barriers that describe the green dot road system and allowed uses.
- Non-green dot roads:
 - The roads committee is working on recommendations for closing and placing barriers along other non-green dot roads.

Camping, Day-Use, Trails:

- All campsites would include a buffer zone to protect shorelines and meadows.

Education and Enforcement:

- Promote a more active education and enforcement presence, especially along the Upper Basin Loop Road in Zone 1.

Zone 1

Use in Zone 1 is concentrated along the green dot road system comprising the Upper Basin Loop Road and Upper Wheeler Road and is primarily motorized.

Zone 1: Summer Alternatives

Alternative A

Roads:

- Green dot roads:
 - Maintain the green dot road system in the current conditions with improvements as needed to maintain access.

Camping, Day-Use, and Trails:

- For camping and day-use, the existing footprint would be reduced; the focus would be on accommodating existing use at average times.
- Camping fees would not be required; minimal maintenance would occur.

Lily Lake (Section 22):

- Formalize camping at Lily Lake. Delineate some of the high-use sites by placing natural edges around the sites. Some of the highest used campsites will include fire rings to contain existing campfires. 5-8 campsites.
- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and ATV use on designated routes. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 10-15 parking spots.
- Designate non-motorized use trails; some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.

Clear Lake (Section 23):

- Formalize camping at Clear Lake. Delineate some of the high-use sites by placing natural edges around the sites. Some of the highest used campsites will include fire rings to contain existing campfires. 3-5 campsites.
- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and ATV use on designated routes. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 10-12 parking spots.
- Designate non-motorized use trails; some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.

Steffen's Meadow (Section 28):

- Formalize camping at Steffen's. Delineate some of the high-use sites by placing natural edges around the sites. The campsites will include fire rings to contain existing campfires. 2 campsites.

- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 3-5 parking spots.
- Designate non-motorized use trails; some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.

Upper Wheeler Reservoir Access (Section 29):

- Formalize a parking area and trailhead near the existing gate for day-use including fly-fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 5-7 parking spots.
- Restore area around road junction to reduce impacted footprint and discourage large, potentially hazardous bonfires.
- Designate non-motorized use trails; some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.

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

- 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 (100 ‘ off the road).
- At all the campsites along the road monitor use to assess whether sites need to be delineated to avoid spreading impacts.
- Monitor use and impacts at these sites and evaluate use levels to see if additional vault toilets are needed.

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.

Target Shooting:

- Target shooting not allowed near high-use sites.

Alternative B

Roads:

- Green dot roads:
 - Grade and gravel sections of the green dot road system most needing improvements.

Camping, Day-Use, and Trails:

Implement a fee-based system for camping (\$10-15/night) for high use areas of Lily Lake and Clear Lake. Self-pay stations would be set up and periodically enforced.

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

Lily Lake (Section 22):

- Formalize camping at Lily Lake. Modify the green dot rule to allow parking greater than 100' but no more than 200' off the road at Lily Lake. 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. Maximize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. 8-12 sites.
- Formalize and improve a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, equestrian, and ATV use on designated routes. Include parking facilities for equestrian use. Maximize the number of parking spots within the currently impacted areas. 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.
- Assess for potential to designate non-motorized trails near Lily Lake. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.
- For day-use and camping, the currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for both camping and day-use.

Clear Lake (Section 23):

- Formalize the camping at Clear Lake. 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. Maximize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. 5-8 campsites.
- Formalize and improve a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, 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. 12-20 parking spots.
- Formalize and designate non-motorized trails near Clear Lake. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.
- For day-use and camping, the currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for both camping and day-use.

Upper Wheeler Reservoir Access (Section 29):

- Formalize a parking area and trailhead near the existing gate for day-use including fly-fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing. Both sides of the Orr Creek/Upper Basin Loop Road road would be used for day-use. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 5-7 parking spots.
- Provide additional parking at road junction. 5-7 parking spots.
- Formalize and designate non-motorized trails near Upper Wheeler Reservoir. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.

Steffen's Meadow (Section 28):

- Formalize camping at Steffen's. Delineate some of the high-use sites by placing natural edges around the sites. The campsites will include fire rings to contain existing campfires. 3 campsites.
- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include a seasonal toilet and a sign identifying rules and regulations. 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.

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

- 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 (100' off the road). With the exception of Lily Lake, close or convert to walk-in only all other dispersed sites that are more than a 100' off the road.
- Monitor use and impacts at these sites and evaluate use levels to see if additional vault toilets are needed.

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.

Target Shooting

- Consider designated areas for target shooting.

Alternative C

Roads:

- Green dot roads:
 - Grade, gravel, and maintain the Upper Basin Loop Road and keep other green dot roads in good condition.

Camping, Day-use and Trails:

Implement a fee-based system for all campsites (\$10-15/day) along the Orr/Stemilt road. Self-pay stations would be set up and periodically enforced.

- For camping and day-use, the existing impacted areas will be used; the focus will be on accommodating existing use at peak times.

Lily Lake (Section 22, WDFW):

- Formalize camping at Lily Lake. Modify the green dot rule to allow parking greater than 100' but no more than 200' off the road at Lily Lake. 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. Maximize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. 10-15 sites with two parking spots per site.
- Formalize and improve a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, equestrian, and ATV use on designated routes. Include parking facilities for equestrian use. Maximize the number of parking spots within the currently impacted areas. 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.
- Assess for potential to designate non-motorized trails near Lily Lake. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.
- For day-use and camping, the currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for both camping and day-use.

Clear Lake (Section 23, County):

- Formalize the camping at Clear Lake. 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. Maximize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. 8 -10 walk-in campsites.
- Formalize and improve a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hunting, hiking, 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 designate non-motorized trails near Clear Lake. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.
- For day-use and camping, the currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for both camping and day-use.

Steffen's Meadow (Section 28):

- Formalize camping at Steffen's Meadow. Delineate sites placing natural edges around the sites. Ensure all campsites have an appropriate fire ring and picnic table. Ensure all campsites have an appropriate fire ring to contain existing campfires and a picnic table. Maximize camping sites within the currently used area for recreation use. 3 campsites.
- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including fishing, hiking, hunting, biking, and wildlife viewing. 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. 5 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.

- For day-use and camping, the currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for both camping and day-use.

Upper Wheeler Reservoir/ Orr Creek and Stemilt Road Access (Section 29):

- Formalize a vehicle turn-around, parking, and trailhead for day-use including fly-fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing. The trailhead should include parking areas near the existing gate (5 parking spots) and at the road intersection of Orr Creek and Stemilt Roads (5-10 parking spots). Both sides of the Orr Creek/Upper Basin Loop Road road would be used for day-use and dispersed camping. The trailhead would include a vault toilet, trash container, and interpretive and regulatory signs sharing information on rules, expected behaviors, natural and cultural resource information.
- Formalize and designate non-motorized trails near Upper Wheeler Reservoir. Some of these trails could be conversion of non-green dot roads to trails.
- The currently impacted use area will be utilized to maximize opportunities for day-use and camping.

Upper Wheeler Road (Section 10):

- Formalize a parking area and trailhead for day-use including hiking, hunting, and biking. 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. 5-10 spots.

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

- 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 (100' off the road). With the exception of Lily Lake, close all other dispersed sites that are more than a 100' off the road. Dispersed sites near Steffen's Meadow that are more than 100' from green dot road would be walk-in only.
- At all the campsites along the road, delineate sites, place picnic tables and a fire ring.
- Monitor use and impacts at these sites and evaluate use levels to see if additional vault toilets are needed.

Other Trails:

- Continue to assess non-green dot roads for potential conversion to non-motorized trails.
- Assess feasibility of creating a north-south non-motorized trail per the Naneum Ridge Plan. This may mostly be in zones 2 and 3.
- Designate a motorized route for ATVs between Orr Creek Road and Upper Wheeler Road.

Target Shooting:

- Designate areas for target shooting.
- 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.

Zone 1- Winter Alternatives

Common to All

Sno-Park

- Evaluate the feasibility of creating a sno-park in Section 16. Plow the beginning/steep section of the Upper Wheeler Road to provide easier access for non-motorized snow sports (snowshoe, backcountry ski, cross-country ski). If not feasible, create winter non-motorized parking area at base of Upper Wheeler Road.

Trails:

- Maintain existing snowmobile trail system (Sections 22, 23, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34).
- Designate a non-motorized winter use area per the Naneum plan, bordered by the groomed snowmobile trail system to the east.
- Designate a snowmobile route link from Noyd Easement through winter non-motorized area to link to groomed snowmobile system.
- Create non-motorized Nordic ski trail connections outside of the orchard in Section 17. This would need a reasonable graded route and connections to Section 19. The trail would be groomed, and connect to Squilchuck State Park and Mission Ridge.

Alternative A

Sno-Park

- Maintain two snowmobile parking lots in this zone at their existing locations in Sections 22 and 23.

Alternative B

Sno-Park

- Maintain two snowmobile parking lots in this zone one in 23 and move the one from 22 to alternative location in 23.

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

Common to All

Trails

- Create non-motorized multi-use trails linking Mission Ridge expansion area with Squilchuck State Park (Sections 17, 19, 20).
- Assess feasibility of creating the north-south trail referenced in the Naneum Plan.
- Consider strategic fuel breaks and wildfire/fuels reduction planning with trail development.

- Noyd Road Easement currently does and will continue to provide designated motorized vehicle access route for Forest Ridge residents to access green dot road system.

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.
- Develop educational signage 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 and campsites at Squilchuck State Park to alleviate private property issues (people camping on private property).

Wildlife Reserve Area

- Set aside ¼ section of 19 for a 'wildlife reserve' area.

Zone 2 Winter

Common to All

Trails

- Create a snowshoe/backcountry ski trail from Squilchuck State Park to Mission Ridge/Section 30 non-motorized winter use area.
- Create groomed cross country ski trails in Section 19, with connection to Section 17.
- Noyd Road Easement provides designated snowmobile access route for Forest Ridge residents to access groomed snowmobile system.

Zone 3

Zone 3 – Summer

Common to All

Trails

- Assess feasibility of creating a north-south trail per the Naneum Ridge Plan. This may mostly be in zones 2 and 3.
- Open road system to Naneum Ridge road to ATVs and motorcycles. Enable a motorized loop on green dot road system (or on designated motorized route).
- Create non-motorized loop trails and other small trails near the site currently used for camping just below section #33. Look to first re-purpose the existing road corridors.
- 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 roads in the eastern part of zone 3/Upper Stemilt Basin (Sections 27, 28, 33, 34).
- Maintain "wilderness feel" of area between the backside of Mission Ridge and Nanuem Ridge (west of groomed snowmobile trails) by leaving the area primitive and used by non-motorized users (this concept applies for both summer and winter).

Zone 3 – Winter

Common to All

- Create a warming hut along the Naneum Ridge on groomed snowmobile trail system with a permanent CXT bathroom. This could be part of a series of warming huts along the ridge.
- Maintain "wilderness feel" of area between the backside of Mission Ridge and Nanuem Ridge (west of groomed snowmobile trails) by leaving the area primitive and used by non-motorized users (this concept applies for both summer and winter).
- Closure to motorized vehicles in Section 30 to maintain quality backcountry skiing opportunity.