I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The River Corridor Public Use Concept, Phase II of the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Study, develops the use and management framework established in Phase I. It recommends the location, scale and level of facility development for day and overnight recreation use within one mile of the river corridor, from the mouth of the Valley to Dingford Creek. It proposes an interagency organizational structure—the Middle Fork River Council and a river coordinator—to coordinate project development, management activities and investment in the Valley. It also identifies tasks and responsible parties for implementation of Concept elements over a 5+ year period. Finally, the Concept provides general recommendations for facilities financing and operations, and preliminary budget opinions for facilities development.

PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II, funded by Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) resources, included the same participants as in Phase I—the Middle Fork Task Force and the project planning team. In Phase II, a Steering Committee composed of Middle Fork Task Force members—landowners, resource managers, representatives of user groups, and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway—worked closely with the planning team in a series of work and field sessions to develop the River Corridor Public Use Concept. Two workshops were held with the full Task Force in early 1997 to review development and management alternatives and to approve the final corridor concept.

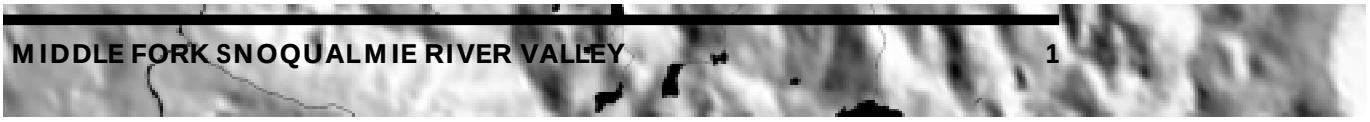
CONCEPT OVERVIEW

The River Corridor Public Use Concept consists of a series of day use sites and one overnight site, the Taylor River complex. The sites are carefully concentrated along the river and the Middle Fork River Road within the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley. All are located on previously disturbed sites or within environmentally appropriate areas based on resource suitabilities, site capacities, existing visitor use patterns and visitor use forecasts.

The River Corridor Public Use Concept implies that as facilities are added to the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley, fewer recreationists will use the Upper Valley for wilderness experiences and/or extended overnight stays. Thus, scarce development and management resources are focused below the Taylor River.

VALLEY ENTRY PORTAL

A Valley Entry Portal is located at the mouth of the Valley. It serves as a formal entry point, provides visitor information, and establishes a sense of safety for users entering the Valley.



GATEWAY STAGING AREA

A Gateway Staging Area is established in the City of North Bend. It provides RV camping and other recreation-oriented commercial services, visitor information about regional opportunities, and connects visitors with regional and local transit systems.

DAY USE SITES

Nine sites in the river corridor are developed for day use. Their locations provide experiences of the diverse places within the river corridor and a range of recreational opportunities, from river access to interpretation. The sites include sanitary and trash facilities, parking, and interpretative trails and signing.

OVERNIGHT SITES

Long-term car and walk-in camping is concentrated at Taylor River in the clear-cut upland areas west of the Middle Fork River Road. Individual campsites and low impact, shared facilities are provided. The complex is the last developed area in the corridor and serves as a primary staging area for entry into the backcountry and wilderness. The complex is also a major interpretive center for the Valley, providing extensive information and organized programs to individuals and groups.

In the short-term, dispersed camping continues in the river corridor at a limited number of suitable sites selected from criteria carefully developed by landowning and managing agencies. The sites are temporarily improved with minimal facilities (trash, toilets) and closed incrementally as more permanent facilities are developed at Taylor River.

All permanent day and overnight facilities will be designed in the rustic style popularized by early national park architecture and CCC site development.

In addition to site development, the River Corridor Public Use Concept includes the use of selected existing spur roads, existing trails and new trails to connect recreationists to upland areas and trail systems outside the river corridor.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

VEHICLE ACCESS AND ROAD MANAGEMENT

Private vehicle access into the Valley is limited to the Middle Fork River Road. The road itself remains primitive, with a rough surface, narrow lanes, limited sight lines and minimal or no clear zones. Gates are installed in phases at the Taylor River bridge and at Dingford Creek to limit vehicle access into the Upper Valley and to concentrate road maintenance and law enforcement resources in the Middle and Lower sections of the Valley. When not in use for log transport, the CCC Road provides a non-motorized route into the Valley for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. Spur roads are permanently closed to control dumping, shooting activity and uncontrolled access to and into the river.

INCREASED LAW ENFORCEMENT

Visitor safety is a critical goal of the Middle Fork River Study. Phase II includes a coordinated law enforcement presence in the Valley from King County, the City of North Bend, WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and WA Department of Fish & Wildlife.

NEW SIGNING

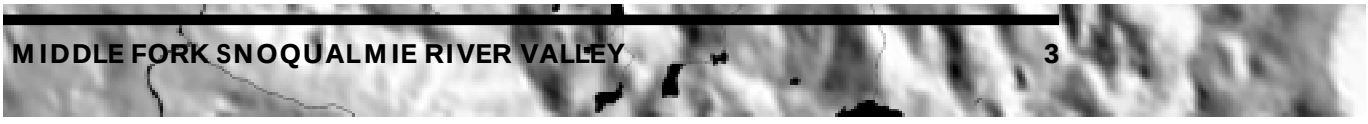
In the spring of 1997, the DNR, King County and the Weyerhaeuser Company posted their lands for no shooting, camping or dumping. USFS policy about shooting is under review. The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends similar signing of all public and forest lands in the watershed.

USE OF FIREARMS

Phase II recommends that the Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club, with assistance from the newly-formed Middle Fork River Council, undertake a formal site selection study to identify viable locations for a new shooting range on nearby lands. It also recommends that they develop and administer an adult firearm safety program, beginning in 1998.

ACTION PLAN

The River Corridor Public Use Concept will be implemented by the Middle Fork River Council, an interagency coordinating committee, and a river coordinator through a systematic set of actions staged over several years. The River Council will coordinate agency management activities, build support for the Concept, raise and leverage funds for its development, and provide a forum for public participation in issues related to the Valley. The river coordinator will ensure implementation of projects, coordinate and help maintain the working relationships on the Council, organize volunteers and build a Valley constituency, and participate on other agency park, recreation and resource plans developed for eastern King County.



II. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This report, the Middle Fork River Corridor Public Use Concept, represents the results of Phase II of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley Study. The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends the location, approximate scale and level of facility development for day and overnight recreation use within the river corridor. It also proposes an organizational structure—the Middle Fork River Valley Council and a river coordinator—to coordinate project development, management activities and investment in the Valley.

The River Corridor Public Use Concept establishes a clear, flexible framework for facilities development and management of the river corridor. The framework:

- resolves the existing environmental, recreation and behavior issues identified in Phase I;
- describes a facilities program of appropriately scaled and appropriately located recreation sites that build upon the concepts developed in Phase I;
- facilitates the incremental development of sites using low tech, cost-effective concepts that respond to existing and future environmental and recreation needs;
- bases facility development on landscape suitability and maximizes conservation of sensitive valley resources;
- identifies potential reserve areas for future recreation development and/or conservation; and
- proposes a realistic organizational structure for implementation of the Concept, and operations and law enforcement scenarios.

The Phase II River Corridor Public Use Concept also includes:

- recommended tasks for implementation, including a five year schedule with suggested responsible parties (Phase III);
- recommendations for financing and transportation;
- a resource analysis that establishes preliminary resource sensitivity and development suitability; and
- budget opinions for facilities development.

PLANNING PROCESS

Phase II, funded by IAC NOVA resources, included the same participants as Phase I—the Middle Fork Task Force (TAC) and the project planning team (member names are

listed on the inside front cover of this report and on the back of the River Corridor Public Use Concept map). In Phase II, a Steering Committee, composed of Valley landowners, resource managers, the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway and representatives of TAC user groups, worked with the project planning team in a series of in-house work and field sessions to develop the River Corridor Public Use Concept.

Two workshops were conducted by the project planning team with the full TAC. The first session was held in February, 1997, to review the Phase I concept and to present development and management scenarios. The second workshop was held in March, 1997, to present refined ideas, management and user fee strategies, and to receive approval for a final river corridor concept. Minutes from both Workshops are found in Appendix D.

RIVER CORRIDOR DEFINED

Phase I developed a framework for the long-term use and management of the entire Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River watershed. The Phase II study focused on lands within one mile of each side of the River where most human use occurs and sensitive resources are located. The CCC Road, which begins outside of the river corridor on the eastern shoulder of Mt. Si, is also included in the concept since it provides access to the Valley and will be an important joint use facility for mountain bikers, equestrians and hikers.

At some point in the future, the remainder of the watershed should be studied to generate a facilities framework compatible with that proposed in this report.

ACTIONS TO DATE

Since the initiation of the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Study in 1996, a variety of activities have taken place. They have helped to maintain project momentum and, in some cases, have begun to solve existing problems in the Valley. Representative activities and the responsible parties include:

- Removal of car bodies from the Middle Fork River and shorelands (Friends of the Trail);
- Removal of debris, litter and garbage from riverfront sites, road spurs and other areas (Friends of the Trail);
- Completion of a Draft Middle Fork River Watershed Analysis (USFS)—final to be completed in November 1997 (approximate date);
- Initiation of USFS Access and Travel Management (ATM) Study (USFS);
- Acquisition of lands near the Middle Fork (concrete) bridge (known as Granite Creeks Flat) by King County's Waterways 2000 Program. Site demolition and cleanup has recently been completed (King County Parks);

- Installation of signs prohibiting use of firearms, dumping and overnight camping on Weyerhaeuser, DNR and King County property (DNR, Weyerhaeuser, King County);
- Completion of a land exchange between Champion Timber Co. and WA DNR (DNR, Champion Timber Co.);
- Successful land acquisition of private property within the Valley (The Land Conservancy of Seattle/King County);
- Initiation of traffic counts on the Middle Fork River Road and Mt. Si Road (King County Dept of Transportation, Traffic and Engineering Section);
- Briefing of project and tour of river corridor with Region 6 USFS Forest Management Team, Recreation Directors, and Director of King County Parks (Planning Team);
- Briefing with WA Interagency Committee (IAC) to describe project's recreation planning within a watershed context (Planning Team);
- Multiple briefings with Undersecretary of Agriculture, Jim Lyons, to underscore the importance of the project, develop internal USFS support, and identify possible national funding sources (Planning Team);
- Presentation to City of Seattle Water Department, Seattle School District, Cedar Watershed Interpretive Center Planning Team and interested environmental groups to describe project and emphasize collaborative opportunities (Planning Team);
- Briefing to North Bend City Council about both phases of the Middle Fork project to date (Planning Team);
- Requests by Jobs for the Environment for 1997/98 restoration projects in Valley (King County);
- Initiation of Biosolids project on Zorro Ridge, summer of 1997 (Mountains-to-Sound Greenway);
- Briefing and field session with Federal Highways Program policy and engineering staff to discuss FHA program, transportation system in Valley and desired future road improvements (Planning Team, Steering Committee); and
- Briefing and field trip to Western Washington Cascades Province Advisory Committee (Planning Team, Steering Committee).

III. RIVER CORRIDOR PUBLIC USE CONCEPT

OVERVIEW

The River Corridor Public Use Concept presents a concept for the development of day use and overnight recreation facilities within the Middle Fork River corridor. The concept covers an area of approximately one mile on either side of the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River from the mouth of the Valley to Dingford Creek, a distance of about 18 miles (see River Corridor Public Use Concept map, Figure 1).

Most existing recreation use in the Valley occurs in its lower reaches, with use progressively diminishing as one moves further up the Valley (see Chapter III, Traffic and Visitor Use Projections, and Appendix C). In response to this pattern, the concept consists of a series of nine day use and one overnight site concentrated along the river within the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley. Existing spur roads and trails, and some new trails, connect recreationists to upland areas and to trail systems outside the Valley. The concept implies that as these facilities are added in the Lower and Middle Valley sections, recreationists will likely avoid the long and difficult drive to the Upper Valley unless for overnight stays. The concept suggests, therefore, that scarce development and management resources be focused below the Taylor River.

All of the sites proposed for development are located in previously disturbed sites and/or within environmentally suitable areas. New trails also include road-to-trail projects. The number of sites and their size is based on resource suitabilities (see Appendix A), site capacities (see Appendix B), and existing visitor use patterns and visitor use forecasts (see Appendix C). Locations are intended to provide experiences of diverse places within the river corridor and to supply a range of recreational opportunities.

Private vehicle access into the Valley will continue to be limited to the Middle Fork River Road (USFS Road 56). The CCC Road will provide a non-motorized route into the Valley (hike-bike-horse) when not in use for DNR/Weyerhaeuser Company logging. A user fee program and a future shuttle are also proposed to reduce private vehicle use.

The major goals of the River Corridor Public Use Concept are to:

- concentrate day and large-scale group uses in the Lower and Middle Valley and, in general, to limit Lower and Middle Valley facilities to day use only;
- minimize impacts to the River by concentrating recreation areas in suitable locations away from the river;
- develop walk-in only access to the River at suitable scenic or interpretive points of interest for more visitors, but with lower impacts;

- maintain dispersed primitive camping in upland areas of the Middle Valley and in the backcountry and wilderness areas of the Upper Valley;
- limit overnight camping to suitable areas with adequate but strictly defined capacity;
- move private vehicle access away from the River and other sensitive areas of the Valley; and
- lessen lawless behavior by increasing law enforcement and by building a year round entry point at the mouth of the Valley.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Development principles were established to define the context within which the corridor was analyzed and concepts for its development and protection were considered. Most importantly, development of day and overnight sites, trails and road-to-trails, and the entry area must reduce human impacts and repair degraded areas. In addition, any development should:

- recognize the context of the landscape—its resources and their relationship to visitor experience, and the opportunities and constraints associated with visitor use;
- recognize the corridor as the spine from which a developing system of recreation, interpretation and conservation sites extends;
- include only structures and facilities that are essential; and
- repair natural systems on site.

PUBLIC USE AREAS: SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

All of the sites proposed for development in the River Corridor Public Use Concept were selected using the following site selection criteria with this context in mind. The criteria were developed from resource suitability information, visitor use information, field observations, map reconnaissance, and TAC workshop discussions.

Proposed sites should:

- provide a diverse range of activities for a diverse range of users within a Valley-wide context;
- use existing disturbed sites;
- respond to the existing context of present landowner management frameworks;
- provide for low impact development and low cost investment;

- minimize long-term individual site maintenance costs and those costs associated with a Valley-wide infrastructure, such as staff travel time and road maintenance;
- minimize security costs through site and facilities design (e.g. access to multiple trails from a single trailhead);
- be located away from sensitive riparian or other areas or include, where possible, a 300-ft. minimum buffer between facilities and the water;
- provide safe, easy access from roads, trails and/or other proposed sites;
- have the potential to connect to other sites and features;
- typify or evoke the Valley's special places by providing appropriate access to representative natural and cultural features; and
- manage vehicle, bike, horse and pedestrian traffic in an environmentally suitable fashion, and coordinate maintenance efforts.

Detailed descriptions of all proposed sites are found in Appendix B. Their development feasibility, including location, scale and final facilities program will be determined during Phase III.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Middle Fork Valley is one of the more significant, close-to-home places in King County. Often called the "Yosemite of the Cascades, the Valley is less than one hour drive from over one million people within the Seattle metropolitan area. As a destination, the Valley presents a beautiful, yet mysterious, challenge. There is no managed entry into the Valley, no centrally located orientation point that offers watershed-wide interpretive or wayfinding information, and no wayside exhibits, markers or developed interpretive facilities.

Some hiking and boot-built trails, (many familiar to only the most intrepid of hikers), used and unused logging and spur roads, and a single main road carry recreationists to high elevation trails and to backcountry and wilderness destinations. Meanwhile, many visitors experience the river corridor in glimpses from the road. They stop for short visits at locations where the river is visually or physically accessible and shorelands appear safe and unlittered, or at pullouts where parking looks relatively hazard-free. Many of the sites provide excellent river views and relatively easy river access, but some are poorly located and visitor use has resulted in significant stream-side erosion and vegetation damage. All are usually littered with garbage or human waste. Given these conditions, visitors do not generally experience a positive or comprehensive sense of the river or the larger Valley.

The River Corridor Public Use Concept leads the visitor into the heart of the Middle Fork Valley through a sequence of safe, varied riverside locations with visual and physical access to increasingly dramatic natural and scenic resources that climax at the proposed Taylor River complex. The sites are located to:

- provide a physical and/or a visual experience of diverse landscape places (such as Mine Creek, Granite Creek Flats, or the Pratt River Bar) within the river corridor;
- create variety in short stay, walk-in opportunities from the Lower to the Middle sections of the Valley for hiking, biking, boating, interpreting points of interest, picnicking or fishing;
- provide activities at the river that minimize impacts.

The Concept facilitates a more comprehensive visitor experience of the Valley with:

- a series of low impact interpretive signs and markers;
- loop trails at individual sites;
- a safe, suitably located designated overnight site;
- trail connections to wilderness areas and new trail, road-to-trail or stronger trail connections to the river or to existing backcountry and wilderness trails within the watershed; and
- a future focus at Taylor River for interpretive information such as river morphology, native fisheries management, and/or the cultural and natural history of the Valley.

VISITOR SAFETY

Phase I identified vandalism, irresponsible gun use, garbage dumping and other types of unacceptable behavior in the Valley as key public safety concerns.

The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends several steps to solve these problems, including increased law enforcement, management of a single entry point, careful management of vehicle use and overnight camping, development of specific day use sites, and gates at Taylor River and at Dingford Creek. These and other changes will improve public safety within the river corridor and heighten the quality of recreational experiences for everyone.

Increased Law Enforcement

Phase I identified increased law enforcement as a critical goal of the Middle Fork Valley Concept. Although agencies have increased the law enforcement presence in the Valley, there is still considerable lawlessness. Improved security is a precondition of safe recreation in the Valley. Discussions between King County, MidFORC, City of North Bend, DNR, USFS and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway have resulted in efforts by King County Police to provide more presence in the Valley. The Forest Service has also suggested the possibility of acquiring an additional 1/2 time USFS deputy. WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife could also provide a greater presence to eliminate poaching and non-compliance with fishery regulations.

New Signing

In spring, 1997, DNR, King County and the Weyerhaeuser Company posted their lands for no shooting or camping. USFS policy about shooting is being reviewed. The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends similar signing on all agency lands.

Management of Roads

The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends careful management of roads in the Valley. Short spur roads are the location for much illegal dumping of hazardous wastes, appliances, unused and/or stolen automobiles, building projects and household objects. These have become not only shooting targets but source points of pollution from car batteries, oil and other materials leaching into creeks and soils.

Because of dumping and shooting, these spur roads are not available for safe use as recreation sites. Because Valley law enforcement staff cannot patrol the spurs regularly, the River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends closure of these spurs to motorized use. Lack of vehicle access will end the dumping (and possibly the shooting in these areas) and allow non-motorized users to enjoy the areas for legal activities.

The DNR has "tank-trapped" all spur roads on DNR and King County property to control dumping, shooting activity and uncontrolled access to and into the River by vehicles. The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends the same action for National Forest spur roads.

Installation of Gates

The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends the phased and coordinated installation of two gates—one at Taylor River bridge, and one at Dingford Creek. A permanent gate at Dingford Creek would be installed and closed now. Authorized private vehicles would be permitted beyond Dingford Creek with passes or keys. A permanent gate at Dingford Creek will allow law enforcement officers to focus their activities in the Lower and Middle Valleys, the area of heaviest recreation use and the location of most unacceptable behavior. However, access to Goldmyer Hot Springs will be important to resolve for Northwest Wilderness Program members and visitors.

A Taylor River bridge gate would be installed now (coordinated with the USFS current Access and Travel Management Plan process) and closed when needed to contain traffic in peak use periods, and to protect the Upper Middle Fork River Road from damage and hazardous road use (e.g. flooding). A gate at the Taylor River bridge is an important component of the River Corridor Public Use Concept. The gate will provide additional hike-horse and bike use on the Upper Valley road, reinforce a natural separation between Front Country, Backcountry and Wilderness uses, and concentrate law enforcement activities in the Lower and Middle areas of the Valley.

Use of Firearms

In Phase I, the study of a formal gun range in the lower section of the study area was proposed to provide shooters with a safe alternative location for shooting. Two target range sites were tentatively identified on Grouse Ridge and at the Fire Training Center. The River Corridor Public Use Concept did not analyze these sites further because of their location outside of the Phase II study area, and because proposed locations for day and overnight recreation sites within the river corridor preclude firearms use. The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends that:

- a formal site evaluation study be undertaken by the Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club (SVRC), with assistance from the newly-formed Middle Fork River Council and river coordinator, to identify viable locations for a designated gun range on nearby lands;
- a gun safety program be developed and administered by agencies with the help of SVRC beginning in 1998.

PROPOSED FACILITIES

The types, scale, character, location and number of facilities proposed for formal development or improvement in the Middle Fork River Corridor are described below (see River Corridor Public Use Concept map, Figure 1). Development concepts and more detailed information about each proposed site is found in Appendix B.

Valley Entry Portal

Two narrow, paved roads—the Middle Fork River Road (earlier known as the Lake Dorothy Road) and a residential road—converge at the mouth of the valley just east of the Lutheran Valley Camp. The River Corridor Public Use Concept proposes the development of a single entry point just north of this couplet, on DNR property. A temporary booth, donated by the Weyerhaeuser Company and manned by volunteers (entry hosts), should be located on the site in the summer of 1998 to test the feasibility of an entry point, and to provide visitors with information about appropriate visitor behavior, points of interest, facilities, resource management, and distances to specific destinations such as Taylor River, the Middle Fork Trail, Dingford Creek, etc. The entry point is critical to improving law enforcement in the Valley. A more permanent facility will be built in the future.

Day Use Sites

Nine day use sites are proposed in the Lower and Middle Valley sections of the River corridor from Tanner to Taylor River, a distance of approximately twelve miles (see River Corridor Public Use Concept Map, Figure 1). One existing day use site, Dingford Creek, is located in the Upper Valley.

The sites are located at regular intervals along the Middle Fork River Road (USFS Road 56) on DNR, USFS or King County property. None of the sites are more than 2-3 miles apart. Most of the locations are currently used informally as day and/or overnight sites and have no facilities. Mine Creek is a former DNR overnight site with parking and toilets. Taylor River is a formal USFS day use and trailhead area with vehicle and trailer parking, toilets, an information board, picnic sites, a short trail to the river and a bridge to the Middle Fork Trail. Dingford Creek is a USFS trailhead with an off-road gravel parking area for a small number of vehicles, foot trails up Dingford Creek and to the river, and a bridge to the Middle Fork Trail.

Each proposed day use site possesses distinct landscape character, and provides scenic views, safe river access, trail connections, or interpretive opportunities. Limited improvements, including built facilities such as parking spaces, self-contained toilets, information/interpretive signs, picnic tables, etc., will be included, carefully located to buffer uses from the river on site and to minimize impacts to riverine resources. No utilities will be extended to the sites, with the exception of the Valley Entry Portal for security and entry hosts.

Facilities will be designed to reflect the rich character of the river corridor and the low tech design heritage and landscape ethic of parkland architecture. All facilities will be developed incrementally with limited capital investment to respond to the dynamic natural processes of the river corridor. For example, if facilities are washed away because of changes in the river's course or seasonal high water, recovery and reconstruction may not be warranted and alternative sites would be found. Additional analyses of all proposed sites will be undertaken during Phase III to assess their feasibility, determine actual costs, and undertake design development and construction phasing.

All other informal sites from the Valley entry to Taylor River, such as unused spur roads and riverside areas not included in the River Corridor Public Use Concept, will be closed and restored over time to natural conditions. All spur roads on DNR, Weyerhaeuser Company and King County lands have already been closed to vehicles. Future closures and/or decommissioning of USFS spur roads within the river corridor will be analyzed as part of the USFS Access and Travel Management (ATM) study in the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. That process was initiated in the Valley late this summer.

Proposed day use sites within the river corridor are listed below and located on the River Corridor Public Use Concept map, Figure 1. Additional information about each site is provided in Appendix B.

Valley Entry Portal
Mine Creek
Granite Creek Flats
Oxbow Natural Area
Pratt River Bar
River Bend
Camp Brown
Taylor River
Dingford Creek

Trails and Trailheads

New trails near the river, in the uplands, and connections to other existing trail systems, are proposed in the River Corridor Public Use Concept. They include:

- A trailhead at the Valley Entry Portal, including a short foot trail to a river access point and to Mailbox Peak (parking for 15-20 vehicles);
- Granite Creek Flats foot trail from the day use area downstream to a popular sand bar/swimming hole (parking for 10-15 vehicles);
- A foot trail from the Middle Fork River Road to the gravel bar across from the Pratt River confluence (parking for 15-20 vehicles);
- Camp Brown/Taylor River interpretive foot trail from the existing Camp Brown parking lot upstream to the existing Taylor River parking lot (parking for 15-20 vehicles);
- Taylor River loop foot trail from the existing Taylor River auto bridge, along the east bank of the Taylor River to the confluence of the Taylor and Middle Fork and back to the Taylor River bridge along the Middle Fork Road (existing parking for 55 cars and 12 horse trailers);
- Middle Fork Trail extension (foot) from the existing trailhead/gateway bridge downstream into the Pratt River valley, and up "Stegosaurus";
- Bessemer/CCC Road used as a bike-horse-hike route when not in use by logging trucks. Also, conversion of the old CCC road within the National Forest to a multi-use road-to-trail, including an extension of this trail to Taylor River. The route will provide mountain biking, hiking and horseback riding parallel to and above the Middle Fork River Road.

  A small car and horse trailer parking area (5–10 car spaces, 3–5 trailer spaces) will be located at the junction of the Bessemer and the Middle Fork River Road, across from the Oxbow Natural Area. A larger parking (30–35+ cars, 5–10 horse

trailers) and trailhead area, including composting toilets and a new, off-road trail connection to the CCC Road, will be located in the vicinity of the eastern portion of the Mt. Si NRCA just west of the Mt. Tenerife neighborhood. Development of a trail and trailhead in this general area will resolve existing parking and user issues near the Weyerhaeuser gate on the CCC Road. More detailed analysis of an appropriate site location and public involvement is needed for a final decision on trailhead development.

The trail extension to Taylor River and a trailhead in the vicinity of the Mt. Si NRCA will provide a legitimate alternative to hiker-only trails for mountain bikers. Over 14 miles of trail will be available above the Middle Fork River Road to provide a loop route through the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley. The Taylor River trailhead will serve as the starting point for the Bessemer/CCC Road loop until a trailhead is constructed west of the Mt. Tenerife community. This will reduce the impacts of parking on the Mt. Si Road and the Mt. Tenerife community (See Appendix B).

- Connections to trail systems outside the Valley (such as the Snoqualmie Valley Trail along North Bend Way).

Phase I identified a potential north bank mountain bike trail to be located between the Upper Middle Fork River Road and the River from Taylor River to Dingford Creek. This trail was not included in the Phase II proposal because of resource (soil/water) constraints, concerns expressed by participating mountain biking interests on the Task Force, and the costs anticipated with new construction in this area.

Overnight Camping

Uncontrolled, dispersed camping on spur roads and along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie and Taylor Rivers has resulted in damage to sensitive river habitat. In many areas along both rivers, vegetation has been stripped from the riverbanks and replaced by hard packed earth. Lack of sanitation and trash facilities has resulted in the presence of extensive garbage and human waste.

In order to solve these problems, the River Corridor Public Use Concept proposes the incremental elimination of dispersed camping in these areas and the development of a permanent overnight camping facility for both non-motorized and auto camping at Taylor River.

Short-term Camping: Dispersed Sites

Dispersed camping will continue at a limited number of suitable, designated existing sites in the Lower and Middle Valley sections of the corridor on USFS lands only until permanent facilities are established. These short-term sites will be selected in the near future from the recommendations of the watershed analysis and from criteria developed by the USFS, DNR and TAC. All other more sensitive dispersed sites will be closed to use.

The short-term sites could be cleaned up and temporarily improved (for example, with signing, trash facilities, sani-cans, defined camping pads, improved vehicle access) and their specific use enforced. With the establishment of a permanent camping facility at Taylor River, the dispersed sites will be closed incrementally to overnight camping, unless an analysis by the managing agencies found them to be viable for longer term use. If so, their continued use as overnight sites could be by reservation only and managed within the system.

Long-term Camping: Taylor River

Given the sensitivity of riverine resources, the high costs associated with adequately managing dispersed overnight sites in the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley, and the potential demand for such sites in the region, a permanent camping area appears to be the more reasonable alternative.

When feasible, overnight car and walk-in camping sites will be developed at Taylor River. Camping sites will be developed incrementally, as demand requires, up to a maximum of 64 -70 sites, approximately. The sites will be clustered in the clear-cut upland areas west of the existing Middle Fork River Road. Low impact, shared facilities, including composting toilets and water, parking spaces, a fire ring, an interpretive kiosk, and a central trailhead will be developed away from the road and river, and integrated with existing day use facilities and trails. A new (optional) road alignment, designed to move automobiles and facilities away from the river and to reach campsites directly, would be evaluated for its feasibility relative to cost and environmental impacts. No power will be provided on the site. No RV camping will be provided.

The Taylor River complex will serve as the major hike-bike-horse-only trailhead from the river corridor into the backcountry and Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area. The campground and day use facility will be the last developed area in the watershed. Dispersed front country, backcountry and wilderness camping will continue on USFS land only. When a shuttle system is in place, and use reaches appropriately high levels, a gate located at the Taylor River bridge will be closed to private vehicles. The Taylor River will act as a natural barrier. The gate will facilitate the separation between vehicle and non-vehicle uses and provide a hike-horse and bike route along the Upper Middle Fork River Road in the Upper Valley (see Appendix B, Taylor River, for additional information).

Character of Proposed Facilities

A limited number of recreation facilities, designed to embody the special character of the Valley, will enhance visitor experiences within the river corridor without dominating the landscape. Facilities will include composting/pit toilets, picnic tables and/or shelters, interpretive and directional signs, markers, benches, fire rings, bridges or fords, and possible road and trail overlooks. A consistent, systematic use of these structures, and continuity in design details, will establish a design vocabulary and an identity for visitor facilities that reflects the Valley's character.

Given the character of the Middle Fork River Valley, an appropriate style for all proposed facilities is the rustic architectural style expressed in the 19th Century tradition of camp designs, early 20th century National Park Service and US Forest Service building architecture, and Civilian Conservation Corps site work.

Recreation structures and elements built in this tradition used properly scaled native materials that gave the appearance of pioneer handcrafting and possessed a strong fit with the environment. They promoted an image of a simple functional style inspired by surrounding wild, natural landscapes. Important design qualities that embodied the rustic style included:

Scale and massing: Facilities were small in terms of whole structures but large in terms of detail. Structures gave a sense of strong visual and organic ties with nature. They were designed to be subordinate to the environment and located to profit from natural screening. The use of recycled logs or big timbers and native rocks reasonably overscaled to the structures achieved this effect.

Line and form: Structures and other features hugged the land with low silhouettes and strong horizontal lines to reinforce the ground plane or the flow of rivers and streams.

Materials, colors and textures, finishes and details: Natural materials, such as wood and rock, were used and not heavily manipulated. They retained their natural shapes, textures and finishes, and were allowed to weather to create natural camouflage with the landscape. Detail work was simple. Colors, used minimally, were earth tones.

A similar style of building fits the glacial valley landscape of the Middle Fork with its rugged ridges, high lakes and bogs, and steep, forested slopes. While some variations in character might occur based upon the specific needs of individual sites, all facilities throughout the Valley should share these design qualities.

Facilities Costs

Gross budget opinions were developed for each site proposed in the River Corridor Public Use Concept, based on preliminary programmatic elements and locations. Unit costs were determined from the National Park Service Class "C" Estimating Guide for New Construction, Denver Service Center, 1996–1998.

The following table summarizes general dollar estimates for site development. High and low numbers reflect the total costs generated from minimum to maximum quantities of proposed facilities, respectively. Preliminary budget opinions and preliminary facilities summaries for each proposed site are provided in Appendix B.

Gross Budget Opinion

Projects* (no priority order)		Net Construction Costs	Budget Opinion
North Bend River Park	Low	$ 125,050	$ 204,582
	High	$ 321,250	$ 525,565
Mt. Si/CCC Trailhead	Low	$ 272,630	$ 446,023
	High	$ 552,180	$ 903,366
Middle Fork Valley Entry Portal	Low	$ 85,600	$ 140,042
	High	$ 111,200	$ 181,923
Future Middle Fork Valley Entry Facilities	Low	$ 269,900	$ 441,556
	High	$ 280,800	$ 459,389
Mine Creek	Low	$ 200,700	$ 328,345
	High	$ 367,450	$ 601,148
Granite Creek Flats	Low	$ 209,300	$ 342,415
	High	$ 270,400	$ 442,374
CCC Road to Trail and Trailhead	Low	$ 153,350	$ 239,429
	High	$ 249,400	$ 386,750
Oxbow Natural Area	Low	$ 686,340	$ 1,114,672
	High	$ 1,951,920	$ 3,181,889
Pratt River Bar	Low	$ 72,000	$ 117,792
	High	$ 88,950	$ 145,522
River Rest Stop	Low	$ 22,675	$ 37,096
	High	$ 25,700	$ 42,045
Camp Brown	Low	$ 128,100	$ 209,572
	High	$ 193,300	$ 316,239
Taylor River Campground Complex	Low	$ 675,900	$ 1,105,772
	High	$ 1,221,600	$ 1,998,538
Dingford Creek Trailhead	Low	$ 34,400	$ 56,278
	High	$ 38,000	$ 62,168
Grand Total*	Low	$ 2,935,945	$ 4,783,574
	High	$ 5,672,150	$ 9,246,918

* Does not include Middle Fork Road improvements or restoration of spur roads to natural conditions.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Interpretation of the river corridor's natural and cultural resources is an important component of the River Corridor Public Use Concept. In Phase II, the river corridor was divided into landscape places based on sub-watershed boundaries and specific landscape features. Each place possesses different landscape characteristics, resource management needs, views, and a land tenure history that can be translated into stories about the Valley.

Some facilities and other means that could interpret these places include:

- a logo for the Valley that can be used on all interpretive facilities and materials;
- interpretive signs, markers or guidebooks for each day use site and trailhead to describe each landscape place, the unique resources present and important management requirements;
- an interpretive kiosk at the future Taylor River campground to provide more in depth information about the natural and cultural history of the Valley. Interpretive programs, perhaps modeled after the National Park Service's interpretive campfire programs, could be developed and conducted in coordination with the materials provided at the kiosk;
- short nature trails at Taylor River, Camp Brown, Mine Creek, Granite Creek Flats and, potentially, guided group opportunities at the Oxbow Natural Area;
- an interpretive kiosk at a future permanent Valley entry Portal facility; and
- interpretive information at future locations in downtown North Bend, at the North Bend Ranger District office, at a future staging area, or at other locations near the Valley.

During Phase III, an interpretive master plan should be developed to:

- further analyze landscape places and research the Valley's natural, Native American and logging history;
- develop a thematic framework for future development of interpretive facilities;
- explore public education opportunities such as active school-age educational programs about the watershed in conjunction with entities such as the Cedar Watershed and new Cedar Watershed Interpretive Facility, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Gap Analysis Program, or the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Outreach and Education staff; and
- explore the use of the Valley as an outdoor laboratory for ecological study.

FACILITIES OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

It may not be reasonable for participating agencies, namely the DNR, the USFS, King County, WA State Parks, etc., to operate recreation facilities in the river corridor. During Phase III, a key task for the Middle Fork River Council and river coordinator will be to develop alternative scenarios (e.g. a concessionaire, a network of recreation organizations, etc.) for operating a system of recreation facilities in the river corridor, and to determine which is the most appropriate and feasible for managing public use.

Until a permanent operations manager is in place, a network of entry, trailhead and campground hosts could be established from volunteer groups to build a coordinated, visible presence in the Valley. The hosts would disseminate information, provide an important deterrent to break-ins and vandalism of cars and public use sites, and help improve public confidence in visitor safety throughout the river corridor. Once a more permanent management entity is established, the hosts could continue their role in coordination with them, as they do in many National Parks and National Recreation Areas. During Phase III, the River Council and river coordinator will develop a cost estimate of this concept in order to evaluate its feasibility.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the recreation sites proposed for the river corridor, other elements important to the success and effective management of the River Corridor Public Use Concept include projects within the city limits of the City of North Bend. These projects could provide additional visitor services, river access, and facilitate connections to other local and regional recreation opportunities.

North Bend: "Gateway to the Cascades"

The City of North Bend is a gateway community for the Middle Fork Valley (see River Corridor Public Use Concept map, Figure 1). In addition to providing conventional community and visitor services such as food, gas and lodging, North Bend provides direct connections to the Valley via North Bend Way, the Mt. Si Road, and I-90. Opportunities exist for the City to provide services that would improve visitors' knowledge and enhance their experience of the Valley. These could include equipment sales, rental outfitters, a shuttle and trolley operation, expanded Metro connections, RV parking and camping, and use of existing parking areas within the City (mall, park-and-ride, cbd parking, etc.) Opportunities also exist for development east of the central business district for recreation staging (see 'Gateway Center' staging area below.)

In addition to being a major service center in the eastern portion of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, North Bend is centrally located to regional recreation, cultural and natural resource-based opportunities. Examples include Meadow Brook and Tollgate Farms, Three Forks Park, Snoqualmie Falls, the Snoqualmie Valley train, Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area, the Mt. Si Natural Resource Conservation Area, Rattlesnake Lake, Rattlesnake Ledge and Ridge Trails, the Cedar Watershed Interpretive Center, the

Snoqualmie Valley Trail, the Iron Horse Trail/John Wayne Trail, and the Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Tree Farm. North Bend's role as a service and commercial gateway to this larger regional recreation continuum—from urban to wilderness areas—could further diversify its economy and increase its influence in regional resource issues, including those related to the Middle Fork Valley.

North Bend River Park

This proposed site includes an existing private parcel located approximately one mile east of the Mt. Si Road and directly north of North Bend Way (see River Corridor Public Use Concept map, Figure 1). The site is also adjacent to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River and provides potentially safe ingress/egress to the river for non-motorized boats. It also provides a direct connection to the Snoqualmie Valley Trail. Opportunities may exist for King County to acquire the entire site in order to solve existing boater access problems along this popular stretch of the river, and for the City to help develop a day-use area in this part of the community (see Appendix B).

"Gateway Center" Staging Area (Tanner/Edgewick)

A gateway center/staging area in North Bend will provide information and public services to visitors, including restrooms, monitored parking, Metro connections, shuttle transportation into the Valley and to other regional destinations, RV camping, equipment and rental sales.

The staging area will be located along primary roads or near I-90 exits to ensure visibility and to facilitate direct connections to surrounding services and to cultural, education, interpretation and recreation opportunities. The River Corridor Public Use Concept proposes studying two areas in the Lower Valley portion of North Bend for a staging site. One area is located at Tanner along North Bend Way. The other area is near Ken's Truckstop at Edgewick, Exit 34 (See Public Use Concept map and Appendix B).

In order to develop its niche as a gateway community, the City should champion the gateway concept to local officials and key community interests who would:

- develop and help finance new staging area businesses and facilities;
- influence the review of existing zoning east of the central business district to ensure a compatible land use transition into the Valley;
- help promote expanded Metro and other transit connections, including a shuttle system, to regional points of interest, including the Valley; and
- promote recreation-related commercial development on appropriate sites.

The River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends the following initial actions for the City of North Bend to consider in helping to implement the Concept:

- formally recognize or even adopt the River Corridor Public Use Concept as a framework for economic development;

- develop a task force of interested and effective, civic, business and private interests who will spearhead the development of such projects as North Bend River Park and/or the staging area; and
- actively participate in the River Council once it is established.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

UTILITIES

Minimal utilities will be provided in the Valley under the River Corridor Public Use Concept. Full utility services will be located at a future entry/gatekeeper area, with temporary sanitation and electrical services provided for volunteer staff in the interim. No other electrical or phone service will be provided to proposed facilities. Potable water and composting/pit toilets are recommended at day use sites and at the Taylor River campground (see Appendix B). Additional analysis of utility feasibility will occur during Phase III.

VALLEY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Uncontrolled private vehicle access into the Middle Fork Valley, and the resulting degradation of riverine resources, accumulation of road dust, and the high costs required to maintain the Middle Fork River Road, were key issues identified during Phase I. The Phase I Valley Concept recommended that private vehicle access eventually be confined to the Middle Fork River Road and restricted beyond Taylor River. In addition, a concessionaire-operated shuttle was envisioned to transport recreationists to Valley destinations and to decrease private vehicle numbers.

The Phase II River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends that these ideas be developed in the context of a comprehensive, Valley-wide transportation system that will include a range of maintained, decommissioned, seasonally gated and permanently gated roads, a potential shuttle system, maintained trails, new trails and road-to trails. Specifically, the River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends:

- the closure of unused spur roads within the National Forest accessible from the Middle Fork River Road;
- the installation or relocation of an improved trailhead and a year-round gate near Dingford Creek, with vehicle access beyond it only for landowners, such as Goldmyer Hot Springs, by pass or key. The trailhead will provide organized access to existing trails. The road closure will provide an additional, inexpensive non-motorized route for hikers, horses and mountain bikes to Hardscrabble. The road closure will also lower road maintenance and law enforcement costs by focusing both activities in the lower parts of the Valley where current problems are generally concentrated;

- the installation of a seasonal or use-generated gate at the Taylor River bridge, with private vehicle access beyond the bridge for land owners by pass or key. In the near future, the gate will be closed when needed to protect the road from damage or to protect drivers if use is dangerous. In the long-term, the gate will be closed during seasons of highest use (summer/early fall), essentially "road banking" the Upper Middle Fork River Road (the closure would provide additional hike-horse and mountain bike use of the road within the Upper Valley without foreclosing future recreational vehicle access.) At that time, a shuttle system to transport people from Taylor River to Dingford Creek may be feasible;
- a road-to-trail conversion within the National Forest from the old CCC Road to Taylor River, and above Burnboot Creek for mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians;
- the development of new hiking trails at and between proposed sites paralleling the Middle Fork River Road; and
- continued analysis of the feasibility of a shuttle system to transport visitors into and out of the Valley as an alternative to private vehicle use.

VALLEY-WIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Middle Fork River Road is the primary private vehicle route into the Middle Fork Valley. Because there is such limited access to the Valley, and because of the road's narrowness and rough surface, visitors have a sense of the Valley as a wild, mysterious landscape. Retaining this experience by maintaining the primitive character of the Middle Fork River Road is an important element of the River Corridor Public Use Concept. Not only does it reinforce a sense of entering a wilderness area, it limits large numbers of vehicles and provides a certain disincentive to reckless driving. However, it also discourages those visitors who might, under better road conditions, use the Valley. In order to maintain the road's primitive character and provide safe access to increasing numbers of users, the River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends that King County, as the responsible managing entity, and the Forest Service, consider several actions:

- Currently, no survey of the Middle Fork River Road has been conducted from 468th SE to the USFS boundary. A detailed land survey, including ownership and location of the road within the right-of-way, should be conducted to update the County Road Log, clarify maintenance responsibilities, and provide background data for future projects.
- Proposed improvements to the Middle Fork River Road, including its road classification and the identification of desired road standards compatible with the classification, should be included in King County's Transportation Needs Report (TNR). The Report is prepared yearly and is used to formulate the County's Road Capital Improvement Program and to coordinate transportation

improvements, especially priorities between the County and other jurisdictions. Formal inclusion in the Report is necessary for eligibility to receive local, state or federal road improvement funds, and to formulate collaborative jurisdictional projects, such as the Middle Fork River Road.

- The Middle Fork River Road is a candidate on a Federal Highways Program (FHP) improvement schedule and should be cross referenced in the County's TNR. The County should clarify its future maintenance and liability responsibilities relative to the potential implementation of this federal project.
- Once established, the Middle Fork River Council and the appropriate agencies should take immediate steps to participate in defining the scope of the potential Forest Highway Program Project. If approved, the project is slated to improve the Middle Fork River Road from milepost 2.9 to the USFS boundary, beginning in 2003. However, planning and design of any road improvements has not begun. This is an excellent time for the River Council to work with the FHP, King County and the Forest Service to plan road improvements in the context of a Valley-wide transportation system that may include road gatings and decommissionings. Otherwise, road improvements will likely increase vehicle use in inappropriate areas (spur roads), and foreclose implementation of many of the recommendations about recreation use and resource protection made in the River Corridor Public Use Concept. This is also an excellent time to work with the FHP, King County and the Forest Service to define the characteristics necessary to maintaining the road's primitive character. Finally, for design and planning continuity, the River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends that the project be extended to the proposed Taylor River bridge gate and trailhead.
- The USFS began its Access and Travel Management (ATM) Study in the Middle Fork Valley late this summer. The project evaluates the existing network of roads and trails within the watershed to determine the feasibility and location of road decommissionings, road closures and new trails. Alternative proposals will be posted in the Valley this fall (1997) and will include the River Corridor Public Use Concept as one alternative. The results of the ATM Study will be integrated into the FHA project if it is approved, and will help determine the final transportation system for the Valley.
- The King County 1997 Transportation Needs Report (TDR) identifies several improvement proposals for the Middle Fork River Road and the Mt. Si Road, including: widening of the Middle Fork River Road and realignment of the intersection at 468th SE and 140th St. to improve sight distances and accommodate subdivision development plans; construction of equestrian facilities and a road realignment of the Mt. Si Road from 452nd Ave SE for 800 ft., and for 6 miles along the Mt. Si Rd from North Bend Way; a study of the Mt. Si Bridge for improvements and historic preservation. The River Corridor Public Use Concept proposes the planning and eventual construction of an access road

from the end of the Mt. Si Road to a new trailhead in the Mt. Si NRCA vicinity. The trailhead will help resolve CCC Road access problems in the Mt. Tenerife neighborhood and provide off-road trail access for horses, mountain bikes and hikers on to the CCC Road. The River Corridor Public Use Concept also proposes the development of rural safety features on the CCC Road when it becomes a viable bike-hike and horse route.

MIDDLE FORK RIVER ROAD

Road Character

Although the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) has listed the Middle Fork River Road as a potential project in its Federal Highways Program, final decisions to develop the project have yet to be determined. A Forest transportation system analysis (ATM) and extensive resource assessments must be conducted to evaluate the feasibility of any road improvement project targeted to resolve existing problems on or resulting from the Middle Fork River Road, especially as it relates to a Valley-wide system, and to the River Corridor Public Use Concept.

Given the potential for such a project, and given that certain road improvements are desirable, it is useful to understand the existing character of the Middle Fork River Road in order to carefully identify what features are responsible and should be part of any improvements.

It takes approximately 30 minutes to drive the Middle Fork River Road from the mouth of the Valley to Taylor River. The road is narrow, rough and windy in places, requiring attentive, slow driving. But the focus is well rewarded. As one enters the Valley, time slows and a quiet forest of trees encloses the roadway. Ferns, logs and moss thicken the wet forest floor. And the rushing of the River can be heard clearly through the trees. As one moves upstream, the forest canopy opens and closes. One catches only glimpses of lonely peaks, ridges, and the River. Finally, at the Middle Fork bridge, views up and down the River's meanders reveal the full, u-shaped figure of the Valley from Bessemer Mountain to Russian Butte.

Beyond the Middle Fork bridge, the rough road leads deeper up the Valley. It widens and straightens but closes under trees as it moves nearer the River. Now, the Middle Fork is ever present, separated from the road at times only by wetlands and small streams tumbling off of the Valley's west ridges. Muddy vehicle tracks and narrow spurs leading to the river's edge are numerous. As the road finally reaches Taylor River, the landscape opens on to young forest and giant old trees, the joining of the Taylor and Middle Fork, and the looming cliffs of Garfield Mountain.

Road features that would maintain a primitive road experience and emphasize the road's connection to the landscape include:

- A road that supports a posted operating speed of no more than 25 mph and a design speed of no more than 35 mph.

- A road profile that is dominated by nature, consists of narrow (10–11 ft.) lanes, a narrow rumble edge or recovery zone (2 ft. max.), grass shoulders and minimal or no clear zones. The width of the road could vary by segment in response to the lay of the land and to sensitive areas.
- Tightened or even new alignments within the existing footprint. Where possible and suitable, relocation of the road centerline would provide a curvilinear alignment with a curve radius not exceeding that for a 35 mph design speed. Natural features and the curve radii would control passing and limit sight distance to that required for 25 mph. Realignments should be field-engineered to reflect natural features and to maintain desired visitor experience.
- Standards that vary by segment. Different segments of the road could be considered differently. For example, in the Lower Valley from the Entry Portal to the Middle Fork bridge at Granite Creek Flats, the road could be full standard gravel. From the bridge to Taylor River, it could be a National Forest Road with a minimal surface and limited lane width, curve radii, and no clear zone requirements. From Taylor River to Dingford Creek, the road could continue as a rough, unsurfaced route that accommodates 4x4 vehicle use only.
- Occasional turnouts provided every mile or so in either direction for passing. All other turnouts would be "tank-trapped" and restored to native vegetation over time.
- Continuation of a gravel surface, or consideration of a hardened surface that would maintain the feel of the existing road. An asphalt base with a rough chip seal overlay is an example of a hardened surface that could provide the durability required for vehicles, timber haul and a shuttle, yet provide the surface conditions needed for a primitive road experience. Use of a chip seal surface would also resolve dust or sediment travel problem.
- Development of views. Long and short views of special features within the Valley's many scenic landscape places, such as high ridges, mountain peaks, the River, or special groves of trees not currently visible from the road, could be created by varying plant density and location. Careful vegetation management outside of riparian areas, including pruning, selectively cutting and planting, would create open and enclosed spaces to sequentially expose distant features or interpretive themes, or give visitors the opportunity to stop and look at foreground features or the larger landscape.
- Road elements that are tied to the landscape and respect local materials color, and scale. Examples include:

    1. vegetated shoulders using crushed rock and grass or native shrubs and trees small enough to maintain drainage, sight distances and safety requirements;

2. native stone, timber or cor-ten guardrails embedded in natural or man-made landforms;
3. native stone-lined swales or ditches;
4. wood or native stone milepost markers or other rustic designs with numbers routed into both sides facing traffic;
5. pullouts designed with low native stone walls to define edges;
6. well-defined road turnouts and parking areas;
7. restoration of existing spur roads off the Middle Fork River Road to their natural condition;
8. construction of an entry portal with rustic proportions;
9. creative wetland mitigation (e.g. acquisition of additional wetlands, use of the County's 4:1 Program).

Road Improvements: Rough Budget Opinion

The Forest Highway Project preliminary budget estimate for improvements from Edgewick to the USFS boundary, is approximately $6 million (USFS). Funding for these improvements and King County maintenance would have to come from direct project funding, including both federal ISTEA and County moneys.

BUSINESS CONCEPT

SUMMARY

The major findings of the Phase II visitor use/business concept study, conducted in January—May, 1997, and using a projection horizon of 1996 to 2011, included the following elements. Numbers were based on existing figures obtained from USFS and WA State Parks data. The full report can be found in Appendix C.

TRAFFIC AND VISITOR USE

- Total traffic on the Middle Fork River Road (USFS 56) is projected to increase from an estimated 40,550 trips (one-way) in 1996 to an estimated 63,180 trips in year 2011, based on assumptions of moderate growth (3.7%) during the projection horizon. Under high initial growth assumptions, total traffic is projected to grow to 82,747 trips in year 2011. Projections will be adjusted once King County establishes an accurate data base of total traffic volume on the Middle Fork River Road.
- The corresponding average daily traffic (ADT) and peak daily traffic volumes are projected to increase from 203 trips and 385 trips, respectively, in 1996 to 316 trips and 600 trips, respectively, in year 2011 under moderate growth conditions.

Under high initial growth assumptions, annual ADT and peak daily traffic are projected to increase to 409 trips and 777 trips, respectively. Again, ADT and peak daily traffic will be adjusted to reflect King County's data for the Middle Fork River Road.

- Visitor use by persons arriving using some kind of private vehicle, bus or other, and bicycle, is projected at 161,147 visitors in year 2001, 193,774 in year 2006, and 224,640 in year 2011 under moderate growth conditions. Under high initial growth assumptions, visitor use is projected at 216,267 visitors in year 2001, 250,717 in year 2006, and 290,767 visitors in year 2011.

DAY USE AND OVERNIGHT PARKING CAPACITY

The Middle Fork River Corridor Public Use Concept recommends between 196 and 242 parking spaces for day use at nine locations between the mouth of the Middle Fork Valley and the Dingford Creek Trailhead:

- Valley Entry: 15–20 cars (with potential for more in future);
- Mt. Si/CCC Road Trailhead: 30–35+ cars, 5–10 horse trailers;
- Mine Creek: 20–25 cars;
- Granite Creek Flats: 10–15 cars;
- Bessemer/CCC Road junction: 5–10 cars, 3–5 horse trailers;
- Pratt River Bar: 15–20 cars;
- River Bend: 3 cars;
- Camp Brown: 15–20 cars;
- Taylor River: 55 cars, 12 trailers (existing); and
- Dingford Creek: 8–12 cars

Overnight car capacity would include from approximately 38–82 spaces provided at two locations:

- Taylor River: 30–70 cars
- Dingford Creek: 8–12 cars

VISITOR MANAGEMENT: USER ACCESS FEE PROGRAM AND A SHUTTLE SYSTEM

Two alternative management scenarios were considered for managing and financing visitor use in the Valley. Both scenarios assume that a joint operating management structure (River Council) will be established among the parties and agencies involved in order to protect resources, accommodate visitor use and enter into agreements with third parties for operating recreation facilities and, possibly, a shuttle. Both also assume parking capacity to be the determining constraint to vehicle access.

Scenario 1: Parking permit limitations. Under Scenario 1, visitors would enter the Valley using their own vehicles for both day and overnight use up to the limits of available parking spaces. Parking at one's own discretion at other than established locations would not be allowed. Once parking spaces are unavailable and visitors continue to arrive, a shuttle service would continue to provide access from alternative parking areas outside the Valley.

Overnight parking limitations would naturally constrain the number of private vehicles entering the Valley to 80 vehicles, roughly, or approximately 256 persons. If the average overnight stay is 2.25 days, as indicated by USFS numbers for a central Valley location near the Middle Fork bridge (milepost 7.0), the number of visitors per day would be constrained to approximately 114 on average. If overnight stays amounted to one day only, the maximum overnight visitation would be 252 persons, approximately. Seasonal visitor use would generate approximately 12,515 persons assuming the average 2.25 day stay with 8800 vehicles.

Day use visitation would also be subject to the limits of available parking. The River Corridor Public Use Concept provides for a low approximation of 200 spaces in the corridor. Given the likely turnover of from 1–2.5 cars per space per day, the maximum number of vehicles that could enter the Valley would total 410 vehicles, with associated visitor use (3.2 persons per vehicle) totaling about 1312 persons. It is more likely that visitor use would result in summer peak and shoulder visitation lows. If so, based on a day use level at 90 percent of capacity, total vehicles entering the Valley per year would total about 49,200 vehicles, or 157,440 persons.

Scenario 2: Overnight parking permit limitations. Under Scenario 2, private vehicles would be allowed only for overnight use at designated locations. Access for all other visitors requiring motorized transportation would be provided by a shuttle service departing from a gateway staging area and terminating at Dingford Creek. Pedestrians and cyclists would have unlimited access. The same parking limitations and associated visitation levels described in Scenario 1 would apply for Scenario 2.

Scenario 2 assumes the future feasibility of a shuttle service, peak numbers of visitors to the Valley, visitors' willingness to park outside of the Valley and their willingness to pay for and rely on shuttle transportation.

User Access Fee Program

Fees charged for overnight and day use in the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest provide a basis for determining potential revenues generated from a permit fee system in the Middle Fork Valley. Currently, the basic fees for overnight use are $10.00 per vehicle. An additional $7.50 is charged if a reservation for overnight use is made in advance. The fee for day use sites is $6.50 and is applied to day users arriving by vehicle. The fee constitutes both an entry and parking fee. For the purposes of this analysis, the $6.50 fee could be imposed on overnight users who walk in or bike. Persons arriving by bus, bicycle or on foot would not be charged a fee for day use (unless, as suggested, they remain overnight at a designated campground).

Revenues generated from using such a fee structure (i.e. $10.50 overnight vehicle use, $17.50 overnight vehicle reservation, $6.50 non-vehicle overnight use, $6.50 vehicle day use, $0 for non-vehicle, or bus day use) can be estimated based on projected annual visitor use for both day use and overnight use in the river corridor. Day users would generate approximately $320,000 in annual revenues at buildout. Overnight users would generate between $54,000 and $121,000 depending on the length of visitor stays. Total revenues from operations would range from $374,000 to $441,000 per year at buildout.

After distributing a 10 percent share of gross revenues to landowners and land managing agencies (a reasonable estimate for agency oversight given the potential number and type of facilities that would require management in the corridor), this would leave between $337,000 and $397,000 to the managing agency or concessionaire to cover expenses (personnel, equipment, supplies and services, leasehold taxes, overhead) and, in the case of the concessionaire, realize a profit. Surplus or residual would range from $77,000 to $137,000, depending on number and length of stay of overnight users and would be applied to management costs, contingencies and profit.

Any user fee program for the Middle Fork River corridor could also be coordinated with user fees charged in the future at nearby public recreation areas such as Mt. Si NRCA, Tiger Mt., Rattlesnake Scenic Area, etc. (e.g. annual permit covers all sites)

Shuttle System

Phase I of the Middle Fork Concept identified a shuttle as a way of limiting personal vehicle use in the Valley, minimizing wear on the Middle Fork River Road, retaining a "backcountry" experience, and managing vehicle vandalism at trailheads. In addition, the use of a shuttle could provide connections to Metro's larger regional system and benefit North Bend economically. The service could be similar in concept to that operated by the Maroon Falls Tour Service in the White River National Forest near Snowmass, Colorado or that operated on San Juan Island, WA.

Under a shuttle system, the two scenarios for permits based on the limits of parking capacity could be implemented. Under any scenario, recreational vehicles measuring more than 30 ft. from front to rear axle would not be allowed in the Valley. These larger

vehicles would be directed to parking and camping facilities, and a gateway shuttle stop located at a staging area in the Lower Valley near North Bend.

A shuttle would provide varying levels of service to recreation stops in the Valley for approximately six months of the year. The City of North Bend and Taylor River would serve as formal termini, with intermediate stops at proposed day use sites on a scheduled basis (See the Middle Fork River Corridor Public Use Concept map for shuttle stop locations).

Using present and projected visitor numbers for the Middle Fork (see above figures), a design day shuttle ridership* would be about 1000 persons (500 in, 500 out). During busy weekend times (from approximately May to November) demand would control the shuttle's schedule, with more frequent service on peak days. On less busy days, a policy service level would be established to reduce operating costs when rider demand was low. For example, service could run every 60 minutes in each direction.

A baseline system responding to this ridership level would include:

- 10-passenger vans at a new cost of approximately $35,000 each; or
- 25-passenger buses at approximately the same cost per vehicle (other possibilities would include use of King County/Metro out-of-service metro van pool vehicles);
- weekend and weekday service during approximately half the year;
- a policy of service in each direction every 60 minutes during 6 peak hours, and every 120 minutes during 4 peak off-hours. However, on peak days, actual demand will require service more frequently than these policy headways;
- design day volume of approximately 500 persons. This requires an operating fleet of 6 vans;
- private-sector operation with an hourly operating and maintenance cost of $35/hour; and
- possible termini (2), and intermediate shelters (2 for estimating purposes) at an approximate cost of $130,000.

The number of operating shuttle vehicles required for a design day are illustrated in the following table. Spare vehicles are not included. Costs per rider would range from $2.50 to $5.50 (capital cost spread over 10 years plus operating and maintenance costs). A family charge could also be developed. These costs may be too high to be borne by fares alone. However, the total annual operating costs ($125,000 to $170,000) are within the range of revenues estimated from projected visitor permit fees.

*Design Day is the day used to size the shuttle system, based on visitor projections. It is distinguished from the peak visitor day (less than) and from the average visitor day (more than) as a day when visitor capacity would not be exceeded by more than 5–10 days in a typical summer season.

	Design Day Ridership				
Shuttle Size	250	475	1000	1500	2000
10-passenger vans	4	6	13	19	26
25-passenger buses	2	3	5	8	10

Shuttle system costs could be reduced by:

- Providing service only on weekends and holidays. Total costs per rider would not change much. While operating costs per rider would decrease, capital costs would increase. However, the total annual operating budget would decrease by approximately half. While the cost per rider would not change much, the reduction in total operating cost may be an important financial consideration.
- Reducing capital costs. Because the shuttle would run only half the year approximately, capital costs are relatively more important than in a typical year-round operation (the operation can be discontinued at the end of the season; capital costs can not). Potential reductions would be modest, however. Cutting the vehicle cost to $20,000 each (using less expensive or used vehicles) and cutting station costs in half would reduce costs per rider by approximately 10–15%.

Funding for the development and implementation of a shuttle system could come from a variety of sources, including direct funding from King County/Metro, innovative uses of federal NEXTEA or other grants, or concessionaire services.

A concessionaire contract, with a King County/Metro guarantee in case fares do not meet expectations, is the most likely way to operate a shuttle system. Congressional cuts in transit operating funds are on the increase, and King County's backlog in desired transit services is growing. Since much of the Middle Fork's shuttle demand is expected to be on weekends or during the summer, it would be feasible to contract with an operator who could also provide facilities management.

The shuttle would be implemented over time based on user volumes. After an evaluation of its efficacy on the Middle Fork River Road is conducted, it could be considered for use on the Mt. Si Road (given existing traffic and user overflow problems on Mt. Si trailheads) as part of a larger Middle Fork system.

Given the data currently available for visitation and traffic in the Middle Fork Valley and, given the conceptual character of the River Corridor Public Use Concept, the approximations for visitor projections and permit and shuttle revenue generation are reasonable estimations. Both the USFS and King County should develop detailed visitor and traffic volume data bases and baseline monitoring during Phase III so that further study of a fee permit program and a shuttle service in the Middle Fork Valley can be undertaken.

IV. RIVER CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The major goals of the River Corridor implementation strategy are to:

- build an effective organization that can actively help steward the River corridor over time;
- solve the important use issues within the corridor quickly and effectively;
- obtain the funding and complete the planning and design necessary to construct needed facilities within the corridor in a timely manner; and
- develop the relationships necessary for true cooperative management of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River watershed.

MANAGEMENT SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

The recommendations proposed in the River Corridor Public Use Concept will require long-term, coordinated efforts between participating land managers, private land owners, and local, state and federal agencies. In addition, recreation, conservation and other community organizations will want to be involved in planning and implementation efforts. Regular meetings and constant coordination between all parties will be critical in making successful land acquisitions or exchanges, sharing information, developing and operating recreation sites, managing important Valley resources, obtaining funding, and influencing general regional and watershed planning.

The Middle Fork Steering Committee and the Middle Fork Task Force recommend implementation of the River Corridor Public Use Concept on two parallel levels. The first level will focus on the formation of an organizational partnership between the public and private land owners to develop and manage the river corridor's resources and facilitate management of the upland parts of the watershed. Each agency will coordinate its own actions and management responsibilities (within the mandates of its authorities) with the other land owners to solve problems of joint interest. The second level will focus on the development of recreation, interpretation and conservation projects within the river corridor.

These two levels of implementation—institutional will-building and physical planning—will require the formation of a strong, flexible alliance between the DNR, King County, USFS, the City of North Bend, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, Weyerhaeuser Company, MidFORC, Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, The Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County, WA State Parks, and citizens interested in the Middle Fork. With assistance from a river coordinator—a new interagency position—this alliance will:

- strengthen internal partnerships among the land owning and managing agencies;
- develop cooperative agreements among the partners and the private sector;
- assist in the design and implementation of recreation facilities;
- draw appropriate resources and expertise from each participating agency or group to implement the River Corridor Public Use Concept; and
- assist in developing a permanent constituency for the watershed.

MIDDLE FORK RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL

Because of the multiple ownerships, jurisdictions and separate missions of the groups and agencies involved in the Middle Fork, an organizational framework should be developed to oversee the implementation of actions and the development, operation and management of facilities within the river corridor.

One proposed model for this framework is the development of an interagency coordinating committee—the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Valley Council ('River Council')—organized as an affiliate to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway (MTSG). The River Council would consist of appropriate representatives from the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, WA DNR, Weyerhaeuser Company, King County, the City of North Bend, the Middle Fork Steering Committee and Task Force, MTSG, WA State Parks, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and a river coordinator.

The principal ownerships and managing parties involved in the Middle Fork Valley, acting through the Steering Committee, would establish the River Council and the river coordinator position. The River Council would be set up through a memorandum of understanding or cooperative agreement among the agencies and other participating parties, and be authorized to take the measures necessary to implement the River Corridor Public Use Concept. Other agencies and parties, such as The Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County, would participate on the Council as advisors on activities affecting the river corridor, and as direct players in development efforts and in building constituency support.

The River Council would not have legal authority but, consistent with the Phase I Charter, would act as an oversight committee. It would meet regularly with the river coordinator to implement the Concept through specific projects and other activities and would, in cooperation with the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, leverage funds and build support for activities in the Valley.

In general, the River Council's responsibilities would include:

- financing, appointing and providing office space for the Council's river coordinator who will aid agencies in the implementation of the Public Use Concept;
- facilitating funding from foundations, businesses and government sources at all levels;

- providing a forum for public participation;
- helping develop a Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley constituency;
- helping build and maintain interagency relationships through internal commitments by management of staff, moneys and other resources; and
- providing information, direction and support to the participating agencies and to the river coordinator.

The Council would not acquire lands or easements, or receive them. However, it could develop contracts and cooperative agreements and undertake other transactions for public agencies and other third parties to:

- receive funds from public agencies and private entities for development projects or volunteer support;
- disburse funds to public and private groups for development projects or volunteer support;
- hire staff and accept personnel, equipment and supplies from other groups to fulfill its responsibilities.

It should be emphasized that the River Council would be established in compliance with all federal and state requirements relating to the establishment of advisory committees and supporting organizations.

Middle Fork River Council Member Roles

Specific contributions and responsibilities of the participating parties on the River Council would include:

Federal: USFS

- salary (larger percentage) and operational funds to support a river coordinator, including possible office space
- technical assistance, including site planning, design and development of recreation sites
- capital project funds through existing federal programs
- land management
- law enforcement
- recreation management

State: DNR

- salary (larger percentage) and operational funds to support a river coordinator
- technical assistance, including planning, design, funding for and construction of recreation sites
- capital project funds through existing programs
- land management
- law enforcement
- assistance in recreation management on DNR lands

State: WA State Parks

- salary and operational funds (small to large percentage) to support a river coordinator
- technical assistance, including planning and coordination with other state-related projects in eastern King County such as Mt. Washington, Twin Falls State Park, Iron Horse Trail
- capital project funds through existing programs

State: WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife

- salary and operational funds (small to large percentage) to support a river coordinator
- technical assistance, including planning and coordination with other state-related fish and wildlife efforts that would pertain to the Middle Fork Valley such as fisheries resource assessments, public education, enforcement of fishery regulations, etc.
- capital project funds through existing programs or endowments

County: King County

- salary and operational funds (small to large percentage) to support a river coordinator
- support for shuttle access and bus service through Metro
- cooperates with County Council and larger Valley partnership to protect important adjacent land resources through appropriate zoning and land use controls
- facilitates residential, commercial and industrial development appropriate to gateway lands in and around North Bend
- resource and recreation management of Waterways 20000 program lands

- annual funding for land acquisition
- law enforcement
- management of the Middle Fork River Road

Local: City of North Bend

- salary and operational funds (smaller percentage) to support a river coordinator, including possible office space
- contributions to capital project costs (e.g. North Bend River Park, Valley staging area), including in-kind staff
- cooperates with County Council and larger Valley partnership to protect important adjacent land resources through appropriate zoning and land use controls
- facilitates residential, commercial and industrial development appropriate to gateway lands in and around North Bend
- facilitates economic development that enhances recreation use and resource protection in the Valley
- law enforcement
- recognizes/adopts River Corridor Public Use Concept

Mountains-to-Sound Greenway

- provides existing regional organizational framework for River Council to operate with
- helps leverage funding for river coordinator and corridor projects
- helps develop a Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Valley constituency
- participates in volunteer efforts
- helps facilitate, when necessary, recognition of common values and solutions to meet the needs of various Valley parties
- sponsors public events to promote the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River as an integral component of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Concept

Middle Fork Task Force (TAC)

- represented on the River Council
- provides advisory support to the river coordinator
- helps develop Valley-wide constituency via representative interest groups and governments

- helps coordinate volunteer efforts upon request
- initiates and/or helps identify issues, develop projects and studies
- pursues grants from foundations, the outdoor recreation industry, and government to support a river coordinator and projects in the corridor
- with the River Council, provides a public forum for Middle Fork-related issues twice per year or at special requests

Private Entities: Weyerhaeuser Company, corporate sponsors, concessionaire, etc.

- funds private share of river coordinator position
- operates facilities and/or operates shuttle
- provides funding or donations for capital projects
- provides resource management activities on private lands
- helps develop a Middle Fork River Valley regional constituency

Non-Profit Groups: The Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County, the Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Washington Trails Association, Sierra Club Volunteers for Outdoor Washington, etc.

- spearheads land acquisition
- provides funding for stewardship of acquisitions
- helps develop a Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley constituency
- participates in volunteer efforts
- helps secure project and land acquisition funding

MIDDLE FORK RIVER COORDINATOR

The Middle Fork river coordinator will help implement the Middle Fork Valley Concept and River Corridor Public Use Concept, and coordinate them with the goals and policies set forth in the various agency park, trails and recreation plans developed for eastern King County. These include plans for the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River Valley, Cedar Watershed, Rattlesnake Mountain, Rattlesnake Lake and adjacent lands to the north and east, as applicable. The river coordinator will work with the DNR, King County, WA State Parks, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, City of Issaquah and the existing Interagency Coordinator to establish and manage the necessary working relationships among the jurisdictional agencies responsible for managing public use in the Middle Fork River corridor and in this part of King County

The river coordinator will also help the DNR, Washington State Parks, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, King County Parks, City of North Bend, City of Seattle Water Department Watershed Division, the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest North Bend

Ranger District, Weyerhaeuser Company, Mountains-to-Sound Greenway, MidFORC and other participating land owners and organizations with resource management; recreation facilities planning and design; volunteer coordination; general environmental education; public and agency support; project funding, and; education about the Middle Fork Valley and nearby lands in eastern King County.

The river coordinator will be selected by the participating agencies, with assistance from the TAC and River Council. Once hired, the coordinator will be under contract to the DNR and have office space in either the City of Issaquah trails headquarters or, ideally, in the North Bend area. An existing agreement between the City of Issaquah and WA DNR was established in 1995 to implement a similar arrangement with the current Interagency Coordinator position. An amendment to this existing agreement includes the Middle Fork river coordinator and has recently been approved. Other office arrangements may be possible in the WA State Parks District office east of North Bend or the USFS North Bend Ranger District office.

As of the date of this report, money is being secured for a one year position from the WA DNR, King County, USFS, WA State Parks, Middle Fork Task Force (TAC), and others. Next year, the River Council will fund the position on a more permanent basis.

A river coordinator for the Middle Fork is critical to:

- ensuring implementation of the projects and actions identified during Phases I and II;
- maintaining the strong partnership and problem solving momentum established during Phases I and II;
- building and maintaining the working relationships necessary to manage the river corridor and influence management of the larger watershed;
- developing a wider set of working relationships that reflect the regional context of opportunities and management issues facing this part of the Greenway; and
- obtaining moneys to establish a long term program for the Middle Fork Valley.

Specific river coordinator responsibilities will include:

- coordinating the activities of the River Council;
- coordinating interagency facilities development projects within the river corridor, including technical assistance, design and planning;
- developing a volunteer stewardship program for the Middle Fork with Washington Trails Association (WTA), Volunteers for Outdoor Washington (VOW), and other organizations and agencies (e.g. WDFW), and identifying projects, matching volunteers to projects and coordinating onsite work;
- helping develop a comprehensive interpretation and public education program for the watershed;

- helping obtain ongoing moneys to implement the corridor concept including identifying funding sources and completing grant applications;
- identifying and initiating new projects with the River Council;
- helping develop a broad local and regional constituency for the watershed through active solicitation, presentations, written materials;
- maintaining the interagency relationships on the River Council; and
- helping with existing local, county, state and federal trail and other projects in eastern King County.

ACTION PLAN (PHASE III)

The River Council, river coordinator, and other partners will undertake a range of actions to implement the proposals described in the River Corridor Public Use Concept. The following Action Plan outlines these tasks within the context of goals for a number of time periods. It also coordinates activities and projects with other efforts being pursued, and assigns responsibility to appropriate parties. In most cases, the river coordinator, River Council, or a specific agency position will initiate, organize and oversee implementation.

The Action Plan is organized into the following "action categories":

Public Safety/Law Enforcement
Management Structure
Valley Cleanup
Dispersed Access Management
Target Shooting
Transportation
Trail Access and Development
New Facilities Development
User Access Fee Program
Land Acquisition
Conservation and Restoration
Interpretation/Education
Volunteer Program
Citizen Advocacy/Community Outreach
Funding

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Development and construction of the recreation facilities described in the Middle Fork River Corridor Public Use Concept will take several years and multiple efforts. However, facilities development can be prioritized to respond to public safety issues, financial and political realities, and to build the physical infrastructure needed to direct

long-term recreation use and resource protection. Project priorities within a 0–5+ year timeframe were established during discussions among the Middle Fork Steering Committee members and workshops with the TAC. Where applicable, project priorities are listed before each action matrix.

TIMEFRAME: IMMEDIATE–2 MONTHS

ANTICIPATED KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completion and distribution of River Corridor Public Use Concept
- Development of River Council and river coordinator position
- Recognition of Public Use Concept by key agencies and parties

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Management Structure	• Develop interagency structure for implementation	Steering Committee, MTSG, WDFW
	• Meet with City of North Bend to identify their interest, benefit and participation	Steering Committee, MTSG
	• Identify and obtain funding for coordinator position	Steering Committee, TAC, WDFW, WA State Parks
Public Safety/Valley Cleanup/ Dispersed Access Management	• Post visitor information signs in valley regarding firearms use, littering and dispersed camping, fisheries regulations	DNR, USFS, King County, WDFW, Weyerhaeuser Co
Transportation	• Initiate USFS ATM process with information board placed at selected locations indicating alternative road and trail scenarios	USFS
Conservation and Restoration	• Identify Jobs for the Environment projects	Steering Committee
	• Continue Valley cleanup	Friends of the Trail
Community Outreach	• Establish valley visibility—open house, press releases, projects, events	Steering Committee, MTSG

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

TIMEFRAME: 2–6 MONTHS

ANTICIPATED KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Organization of River Council and hiring of river coordinator
- Recognition of Public Use Concept by key agencies and parties
- Obtain necessary funding for river coordinator

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Public Safety / Law Enforcement	• Coordinate and increase interagency law enforcement presence in the Valley	DNR, King County, USFS, City of North Bend, WDFW
	• Design and install visitor information signs about legal and illegal use of firearms	DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co, USFS, King County, SVRC
	• Compile law enforcement data to identify patterns and locations of visitor and resource problems; develop enforcement strategy	DNR, USFS, King County, WDFW
Management Structure	• Refine Council roles	USFS, DNR, King County, City of North Bend, Steering Committee, TAC Weyerhaeuser Co, WA State Parks, WDFW
	• Establish and recognize new River Council	MTSG, USFS, DNR, King County, City of North Bend, TAC, Weyerhaeuser Co, WA State Parks, WDFW
	• Fund and staff river coordinator position and finalize office location	River Council, DNR, USFS, City of North Bend, WA State Parks
	• Develop and draft interagency and landowner agreements	DNR, USFS, King County, WA State Parks, WDFW, MTSG, Land Conservancy of Seattle and King County, Weyerhaeuser Co

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Management Structure (cont.)	• Explore partnerships for volunteer work, land acquisition, funding support	River Council, river coordinator
	• Prepare white paper about River Corridor Concept for distribution at national USFS level	River Council, river coordinator
	• Conduct presentation with King County	River Council, river coordinator, King County, MTSG, Jones & Jones
	• Hold open house for River Corridor Public Use Concept	DNR, MTSG
Valley Cleanup	• Fund and continue Valley clean up (including litter and derelict car removal, close selected dispersed access sites)	Friends of the Trail, JOE, King County, USFS, DNR, MidFORC, WDFW
	• Install visitor information signs about dumping, dispersed access, overnight camping and legal/illegal use of firearms, fisheries regulations on respective properties.	King County, DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co, WDFW
	• Develop a public message about citizen stewardship of river corridor lands through articles, presentations to groups, and general distribution	River Council, MidFORC, river coordinator, WDFW
Dispersed Access Management	• Follow up with USFS staff on the watershed analysis to begin identifying recommended day use and designated overnight sites	River Council, river coordinator
	• Initiate ATM process in valley; sign roads	USFS

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Dispersed Access Management (cont.)	• Complete "tank trapping" of spur roads	DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co
	• Enforce ban on overnight camping in corridor from valley entry to USFS boundary	DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co, King County, private landowners
	• Install visitor information signs about dumping, dispersed access, overnight camping and legal/illegal use of firearms, fisheries regulations on respective properties.	Friends of the Trail, King County, Weyerhaeuser Co, DNR, WDFW
	• Coordinate and increase interagency law enforcement presence in the Valley	DNR, King County, USFS, City of North Bend, WDFW
Target Shooting	• Assist in developing study and identifying potential funds for target range site study in Middle Fork or lower Snoqualmie valley (South/North Forks)	River Council, river coordinator, SVRC, DNR, King County, USFS
Transportation	• Continue shuttle feasibility study, including analysis of private sector and funding opportunities	River coordinator
	• Initiate King Co. road survey to initiate numbers monitoring	King County DOT, USFS, river coordinator
	• Define desired road character for future Middle Fork River Road projects	River Council, river coordinator, King County DOT, WADOT, DNR, USFS, TAC, FHP, Jones & Jones
	• Explore scope of 2003 project	River coordinator, River Council, USFS, King County, WADOT, FHP, TAC

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Transportation (cont.)	• Clarify road ownership and boundaries, including right-of-way	King County DOT, DNR, USFS
	• Determine road maintenance responsibilities	King County, DNR, USFS
Trail Access and Development	• Implement and enforce Middle Fork Trail use regulations; sign affected trails	USFS
	• Identify specific road-to-trail projects	River coordinator, River Council, USFS, DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co
	• Continue volunteer trail maintenance activities	River coordinator, River Council, MidFORC, BBTC, BHWA, WTA, VOW
New Facilities Development	• Continue planning CCC road-to-trail	River coordinator, USFS, DNR, WTA, BBTC BHWA, MidFORC, Sierra Club, Weyerhaeuser Co
	• Begin planning Mt. Si/CCC road trailhead	River coordinator, DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co, TPL
	• Integrate trailhead concept with Mt. Si NRCA management plan and capital improvements schedule	DNR, river coordinator
	• Continue evaluation of potential recreation and interpretation sites in Valley outside of river corridor	River coordinator, USFS, DNR, River Council, WDFW, Weyerhaeuser Co
	• Continue feasibility study of potential day-use sites and begin site and facility plans	River coordinator, River Council, DNR, USFS, WDFW
	• Continue restoration of Granite Creek Flats site and finalize management plan	King County Waterways 2000

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
User Access Fee Program	• Continue research on potential user fee program, including identification of applicable models from other areas	USFS, DNR, river coordinator
Land Acquisition	• Complete USFS and Weyerhaeuser Co exchange	USFS, Weyerhaeuser Co
	• Explore potential acquisition opportunities (fee or easement)	TLC, King County, USFS, DNR
Conservation & Restoration	• Complete and publish Middle Fork Watershed Analysis	USFS
	• Identify potential restoration projects and potential funding sources	River coordinator, River Council, WDFW
	• Complete biosolids project on Zorro Ridge	MTSG, DNR
Advocacy/Community Outreach	• Develop additional partners for Valley projects	River Council, TAC, WDFW, MTSG
	• Develop public awareness message and draft agency packets	River Council, river coordinator, WDFW
	• Develop and coordinate annual Valley field tour or open house for public, key officials and stakeholders	River Council, river coordinator
	• Obtain formal recognition for River Council from other groups	River Council, MTSG
Funding	• Find and obtain moneys to fund river coordinator position	River Council
	• Explore project funding sources	River Council, river coordinator
	• Identify potential IAC projects and prepare applications	DNR, King County, TAC, USFS, river coordinator

TIMEFRAME: 6 MONTHS–2 YRS

ANTICIPATED KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Solidification of interagency organizational structure and roles
- Solidification of river coordinator position, responsibilities and funding
- Establishment of day use and overnight camping infrastructure, with operations/staffing needs, final cost estimates determined
- Development of visitor and road database for Valley
- Completion of several facilities projects, including phases of the CCC road-to-trail
- Establishment of a greater law enforcement presence in the Valley
- Designation of specific dispersed overnight sites in corridor

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Install an entrance booth at Valley Entry area
- Install visitor information signs at key areas (prioritize locations based on use issues and resource sensitivities)
- Increase law enforcement presence and visibility throughout river corridor
- Reopen Mine Creek for interim day-use area
- Begin development of the CCC road-to-trail including analysis of a CCC trailhead in the vicinity of the eastern portion of the Mt. Si NRCA, and development of a public involvement process to ensure support and acceptance
- Close selected spur roads
- Add gates to Taylor River and Dingford Creek
- Design, develop and open the Pratt River Bar day use site
- Develop and open the River Bend day use site
- Assist the Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club (SVRC) with grant applications for study of potential shooting range sites
- Acquire key parcels in the Middle Fork Valley
- Work with City of North Bend to establish gateway ideas, including staging area concept

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Public Safety / Law Enforcement	• Maintain coordinated law enforcement efforts; add staff if necessary	River Council, river coordinator, DNR, USFS, King County, WDFW
	• Develop gun safety / public education program	SVRC, agencies
	• Work with private groups to find appropriate shooting range site (within or out of Mid Fork Valley)	SVRC, river coordinator, DNR, King County, USFS, TAC
Management Structure	• Develop and refine River Council working relationships	DNR, King County, USFS, WDFW, WA State Parks, MTSG, other
	• Finalize and obtain final written cooperative agreements	River Council
Valley Cleanup	• Continue garbage and derelict car removal	Friends of the Trail
	• Install additional information signs if necessary	King County, DNR, Weyerhaeuser Co, WDFW, USFS
Dispersed Access Management	• Complete ATM study and implement findings; sign candidate roads	USFS
	• Continue closure and tank trapping of spur roads and sites, especially those near river	DNR, USFS
	• Harden appropriate riverside sites and close others; sign and enforce	USFS, DNR, WDFW
	• Install entry sign and temporary information booth at mouth of Valley	DNR, King County, WDFW Weyerhaeuser Co; USFS to review
	• Install trained volunteers at temporary information booth at mouth of Valley	River Council, DNR, King County, USFS Weyerhaeuser Co

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Dispersed Access Management (cont.)	• Identify other potential trails, trailheads and overlooks in Middle Fork Valley	DNR, USFS, River Council, river coordinator, WTA, TAC
Target Shooting	• Initiate and complete target range site study in Mid Fork Valley and nearby lands	SVRC, River Council, river coordinator
	• Implement safe shooting campaign	River Council, SVRC
Transportation	• Identify funding needs for Middle Fork Road improvements and long-term maintenance	King County, USFS
	• Install gates at Dingford Creek and Taylor River	USFS, River Council
	• Coordinate development of visitor data base	King County, USFS, DNR, WDFW, other interests
Trail Access and Development	• Begin CCC road-to-trail project, including trailhead site analysis and public involvement process, trail survey design and construction of road-to-trail from Bessemer Road to Middle Fork River Road	USFS, DNR, BBTC, MidFORC, WTA, Weyerhaeuser Co, Sierra Club, river coordinator, River Council
	• Complete design development and design documents for proposed CCC trailhead on the Mt. Si site	DNR, river coordinator
New Facilities Development	• Continue design documents for targeted day-use sites; develop cost estimates and timelines; apply for development funding	River Council, river coordinator, DNR, King County, USFS
	• Coordinate with USFS staff on day use and overnight projects planned for USFS lands	River Council, river coordinator

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
New Facilities Development (cont.)	• Define operating structure, including staffing, costs, private vs. public operation, etc. for day use sites	River Council, agencies, river coordinator
	• Refine entry portal area design; develop cost estimates, apply for funding	River coordinator, River Council, DNR
	• Begin North Bend staging area site planning; explore local partnerships, begin programming	River coordinator, River Council, City of North Bend, King County, North Bend coalition
	• Evaluate and identify appropriate dispersed overnight campsites	River Council, river coordinator, agencies
	• Continue identifying potential traiheads and roads-to-trails	River coordinator, River Council,
	• Coordinate regional trails connections	River coordinator, River Council, WA State Parks, City of Seattle, King County, WTA, MTSG
	• Continue identification and evaluation of reserve areas	River coordinator, River Council, DNR, USFS
	• Improve and reopen Mine Creek for interim day use	DNR
	• Build Pratt River Bar day use site	River Council, USFS
	• Build River Bend day use site	USFS
	• Coordinate further resource study of Oxbow Natural Area	DNR, River Council, river coordinator
User Access Fee Program	• Make user fee program recommendations	River Council
	• Identify other potential trails, trailheads and overlooks in Middle Fork Valley for user permit program	DNR, USFS, River Council, river coordinator, TAC

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Land Acquisition	• Acquire important parcels in Valley	TLC, King County, DNR, USFS
Conservation and Restoration	• Implement watershed analysis recommendations	USFS
	• Establish 300 ft. setback from river for all structure facilities	USFS, DNR, King County
	• Continue further study of Oxbow Natural Area to determine resource sensitivity and capability for public use	DNR, River Council, river coordinator
	• Begin restoring spur roads and other restoration areas to natural conditions	DNR, USFS, King County, volunteer groups
	• Continue study of shuttle and Metro/City of North Bend connections	River coordinator
Interpretation and Education	• Conduct additional research on Valley's natural and cultural history	River coordinator
	• Refine analysis of river corridor places and identify important resources	River coordinator
	• Identify preliminary interpretive goals and visitor needs	River coordinator, River Council
	• Identify preliminary interpretive themes for river corridor	River coordinator, River Council
	• Establish interpretation subcommittee to work with agencies, educators, local experts regarding environmental education	River Council, river coordinator
	• Develop Valley-wide interpretive master plan	River Council, river coordinator, consultant
	• Develop interpretive design standards	River Council, river coordinator, consultant

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Interpretation and Education (cont.)	• Develop non-site specific interpretive media—school programs, brochures, guidebooks, videos, Valley tours, etc.	River Council, river coordinator, other groups
Volunteer Program	• Begin developing potential coordination framework for volunteer activities; identify potential projects and partners	River coordinator, River Council, WTA, VOW, MidFORC
Citizen Advocacy / Community Outreach	• Develop and coordinate permanent volunteer organizational structure	River coordinator, WTA
	• Implement outreach and public message program	River coordinator, agencies
Funding	• Solidify funding sources for river coordinator position	River Council

TIMEFRAME: 2–5 YEARS

ANTICIPATED KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued establishment of corridor day-use infrastructure
- Institutionalization of interagency organization
- Generation of visitor use and traffic volume data for long-term development scenarios
- Implementation of Valley user access fee program, if appropriate
- Identification and enforcement of appropriate dispersed overnight camping sites
- Planning for Taylor River complex, as funds are available

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Build Mt. Si trailhead; finish any incomplete sections of the CCC road-to-trail to Taylor River
- Develop and build Granite Creek Flats day-use area
- Develop and build the Camp Brown
- Close and restore inappropriate dispersed sites to natural conditions
- Establish staging area in North Bend
- Open improved Mine Creek day use area

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party
Public Safety	• Maintain coordinated law enforcement efforts; add staff if necessary	River Council, river coordinator
Management Structure	• Revise management structure, add parties if desirable	River Council, river coordinator
Valley Cleanup	• Institutionalize cleanup activities through coordinated volunteer program	River Council, river coordinator, volunteers, agencies
Dispersed Access Management	• Close selected dispersed roads & sites, sooner if possible	USFS
Target Shooting	• Continue safe shooting program	SVRC
	• Assist with site plan(s) if selected target shooting site is in Valley	River Council, river coordinator

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Transportation	• Identify acceptable Middle Fork road improvements	USFS, River Council, WTA, MidFORC, BBTC, Sierra Club, etc.
	• Continue to build road use and visitor database	King County DOT, DNR, USFS, River Council, river coordinator
	• Implement final ATM findings, including gate closures	King County DOT, USFS
Trail Access and Development	• Build Mt. Si trailhead and finish CCC Road-to-trail	USFS
New Facilities Development	• Identify North Bend staging area site and begin developing site plan	River Council, river coordinator, private developer, City of North Bend
	• Continue study of reserve areas for day-use, including preliminary site design and general cost estimates	River coordinator, DNR, King County, USFS
	• Verify feasibility of Taylor River overnight campsite development; determine staffing needs to operate	USFS, River Council
	• Develop Granite Creeks Flat day use area	King County, River Council, river coordinator
	• Develop Camp Brown	USFS, River Council, river coordinator
	• Open improved Mine Creek	DNR
	• Improve and open dispersed campsites	DNR, USFS
User Access Fee Program	• Introduce pilot fee program for day use and overnight camping sites	DNR, USFS

Action Category	Action Task	Action Party*
Land Acquisition	• Continue acquisition (fee or easement) or land exchange of valley lands	USFS, DNR, TLC, others
	• Acquire North Bend River Park site and develop for day use	King County, City of North Bend
Conservation and Restoration	• Continue restoration of unused spur roads and riverside sites to natural conditions	USFS, DNR, JOE, others
	• Continue restoration of targeted agency lands	DNR, USFS, Weyerhaeuser Co, King County
	• Enforce watershed recommendations	USFS
Interpretation/ Education	• Implement master plan and develop outreach efforts	River Council, river coordinator, private organizations
Citizen Advocacy/ Community Outreach	• Continue public outreach	River Council, river coordinator
Funding	• Continue to solicit and obtain project funding	River Council

**Action Party Abbreviations*

BBTC=Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club
BHWA= Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
DNR= Washington Dept. of Natural Resources
FHP= Forest Highway Program
JOE= Jobs for the Environment
MidFORC= Middle Fork Coalition
MTSG = Mountains to-Sound Greenway
SVRC= Snoqualmie Valley Rifle Club
TAC= Middle Fork Task Force
TPL= Trust for Public Land
TLC= The Land Conservancy of Seattle King County
USFS= US Forest Service, Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
VOW= Volunteers for Outdoor Washington
WADOT= Washington Dept. of Transportation
WDFW= Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
WTA= Washington Trails Association

TIMEFRAME: 5++ YEARS

ANTICIPATED KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Implementation of remaining elements in River Corridor Public Use Concept according to prioritization list
- Operation of effective partnership among land managers
- Presence of effective public information program and established Valley constituency
- Development of restoration research opportunities with outside entities
- Decrease in law enforcement needs in the Valley

PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Develop Taylor River overnight and interpretive complex
- Develop permanent staffed Valley Entry facility
- Develop permanent staging area in or near North Bend
- Open Oxbow Natural Area for guided and limited day use and interpretation, if appropriate

ACTIONS

- Design and construct overnight camping facilities at Taylor River;
- Build gatekeeper building and residence at Valley Entry Portal;
- Build Oxbow Natural Area facilities
- Maintain and grow volunteer/stewardship organization;
- Continue generating funds for project coordination and interagency management;
- Introduce shuttle program, if feasible.

SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT: FRIENDS AND FUNDS

The Middle Fork River Corridor Public Use Concept will be implemented by the River Council, river coordinator and extensive volunteer efforts. However, alliances among region-wide businesses, non-profit and community organizations, and environmental groups will be critical to the successful operation of facilities, the management of visitor experiences, the effective protection of the Valley as a regional

reserve for recreation, conservation and interpretation, and the evolution of the new management partnership outlined above. Many important actions involving outside audiences will need to be taken in the near future to build these alliances. Some of these include:

- Obtaining support from key recreation businesses and promoters such as REI, Patagonia and Eddie Bauer;
- Establishing the Valley as an outdoor laboratory for research and public education activities by the WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, University of Washington, USFWS Gap Analysis Program, Seattle School District, City of Seattle Water Department, Pacific Science Center, etc.;
- Developing sponsorships from local and regional organizations and foundations such as The Mountaineers, Weyerhaeuser Company, the Washington Forest Protection Association, the Strong, Wilburforce, Bullitt, Henry P. Kendall, Northwest Area, and Lazar Foundations.

APPENDIX A

RIVER CORRIDOR RESOURCES

One of the operating concepts for the River Corridor Public Use Concept is to locate human activities and facilities only within areas that are environmentally suitable. Only through sensitive site selection, site planning and site design that is compatible with the environmental conditions of the area, can a balance between environmental protection, recreation and land management be achieved. Another important part of this balance is the definition of the appropriate level of development for the site conditions and on-going environmental monitoring once a project has been constructed and activities initiated.

As part of the Middle Fork Phase I effort, environmental information was collected and analyzed for the 110,000 acre Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River valley study area. This information was presented on inventory maps and mylar overlays and summarized on a sensitive resources map (enclosed). The lack of wetlands, floodplain and soils information was identified as an information gap during Phase I.

The Phase II effort focused on an approximately 2 mile-wide corridor paralleling the river from the Valley couplet at its mouth to Dingford Creek. This area was studied in greater detail because it is (and will continue to be) the area of recreation activity concentration within the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley. The following environmental information was collected and analyzed as part of this Phase II planning effort.

RIVER PLACES

People experience the Middle Fork Valley as a series of different landscapes as they pass up and down the valley. Each of these landscapes is a distinct place, possessing different landscape characteristics, views and land tenure history. In the Middle Fork Valley, sub-watershed boundaries and specific landscape features were used to delineate the edges of these places.

As part of the planning process each landscape place was given a name. Many of the names were taken from USGS base maps where prominent landscape features are noted. Several of the names have historic connections while others relate to specific landscape features. The place names have been noted on the concept maps so that people's "ownership" in those places is enhanced.

In addition, the use of place names simplified the planning process by providing place-based analysis units. Identifying landscape places also facilitated the discussion of specific points in the landscape and made it easier for people to see how site specific actions were connected to a larger landscape context.

RIVER RESOURCES AND SENSITIVE RESOURCES

SURFICIAL GEOLOGY

The surficial geology of the Middle Fork Valley was mapped as part of the Phase II information inventory. Illustrative cross sections through the valley were also developed. J. Hoover Mackin described the Middle Fork Valley surficial geology in an article in The Journal of Geology, July-August 1941. The Middle Fork Valley is an example of a U-shaped valley resulting from glacial activity. The valley was cut by pre-Vashon glaciers extending down valley to and beyond Mount Si. Local glaciers also occupied cirques in the mountains.

During a later period, the Vashon Puget Glacier flowed to the Middle Fork Valley mouth and build deltaic outwash plains into the Valley. The Middle Fork Valley embankment, which is located at the mouth of the Valley at the base of Mount Si, is the result of the outwash plain development. The embankment is composed of debris masses post dating the valleys. The material is composed of irregularly bedded sands, gravels and contorted clay lenses, and great boulders plucked from the surfaces of Mount Si.

This embankment, which at one time was connected to Grouse Ridge and the Cedar Valley across I 90, has been cut through by the Middle Fork River. During the Vashon Puget Glacier period, lakes occupied the Middle Fork, South Fork and Cedar valleys.

One of the striking features of the Middle Fork Valley is a lake shoreline at elevation 1500-1600 feet. The shore line is seen as a faint change in slope. The complex interfingering on till, outwash gravels, and lacustrine sediments that make up the surficial geology of the valley is due to changes in the position of the Vashon Puget Glacier ice front, shifting routes of meltwater streams and variations in the level of the lake formed up valley from the ice front.

SOIL HYDROLOGY

The soils occurring within the study area were mapped and analyzed. The source for the soils information was the King and Pierce County Soils Report—USDA-NRCS, 1992. The following soil/hydrology conditions were interpreted and mapped.

A. Soils Subject to Flooding

These soils generally occur immediately adjacent to the river or on river terraces within 1000-2000 feet of the river.

Soil No.	Soil Name	Occurrence
50 -	Crofluvents -	Occasional
53 -	Edgewick silt loam -	Occasional
70 -	Grotto -	
75 -	Haywire loamy sand -	
157 -	Nooksack silt loam -	Occasional
187 -	Pilchuck loamy fine sand -	Occasional
202 -	Puget silty clay loam -	Occasional
215 -	Riverwash -	Frequent
226 -	Salal silt loam -	Occasional
236 -	Si silt loam -	Occasional
241 -	Snoqualmie loamy fine sand -	Occasional
248 -	Sultan silt loam -	Rare
267 -	Udifluvents -	Occasional

B. Seasonally High Water Table Soils
High water generally occurs within 0–1 feet of the soil surface.

Soil No.	Soil Name	Occurrence
25	Borohemists	Oct.–June
79	Humaquepts	Dec.–May
106	Klaber silt loam	Nov.–May
215	Riverwash	Jan.–Dec.

C. Seasonal High Water table
High water generally occurs within 1–4 feet of the soil surface (*3–5 feet of the soil surface)

Soil No.	Soil Name	Occurrence
34-38	Chinkman sandy loam	Nov.–July
53	Edgewick silt loam	Feb.–April
92*-93	*Kaleetan sandy loam	Nov.–March
104	Kindy gravelly loam	Nov.–April
106*	Klaber silt loam	Nov.–May
157	Nooksack silt loam	Feb.–May
182-183	Philippa sandy loam	Dec.–April
187	Pilchuck loamy dine sand	Nov.–April
202	Puget silty clay loam	Nov.–May
216-217	Rober loam	Dec.–May
226	Salal silt loam	Feb.–April
235	Shalcar muck	Oct.–May
236	Si silt loam	Nov.- May
241*	Snoqualmie loamy fine sand	Nov.–April
248	Sultan silt loam	Nov.–April
258	Tokul-Pastik complex	Nov.–May

SENSITIVE RESOURCES

Sensitive Resources information collected during Phase I was reformatted, augmented with additional information and presented on the enclosed map. The map includes the following resource information:

A. Vegetation

Old Growth (200–250 plus years)

Late Successional Old Growth

Late Successional Reserve

Wetlands

B. Soils

Erodible Soils

Highly Unstable Soils

Erodible and Unstable Soils

C. Wildlife*

Wintering Range (mountain goat, elk, deer)

Sensitive Habitat

*Information is aggregated on the enclosed map

D. Surface Hydrology

Streams and Lakes

Critical Spawning Habitat

Listed Resident Fish Present Streams

Watershed Boundary

LAND TENURE

The Phase I and II concept recommendations and concept actions fit within an overall landscape management framework that matches suitable land uses and management activities with the environmental characteristics and history of human use in the Valley. An important element of the land management framework for the Valley is the land use history and land tenure mosaic present in the area. This history includes the logging history and presence or absence of roads. These land conditions, defined in Phase I, are characterized below and available on a map of the river corridor. They were overlain on the resource information to help identify appropriate levels and locations of recreation development.

WILDERNESS (UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE)

The wilderness landscape is a nationally recognized resource managed under provisions of the Wilderness Act. This near pristine landscape is free of human impact except for minimal trail and campsite development. This landscape provides primitive recreation opportunities (non-mechanized) where solitude is an important visitor experience. Ecological preservation is paramount in this landscape. Mechanized equipment, including bicycles, is not compatible with this landscape type.

BACK COUNTRY— ROADLESS, UNDISTURBED AREAS (PUBLIC OWNERSHIP)

This primitive, wild-landscape has little or no evidence of human disturbance. Primitive recreation is a significant part of this landscape and provides similar visitor experiences as the wilderness landscape. This landscape has a high degree of ecologic preservation. The visitor's experience is of a natural area where solitude is a little more elusive than in the wilderness landscape. Mechanized equipment is not compatible with this landscape type. However, modest camp site hardening is allowed.

FRONT COUNTRY

The Front Country landscape is defined by the presence of human intervention. This area provides opportunities for a range of recreation activities and facilities. Some areas are retained in an undisturbed condition similar to Back Country. Timber management activities such as thinning, salvage or partial cuts occur in specific locations. No new main roads are anticipated. Substantial road-to-trail conversions would occur within this landscape. Mechanized equipment is compatible with the character of this landscape in selected locations.

RIVER CORRIDOR

The river corridor, under predominantly public ownership, is a sensitive landscape that provides significant ecological, scenic and recreation activities. The river landscape includes riparian vegetation, floodplain and natural meander stretches. Overnight and day use facilities and activities are to be carefully located and designed to limit impacts to this area. Wildlife movement routes must be considered in facility location.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

This managed forest landscape, in a mix of public and private ownerships, includes intensive timber management areas with roads and logging activities. Road or trail-oriented recreation activities are compatible with this area as long as they do not significantly constrain timber operations. This landscape maintains a variety of ecological functions, although late successional old growth (LSOG) forest may be limited and fragmented.

WORKING FOREST

This tenure class includes timber management areas within the Front Country and Gateway landscapes where it is appropriate. Road or trail-oriented recreation activities are compatible with this area as long as they do not significantly constrain timber operations.

RESTORATION LANDSCAPE

Areas within this landscape have undergone human disturbance. Landscape restoration is an attempt to revert disturbed land to Back Country, Front Country or River Corridor landscape character. Forest management and compatible recreation uses define the appropriate activities in this landscape type.

GATEWAY LANDSCAPE

This landscape provides a setting for activities that support and facilitate the working forests and recreational activities in the Valley. This area also includes areas of existing residences.

SUITABILITY FOR LAND MANAGEMENT

The information discussed above defines areas of environmental constraints and sensitivities as well as land tenure classes that must be taken into account when considering land management actions and the magnitude, location and design of recreation facilities and activities. Careful, site specific assessment will be required as this project moves into the next phase of refining visitor activities and determining final locations for a range of suitable facilities.

DATA GAPS

Phase III work should include site specific mapping of floodplain and wetland areas prior to final site planning and design, and greater coordination among USFS, DNR, Weyerhaeuser Company and King County resource staff to insure that site specific environmental conditions are addressed.

APPENDIX B

DAY USE AND OVERNIGHT SITES

INTRODUCTION

During Phase I, several objectives were developed to realize the Concept for the Middle Fork Valley. The objectives are target goals for natural resource protection and appropriate recreation and resource management. They included:

1. Improve safety and security
2. Improve firearm safety
3. Develop Valley Gateway
4. Meet demand for low-impact recreation
5. Provide research and education opportunities
6. Restore and protect ecosystem functions
7. Develop appropriate transportation infrastructure
8. Increase public land ownership

During Phase II, potential day use and overnight sites were identified, and facilities programs and design concepts developed, to respond to these objectives. Objectives met at specific sites are listed by number under Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints.

In addition to responding to the objectives, potential sites had to meet the following site selection criteria:

- contributes to providing a diverse range of activities for a diverse range of users Valley-wide (including hiking, biking, horse back riding, kayaking/rafting, hunting and fishing);
- uses existing disturbed sites;
- works within the context of the private or public landowners management framework;
- provides for low impact development and low cost investment and maintenance;
- is located away from sensitive natural and cultural resources;
- provides foot access to representative or unique natural and cultural resources where appropriate;
- provides river access where appropriate;

- provides safe vehicle and/or pedestrian access to and from roads, trails and other proposed sites;
- provides the potential to connect to other sites inside and outside of the Valley; and
- meets physical requirements for facility programs.

The following preliminary site and facility profiles were developed using existing resource and visitor use information, and projected visitor profiles. Gross budget opinions were prepared using the preliminary facilities programming outlined in Phase II. Unit costs were obtained from the National Park Service Class C Estimating Guide, Denver Service Center, 1996-1998. They reflect net construction costs and twenty percent overhead and profit with four percent inflation per year. Contingencies, planning and design, project supervision, permits, taxes and general requirements were added to net construction costs for each project for a preliminary cost summary. Site acquisition costs or leases are not included in the preliminary cost summaries. Refer to the River Corridor Public Use Concept map for site locations.

NORTH BEND RIVER PARK

This site is located just upstream of River Mile 48 on the Middle Fork River east of the Mt. Si Road and north of North Bend Way. The site has been discussed as a developed put-in/take-out for non-motorized boat access since no locations for this purpose exist on the 'Middle Middle' segment of the river. Other facilities on the site could include parking, interpretive and directional information and a pedestrian/bike connection to the Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- flat site located on private property adjacent to the river;
- site is split by the Snoqualmie Valley Trail; northern half King County, the southern half recently annexed by the City of North Bend. Land to the north belongs to King County;
- adjacent private uses on either side;
- boaters running the Middle Middle segment of the Middle Fork (Class III-IV whitewater) with non-motorized craft access the river and shoreline via a King County right-of-way at Tanner Road, approximately 1/2 mile upstream from the proposed site. Boater traffic levels have increased because of popularity of the segment and site. Consequently, private property concerns are increasing. The road is now gated 100-200 yds from the river resulting in vehicle parking on the non-river side of Tanner Road and difficult river access for boaters;
- King County has tried to purchase the site in order to respond to the situation, but the site remains private. It has been identified for priority acquisition in the King County Trails Master Plan;
- opportunities exist for minimal development as a river access point and small day use park, jointly owned by the City and County, with connections to the river, the existing Snoqualmie Valley Trail and to one of the alternative proposed staging sites along North Bend Way;
- meets concept objectives 1,3,4,7,8.

Detailed environmental studies of the site must be conducted by King County to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of using the site and important needs such as parking. The property would have to be acquired and maintenance resources secured to successfully develop this site.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

A facilities program and development concept for this site was not prepared during Phase II. However, a potential use program was discussed for the site. It included car and

bike parking, river access for non-motorized boats, road access to the site, information and interpretive signs, and a connection to the Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle stop
Car parking
Bike rack(s)
Composting toilet
Trash receptacle
Entry/information/interpretive signs
Access road
Trail connection

NORTH BEND RIVER PARK

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Car parking, gravel	5	10	900	space	$4,500	$9,000
Bike rack(s)	1	2	750	ea	$750	$1,500
Toilet, composting, men/women	1	1	30,000	ea	$30,000	$30,000
Trash receptacle	1	2	450	ea	$450	$900
Entry/directional sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive sign	1	1	2,000	ea.	$2,000	$2,000
New access road, gravel	0.125	0.5	480,000	mile	$60,000	$240,000
Site preparation	2	5	3,500	ac	$7,000	$17,500
Permits	1	1	10,000		$10,000	$10,000
Sub Totals					$125,050	$321,250
Construction Supervision				15%	$18,758	$48,188
Contingencies				20%	$25,010	$64,250
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$15,006	$38,550
General Requirements				8%	$10,004	$25,700
Taxes				8.60%	$10,754	$27,628
Total Cost					$204,582	$525,565

MT. SI/CCC ROAD TRAILHEAD

INTRODUCTION

A proposed Mt. Si/CCC Road trailhead site is located on the Mt. Si Road, approximately 4 miles east of the Mt. Si Bridge and immediately west of the Tenerife neighborhood. The site would include approximately 2.5 acres within the vicinity of the eastern portion of the Mt. Si Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) or on DNR trust lands (including former Champion property). Final location of the site has yet to be determined.

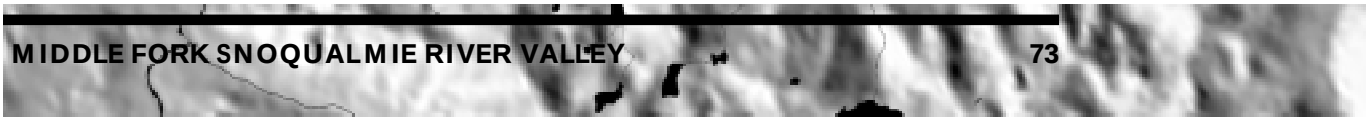
A trailhead and parking lot in this vicinity could resolve current access issues for residents and recreationists by providing off-road non-vehicle access via a trail to the CCC Road.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- approximately 2.5 acres of DNR land in the Mt. Si NRCA. Site must be relatively flat and dry;
- land uses surrounding the site may include private residences, Weyerhaeuser land to the east, north and south, and Mt. Si NRCA to the west and north;
- the existing Mt. Si Road road is paved to approximately mile 3.74 and unpaved to a gate located approximately 1/2 mile uproad. The upper road is jointly owned and maintained by the Weyerhaeuser Company and DNR, and gated. Currently, recreationists using the CCC Road park at the gate. This has resulted in conflicts with the Tenerife community because of the presence of garbage, noise, and restricted access for residents;
- opportunities include development of improved foot access into this portion of the Mt. Si NRCA and non-vehicle access via a trail to the CCC Road;
- final site identification and selection, public comment, possible acquisition, development and maintenance funding, and determination of management responsibilities are needed to successfully develop the site;
- meets concept objectives 1,3,4,7,8.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

A facilities program and development concept have not been prepared for a site. Facilities discussed include hiking trail access into the Mt. Si NRCA and mountain biking trail access into the Middle Fork Valley along the CCC Road. Facilities would also include day use car and horse trailer parking, a trailhead, interpretation and directional signs, toilets and trash receptacles, a new trail for mountain bike-hike and equestrian use that would connect to the CCC Road, a hitching rail, and a turnaround at the end of the parking area. Vehicle access road to the trailhead would be from the Mt. Si Road.



PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Trailhead parking, car and horse
Composting toilet
Trash receptacle
Hitching rail
Information, interpretation and directional signs
Trail, bike-horse-hike only, gravel
Gate
Access road and turnaround
Shuttle stop
New trail

MT. SI/CCC TRAILHEAD

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Site preparation	2	2	12,000	acre	$24,000	$30,000
Trailhead car parking	30	35	900	space	$27,000	$31,500
Trailhead trailer parking, gravel	5	10	900	space	$4,500	$9,000
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Toilet, composting, mens/womens	1	1	30,000	ea	$30,000	$30,000
Entry & information sign	1	2	350	ea	$350	$700
Interpretive sign	1	1	2,000	ea	$2,000	$2,000
Trash Receptacle	1	2	450	ea	$450	$900
Hitching rails, 15 lf	1	1	2,000	ea	$2,000	$2,000
Bike, hike and horse trail, unpaved	0.75	1.00	55,000	mile	$41,250	$55,000
Gate	1	1	1,080	ea	$1,080	$1,080
Gravel Access Road	0.25	0.75	480,000	mile	$120,000	$360,000
Permits	1	2	10,000	ea	$10,000	$20,000
Sub Total					$272,630	$552,180
Construction Supervision				15%	$40,895	$82,827
Contingencies				20%	$54,526	$110,436
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$32,716	$66,262
General Requirements				8%	$21,810	$44,174
Taxes				8.60%	$23,446	$47,487
Total Cost					$446,023	$903,366

MIDDLE FORK VALLEY ENTRY PORTAL (SEE FIGURE 2)

INTRODUCTION

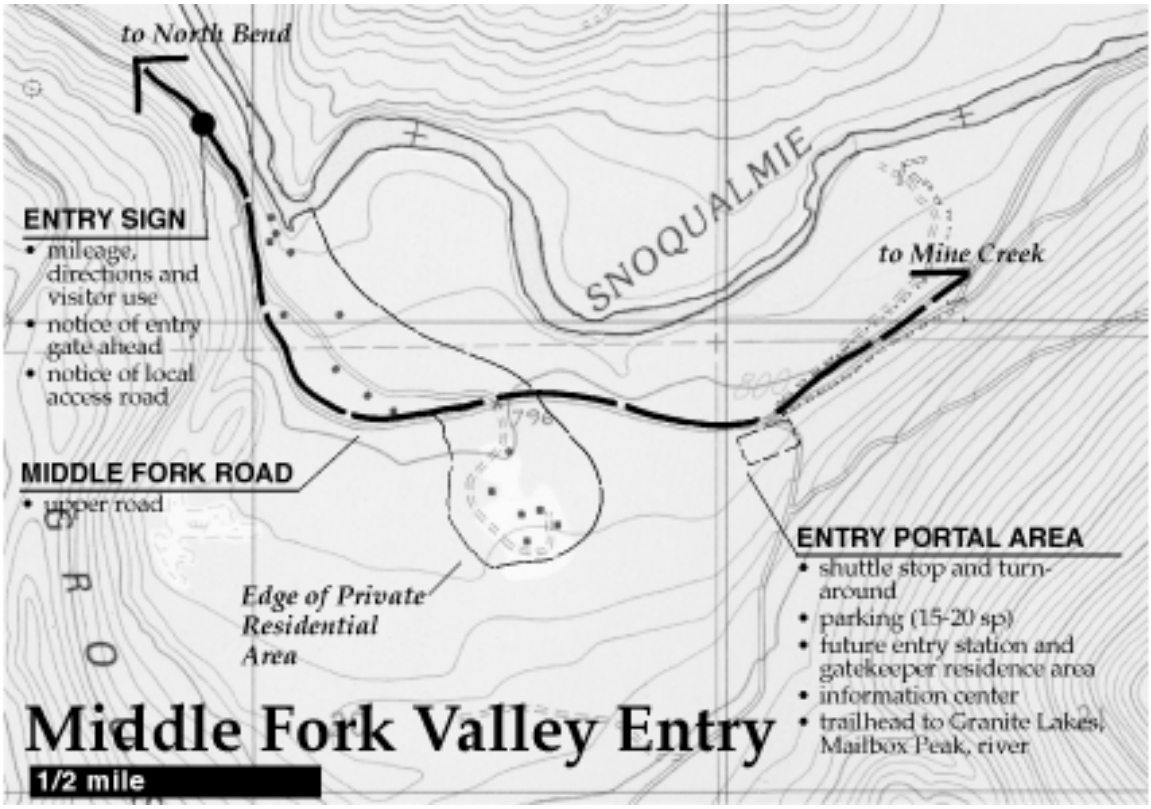
The proposed Middle Fork Valley Entry Portal is located on the Middle Fork Road, approximately 4 miles east of 468th SE, and approximately 1/8 mile east of the Lutheran Valley Camp access road. The site, approximately 1-2 acres, is located on DNR property.

The Entry Portal will inform visitors about appropriate behavior in the Middle Fork Valley and provide them with information about trails, river access, day and overnight sites, and destinations. Facilities currently proposed for the site include an information booth manned by trained volunteers (entry hosts), day use car parking, trails to upland sites (such as Granite Peak) and to the river, and a Valley information sign. Future facilities include a more permanent gatekeeper post/residence, a shuttle stop and additional staff and trail parking.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- two narrow, paved County roads, the former Lake Dorothy Road and a lower local residential road, converge approximately 1/8 m. west of the proposed site, providing a dramatic physical and visual entry into the Valley;
- land uses around the site include private residences and the Lutheran Valley Camp to the west; DNR and Weyerhaeuser lands above and to the south and east; forested land along the valley floor and Middle Fork River Road to the north;
- the site is relatively enclosed along the road but its eastern upland edge opens to provide views of surrounding peaks; these views and the scenic character of the Valley could be enhanced through careful development of trails;
- no major site preparation would be required to install a temporary information booth during the summer of 1998. However, extensive grading, site preparation, and revegetation would be required to develop a larger, more permanent site;
- key issues that will require resolution for this site to succeed include both short and long-term management and operations responsibility, and financing of facilities development, staffing, and any adjacent land use issues;
- meets concept objectives 1,2,3,4,5,7,8.

FIGURE 2



DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

The purpose of this site is to provide a visible entry point into the Valley that establishes a character and context for recreation use including a law enforcement presence, and information to visitors about recreation opportunities, changes in conditions and temporary restrictions. During the summer of 1998, the site will be installed with a temporary booth manned by volunteers to test the feasibility of this concept. At a future date, a more permanent facility and a shuttle stop on the Middle Fork River Road will be built to strengthen the function of the entry.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Valley entry sign
Temporary information booth
Day use trailhead with sign
Day use trail parking
River foot trail

ADDITIONAL FUTURE FACILITIES:

Shuttle stop and turnaround
Composting toilet
Trash receptacle(s)
Additional day use trail parking
Temporary visitor parking
Permanent gatekeeper residence/gatehouse
Interpretive signs
Trailhead signs
Valley entry gate

MIDDLE FORK VALLEY ENTRY

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Valley entry sign	1	1	6,000	ea	$6,000	$6,000
Valley entry gate	1	1	5,000	ea	$5,000	$5,000
Temporary information booth (incl. porta potty, temp power)	1	1	40,000	ea	$40,000	$40,000
Day use car parking, gravel	15	20	900	space	$13,500	$18,000
Trailhead sign	1	2	350	ea	$350	$700
River trail, foot	0.25	0.5	55,000	mile	$13,750	$27,500
Site preparation	2	4	3,500	ac	$7,000	$14,000
Sub Totals:					$85,600	$111,200
Construction Supervision				15%	$12,840	$16,680
Contingencies				20%	$17,120	$22,240
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$10,272	$13,344
General Requirements				8%	$6,848	$8,896
Taxes				8.60%	$7,362	$9,563
Total Cost					$140,042	$181,923

FUTURE MIDDLE FORK VALLEY ENTRY FACILITIES

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Toilet, composting, men's women's	1	1	30,000		$30,000	$30,000
Trash receptacle	1	2	450	ea	$450	$900
Additional visitor and dayuse staff parking	6	10	900	spaces	$5,400	$9,000
Car parking	10	15	900	spaces	$9,000	$13,500
Permanent gatekeeper residence/ gatehouse	1	1	200,000	ea	$200,000	$200,000
Interpretive sign	2	3	2,000	ea	$4,000	$6,000
Trailhead sign	1	2	350	ea	$350	$700
Information/directional signs	2	2	350	ea	$700	$700
Permits	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$269,900	$280,800
Construction Supervision				15%	$40,485	$42,120
Contingencies				20%	$53,980	$56,160
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$32,388	$33,696
General Requirements				8%	$21,592	$22,464
Taxes				8.60%	$23,211	$24,149
Total Cost					$441,556	$459,389

MINE CREEK

INTRODUCTION

Mine Creek is located on the Middle Fork River Road, just downstream of River Mile 55 and approximately one mile from the proposed Valley Entry Portal. The site is located in the Puget Moraine Place. The area, a former campground adjacent to the river, is owned by the WA DNR and leased to the IAC (Interagency Commission for Outdoor Recreation). The site was formally closed to overnight use and gated in 1994 due to vandalism and lack of maintenance resources. The site continues to be used informally as a day use area and put-in for non-motorized use of the 'Middle Middle' stretch of the river.

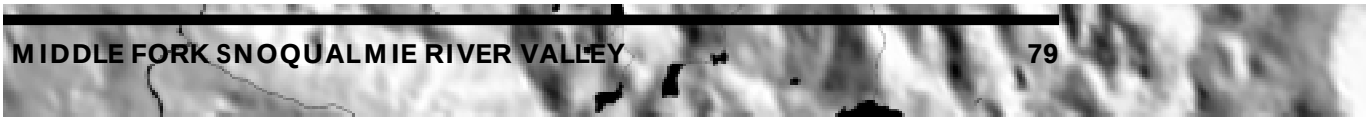
The River Corridor Public Use Concept proposes to improve this site for individual and group day use in order to promote appropriate visitor behavior, encourage more intensive recreation use in the Lower Valley, and help set the context and scale for additional day use facilities upstream.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- flat low-lying area of approximately 37 ac. located adjacent to the south bank of the Middle Fork. The site is located within riparian habitat Type I River - DNR Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Former activities included overnight camping;
- site is surrounded by DNR land to the north and east, Weyerhaeuser land to the west across the river;
- site could be improved to accommodate small and large day use groups in the lower part of the Valley, establish interpretive themes, and provide needed information about visitor behavior and resource management;
- More extensive analysis of the site's suitabilities relative to impacts on riparian and habitat areas in the HCP must be conducted before specific improvements can be designed. In addition, public comment must be solicited for any proposal on DNR land;
- Long term operations responsibilities must be identified and site improvement moneys secured;
- Meets objectives 1, 3, 4, 6, 7.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

A concept plan for Mine Creek was not developed during Phase II. However, the existing site includes approximately 17 day use sites which could be improved with new picnic tables, toilets, trash receptacles, a group fire ring, a barrier-free interpretive trail near the river, additional signs and parking. A shuttle stop on the Middle Fork River Road would be developed in the future.



PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Day use car parking unpaved
Picnic tables and/or a picnic shelter
Composting toilet(s)
Trash receptacles
Group fire ring
Interpretive trail, barrier-free
Interpretive signs
Directional/information signs
Gate
Shuttle Stop

MINE CREEK

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Site restoration	10	20	8,500	ac	$85,000	$170,000
Shuttle stop (10' x 10')	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Gate	1	1	5,000	ea	$5,000	$5,000
Day use car parking, unpaved	20	25	900	space	$18,000	$22,500
Picnic tables	10	12	750	ea	$7,500	$9,000
Picnic shelter, stone (10' x 12')	1	1	12,000	ea	$12,000	$12,000
Toilet, composting, men/women	1	3	30,000	ea	$30,000	$90,000
Trash receptacles	3	5	450	ea	$1,350	$2,250
Group fire ring	1	1	5,000	ea	$5,000	$5,000
Interpretive trail, barrier-free	0.25	0.5	50,000	mile	$12,500	$25,000
Interpretive sign	2	3	2,000	ea	$4,000	$6,000
Directional/information signs	1	2	350	ea	$350	$700
Permits	1	1	10,000		$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$200,700	$367,450
Construction Supervision				15%	$30,105	$55,118
Contingencies				20%	$40,140	$73,490
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$24,084	$44,094
General Requirements				8%	$16,056	$29,396
Taxes				8.60%	$17,260	$31,601
Total Cost					$328,345	$601,148

GRANITE CREEK FLATS

INTRODUCTION

This site is located approximately two miles upstream from Mine Creek along the Middle Fork River Road where it crosses the Middle Fork at what is commonly known as "the concrete bridge." The site is located in the Puget Moraine Place.

The site was recently acquired by the King County Waterways 2000 Program, a county-wide program authorized to acquire and protect riverine habitat along County rivers and waterways identified as significant for fisheries habitat and water quality.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- the site consists of 7.9 acres located along the south bank of the Middle Fork between River Miles 56 and 57 near the confluence of the Middle Fork and Granite Creek;
- once the site of a small derelict ranchhouse, the property provides one of the few open, flat and dry sites near the river within the Lower Valley;
- land uses adjacent to the site include recently acquired DNR lands to the south and private property across the Middle Fork River Road to the east. Recreationists using the Middle Middle stretch of the Middle Fork presently put in or take out on or adjacent to the site on either side of the bridge;
- the site provides great views of the river up and downstream, easy pedestrian access to the bridge and safe, relatively easy foot and boat access to the river;
- this is one of only two sites in the lower part of the Middle Valley identified to provide day use recreation and interpretation;
- opportunities exist for public education about Waterways 2000, river system interpretation, including aquatic resource natural history and management, and for the development of trail connections to other nearby day use sites such as the sand bar/swimming hole downstream;
- compatibility with Waterways 2000 program goals, especially resource protection, will have to be resolved; development and maintenance funding, and long term management responsibilities will have to be identified before this site can be developed; and
- Meet objectives 4, 6, 7, 8.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

No development concept was prepared for this site during Phase II. However, minimal day use facilities were discussed in the context of uses appropriate to Waterways 2000 Program goals. Facilities could include a shuttle stop, car parking, river access via a foot trail, a more formalized put-in/take-out for non-motorized boats, a composting toilet, trash receptacle and Waterways 2000/interpretive signs. The site will be subject to detailed site analysis and a management plan presently being prepared under the Waterways 2000 Program.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Restored conservation area
Shuttle stop
Access road, gravel
Day use car parking, gravel
Composting toilet
Trash receptacle
River trail, foot only
Non-motorized boat put-in/take-out
Entry/directional sign
Interpretive signs
Foot trail to river sandbar

GRANITE CREEK FLATS

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$/ Unit	Unit	Low	High
Restored conservation area with 300-ft. river setback	5	7.9	8,500	ac	$42,500	$67,150
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Access road, gravel	0.1	0.1	480,000	mi	$48,000	$48,000
Day use car parking, gravel	10	15	900	space	$9,000	$13,500
Toilet, men/women, composting	1	1	30,000	ea	$30,000	$30,000
Trash receptacle	1	2	450	ea	$450	$900
River trail, foot only	1	1.5	55,000	mi	$55,000	$82,500
Non-motorized boat put-in/ take-out (incl. rough grading, veg. removal, rock walls)	1	1		ac	$-	$-
Entry/directional sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive signs	2	4	2,000	ea	$4,000	$8,000
Permits	1	1	10,000		$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$209,300	$270,400
Construction Supervision				15%	$31,395	$40,560
Contingencies				20%	$41,860	$54,080
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$25,116	$32,448
General Requirements				8%	$16,744	$21,632
Taxes				8.60%	$18,000	$23,254
Total Cost					$342,415	$442,374

OXBOW NATURAL AREA (SEE FIGURE 3)

INTRODUCTION

The "Oxbow Natural Area" is located along the Middle Fork River Road at River Mile 59, approximately two miles north of Granite Creek Flats. It is located on DNR property within the Gifford Lakes Place.

Proposed uses for the site include extensive riverine habitat protection and guided nature interpretation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

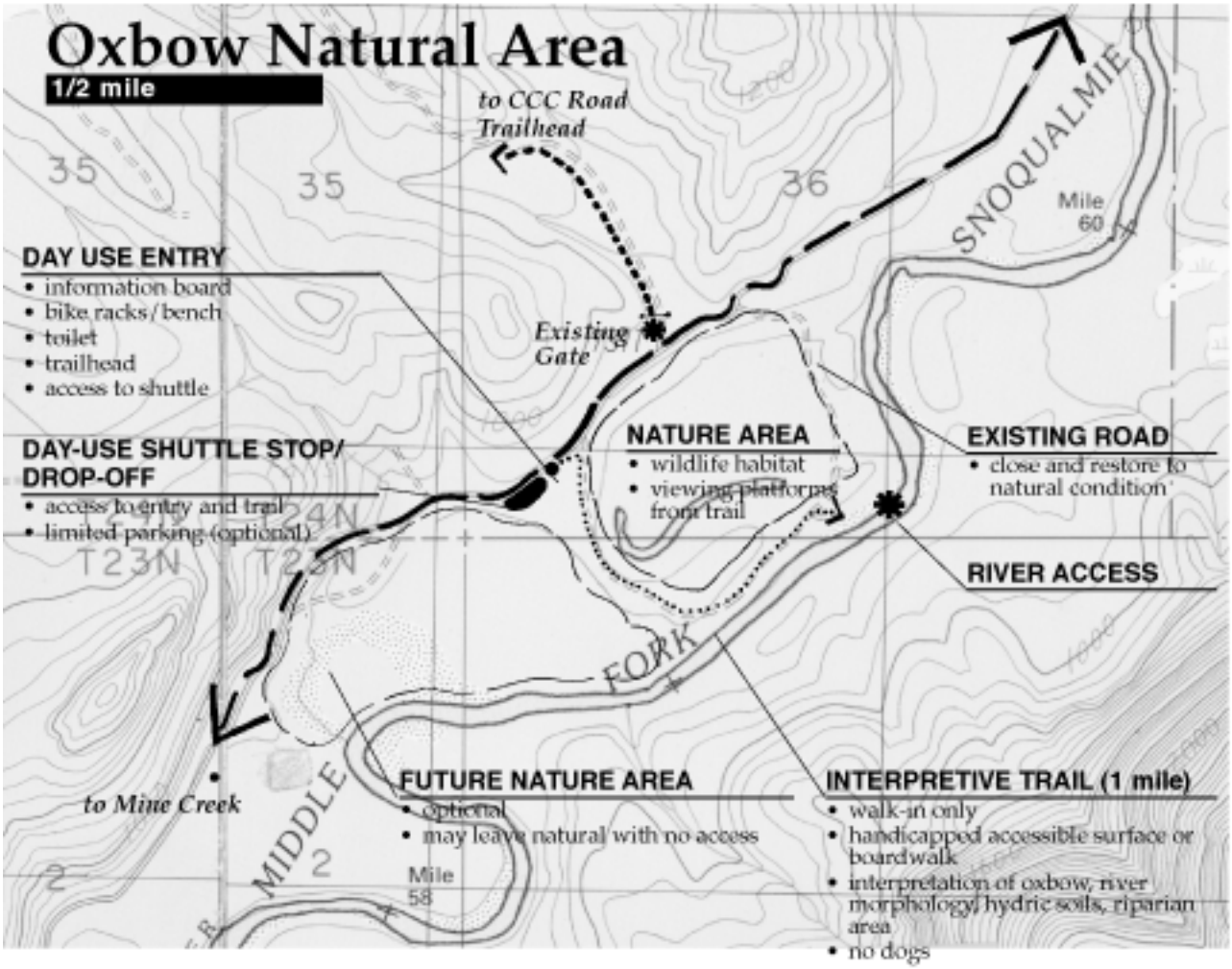
- the site consists of approximately 128 acres of highly sensitive river woodland, including lake/wetland and oxbows adjacent to the main stem of the river. Soils in the area are wet and prone to seasonal flooding. Birds, ducks, cormorants and other waterfowl are numerous;
- the area includes an existing dirt road on an overgrown dike that extends approximately 1/2 mile from the Middle Fork River Road out to a wide gravel bar. The road has been "tank-trapped" to prevent off-road vehicle use;
- this is a highly sensitive area that provides an excellent opportunity within the Middle Valley to promote river protection and provide natural resource interpretation. Views of the oxbow and other features from and along the dike are numerous. The gravel bar provides unparalleled walk-in access to a scenic part of the river. Wildlife viewing opportunities are extensive;
- will require thorough resource and suitability analysis within the context of the DNR's HCP; should remain a low priority development site until findings are known, management responsibilities are identified, and adequate moneys secured;
- Meets objectives 5,6,7.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

The site, including the lake, would be restored to natural conditions and minimally developed to accommodate restricted day use only. A small but well-defined entry area and development of the existing dike as a trail/boardwalk would be provided. The site would, in general, be off limits to visitors unless they were accompanied by guides or part of an organized program. A shuttle stop would provide the major visitor access. Limited private vehicle parking spaces could be provided.

Composting toilets, a visitor information board and interpretive information would be provided at the entry area. Guided group tours would be conducted along a barrier-free surface or boardwalk used as a one-way interpretive trail between the road and the river. River access would be deemphasized, with interpretation of aquatic resources and

FIGURE 3



faunal communities becoming the greater focus. No animals would be allowed on site. The existing road located in the north portion of the site would be restored to natural conditions. An area adjacent to the proposed site could be included in the future as additional natural area.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle stop
Road restoration
Composting toilet
Trash receptacle
Trailhead information board
Boardwalk with viewing platforms
Entry sign
Interpretive signs

OXBOW NATURAL AREA

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Road restoration (12' corridor)	0.25	0.75	126,720	mi	$31,680	$95,040
Toilet, composting, men/women	1	1	30,000		$30,000	$30,000
Trash Receptacle	1	1	450	ea	$450	$450
Trailhead information board	1	1	6,500–10,000	ea	$6,500	$10,000
Boardwalk loop (8ft wide) with viewing platform, elevated w/railing (both sides of boardwalk)	1320	3960	400	lf	$528,000	$1,584,000
	2640	7920	24	lf	$63,360	$190,080
Entry Sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive Signs	3	6	2,000	ea	$6,000	$12,000
Permits	1	2	10,000		$10,000	$20,000
Sub Total					$686,340	$1,951,920
Construction Supervision				15%	$102,201	$291,738
Contingencies				20%	$136,268	$388,984
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$81,761	$233,390
General Requirements				8%	$54,507	$155,594
Taxes				8.60%	$58,595	$167,263
Total Cost					$1,114,672	$3,181,889

BESSEMER/CCC TRAILHEAD AND CCC ROAD-TO-TRAIL

INTRODUCTION

This project includes an area at the junction of the Bessemer/CCC Road and Middle Fork River Road, approximately 3/4 -1 mile west of the Oxbow Natural Area. The old logging road and additional land on National Forest land toward Taylor River, approximately 6-7 miles to the east would be developed from road-to-trail. The area is located in the West Ridge and Bessemer Mountain Places.

The site will provide a non-motorized trailhead and trail above the Middle Fork River Road. There will be no direct river access.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- former logging road, now overgrown; gentle-to moderate gradient;
- With the potential development of a CCC Road trailhead in the vicinity of the Mt. Si NRCA, the Bessemer/CCC road parking area and trailhead and overnight facilities at Taylor River, mountain bikers, horse riders and hikers would have over fourteen miles of upland trail in the Lower and Middle sections of the Valley connecting them from North Bend to the wilderness;
- the feasibility and potential impacts of providing parking at the Bessemer/ Middle Fork River Road junction, including redesign of the Middle Fork River Road, must be carefully evaluated;
- long-term management responsibilities and development moneys must be identified and secured for this concept to be successful; and
- meets objectives 4, 7, 8.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The old CCC road would be converted to a hike-horse-bike only trail and connected into the Taylor River area along the lower slopes of Bessemer Mt. The connection would be made by stitching together portions of old logging spurs and, where possible, new trail.

The overgrown and abandoned CCC road would be cleared to standard trail width, water-barred, and its surface minimally improved where necessary. No other improvements would be made or facilities provided. Trailhead signs would be installed at the future Mt. Si/CCC Road trailhead, the existing Bessemer/CCC Road junction, and a future Taylor River trailhead.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Road-to-trail, approx. 6–7 miles
Trailhead signs
Interpretive signs
Car and horse trailer parking
Directional sign

CCC ROAD TO TRAIL AND TRAILHEAD

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$/ Unit	Unit	Low	High
Trailhead signs	1	4	350	ea	$350	$1,400
Day-use parking, gravel	5	10	900	space	$4,500	$9,000
Trailer parking, gravel	3	5	900	space	$2,700	$4,500
Road-to-trail conversion:						
• Conversion and new const.	2	3	55,000	mi	$110,000	$165,000
• Clearing and water barring	2	4	12,000	mi	$24,000	$48,000
Interpretive sign	1	1	2,000	ea	$2,000	$2,000
Permits	1	2	10,000	ea	$10,000	$20,000
Sub Total					$153,350	$249,900
Construction Supervision				15%	$21,953	$35,460
Contingencies				20%	$29,270	$47,280
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$17,562	$28,368
General Requirements				8%	$11,708	$18,912
Taxes				8.60%	$12,586	$20,330
Total Cost					$239,429	$386,750

THE PRATT RIVER BAR (SEE FIGURE 4)

INTRODUCTION

The Pratt River Bar is located between River Miles 61 and 62, approximately two miles upstream from the Oxbow Natural Area, and approximately three miles downstream from the Taylor River auto bridge. It is located in the West Ridge Place.

The site will be used as a day use area with foot-only river access.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- the site includes approximately 3 acres between the road and the river. Riparian shrubs, small trees, forbs and grasses live along a seasonal creek bed and in the sand between the road and the river. The brush opens out on to an extensive gravel bar across from the confluence with the Pratt River. The site provides views of peaks up and downstream, and views of the walls of the Pratt valley;
- safe river access;
- further analysis of impacts to the riparian area must be conducted, and maintenance funding and long term management responsibilities must be identified before the site can be successfully developed;
- meets objectives 4,6, 8.

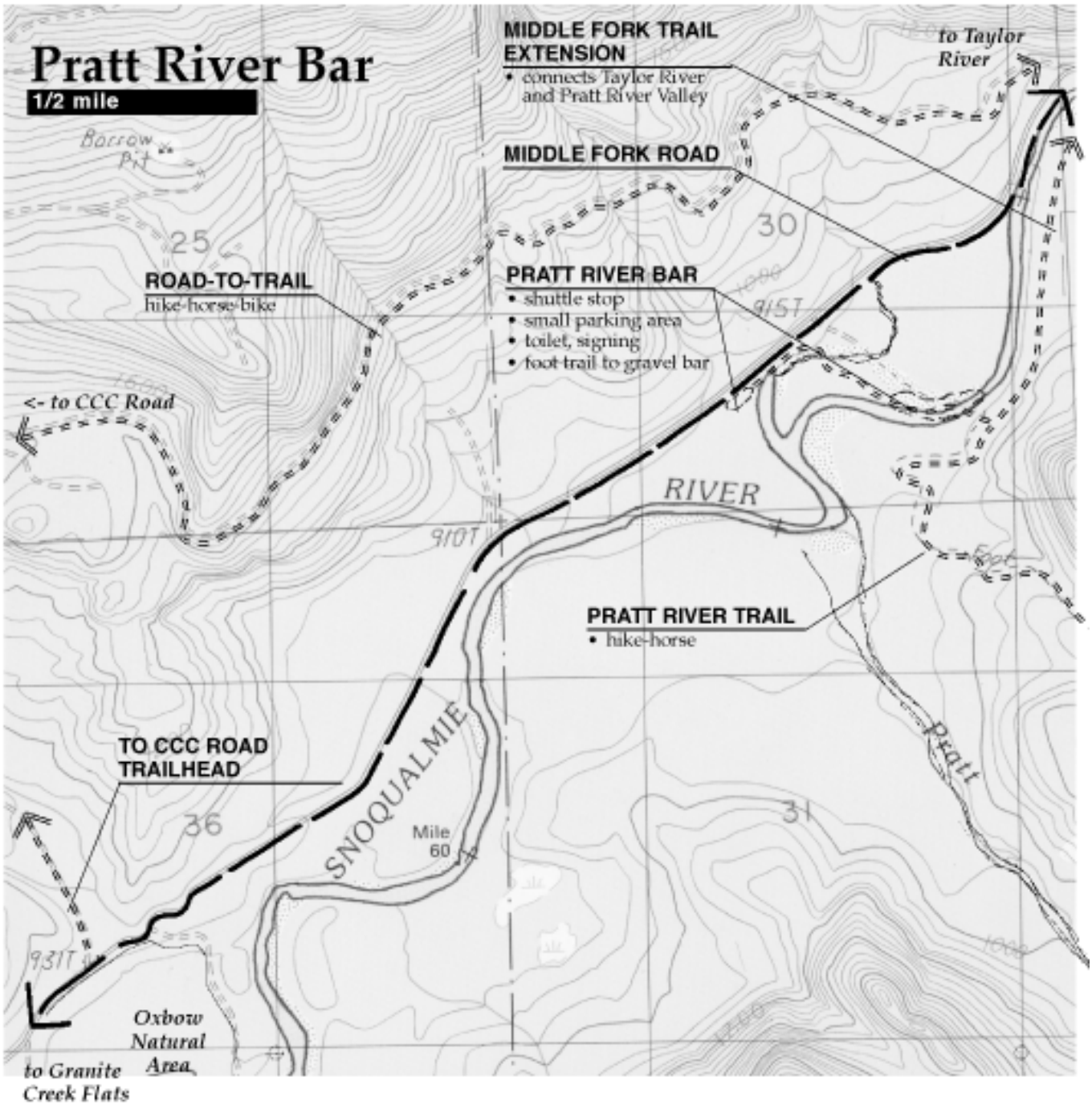
DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

This would be a seasonal day use site, developed only to provide river access for foot traffic. Car parking, a toilet and signs would be located on the Middle Fork Road just south of the trailhead. A small sign would mark the trailhead on to the Bar. A short (1/8 mile maximum) trail would cross the creek and lead through the sand bar to the river. A low tech, primitive ford could be built across the creek to facilitate high water crossings and reduce bank impacts. Hikers could ford the Middle Fork from the bar and head into the Pratt valley. No horse or mountain biking facilities would be provided.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle Stop
Day use car parking
Composting toilet
Seasonal foot trail to river
Seasonal ford
Directional sign
Interpretation sign

FIGURE 4


Pratt River Bar
1/2 mile
MIDDLE FORK TRAIL EXTENSION
• connects Taylor River and Pratt River Valley
to Taylor River
MIDDLE FORK ROAD
PRATT RIVER BAR
• shuttle stop
• small parking area
• toilet, signing
• foot trail to gravel bar
ROAD-TO-TRAIL
hike-horse-bike
<- to CCC Road
PRATT RIVER TRAIL
• hike-horse
TO CCC ROAD TRAILHEAD
SNOQUALMIE
RIVER
Pratt
Mile 60
Borrow Pit
25
30
36
31
915T
910T
931T
Oxbow Natural Area
to Granite Creek Flats

PRATT RIVER BAR

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$/ Unit	Unit	Low	High
Day use car parking, gravel	15	20	900	space	$13,500	$18,000
Toilet, composting, men/women	1	1	30,000	ea	$30,000	$30,000
Trash receptacle	1	2	450	ea	$450	$900
Seasonal foot/horse trail to river	0.25	0.25	55,000	mi	$13,750	$13,750
Small pedestrian seasonal ford (4x6)	30	30	65	sf	$1,950	$1,950
Information sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive sign	1	2	2,000	ea	$2,000	$4,000
Permits	1	2	10,000	ea	$10,000	$20,000
Sub Total					$72,000	$88,950
Construction Supervision				15%	$10,800	$13,343
Contingencies				20%	$14,400	$17,790
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$8,640	$10,674
General Requirements				8%	$5,760	$7,116
Taxes				8.60%	$6,192	$7,650
Total Cost					$117,792	$145,522

RIVER BEND

INTRODUCTION

River Bend is located at River Mile 63, approximately 1/2 mile south of Camp Brown, and 1/2 mile north of the Pratt River Bar. The site is located in the Bessemer Mt./Pratt Ridge Places. The site provides a small viewpoint/picnic area along the river.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- this site, approximately 1/4–1/2 acre, is characterized by its dramatic orientation on a bend of both the road and the river. Here, the Middle Fork flows sharply west against the road and then veers back to continue its sinuous course downstream;
- views of the river and Pratt Ridge are expansive. Access to the water is difficult because of steep, eroded banks;
- the site is presently an informal day and overnight area. As a result the ground is bare and littered, and shrubs and grasses are spotty;
- because of its smallness and location, the site is a dramatic spot for river or bird watching, picnicking, photography, even relaxing with a sketchpad or book;
- meets objectives 1, 4, 6.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

No formal development concept was prepared for this site as part of Phase II. Facilities discussed for River Bend include those which would improve existing day use: formalized parking for a small number of cars (1–3), a picnic table, a trash receptacle, an information and/or interpretive sign, and perhaps a primitive bench set into the riverbank. The ground would be cleaned, restored and revegetated to eliminate existing impacts and more clearly limit and direct foot traffic.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle stop
Day use car parking
Picnic table
Trash receptacle
Information sign
Interpretive sign
Riverbank bench

RIVER BEND

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$/ Unit	Unit	Low	High
Day use car parking/shuttle stop, gravel	2	3	900	space	$1,800	$2,700
Picnic table	1	1	750	ea	$750	$750
Trash receptacle	1	1	450	ea	$450	$450
Information sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive sign	1	1	2,000	ea	$2,000	$2,000
Bench, primitive	1	1	950	ea	$950	$950
Site restoration	0.75	1	8,500	acre	$6,375	$8,500
Permits	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$22,675	$25,700
Construction Supervision				15%	$3,401	$3,855
Contingencies				20%	$4,535	$5,140
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$2,721	$3,084
General Requirements				8%	$1,814	$2,056
Taxes				8.60%	$1,950	$2,210
Total Cost					$37,096	$42,045

CAMP BROWN

INTRODUCTION

Camp Brown is located approximately one mile south of Taylor River on the Middle Fork at River Mile 64. It is located in the Bessemer Mt. Place with views into the Rainy Creek Place. The site is proposed to augment facilities at Taylor River by providing additional car parking, river access and a trail connection.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- approximately 3-4 acres, a former CCC camp extending from the Middle Fork River Road to the river;
- site is flat with relatively dry soils, a small seasonal creek, some undergrowth vegetation and large trees;
- currently used informally for river access, dispersed camping and parking; ground is bare, compacted, and braided with informal trails to the river; riverbank is degraded with litter, spotty grasses and shrubs;
- site provides access to and excellent views of the river as it flows around a small island against the toe of Pratt Ridge, creating a large glacial pool;
- meets objectives 4,5,6,7,8.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

No formal development concept for this site was developed during Phase II. However, facilities discussed for Camp Brown could provide additional day use activities and river access directly connecting visitors to more extensive facilities at Taylor River. Easy foot access from the Middle Fork River Road and proximity to the Taylor River area would make Camp Brown an attractive site for small-scale sightseeing, picnicking, shore fishing, hiking and interpretation.

Primary facilities would include a shuttle stop, car parking, picnic tables and/or a picnic shelter, toilets and trash receptacles, a foot-only trail from the parking area to the river via the creekbed, and an interpretive foot trail along the river to the Middle Fork Trail at Taylor River. Toilet, trash and parking facilities would be located on the Middle Fork River Road. Interpretive signs would be located throughout the site and along the river trail.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle stop
Day use parking
Composting toilet
Trash receptacles
Picnic tables
Picnic shelter
Directional/information signs
Interpretative signs
Interpretive foot trail

CAMP BROWN

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$/ Unit	Unit	Low	High
Shuttle stop structure (10' x 10') + site prep	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Day use car parking, gravel	15	20	900	space	$13,500	$18,000
Toilet, composting, men/women	1	2	30,000	ea	$30,000	$60,000
Trash receptacles	2	3	450	ea	$900	$1,350
Picnic tables	3	4	750	ea	$2,250	$3,000
Picnic shelter	1	1	100	sf	$100	$100
Entry/directional sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Interpretive signs	3	4	2,000	ea	$6,000	$8,000
Interpretive foot trail	1	1.5	55,000	mi	$55,000	$82,500
Permits	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$128,100	$193,300
Construction Supervision				15%	$19,215	$28,995
Contingencies				20%	$25,620	$38,660
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$15,372	$23,196
General Requirements				8%	$10,248	$15,464
Taxes				8.60%	$11,017	$16,624
Total Cost					$209,572	$316,239

TAYLOR RIVER CAMPGROUND (SEE FIGURE 5)

INTRODUCTION

Taylor River is located approximately 12.6 miles from the Valley entry point at River Mile 65. It is located in the Bessemer Mt./Quartz Places. The area is an existing USFS day use site with car and horse trailer parking, picnic tables and fire grills, restrooms, information board, a trail from the parking lot to the river and foot bridge across the Middle Fork to the Middle Fork Trail. Upstream from the Taylor River auto bridge, there is informal day use along the Taylor River and informal parking along the road. Horses, bikes and hikers only use the road beyond the second Taylor river bridge, which is gated.

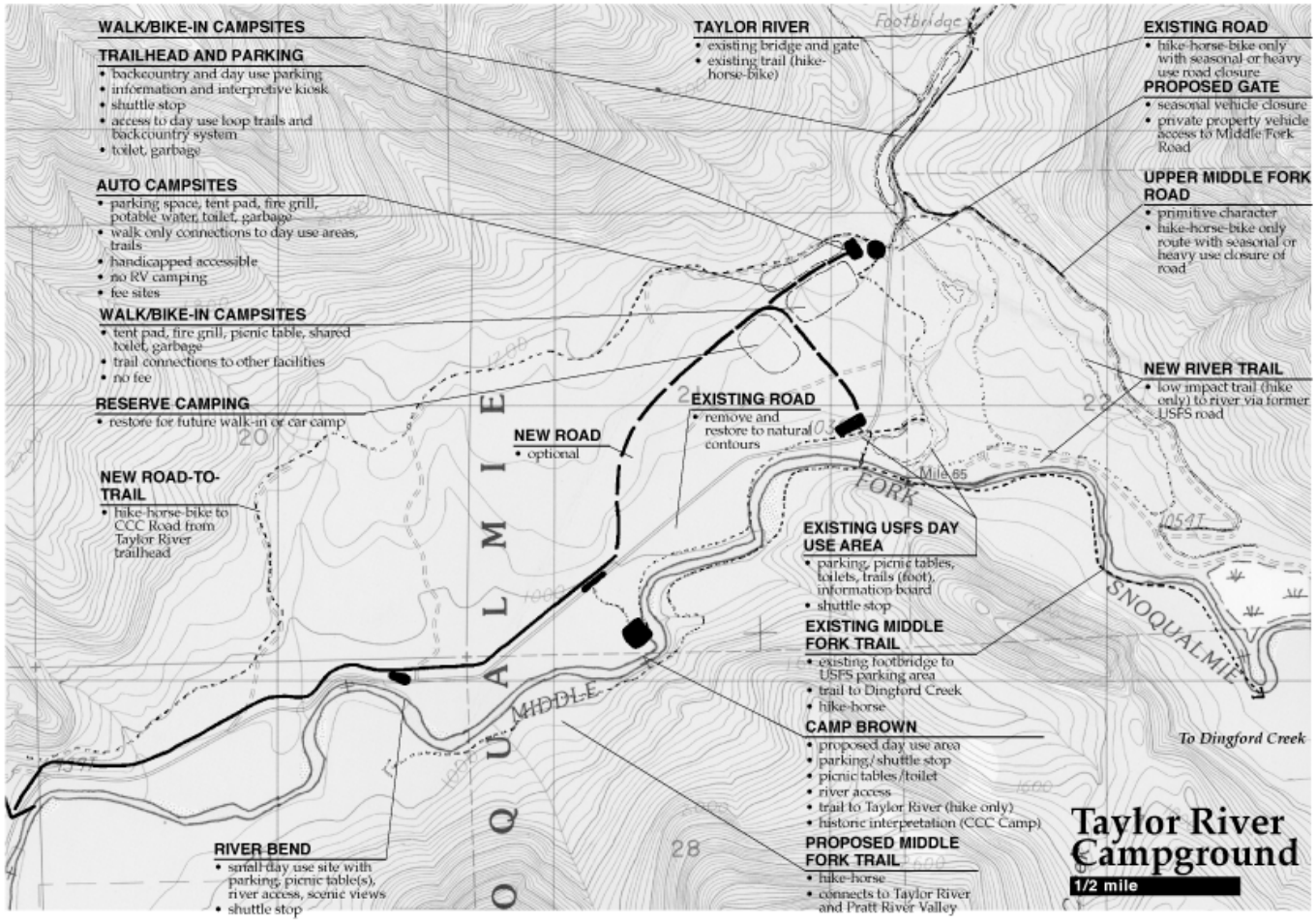
The proposed overnight concept expands the existing day use facilities with overnight car and walk-in camping sites, including restrooms and trash receptacles, potable water, interpretive foot trails, a kiosk/information center, a hike, horse and mountain bike trail that connects to the old CCC Road, and a centralized trailhead area for access into the backcountry and wilderness areas of the Middle and Upper Valley. RV camping, hook-ups, and electricity is not provided.

The Middle Fork River Road is gated at the first Taylor River bridge to limit motorized use beyond it when peak use periods occur. The gate separates motorized from non-motorized areas by using the Taylor River and the intersection of roads and trails as natural barriers. Vehicles are confined to the Taylor River campground and day use parking areas. Private landowners have access to the Upper Middle Fork River Road via a pass or key. Shuttle service to Dingford Creek and, potentially Goldmyer Hot Springs, would be provided in the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- site of approximately 40 acres in second growth and existing, recent clearcuts; soils are stable; topography is relatively flat;
- spectacular views of Upper Valley and specific peaks, namely Garfield Mountain, Stegosaurus, Preacher Mt. River access to both the Taylor River and the Middle Fork on both sides of the rivers;
- existing use of the area includes informal target shooting, informal day use and camping along the both rivers;
- existing USFS site includes 55 car and 12 horse trailer parking spaces, 5 picnic tables and fire grills, 2 restrooms, an information board, a trail from the parking lot to the river, and a foot bridge across the Middle Fork to the Middle Fork Trail. Upstream from the Taylor River auto bridge, there are no formal day use facilities along the Taylor River; informal parking exists along the road for horse, bike and hiking beyond the second Taylor river bridge, which is gated;
- trail access to all trail systems in the Valley;

FIGURE 5



- vicinity of elk, sensitive species habitat; and
- key issues that must be resolved for successful development of the site as proposed include the feasibility of trails in sensitive habitat, riverine and archeological resources, level of campsite development, financing and long-term operations responsibilities.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

The Taylor River complex provides facilities at a natural intersection of rivers, trails, landscape places and roads. Except for the smaller Dingford Creek trailhead, the campground is the terminus of formally developed facilities in the Valley. As such, it serves as both a destination and a staging area for camping, trail access, sightseeing, day use and interpretation. A three-hundred foot buffer along the river would be established to ensure that all structural development is away from the river and to protect sensitive areas from heavy foot or vehicle traffic.

Private car and walk-in campgrounds are located west of the Middle Fork River Road between spur roads 410 and 510. Vehicles and the shuttle access the site via a new

(optional) road relocated west of the existing alignment. The new alignment connects people directly to car camping and walk-in camping sites, and to the central trailhead area. It also provides vehicle access to the existing day use parking area. The existing road is removed and restored to natural conditions, resulting in a buffer area between the river and the more intensively developed campground complex.

Campsites, each including a parking space, tent pad, picnic table and fire pit, are clustered in clear-cuts west of the new road. Walk-in sites with similar facilities, although not barrier-free, are clustered east of the road. Toilets, trash, potable water facilities, and information boards, are located centrally to both campgrounds. Future additional car and walk-in camping are located south of the proposed sites.

A central trailhead, with drop-off and long-term parking, is developed at the end of the road near the existing Taylor River auto bridge. Backcountry and wilderness trail information is posted on a centralized information board. Connections to other trails, such as the CCC hike-horse and bike trail and interpretive trails around Taylor River, begin here. The road gate at the bridge is closed during peak use periods to limit vehicle access above the bridge and to encourage hike-bike and horse use of the road in the Upper Valley.

Interpretation of the Valley's natural, cultural and scenic resources, and resource management is a focus of the Taylor River facility because of its location at the confluence of the Taylor and Middle Fork Rivers, its spectacular views of Granite Mountain and other high ridges and peaks, a rich history of use in this part of the Valley, and the availability of adequate space to accommodate large numbers of people and uses.

Interpretive foot trails are developed from Camp Brown to Taylor River, and from the existing day use area up to the Taylor River Bridge. A loop trail is developed from the Taylor River bridge down to the former USFS campground through the woods and back along the road using the old road (USFS 520). The trail provides access to both rivers and views of mountains and old growth.

A kiosk/shelter and fire ring is constructed in the campground area close to the central trailhead. The facilities serve as a central point from which to provide information, organize recreation and volunteer activities, conduct interpretive classes, etc. Trails are located within the 300-foot river buffer, if appropriate.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

Shuttle stop
Day use car parking (existing)
Car camping sites, barrier-free, includes parking space, tent pad, picnic table, fire pit
Bike/walk-in camping sites includes tent pad, fire pit, picnic table
Composting toilets
Trash receptacles
Potable water
Interpretive kiosk/information center

Information board
Picnic shelter(s)
Fire ring
Campground entry sign
Taylor River gate
Interpretive trails
Interpretive signs
New (optional) access road

TAYLOR RIVER CAMPGROUND

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Shuttle stop (10' x 10')	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Toilets, composting men/women	2	3	30,000	ea	$60,000	$90,000
Trash receptacles	10	15	450	ea	$4,500	$6,750
Interpretive kiosk	1	2	10,000	ea	$10,000	$20,000
Information board	1	2	350	ea	$350	$700
Entry sign	1	1	350	ea	$350	$350
Fire ring	1	1	5,000	ea	$5,000	$5,000
Potable water	1	4	10,000	ea	$10,000	$40,000
Taylor River gate	1	1	5,000		$5,000	$5,000
Interpretive trails	0.5	3	55,000	mile	$27,500	$165,000
Interpretive signs	5	10	2,000	ea	$10,000	$20,000
Overnight camping sites handicapped accessible, incl. parking	30	64	2,000	site	$60,000	$128,000
Picnic shelter (10' x 12')	1	2	12,000	ea	$12,000	$24,000
Road restoration (40' corridor)	0.5	0.75	422,400	mi	$211,200	$316,800
New access road	0.5	0.75	480,000	mi	$240,000	$360,000
Permits	1	3	10,000	ea	$10,000	$30,000
Sub Total					$675,900	$1,221,600
Construction Supervision				15%	$101,385	$183,240
Contingencies				20%	$135,180	$244,320
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$81,108	$146,592
General Requirements				8%	$54,072	$97,728
Taxes				8.60%	$58,127	$105,058
Total Cost					$1,105,772	$1,998,538

DINGFORD CREEK TRAILHEAD

INTRODUCTION

The Dingford Creek trailhead is located approximately 6 miles upstream of the Taylor River bridge on the Upper Middle Fork Road. It is located in the Mt. Price/Derrick Mountain Place.

The existing trail extends north from the road up Dingford Creek to Myrtle and Hester Lakes and the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area (ALWA). A short foot trail south from the road reaches the river through forest. The Upper Middle Fork footbridge crosses a scenic whitewater segment of the river and connects hikers to the Middle Fork and/or the Snow Lake Trails on the river's south side. A short distance up the road, Dingford Creek cascades down into the Middle Fork through moss and fern-covered boulders. The trailhead is one of two recognizable trailhead areas along the road in the Upper Valley.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- an existing trailhead providing hiking access into the backcountry and wilderness areas of the Valley. Vehicle access is via a one lane, rough surface with limited pullouts and frequent washouts;
- the trailhead north of the road is relatively invisible and not clearly marked; the presence of cars usually indicates its vicinity. The area is steep on both sides of the road and heavily forested. Soils are seasonally wet. Existing facilities include an informal pullout for parking, a foot trail to the river and a footbridge across the Middle Fork to the Middle Fork Trail. The amount of available parking varies depending on how straight and close cars park;
- the site is located in a steep part of the Valley enclosed by both topography and forest. It provides no river views from the road, although the sounds of the river are clearly audible. Dingford Creek crosses the road as a small scenic waterfall. Whitewater is visible from the foot bridge;
- key issues requiring resolution for this site to be improved as recommended include closure of the road with a permanent gate, coordination with the Forest Service about additional site development, long-term regular maintenance, project funding, and access, once the road is gated, for private property owners;
- access to Goldmyer Hot Springs for Northwest Wilderness Programs members and visitors must be resolved;
- meets concept objectives 4,6,7,8.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE CONCEPT

No development concept was prepared during Phase II for Dingford Creek. However, several discussions with the TAC during Phases I and II identified additional facilities

that could improve the existing trailhead, lessen existing roadside and river resource impacts from private vehicles, human waste and garbage, and formalize the area as a road-to-trail route for hike-horse and mountain bike backcountry access. Additional facilities included a shuttle stop, additional car parking, perhaps at a flatter site up or down the road, a composting toilet, a trail information/interpretive board, and a gate across the road just east of the Dingford Creek bridge that could be opened by private landowners with a pass or key. The gate would permanently close the last three miles of the road to vehicles for all but private property owners.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF FACILITIES AND BUDGET OPINION

- Shuttle stop
- Day use car parking
- Trailhead information board
- Interpretive sign
- Composting or pit toilet
- Gate

DINGFORD CREEK TRAILHEAD

Item	Low Quantity	High Quantity	$ Per Unit		$ Low	$ High
Shuttle stop (10' x 10')	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Car parking, gravel	8	12	900	space	$7,200	$10,800
Trailhead information board	1	1	200	ea	$200	$200
Interpretive sign	1	1	2,000	ea	$2,000	$2,000
Gate	1	1	5,000	ea	$5,000	$5,000
Toilet, pit or composting	1	1	10,000	ea	$10,000	$10,000
Sub Total					$34,400	$38,000
Construction Supervision				15%	$5,160	$5,700
Contingencies				20%	$6,880	$7,600
Construction Planning and Design				12%	$4,128	$4,560
General Requirements				8%	$2,752	$3,040
Taxes				8.60%	$2,958	$3,268
Total Cost					$56,278	$62,168

APPENDIX C

BUSINESS PLAN: FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

Reed Hansen & Associates

(Subconsultant with Jones & Jones)

June 26, 1997

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The focus of this consultant report is on visitor use, management options, and financing mechanisms in regard to managing and operating the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley as a recreation destination area. The major findings of the study included the following:

TRAFFIC AND VISITOR USE

- Total traffic on the valley road (Forest Road 56) is projected to increase from an estimated 40,550 trips (one-way) in 1996 to 63,180 trips in year 2011, based on assumptions of moderate growth during the projection horizon. Under high initial growth assumptions, total traffic is projected to grow to 81,747 trips in year 2011.
- The corresponding daily traffic (ADT) and peak daily traffic volumes are projected to increase from 203 trips and 385 trips, respectively, in 1996 to 316 trips and 600 trips, respectively, in year 2011 under moderate growth conditions. Under high initial growth assumptions, annual ADT and peak daily traffic are projected to increase to 409 trips and 777 trips, respectively.
- Visitor use by persons arriving using personal vehicles, bus and other, and bicycle is projected at 167,147 visitors in year 2001, 193,774 in year 2006, and 224,640 visitors in year 2011 under moderate growth conditions. Under high initial growth assumptions, visitor use is projected at 216,267 visitors in year 2001, 250,717 in year 2006, and 290,767 visitors in year 2011.

DAY USE AND OVERNIGHT PARKING CAPACITY

- The Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley concept plan calls for between 172 to 200 parking spaces for day use at 9 locations: entry point—5 cars; CCC road—10 to 20 cars; Mine Creek—20 cars; Concrete Bridge—35 to 40 cars; Oxbow road junction—35 to 40 cars; Pratt River—12 to 15 cars; Camp Brown—30 to 35 cars;

and, Taylor River—55 cars. Overnight car parking capacity would amount to 80 parking spaces at 3 locations: Oxbow road junction—8 spaces; Taylor river—64 spaces; and, Dingford Creek—8 spaces.

- Maximum vehicle access and parking for both day use and overnight would amount to 490 vehicles.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Two management scenarios are presented. The first would allow essentially unconstrained day use and overnight use up to the limits of available parking spaces for which parking fees would be charged. The second scenario would also allow overnight use up to the limit of available parking spaces; however, day use would be restricted to bicycle/pedestrian travel as well as transportation using a fee-based shuttle service.
- The maximum day use and overnight use under the first management scenario would amount to 189,000 to 206,000 visitors per annum. These figures are lower than estimated for total visitor demand, based on both the moderate growth and the high initial growth projections of traffic and visitor use during most years of the projection horizon (1996–2011).
- A permit fee system would be established as part of the management structure for the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley. Based on existing fees charged by the USFS (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest), total revenues from operations would range from $374,000 to $441,000 per annum at buildout.
- After distributing a 10 percent share of gross revenues to the owners (USFS, WSDNR, King County), facility operations would generate sufficient funds to pay for personnel, equipment, supplies and services, leasehold taxes, and overhead and, in addition, yield a surplus to cover contingencies and profits. The surplus or residual would range from $77,000 to $137,000.

INTRODUCTION

This consultant report provides support to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley Concept Plan-Phase II by considering visitor use and management options as well as indicating alternative financing methods for operating the area as a recreation destination facility. The focus of the report is two-fold: first, visitation projections are developed for two scenarios reflecting possible future growth patterns under conditions in which the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley is managed for public recreation use; second, alternative management structures and finance mechanisms for operating the valley as a recreation area are presented. The report is divided into seven sections, including the introduction. The second section presents historical traffic data and develops projections of visitor use over a 15-year study horizon. Two alternative visitor growth scenarios are

provided. The third section presents an analysis of campground/parking capacity for both day and overnight use. The fourth section briefly considers the profile of potential visitors to the proposed recreation area. The fifth section presents two scenarios for managing and operating the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley as a recreation resource. The sixth section presents a capacity analysis in regard to the two management scenarios. Finally, the seventh section provides a discussion of management structures and finance mechanisms. The latter includes a revenue analysis based on a user fee system covering management as well as other operating and maintenance costs.

VISITOR USE: HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED

USFS TRAFFIC DATA

Traffic counts are available from the USFS (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest) for multiple years for Forest Road (FR) 56 at two locations: milepost 1.4 near the proposed "entry point" and mile 7.0 near the "Oxbow Natural Area." A single year count is give for milepost 11 for traffic in 1982. Table 1 presents traffic count data for milepost 1.4 and 7.0. The USFS provides traffic breakouts for recreational and total trips only. Nonrecreational trips made by local residents are not separately tabulated.

At milepost 1.4 total annual recreational traffic amounted to 18,190 trips (two-way) in 1975, increasing to 56,970 in the peak year 1988 and remaining basically the same, at 56,748 trips, in 1991, the latest year for which traffic data available at that site. Over the 16 year period total recreational traffic increased at an average annual rate of growth (AARG) of 7.4 percent.

The peak month for traffic volumes occurred in July for most years (although an August peak occurred in one or two of the years for which data are available). For 1988 the peak month flow amounted to 10,824 trips increasing modestly to 11,350 trips in 1991. The peak month represented 17.5 percent of total recreation trips in 1988, 19.2 percent in 1989, 21.2 percent in 1990, and 18.4 percent in 1991.

HISTORICAL TRAFFIC COUNTS ON FOREST ROAD 56 (TWO-WAY TRAFFIC)

Date (May–November)	Total Traffic	Total Recreation Traffic	Peak Month Recreation Traffic	Percent of Total Recreation Traffic
Milepost #1.4				
1975	19,772	18,190	n/a	n/a
1976	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1977	27,928	25,743	n/a	n/a
1978	33,671	30,977	n/a	n/a
1979–1982	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1983	30,189	27,773	n/a	n/a
1984–1987	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1988	61,919	56,970	10,824	17.5%
1989	54,113	49,787	10,406	19.2%
1990	47,956	44,122	10,148	21.2%
1991	61,679	56,748	11,350	18.4%
AARG 1975-91	7.40%	7.40%		
AARG 1988-91	-0.10%	-0.10%		
Milepost #7				
1992	26,369	24,263	5,322	21.9%
1993	26,810	24,668	5,779	23.4%
1994	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	34,815	32,034	5,830	18.2%
AARG 1992-95	9.70%	9.70%		

AARG refers to average annual rate of growth.

1975–1980 and 1983 values for recreation trips are estimated based on 1988–1991 relationships.

Source: Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road Counts, U.S.F.S., fax transmittal 3/5/97.

At milepost 7.0 total annual and peak month recreational traffic volumes are available for the period 1992 through 1995 (although data for 1994 are missing), as indicated in the table. An inspection of the trip counts for both milepost 1.4 and 7.0 suggests that most recreation trips are made within the first few miles of the road and, as one proceeds up valley, fewer people choose to travel on the road. Total recreational traffic increased from 24,263 trips in 1992 to 32,034 trips in 1995 at milepost 7.0 for an AARG of 9.7 percent. Peak month recreation traffic amounted to 5,322 trips in 1992 increasing to 5,830 trips in 1995. The peak month share of total annual recreation trips amounted to 21.9 percent in 1992, 23.4 percent 1993, and 18.2 percent in 1995.

The USFS total traffic volume figure for 1981 (not shown in the table), including administrative trips, at milepost 11.0 amounted to 12,773 trips.

KING COUNTY TRAFFIC DATA

King County Department of Public Works obtained daily traffic counts (two-way) at a location near Concrete Bridge during the latter part of June 1996 indicating average daily traffic (ADT) of 587 trips. (It is important to understand that the ADT figure is comparable to peak month traffic volumes provided by the USFS which were discussed above.) The King County ADT figure represents a snapshot of total traffic volume during a recent peak period. If adjusted to reflect recreation trips using USFS relationships between annual total and recreational traffic volumes (i.e., 92.0 percent of total trips are for recreational purposes), the ADT count for recreational travel would be 540 two-way trips for the month of June, which for purposes of analysis may be considered a peak month figure.

1996 BASELINE TRAFFIC

Extending the USFS traffic flows for milepost 1.4 from 1991 through 1996, based on the historical (1975–1991) growth rate of 7.4 percent per annum (see Table 1), results in about 81,100 trips on annual basis (from mid-April to mid-November or approximately 200 days) or an annual ADT of 405 trips. The corresponding traffic for the peak month would amount to 15,406 trips (assuming a peak month to total traffic share at 19.0 percent); daily traffic for the peak month would amount to 515 two-way trips. Interestingly, this figure is very close to the ADT count obtained by King County Department of Public Works during the month of June 1996 and, therefore, is a reasonable approximation of current recreation-oriented vehicular traffic volumes on the lower portion of FR 56. One-way recreation trips of course would be half of total estimated trips (based on historical two-way trip counts). The number of one-way trips in 1996, therefore, can be summarized as follows:

Total Recreation Trips -	40,550
Annual Average Daily Trips -	203
Peak Month Trips -	7,705
Peak Day Trips (based on 60 percent on weekend days or 5.0 percent of monthly trips)	385

The number of average daily and peak day trips includes recreation travel for both day use and overnight stays. The number of peak day trips would be associated with 1,232 persons visiting the area, based on 3.2 persons per vehicle occupancy.[1]

[1]The 3.2 persons per vehicle is a planning figure derived from visitor use in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest during the month of August 1996.

PROJECTED TRAFFIC

Two growth scenarios are developed for projecting recreation traffic during the foreseeable future. Under the first scenario, it is assumed that recreation traffic on FR 56 will grow at a fairly moderate rate of 3.0 percent AARG over the period of the fifteen-year projection horizon (1997 through 2011). Traffic flows (one-way) are shown for the base-year 1996 and in five-year intervals through year 2011 in terms of total annual, annual average daily trips, peak month, and peak day trips, as follows:

Moderate Growth Scenario

	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total Traffic	40,550	47,010	54,499	63,180
Annual ADT	203	235	272	316
Peak Month Traffic	7,705	8,932	10,355	12,004
Peak Daily Traffic	385	447	518	600

Assuming vehicle occupancy of 3.2 persons, peak day traffic in year 2011 would result in 1,920 people coming to the valley.

The second scenario is based on a rapid build up of recreation travel demand, say a 50 percent increase above baseline traffic by year 2001 (which reflects an AARG of 8.5 percent during the initial period), and thereafter, increasing by 3.0 percent AARG over the remaining period of the projection horizon. Again, traffic flows (one-way) are shown in five-year intervals, as follows:

High Initial Growth Scenario

	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total Traffic	40,550	60,825	70,514	81,747
Annual ADT	203	304	353	409
Peak Month Traffic	7,705	11,557	13,398	15,532
Peak Daily Traffic	385	578	670	777

Again, the peak day traffic figure for year 2011 would be associated with 2,486 persons visiting the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley.

PROJECTED VISITOR USE

Visitor use categories may be evaluated by transportation mode. Obviously the major component involves visitation by persons who travel to the area using their own personal vehicles including vehicles towing horse trailers. Other categories include pedestrians traveling to the area by bus, hitchhiking, or other motorized and nonmotorized means; and persons arriving by bicycle. For purposes of this analysis it is

assumed that 90 percent of visitor users would travel to the area using personal vehicles, 6 percent would travel by bus, hitchhike, or walk (with most from this group arriving by bus), and 4 percent would arrive by bicycle. It is interesting to note that tour bus passengers represent a small component of total visitor arrivals at Mount Rainier National Park, based on NPS Monthly Public Use statistics. For 1996 total visitors using bus transportation as the means of access amounted to 25,817 persons or 1.4 percent of total park visitation (which was counted at 1.87 million visitors). Thus, the use of a fairly modest visitor share for users traveling to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley by bus is warranted. Nonetheless, the imposition of parking fees might encourage more bus ridership.

Before turning to the analysis of future visitation, it is useful to review the existing data on visitor usage at several forest service sites in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River area. At a location just north of milepost 7.0, 310 permits were issued to 657 visitors who stayed an average of 2.25 days in 1995. Also during 1995 there were 524 permits issued to 1,163 visitors at Dingford Creek who stayed an average of 2.13 days. Near the end of the road at Dutch Miller Gap there were 325 permits issued to 709 visitors who stayed an average of 1.94 days. Some of the latter visitors may have traveled overland from the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area which could account for the relatively short overnight stays at Dutch Miller Gap. In light of the traffic information discussed above, this information suggests relatively low overnight use of the area by recreation-oriented visitors. Assuming that each permit was issued to a party in one vehicle and that all permits were issued to persons traveling to the area on FR 56,[2] the data imply a total of 1,159 one-way vehicle trips to the area, an amount that represents about 3 percent of total one-way trips up the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley in 1995. Of course it should be noted that the actual number of overnight users in the area likely exceeded the tally for those holding permits to stay overnight at designated USFS camping sites.

Visitor use of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley would be expected to increase on the basis of the growth projected for one-way traffic (under the two growth scenarios) as discussed above. Projections for the various categories of users are calculated as shares of vehicular traffic (one-way), converted to passengers, and estimated for years 2001, 2006, and 2011. The number of passengers per personal vehicle is estimated at 3.2 persons. Total annual recreational use by transportation arrival category is estimated for both *moderate growth* and *high initial growth* scenarios, as follows:

[2]This seems reasonable given an implied vehicle occupancy of 2.2 persons per vehicle (1,159 permits issued to 2,509 visitors suggests vehicle occupancy of 2.2 persons).

Moderate Growth Scenario

User Category	2001	2006	2011
Persons Arriving by:			
Personal Vehicles	150,432	174,397	202,176
Bus & Other	10,029	11,626	13,478
Bicycle	6,686	7,751	8,986
Total Users	167,147	193,774	224,640

High Initial Growth Scenario

User Category	2001	2006	2011
Persons Arriving by:			
Personal Vehicles	194,640	225,645	261,690
Bus & Other	12,976	15,043	17,446
Bicycle	8,651	10,029	11,631
Total Users	216,267	250,717	290,767

For purposes of comparison it is useful to consider total visitor use at other nearby recreation areas, namely Tiger Mountain near Issaquah, and Mt. Si near North Bend. According to information provided by Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Tiger Mountain had approximately 150,000 visitors in 1992. Visitation to the area, it is conjectured by DNR, increased substantially between 1990 (for which visitation data is unavailable) and 1992 because of improvements (parking facilities, restrooms, etc.) undertaken in 1991 by DNR as well as increased mountain bike use by outdoor recreationalists in the Puget Sound area. Mt. Si visitation has been estimated by DNR at about 37,000–50,000 based on vehicle counts in parking areas near trail heads. The main parking lot has a 160 vehicle capacity, but sometime exceeds 200 vehicles. At least 10 days per year the lot overflows with 200+ cars. There is parking at "little" Si in a King County serviced lot. On rainy days 3–6 cars may be found parked at the lot; during the high season up to 25 cars, and on many days the lot overflows with up to 50 cars. Teneriffe Road is another place people park in the Mt. Si area; before the pavement ends 5 cars or so may be parked in the area by hikers; the Teneriffe community is located on the gravel portion of road, say 1/2 miles further; 1–10 cars are usually found parked there.

CAMPGROUND/PARKING CAPACITY: DAY AND OVERNIGHT USE

The design features and visitor use levels for the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Corridor Development Concept Plan call for a variety of improvements and visitor opportunities at several locations beginning at the gateway and along the FR 56 route proceeding up valley. The primary focus for this study is on parking space for both day and overnight use. Approximately 200 day use and 80 overnight use parking places are currently envisioned for the route, although the specific locations for the spaces as well as possible modifications to the total number of spaces provided are subject to change as the planning process advances. The details based on the preliminary use concept plan, dated March 1997, are as follows:

- Gateway camping and parking/staging area (possibly at Edgewick at Exit 34 off I-90). The parking lot could be sized to accommodate both Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley users as well as other travelers. For purposes of the preliminary analysis the parking capacity is estimated at 40 spaces for cars and RVs. Both day and overnight use would be accommodated.
- Day Use
  - Valley entry on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River road: 15–20 cars at trailheads
  - CCC Road: 30–35+ cars; 5–10 trailers
  - Mine Creek: 20–25 cars
  - Granite Creek Flats: 10–15 cars
  - Bessemer/CCC Road Junction: 5– 10 cars; 3–5 trailers
  - Pratt River: 15–20 cars
  - Camp Brown: 15–20 cars
  - River Bend: 2–3 cars
  - Taylor River: 55 cars and 12 horse trailers

  Total day use car parking capacity, therefore, amounts to between 187 and 225 spaces, approximately.
- Overnight Use
  - Taylor River: 30–64 space maximum, to be developed in increments of about 10 spaces each
  - Dingford Creek: 8–12 spaces maximum

  Total overnight use car parking capacity, therefore, amounts to 38–82 spaces (at maximum), approximately.

It is important to note that for day use, especially at locations within the first 7–8 miles along FR 56 or up to the Pratt River, a 2.5 car turnaround per parking stall can be expected, based on experience indicated by an official at the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. Beyond this point replacement of day use vehicles would diminish to 1.5 cars per parking stall up to and including Taylor River and 1.0 cars per parking stall for locations beyond. Thus, parking capacity available for day use on the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley road (based on 200 spaces) would accommodate up to 410 vehicles per day. Overnight parking capacity would likely reflect single car per space utilization or up to 80 vehicles per day. These figures of course exclude parking at the gateway location.

Combining the two maximum vehicle parking capacity and utilization estimates indicates that total capacity for vehicle access and parking in the area amounts to 490 vehicles. This represents about 82 percent of total peak day demand for the final year forecast horizon suggested by the traffic analysis under the *moderate growth scenario* (600 vehicles) and about 63 percent of total peak day demand under the high initial growth scenario (777 vehicles), as indicated above. Thus, parking capacity could impose a substantial constraint on park visitation given likely demand for future access to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley, unless an alternative means of access is provided, such as a shuttle service. Indeed, parking capacity would constrain visitation practically from the onset. The estimated peak day traffic flow (one-way) for year 2001 ranges from 447 vehicles to 578 vehicles depending on the traffic growth scenario chosen, thus, suggesting that visitor access will require the establishment of a shuttle system from early on. (See the separate Transportation Plan Report for a discussion of shuttle system requirements, costs, and fee structure.)

VISITOR PROFILE

There is no survey-based information on existing Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley users or potential users (under conditions in which improvements to the road, trails, campgrounds, area safety, etc. have been undertaken). However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that most visitors to the area will be day users; a significantly lower number will remain overnight in campgrounds or at primitive dispersed sites in upland areas, e.g., Pratt Valley. Again, most visitors can be expected to arrive via personal vehicle; with small shares arriving by bus, bicycle, and so forth. A few will come for the purpose of setting out into the backcountry on horseback, transporting their horses in trailers which would be parked at designated locations. And of course river users would transport their kayaks using personal vehicles. As noted above, vehicle occupancy is expected to be 3.2 persons per vehicle based on existing patterns of use. Overnight stays would be expected to be 2.25 days on average.

PROGRAM CONCEPT

Two management scenarios can be considered for managing and operating the Middle-Fork Snoqualmie River Valley as a recreation resource under conditions in which plan policies and programs are implemented and capital improvements are made. Both scenarios assume that an overall management structure will be established. Given the multiple ownerships and jurisdictional interests and responsibilities pertaining to management of both natural and human resources it would be prudent to consider the establishment of a joint operating authority which might be established through a memorandum of understanding among the major participants including the USFS, DNR, and King County. Such an authority would be capable of entering into agreements with third parties for managing and operating the recreation area, including contracting with concessionaires for the provision of visitor services. The management scenarios discussed below reflect alternative approaches for accommodating visitor use in suitable areas while assuring that natural processes are protected and resource impacts are minimized. Management Scenario 1 is less restrictive in the sense that visitors are allowed to enter the area using their own personal motorized vehicles for both day use and overnight use up to the limits of available parking space. Parking at own discretion at other than established locations would be prohibited in both cases. Management Scenario 2 would allow vehicle access for overnight use at designated locations; access for visitors would be limited however; persons seeking motorized transportation would be required to use a shuttle service. Bicyclists and pedestrians would be provided unlimited access.

MANAGEMENT SCENARIO 1

Overnight Permit Limitations

Maximum Use

As mention above, overnight parking limitation would constrain the number of visitors who provide their own motorized transportation to a maximum of 80 vehicles or approximately 256 persons. If the average overnight stay is 2.25 days as indicated above for a central Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley location near milepost 7.0, this would constrain the number of visitors per day to about 114 persons on average. The parking limits would amount to 8 spaces at Oxbow Road Junction, 64 spaces at Taylor River, and 8 spaces and Dingford Creek. The corresponding visitor levels (assuming overnight stays of 2.25 days) would be 11 persons, 91 persons, and 11 persons at the three locations, respectively. If overnight stays amounted to one day only, then the maximum overnight visitation would be 26 persons, 205 persons, and 26 persons at the three locations, respectively.

Seasonal Use

It is more likely that visitor use will be distributed differentially with a summer peak and shoulder season visitation lows. It is likely that the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley would have a 3–4 month peak visitation season, with more modest visitation levels

during the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Thus, about half of the days during which the area is accessible (approximately 200 days) would be in the primary summer season. During this period it can be assumed that overnight use would amount to 90 percent of capacity. During the shoulder seasons, use would be expected to fall off to about 20 percent of capacity. The above use levels would translate to 3,200 vehicles entering the area for overnight use during the summer peak, assuming average overnight stays of 2.25 days,[3] or a maximum of 7,200 vehicles if stays are assumed to be one day only; 711 vehicles entering the area for overnight use during the shoulder seasons, again, assuming stays of 2.25 days for overnight visits,[4] or 1,600 days assuming a one day stay per overnight visit. Under these assumptions total vehicles entering the area would amount to 3,911 vehicles, assuming average stays of 2.25 days and 8,800 vehicles at the maximum.

The corresponding visitor levels would be 12,515 persons under the longer overnight stay assumption and 28,160 persons at the maximum.

Day Use—Own Transportation

Day use in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley would be constrained for persons seeking to travel using personal vehicles (e.g., car, pickup, and camper) only.

Bicyclists/Pedestrians

Bicyclists and pedestrians would have free access to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley area (perhaps persons traveling with motorcycles would be treated similarly). Both bicyclists and pedestrian may arrive by bus, personal vehicle, or under their own power. Travel beyond the control point, however, would be by bicycle or walking. As noted in the discussion on projected visitor use, approximately 10 percent of total visitors would be expected to arrive by bus, hitchhike, bike, or walk.

Auto/Camper

Persons traveling by personal vehicle would be subject to access restrictions based on available parking at designated locations in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley. The parking limitations, as discussed above, limit the number of vehicles that can enter the area, most likely on a permit basis. Under current concept plans, the limit would be set at about 200 spaces at the maximum. Given the likely turnover of parking stalls per day (estimated from 1.0 to 2.5 cars per stall per day with an average turnover of 2.05 stalls per day), the maximum number of vehicles that could enter the area would amount to about 410 vehicles. With vehicle occupancy estimated at 3.2 persons, the maximum visitor use associated with day use activities would be about 1,312 persons.

---

[3]Based on 80 spaces times 100 days at 90 percent occupancy and average stays of 2.25 days ((80x100x0.9)/2.25=3,200).

[4]Based on 80 spaces times 100 days at 20 percent occupancy and average stays of 2.25 days ((80x100x0.2)/2.25=711).

Similar to the situation for overnight use, it is more likely that the distribution of visitor use would result in a summer peak and shoulder season visitation lows. It is likely that the Mid-Fork Snoqualmie River Valley would have a 3–4 month peak visitation season, with more modest visitation levels during the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Thus, day use levels at 90 percent of capacity would translate to 36,900 vehicles entering the area during the summer peak and 12,300 vehicles entering the area for day use during the shoulder seasons, assuming use levels at 30 percent of capacity.[5] Under these assumptions total vehicles entering the area would amount to 49,200 vehicles. The corresponding visitor levels would be 157,440 persons.

MANAGEMENT SCENARIO 2

Overnight Permit Limitations

The same overnight parking limitations and associated visitation levels discussed in regard to Scenario 1 apply for Scenario 2.

Day Use—Shuttle Program

Day use in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley would be restricted to bicycle/pedestrian travel and a shuttle service. Parking spaces would not be provided for day use purposes, with the possible exception of parking for vehicles towing horse trailers which would be established at designated locations.

The shuttle would likely provide scheduled transportation service. The main departure/arrival terminal at the entrance would be at the Gateway RV/camping and parking area, presumably at Edgewick or another suitable location. The shuttle would be a fee-based service. Bicyclists and pedestrians would not be restricted from entering the area and would not be required to purchase permits.

CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS

VISITOR DEMAND BY TYPE OF USE (DAY/OVERNIGHT)

Based on the above capacity analysis, there would be an imbalance between future visitor demand and supply (as measured by available vehicle parking spaces) for both day use and overnight use. Overnight use at the maximum expected levels would amount 28,160 visitors per year; a more reasonable expectation is that visitor use would be about 12,515 visitors per year under conditions in which average overnight stays are 2.25 days. Day use would amount to 157,440 visitors per year who travel by personal vehicle and, thus, are subject to permit limitations. These permitted uses, thus, would tally at about 185,600 visitors per year at the maximum and 169,955 visitors per year

[5]Based on 410 vehicles, 100 days, and 90 percent utilization during summer (410x100x0.9=36,900); and 410 vehicles, 100 days, and 30 percent utilization during the shoulder season (410x100x0.3=12,300).

under normal conditions (i.e., under conditions in which overnight visitors stay an average of 2.25 days per visit). Adding cyclists and pedestrians (with a 10 percent share) boosts the total to 206,222 visitors per year under maximum conditions and 188,838 year under normal conditions. These figures are lower than estimated for total visitor demand under both *moderate growth* and *high initial growth scenarios* except for the initial forecast period (year 2001) for the former and all forecast periods for the latter scenario.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS FOR BOTH MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS

The shuttle probably has no capacity constraint (assuming that ridership does not vastly exceed expectations), which is similar to persons entering the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley using bicycles or as pedestrians. The overnight constraint is the same for both scenarios. Parking limitations impose the heaviest constraints during peak congested period. During lower demand periods, such as in the shoulder seasons, there would likely be no constraint on visitor use, given projected demand levels.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND FINANCE MECHANISMS

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Construction, maintenance, and operations of recreation facilities/acreage in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley involve numerous issues concerning ownership, governmental jurisdiction, contracting procedures, management, and finance. Most of the area along the road corridor in the valley is owned by the USFS and DNR. The road itself is owned by both King County (up to a point just beyond Concrete Bridge) and USFS. The entire roadway up to Taylor River is maintained by King County with the portion owned by the USFS paid for under contract by the USFS. The issue of how to fund necessary road improvements including parking areas is critical to achieving the developments envisioned by the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley River Corridor Concept Plan. Other capital construction issues also involve joint determinations of responsibilities and financing support.

Because of the multiple ownerships, jurisdictions, and separate missions of the government agencies involved, it will be necessary to establish a institutional framework for overseeing development and managing the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley recreation area. A memorandum of understanding could be the basis for establishing an organization that would be authorized to undertake the measures necessary for the successful development and operation of the proposed recreation area. The three principal governmental agencies would undoubtedly take the lead in establishing the organizational structure and devising means to provide for its funding. Other parties might be included through an arrangement which would provide advisory status and/or direct participation in management decisions.

Based on experience at other locations in Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest as well as at numerous locations within the system operated by the State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Commission, operation of the recreation area through concessionaire contracts would be a reasonable alternative to direct operations by the public entities individually or as a group. Since most of the facilities that would be managed are campgrounds, the structure of a concession agreement or permit would be straightforward. Most likely construction of improvements would be undertaken directly by the owners. Nonetheless, improvements undertaken by the concessionaire would be authorized. The concessionaire would normally be responsible for minor maintenance; major maintenance outlays, e.g., for water systems, buildings, etc., would be undertaken by the owners. The concessionaire would be responsible for collection and deposit of sales taxes on taxable sales as well as payment of the state leasehold tax on taxable rent paid to the owners. The fees and payments made by the concessionaire to the owners would most likely be based upon a set percentage of total revenues generated, less sales taxes collected (the approach used by the USFS for its major campground concession operation). Alternatively, the fees could be set on a sliding scale with minimum and maximum rates on gross revenues depending on the amounts realized (which is the concession policy of the State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Commission on concessions with relatively short terms).

In situations where market demand supports investment in additional facilities, e.g., a gateway facility, it is common for concession contracts to be structured with the term established that would allow for amortization of capital invested. This might be appropriate in the case of development and operation of a gateway facility at Edgewick or elsewhere, assuming that the site is owned by the public agencies and made a part of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley recreation infrastructure. If the site is purchased separately (possibly under ownership of the designated campground concessionaire, assuming that a concession is called for by the public agency owners), the determination of the capital improvements made would be subject to market forces. For example, a large-scale RV park near I-90 could attract users other than visitors to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley.

FINANCE

Fees charged for single unit campsites and day use picnic sites in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest are generally quite reasonable. The nightly fee for individual campgrounds is $10.00 plus $6.50 for an extra vehicle. Half of the campgrounds are reserved and half are on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservation fees are $7.50. Picnic sites are charged out at $6.50. There is a range of charges for group campgrounds—$32.50 to $90.00 for 25 to 50 persons.

These fees provide a basis for determining potential revenues generated from permit fees under the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley concept plan. The fees for overnight

use would likely correspond to the charges imposed on users of single unit campsites, as noted above—$10.00 to $17.50 per vehicle depending on whether a reservation is made. A lower fee could be charged on cyclists and pedestrians who stay overnight at designated campgrounds, say $6.50; however, the number of such users would likely be small. The fees for day use might reasonably be charged at the picnic site fee — $6.50 per vehicle. (Shuttle fees are not considered in this study; they are treated separately in the transportation analysis. Such fees would be set at levels required to offset fixed and variable costs associated with the operation of the shuttle system.)

Revenues generated from fees and charges can be estimated based on projected annual visitor use for both day use and overnight use in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley, as discussed above in the section on program concept. Day users would generate approximately $320,000 in annual revenues at buildout and overnight users would generate between $54,000 and $121,000 depending on the length of stays visitors incur. Thus, total revenues from operations would range from $374,000 to $441,000 per annum at buildout.[6]

The share of revenues returned to the owners would likely be 10 percent of gross revenues or $37,000–$44,000 per annum. This would leave between $337,000 and $397,000 to the managing agency or concessionaire to cover expenses and, in the case of the concessionaire, realize a profit. It is possible to conjecture the amount of costs required for operations and maintenance of facilities in the Mid-Fork Snoqualmie Valley. For example, four full-time workers and equipment (vehicles) would cost approximately $170,000 (salary and benefits). Supplies and services would add about $20,000; leasehold taxes of about $5,000; overhead and management $65,000; for a grand total of about $260,000. The residual would apply to management costs, contingencies and profit. This would range from $77,000 to $137,000 depending on the number and length of stay of overnight users.

[6]The revenue figures assume 90 percent utilization during the summer season for both day and overnight users and 20 percent and 30 percent utilization during the shoulder season for day and overnight users, respectively.

APPENDIX D

THE MIDDLE FORK SNOQUALMIE RIVER STUDY PHASE II

WORKSHOP I MINUTES: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1997

INTRODUCTION

- Brief introduction by Bob Rose, including a review of Phase I and Phase II, the overall planning horizon (5–10 yrs), the purpose of Workshop I and the overall goals of Phase II—law enforcement, management partnerships, business and transportation plans for the valley.
- Overview of the Phase II process by Tom Atkins, Parametrix, including a working definition of the river corridor study area (1 m. on either side of the river), and a summary of resource suitability mapping.
- Jim Gildersleeve, City of North Bend, asked about recent Waterways 2000 acquisitions at the concrete bridge, and whether we would be coordinating our planning efforts with the Waterways Program. The Waterways 2000 Program has been pursuing these acquisitions (app. 100 acres) independent of the MidFork planning effort, and will focus on habitat restoration projects on the parcels, not recreation planning. The parcels are, however, included in the corridor concept plan as sites for potential passive recreation use which is not inconsistent with the Program's goals.

PRELIMINARY RIVER CORRIDOR CONCEPT

- Chris Carlson, Jones & Jones presented preliminary river corridor concepts for day use, overnight camping and trailhead areas. The following discussion focused on a number of issues related to the concept.

CAMPING

- Camping standards were discussed. Standards for the Mine Creek and Taylor River sites were characterized as USFS Level II, which is approximately four sites per acre, including a non-paved tent pad, fire grill, picnic table, shared toilet facilities; none of the proposed sites were characterized as typifying NPS or KOA facility standards.
- Doug McClelland, DNR, asked how group camping sites would be distinguished from dispersed sites. Tom Atkins indicated that the most suitable camping sites would be found, with some group camping allocated on an advance booking, as in Wilderness areas. The USFS watershed study will definitely affect the placement of camping.

- Reed Hansen, economist, disagreed with the concept of regulated camping beside dispersed, unregulated campsites. Unless there is overwhelmingly high demand, people will camp at dispersed sites, so there might be a need for a general fee. How do we regulate car camping in dispersed areas? It still needs to be controlled. Tom Atkins noted that dispersed sites will have a fee and controls, but that this is the reason that Reed is on board—to investigate the feasibility of various camping options.
- Mark Boyar, MIDFORC, noted that most corridor use will be day-use with cars, and he foresees a huge traffic increase; people could ask about the availability of camping sites at the valley control point; if there are no sites available, the amount of cars in the corridor would be reduced.
- Mark Lawler, Sierra Club, noted that the further down-valley auto camping is located, the greater shuttle-bus use. If camping is at Taylor, people will drive the entire way rather than use the shuttle.
- Mark Lawler asked about the scale of proposals. Could a good-sized campground be located near Mine Creek, with smaller campgrounds further up the valley, including Taylor River? He emphasized pushing as much camping to the Lower Valley as possible, with extra fees charged to use Taylor River. Tom Atkins noted that more expensive camping at Taylor could work with a shuttle/camping concessionaire, and that finding a large dry site downriver would be difficult.
- Clusters of 2 or 3 campsites along the road were suggested as an alternative to a larger campground.
- Bob Rose noted that maybe it would make sense to come back with scenarios of camp development, with Reed Hansen's input.
- It was also noted that land ownership will dictate camping scenarios and that all concepts will go through the USFS; the Mine Creek site and the Concrete Bridge site will also be included in the USFS watershed analysis.

DISPERSED SITES

- Mark Lawler commented on the need to define the pulloffs indicated on the plan; would they be road spurs of the road, or lay-bys? It was explained that most of the pulloffs indicated on the plan would be sited in areas attractive for their foot access to the river or site features amenable to a hardened day use spot for picnicking, fishing, scenic views, etc. No more than two to three cars would be allowed at any one site, parked head-in from the road.
- Rick McGuire, ALPS, commented that persons driving into the brush are a big problem; he is surprised that the USFS is even discussing the idea of dispersed camping.

- Doug McClelland, DNR, noted that we should either aggregate pullouts or keep them as a series of connected sites. It will be, ultimately, a USFS decision.

TRANSPORTATION/SHUTTLE

- Current Metro service to the valley stops in North Bend and Metro has no eastward expansion plans. The City of North Bend is discussing service improvements with Metro. A number of local businesses have expressed interest in the concept of a shuttle bus into the Middle Fork Valley.
- Mark Lawler commented on the need for a transportation plan, and was told it was in the works.
- Bob Rose stated that the core value of the concept is the shuttle; is it fair to continue this assumption? He asked if there was a shifting of opinion because how uses will be allocated in the valley depends on the shuttle bus.

  Mark Boyar noted that we're going to have Yosemite-size crowds eventually, and David Beaton added that the alternative to a shuttle was 200–500-car parking lots. Without a shuttle bus, where do we park 500 cars?
- Adam Gravley asked about the market for a shuttle bus. He sensed that day use was more important to focus on. Tom Atkins noted the concern for a shuttle bus that can serve people with equipment.
- Security at parking areas was questioned and the need to monitor people's cars was suggested.
- Rod Mace, USFS, and Mark Lawler agreed that the proposed scenarios don't work relative to a shuttle. A shuttle from a campground further down valley is the only way to make it viable and to limit vehicles in the valley.

PROJECT PHASING

- Jim Gildersleeve mentioned the need for a phased, realistic evolution of events and activities. Bob Rose responded that we would find the preliminary build-out, then discuss 3–5 yr. phasing which would be tied to the business plan.
- Janna Treisman, SAS, stressed the need to begin signing and gating for new users who will use the Mid Fork for the first time this summer.
- Doug McClelland noted that law-enforcement, or a valley host/manager, has to be in place before any facilities development.
- It was suggested that gates and an entry booth or some structure be installed as a pilot project to monitor people's attitudes to the changes.

FIRING RANGE

- David Beaton asked if the target shooting issue is being ignored. He asked if there was still support for it. Several persons replied that there was a subgroup working on shooting issues, and that a favored site was still at the Fire Training Center.
- It was also noted that the site feasibility study for a firing range is a separate process than the MidFork Phase II study.

TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS

- Jim Gildersleeve asked about trailhead enhancement in the Upper Valley above the concrete bridge. The proposed Taylor River area will have an improved trailhead, as will a new CCC Hike-Horse-Bike trail to Taylor River. It is also proposed to expand the Dingford Creek trailhead with additional parking and a toilet. Jim Gildersleeve mentioned that there are other popular trailheads that will need to be identified.
- Art Tuftee and Craig McKinnon, BBTC, asked about mountain biking opportunities in the valley. The north bank mountain biking trail is still included in the concept plan but topography, soil suitability and other resources have to be evaluated before the proposal is taken further. Both said that off-road biking experiences need to be provided in the valley until that trail is built.

Several TAC members noted that the hike-horse-bike trail connection to the CCC Road from Taylor River could be built now.

RESOURCE SENSITIVITY

- Rick McGuire said that more recent aerial photos are needed. There is mature second growth at the Taylor car-camping area; instead of clearing some trees and making the forest vulnerable to windthrow, why not put car camping in newer tree growth which is more windfirm.
- Jim Gildersleeve noted that the Taylor River area is also good elk wintering and hunting ground.

ACTION ITEMS UPDATE

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Ken Konigsmark and Doug McClelland reiterated that without safety, there is no point to development in the valley. They are coordinating potential actions with the DNR, USFW, USFS and King Co. Police, and meeting on a regular basis to develop ideas.
- The DNR has installed signing on the road through their lands that indicates "no camping or shooting". The hope is that this will be compatible with USFS policy. In addition, all spur roads through DNR lands on the west side of the Middle Fork Road will be closed and tank-trapped, and squatters will be identified and asked to leave.
- The use of mobile booths, such as those owned by Weyerhaeuser, were identified as a potential way to acclimatize people to the notion of a control area.
- IAC funds were mentioned as a potential source of assistance for volunteers such as Wade Holden.

USFS WATERSHED ANALYSIS

- Rod Mace, USFS, described the status of the Forest Service's watershed analysis. They have identified baseline conditions, and are now proceeding with a synthesis of past uses and future trends. The study focuses on USFS land, but when other data about adjacent lands is available, they integrate it. The analysis will also look at the relationship of the Middle Fork Valley to the new Forest Plan. Overall, the analysis should be completed by May. Middle Fork concept plans are being regularly fed to the watershed analysis team for resource information and feedback. It was emphasized that the team look at other potential campsite areas and send them to USFS before finalizing the corridor concept.

DNR HCPs

- Bonnie Bunting, DNR, noted that the DNR has just presented their Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the Middle Fork to the federal government. She explained that the DNR has not analyzed HCP's for non-forest activities nor has the department studied their relationship to adjacent USFS lands. She did emphasize that the DNR is not going to take on campground operations as a departmental activity.

FIRING RANGE

- Ken Paul, Snoqualmie Rifle Club, said that no real progress has been made on the firing range. There have been discussions about the type of facility most desired. One idea is to develop a formal range, and a controlled, but 'informal' range to provide different shooting scenarios for the broadest range of users. The informal site would replicate the gravel-pit with a sani-can, and allow shooters to pick their targets within prescribed boundaries.

ACTIONS

Based on the discussion, the planning team will:

- study potential sites for camping in the lower valley
- reevaluate dispersed sites in the corridor and their use
- revise the Taylor River camping area
- study the entry area for sufficient space relative to the proposed program

MEETING BUSINESS

- Workshop II: Thursday, March 13, 4:30–6:30 PM, Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill

THE MIDDLE FORK SNOQUALMIE RIVER STUDY PHASE II

WORKSHOP II MINUTES: TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 1997

INTRODUCTION AND UPDATES

- Bob Rose introduced the purpose of Workshop II
- Rod Mace, USFS, summarized for the TAC a briefing with Denny Bschor, MBSNF Forest Supervisor and his staff and the Midfork planning team.

REVISED RIVER CORRIDOR CONCEPT

- Chris Carlson, Jones & Jones, summarized the changes to the preliminary river corridor concept. The revisions resulted in a smaller scale day use corridor comprised of several (6) sites supplying river access, off-road parking, foot-only trails, and facilities such as toilets and picnic tables.

STAGING AREAS

- As in the earlier concept, two alternative staging area locations are identified along North Bend Way and at Edgewick. The sites would be developed to direct recreational users to local destinations, including the Middle Fork valley and to provide needed services such as phones, parking, Metro, shuttle and trail connections, bike racks and storage, possible RV camping, etc. The City of North Bend would also serve as the heart of the larger valley, providing outfitting and equipment rental services, Metro and shuttle stops, parking and information.

ENTRY AREA

- The entry gate/booth did not change in concept or location. A booth would be located, possibly in the summer of '97, and manned at this location to provide visitors with information about the valley, including distances to Taylor River, trailheads, etc. and visitor behavior. The booth would provide an opportunity to begin evaluating the feasibility of the entry gate concept.

MIDDLE FORK ROAD

- The Middle Fork Road would be gated at Taylor River and at Dingford Creek. The former would be a seasonal closure—open during low use times with vehicle use of the upper road at one's own risk, and closed during peak use periods and/or hours with use of the road by hikers, mountain bikers and horses. Private property owners would have access through the gate at any time. A permanent gate would be installed at Dingford Creek. The road would be used by hikers, mountain bikers and horses. Private property owners would have

access at any time. This concept would shift road repair monies back to the lower valley where most vehicle and visitor use would occur.

DAY USE SITES

- Several day use sites were identified from the mouth of the valley to Taylor River—Mine Creek, Granite Flats (Concrete Bridge area), Oxbow Natural Area, Road Rest Stop, Camp Brown, and Taylor River. The sites would be provided with varying amounts of parking, signing, foot-only trails to the river, toilets, and picnic tables where appropriate, such as at the Road Rest Stop, or Camp Brown.

CAMPING

- Walk-in and auto camping sites were reconfigured at Taylor River into smaller areas. Other elements of the earlier concept were retained- road realignment, day use trail loops including one to the CCC Road and one to Camp Brown, interpretive signs and kiosk, reopening of the former USFS site for a day use trail, seasonal gate at the first Taylor River bridge. An off-road mountain biking trail paralleling the north side of the Middle Fork was not included.
- Taylor River is the only auto camping area identified in this version of the corridor concept. Walk-in camp site opportunities would still exist 1/2–1 mile from the road as long as certain criteria, such as impacts to the river, wet soils, etc. were met. Existing backcountry primitive camping would not be affected by this concept.
- No camping site was identified in the Lower Valley. However, additional analysis should be conducted.

DISPERSED SITES

- In general, existing dispersed sites throughout the corridor would be closed below Taylor River with the exception of those sites identified as suitable for day use (see above) These sites would be signed and provided with off-road parking, trails, toilet and picnic tables. Dispersed sites, whether for day or overnight use above Taylor River, were not studied further in this version of the concept.

TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS

- Use of the CCC Road for mountain biking, horses and hikers was retained, including the road-to-trail connection to Taylor River. An alternative CCC Road trailhead was identified down road from the Tenerife neighborhood and adjacent to DNR land. The trailhead would provide off-road parking and a new off-road trail connection to existing Mt. Si trails and to the CCC Road. Land would have to be acquired by the DNR for access to the trailhead. Additional proposed trails in the concept included foot-only trails at Taylor River from the existing parking

area south to Camp Brown, and a foot-only loop trail from the first Taylor River bridge along the Taylor to the former USFS site.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

- Reed Hansen presented a preliminary economic analysis of the valley based on historic and projected traffic counts, visitor use numbers (data obtained from USFS, WA State Parks, King County) and number of proposed day and overnight parking capacity (based on preliminary concept plan). No survey-based information on users is available for the valley. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that most users will be day users and a lower number will stay overnight, at least in the river corridor. Based on this assumption, total capacity for the area was identified as 553 vehicles, slightly less than peak day demand (600 vehicles). Parking capacity was, therefore, not identified as a major constraint on visitation given the likely demand projected for the valley.
- Reed described two alternative scenarios for accommodating visitor use in the valley based on development of the concept, and assuming the establishment of an overall management structure. The first would include overnight parking limitations based on permit availability of parking at camping sites, free access for bikers, hikers, and restricted use of personal vehicles by fee. The second scenario would include the same overnight parking limitations via permit, free bike and hiker use of the valley, and shuttle service for day use. No day use parking spaces would be provided for vehicles, except for those towing horse trailers. In this scenario the shuttle would be fee-based.

MIDDLE FORK ROAD AND SHUTTLE

- Bill Eager, TDA, presented additional information about the use of a shuttle system to accommodate numbers of users, including changes to the Middle Fork Road. Using a design day of 400–1500 vehicles, Eager suggested paving the road, reducing speeds to 25 mph, limiting sight distances, supplying turnouts every 1–3 miles, and realigning the road in certain areas to restrict traffic. In order to meet AASHTO standards, and accommodate bikes, Bill also described a rural/recreation road standard with 10 ft. lanes, 4 ft. shoulders and a ten ft. clear zone. Eager said that alternative surfaces such as chip seal would not be durable enough to handle the predicted volume of cars over time. He was asked if there are existing roads through wilderness areas that could be used as a model for the Middle Fork Road (e.g. Soleduck, NPS, North Fork Skykomish).
- The TAC replied that accommodating regular bikes and RV's is not a part of the overall vision for the valley, nor is a complete realignment of the road because of wet soils, wetlands, etc. so the scale and type of road, including shoulders,

should be minimized. Jan Klippert (King County) said that a variance could be applied on the existing rural road to accommodate appropriate design standards.

- Bill also discussed the feasibility of a shuttle system. Based on Hansen's preliminary numbers, he outlined a scenario that would cost approx. $17 for a round trip ticket, assuming a ridership of 250 per day. Based on this scenario, the shuttle would not be a good idea. However, as numbers of riders rose, the cost would drop to a more desirable level. The TAC asked questions about price variations per stop. Eager said that allocating costs by distance would not change the cost.

- Several questions were raised about the shuttle. For example, what is the relationship between willingness to pay for the shuttle versus fee for parking? Should parking pay for the shuttle, especially since that was the original idea in the first place? Should the shuttle be the low cost alternative, and parking and entry fees the high cost way to limit use? What is the incentive structure relative to costs? If no cars are allowed in the valley, and the shuttle is the only way in and out, should there be a fee? At what point do we get enough ridership to justify a shuttle?

  There was also discussion of the need to create a desire to ride rather than drive, develop qualitative reasons to take the shuttle (e.g. no parking spaces, valley experience, unique shuttle designs, bike racks on the shuttle, handicapped access, shuttle rides to places people can't access) and develop disincentives to using cars, e.g., high entry fees. The TAC agreed that reasonable alternative scenarios and their costs should be laid out, including the capacity of the road and parking system, in order for the shuttle to be evaluated clearly.

CONCEPT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- The TAC was asked to provide ideas for an appropriate management structure for implementation of the concept and long-term management. It was assumed that the USFS and DNR would be involved in a cooperative management relationship. King County and City of North Bend could potentially be involved at some level.

- Management suggestions included a cooperatively funded staff position to keep the project going, development of a nonprofit organization, corporate sponsorship and foundation funding, and the use of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway (MTSG) as an umbrella coordinating body.

- Other suggestions included: the need to build and maintain advocates who consistently work with the agencies; the need to sell the watershed to a

constituency who will advocate for its protection; the need for an ecumenical group to facilitate all vested interests; the need to keep the steering committee and/or TAC involved; the need to develop and make the implementation timetable clear so that the public understands what is happening and how long it takes to make things happen.

ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- The group agreed with the scale and elements in the concept. The planning team will proceed to write the final report, and make final presentations to key stakeholders (e.g. IAC, MTSG). Opportunities for the TAC to review the report will be made.