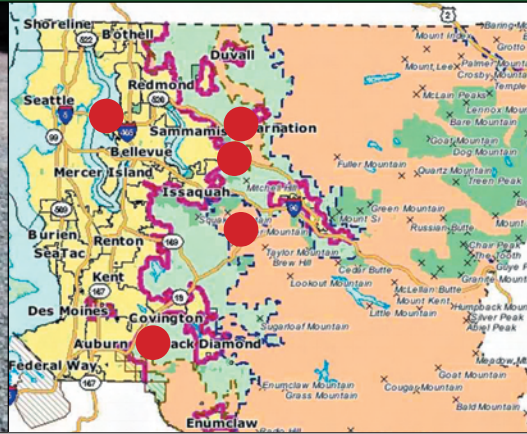


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



Paddling the Rural Waters

Andy Held, Kirkland

Andy Held lives, works, and contributes to his community in Kirkland. His home is his office; his clients come to see him there, or at the coffee shop down the street. His family has the conveniences of urban living: they walk to the supermarket, and do most of their errands on the walk home. Andy has a special understanding of both sides of the urban growth boundary:

- He is a Planning Commissioner for the City of Kirkland, which has the highest percentage of multi-family housing in King County.
- Almost every Wednesday evening, he is on a river in the Snoqualmie River watershed, enjoying the river, the wildlife, and the woodlands and farms that border the rivers.

Andy walks the talk. He says: “As a society, we need the dense environments of Eastside, where commuters can use Metro, or walk; where 10,000 people can be in one campus and collaborate on projects that are changing our world.” Kirkland has changed a lot in the 21 years Andy has lived there - taking on growth so that the ‘other King County’ can stay the same.

“We also need areas that are protected from dense development.” It’s less than 30 minutes from Kirkland to popular stretches of the Snoqualmie river. Sitting on a glassy wave surfing in his kayak, is a totally zen experience. “Surfing is 100% focusing - there is no way to stress about the day while balancing gravity and the rush of the river in a dance on a standing wave.”

Tolt, Snoqualmie, Cedar, Green River

The Tolt River, Snoqualmie River, Raging River, Cedar River and Green River in rural King County offer quality recreation for experienced kayakers and young inner-tubers alike. Paddlers think exploring rural King County by water is the way to go.

At Snoqualmie Falls, water crashes 268 feet to collect in a wide pool before continuing its flow down the Snoqualmie River. All times of the year that pool is the put-in point for kayakers from all over Puget Sound. Boats of every color bob and weave as people new to boating use this water to learn how to flip their kayak, do a roll to right themselves, or bail out if all else fails. Leaving the water at the base of the falls there is long stretch of class II water perfect for the beginning boater. Organized classes are operated on this stretch of the river, and it is where people new to boating often choose to practice.

Intermediate boaters enjoy a hugely popular stretch of the Snoqualmie River called the “Middle-Middle.” It is the perfect after-work kayak workout located just a short drive from surrounding urban areas. Ernie’s Canyon on the north fork and Fall-in-the-Wall on the south fork offer exciting stretches of class IV and V water. The selection of whitewater on the various forks of the Snoqualmie River in King County is a jewel. Its close proximity to the urban core of Seattle / Eastside is what makes this area a premier paddling area in the nation.

On summer weekends and after school, it is hard to find a parking spot along the river in Fall City. Kids and adults enjoy splashing and tubing down this slower moving stretch of the river while picnics are served at Fall City Park.

River play wherever you go in King County is a treat but conditions are always changing and rivers can be extremely dangerous. If you go to play, consult someone who has experience in the area, always wear a life jacket and never visit the river alone.

