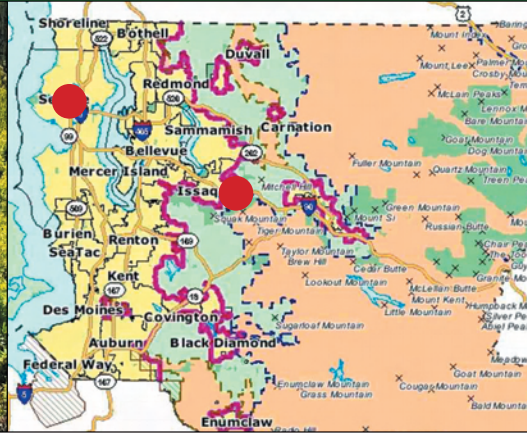


URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS – A WHOLE KING COUNTY



Link to Wilderness

Washington Trails Association, Seattle

Washington's mountains and forests are big enough to provide us with a lifetime of adventure and exploration, if the trails can take us there. Washington Trails Association (WTA) protects and maintains hiking trails, ensuring our hiking trails will be there, for miles and miles to come.

WTA believes that hiking trails are our link to wilderness. WTA protects hiking trails and wild lands through policy work and grassroots advocacy, takes volunteers out to maintain trails, and promotes hiking as a healthy, fun way to explore the outdoors.

Perhaps you've stumbled upon WTA volunteers on a hiking trail--donning hardhats, wielding shovels, and keeping the trail in great shape. WTA's volunteer trail maintenance program is among the largest in the nation. Each year, volunteers donate more than 80,000 hours of great work on trails statewide, and more than 2000 volunteers give back to the trails they love, and get a good dose of personal reward in return.

One of WTA's biggest trail projects in recent years is the Grand Ridge Trail near Issaquah, building a beautiful new trail for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Nestled near the urban growth boundary, Grand Ridge provides area urban residents a unique opportunity to access wildlands for recreation and enjoyment that is near their homes. Over 850 volunteers have helped to build and maintain the Grand Ridge Trail, giving more than 25,000 volunteer hours to the project.

To learn more about WTA and volunteer opportunities on trails, visit www.wta.org



Grand Ridge Park, Fall City & Issaquah

Grand Ridge Park is 1,200 acres of pristine forest rising 1,100 feet in elevation above Issaquah and Lake Sammamish. The park was established as public open space to provide natural resource preservation and passive recreation along the edge of the urban growth boundary.

Grand Ridge truly straddles the transition between urban and rural living. On the west side of the park is Issaquah Highlands, a high density residential and commercial development that has won green building awards. On the east side of the park are rural homes and farms and both public and private timberlands.

A multiuse trail traverses the long linear park wandering through a variety of forest settings which also provide habitat for bears, cougars, owls and other wildlife. The steep slope above the North Fork of Issaquah Creek is covered by stands of large second growth Douglas fir trees. A special feature of Grand Ridge is the many groves of large western red cedar trees and sword ferns in the central part of the ridge. Some of the cedars are over 5 feet in diameter! The red alder forests and wetlands in the north end of the park act as the headwaters for salmon bearing Canyon Creek, which flows into the Snoqualmie Watershed, and the North Fork of Issaquah Creek, which flows east into Lake Sammamish.

Grand Ridge's 7-mile multi use trail was built by hiking and biking volunteers from the Washington Trails Association. Hikers and bikers, whether from Issaquah or outside the area, can access the Grand Ridge trail from the Issaquah-Preston rail trail and from Central Park. Local horse owners can access the trail from the High Point area. Trail improvement efforts are ongoing as King County Parks staff and volunteers continue to work on new trail connections with the Issaquah Highlands community.

