



Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Pierce County

The following recommendations from Pierce County’s Outdoor Sport and Recreation Council include potential additions to the County’s current outdoor recreation inventory. Recommendations are grouped into five categories and are not in any order or priority and are just a beginning slate of ideas.

Water Access/Water Sports

1. Increase access to waterways for use by boaters including fresh water access (Puyallup River, Nisqually River, White River, and Carbon River and various lakes) and salt water (preferably access every 10 miles along the shoreline). Shoreline access and parking remain the two most critical needs for paddle sport development. Whenever possible the water access should be accompanied by some open space/park acreage and adequate parking.
 - a. Re-establish all-tide trailer boat launch opportunity on the east side of Puget Sound south of the Narrows. The top priority sites would be Metro Park’s former Tacoma Outboard Association location and the Chambers Bay site.
 - i. The TOA site benefits by of having been a functional public launch site thereby potentially not needing new permitting. This site has less potential capacity than the Chambers Bay site but both would be desirable.
 - ii. The Chambers Bay site has more potential to include ample parking a launch will require permitting. In the short term the multi-lane launch should be put back into the development plan and ensure that supporting parking potential is retained to support that site.
 - b. Tacoma has plans for a human powered boathouse project on the Foss Waterway (Waterway Park), but at present, it lacks the funding needed to get moving. There is an interlocal agreement between the FWDA and Metro Parks for development, but no money allocated at this time. Potentially the project is facing an estimated \$8M expense. Completion of this site will give human powered water craft storage (and water access) to both clubs and citizens, with public facing programming opportunities to serve not only experienced paddlers and rowers, but also under-served youth, and a wide array of educational programs as well.
 - c. Identify and develop additional Pierce County launch sites, upgrade, and/or preserve existing launch facilities on Puget Sound.
 - d. Improve and increase boat access to the Puyallup River in the

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form of at least two boat launches (for example: an upper site on either Puyallup or Carbon to Launch and a lower site on Puyallup to take out).

- i. Boat launches are needed for both motorized and non-motorized boats
 - ii. Currently the site at the Sumner BMX track would act as a lower take out site. At least one good option for an upper river site on the Carbon or Puyallup Rivers to launch would be critical.
 - iii. More access needed upstream of Orting, and downstream of Sumner.
- e. Support existing projects such as the human powered dock at Ancich Waterfront Park. Gig Harbor is in the early construction stages of developing a sail and human powered dock at the Ancich Waterfront Park. It will serve in a similar capacity and amplify existing community programming needs for the community. Gig Harbor also serves as a substantial hub for all modes of recreational and competitive human powered water craft, in addition to being one of the only places where a limited amount of guided paddle-fishing occurs locally. (Operated by Gig Harbor Fly Shop.) Gig Harbor also hosts the number one youth Olympic Sprint Canoe and Kayak club in the nation.
 - f. Explore the addition of human powered watercraft access in Du Pont. While shoreline access for walkers, runners and hikers is available, access is all but impossible for human powered watercraft. Only those who are capable of a hearty portage will find their way. Du Pont sits on the north side of the Nisqually Delta, which is an excellent place for wildlife exploration, fishing, touring and camping (Marine Trails has a camp site at Anderson Island.)
 - g. Complete the development of Devil's Head, which was acquired by the County in 2010. Exceptional opportunity for passive recreational use, kayak launch, and other activities tied to Puget Sound.
 - h. Develop a whitewater access site on the Carbon River, perhaps near Fairfax Forest or other publicly-held property.
 - i. Complete the development of Foss Waterway Parks.
 - j. Increase parking at all boat launch sites should be evaluated. Additional parking at multiple sites would help spread the access point demands and go a long way in assisting the Point Defiance site which has had its parking greatly reduced recently. Having a site further south toward Chambers Creek would make the most sense.
2. Enhance local salt-water fisheries - and particularly near shore/beach opportunities - through the use of small net pens.

Large Areas of Public Lands

1. Increase the inventory of large expanses of public lands (+/- 1,000 acres) to offer outdoor recreation that does not require a permit fee (commercial forest lands) or entrance fee (national park) to allow access for all socio-economic levels. These larger expanses of land are for outdoor recreation such as hiking, horseback riding, bird and animal watching, and fishing. Consider
 - a. Historic prairie (restoration will be needed) near Roy,
 - b. Forested land in the northwest corner of the county, and
 - c. Riverine along one of the county's rivers such as the White River.
 - d. Carbon River Community Forest – Acquisition of 10,000 acres in the Carbon River area between Carbonado and Mt. Rainier National Park as a community forest. Revenue generated from timber harvests would support recreational infrastructure, such as trails, campground, etc.
2. Increase habitat for waterfowl and other animals that would support bird watching, some hunting, and other activities that revolve around observing fowl and animals in their

native habitat.

Regional Trail Network

1. Create an integrated network of regional trails that connect major attractions or cities within Pierce County with other key living and recreation elements in Pierce County.
 - a. Completion of Foothills Trail between Puyallup and Tacoma, either along the Puyallup River, or by connecting the trail via the Pipeline Trail to Tacoma.
 - b. Completion the acquisition and development of the Foothills Trail between Carbonado and Mt. Rainier National Park.
 - c. Explore the possibility of additional abandoned rail lines (like the one heading south southwest out of Tacoma), power line easements, water district pipeline roads, and similar existing stretches of land/easements that help connect key elements of recreational opportunities throughout Pierce County. For example, use of Tacoma Water's pipeline roads could not only increase a "regional trail" type trail but also potentially allow connections to King County's Regional Trail system (since Tacoma's water comes from the Green River in King County).
 - i. Improve connectivity to existing or planned trails, specifically:
 - ii. Tacoma to Puyallup/Sumner Trail
 - iii. Chambers Creek Trail
 - iv. Foothills Trail to Carbonado
 - v. Interurban Trail to Sumner Trail
 - vi. Hylebos Trails
 - vii. Cushman Power Line Trail to Kitsap County Line
 - viii. Roy to Yelm Trail
2. Support a legislative effort to establish a north-south trail between the Canadian border and the Oregon border utilizing existing regional trails and adding new trail segments as necessary.
3. Consider creating a network of road/logging road trail systems that would allow ATVs the ability to travel throughout the county using authorized roads.

Local Trail Systems

1. Increase locations with multi-use trails that allow outdoor experiences including:
 - a. Protect the Fennel Creek Canyon (approximately 175 acres) and provide for limited trail access into the canyon. Limited access only due to high value of the creek for salmon habitat. Limited access would protect those fish (e.g., from dogs), BUT would allow for environmental educational activities, bird watching, etc. that are passive in nature. In addition, a trail connection from Victor Falls – at the head of the Fennel Creek Canyon – to the Puyallup River should be established, creating a linkage between Bonney Lake and the Foothills Trail.
 - b. Development of the Fairfax Forest property, held by Pierce County, into a recreational amenity that supports recreational activities throughout the Carbon River Corridor. Examples: camping (tent/mountain bike, low impact), mountain bike trails, nature trails with educational signage.
 - c. Approximately 200 acres of forest and lake shoreline at Lake Kapowsin, which would become a regional park providing fishing access, hiking, and potentially other activities.
 - d. Consider dedicating some trail systems to just mountain biking. Mountain biking is an important sport and often the speeds of mountain biking can be a hazard to other trail users. Create some locations that mountain bikes do not have to be careful about hikers or equestrians.

Adequate Infrastructure

1. As outdoor recreation opportunities are increased, attention needs to be focused, in part, on building in reasonable infrastructure including parking for an anticipated volume of users 10-15 years down the line, restroom activities, and trails accessible for individuals (both ADA in some cases and mobility impaired but not to an ADA level). This is usually the US Forest Service Trail standards (not US Forest Service mountain bike standards except where the trails are dedicated to bike only trails).
2. Parking for trails for horseback riding will need to have specialized parking for horse trailers. This would include pull through parking for horse trailer rigs that are 50 feet in length, with each parking spot to be 20 foot wide. (When unloading and saddling equestrians tie their horses to the side of the trailers, thus they need 20 feet for the ride and the horses tied to the side.) Parking areas for horse trailer rigs should be gravel and not asphalt. (Horses wearing iron horse shoes slip on asphalt.)
3. Review current trends for outdoor shooting ranges. The review should consider the potential need to add additional locations to reduce the number of illegal shooting areas that impede hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking.
4. Establish a public/private partnership with Crystal Mountain to expand outdoor opportunities including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and summer mountain bike trails. Determine if this type of model can be used with other private outdoor recreation companies.