



Mountains to Sound Greenway: Seattle to the Cascades



Photo by Jo Gravely

Mission

“Protect and enhance a 100-mile corridor of permanent open space lands along Interstate 90 from Seattle to Central Washington. The greenway embraces city parks and trails, wildlife habitat, working and protected forests, recreational opportunities in nature, local history, scenic beauty, tourism and educational activities that promote a sustainable balance between population growth and a healthy environment.”

Goals

- “Enhance scenic beauty along Interstate 90 and byways
- Create an interconnected trail network from cities to the mountains
- Educate about regional human and natural history
- Improve access to nature for all citizens
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat and corridors
- Preserve working farms and forests
- Encourage communities to retain their identity and plan for sustainable settlement, employment and natural resource protection”

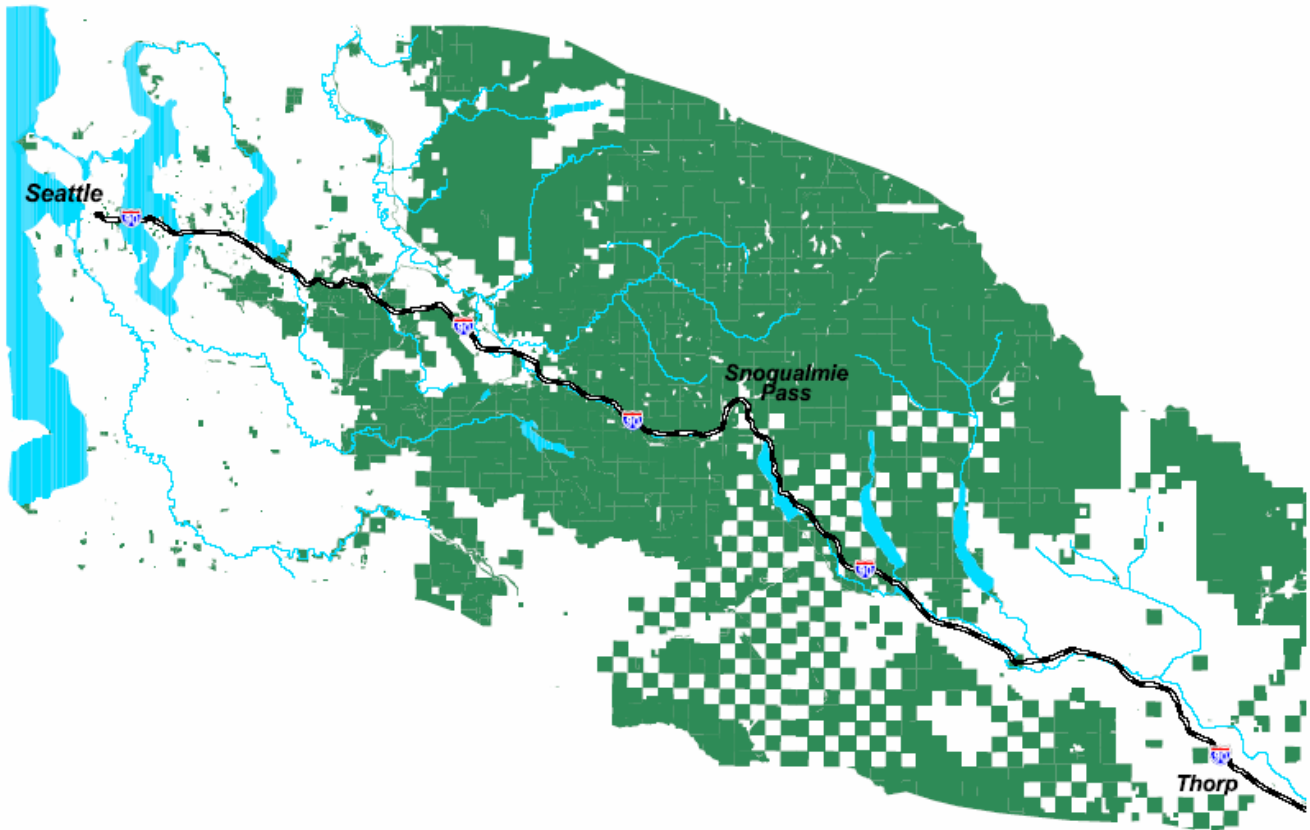


Overview

Like many cities with beautiful surroundings and a high quality of life, Seattle is growing rapidly. Alarmed by the threat to the area’s natural resources, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust began work in 1990 to create a conservation corridor along Interstate 90. The Mountains to Sound Greenway now stretches 100 miles from the shores of Puget Sound in Seattle to the small town of Thorp in Kittitas County along the interstate and the Snoqualmie and Yakima rivers, and includes nine cities and two counties (Figure 1, pg 2). With planning, guidance, and the unified vision of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, public agencies and conservation groups have protected much of the undeveloped land outside urban areas between Seattle and Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascades. The greenway is a mix of publicly and privately owned landscapes, including working forestlands so vital to the region’s economy.

To knit together ecologically important but isolated pieces of land, the Trust has leveraged various funding sources and strategies, including broad and continuing support from multinational corporations based in the area. They have used land exchanges, land donations, acquisitions of public parks, and conservation easements to conserve priority land. Easy access to this vast protected network of lands is a huge boost to the region’s quality of life and allows citizens to easily get away from it all to experience the natural Northwest. The greenway vision also has inspired local municipalities and public agencies to engage in more strategic approaches to land use planning, extending the beneficial impact of the project well beyond the greenway itself.

Figure 1 : The area of the Mountains to Sound Greenway (in green).



Credit: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Highlights

- Trust partners have protected through purchase or exchange more than 215,000 acres of land at a public cost of \$200 million. The greenway focuses on directing growth to suitable locations rather than on stopping growth. The Trust has attempted to control sprawl by advocating concentrated development in already developed areas. The Trust's land protection transactions encourage the preservation of vital forest lands throughout the greenway and the unique flavors of the small mountain towns in the eastern part of the greenway.
- Since the Trust's founding, volunteers have donated more than 100,000 hours in support of stewardship and restoration activities. Hundreds of volunteers donate thousands of hours yearly to planting trees; removing invasive plants; building and maintaining hiking, biking, and equestrian trails; and removing abandoned logging roads. Volunteers helped set up a native tree nursery to provide trees for greenway lands. In 2004 volunteers worked as much as a full-time 4-person crew would in 2 years.
- The Trust has benefited from close associations with a number of large companies and private foundations with strong ties to the area—for example, Microsoft, Weyerhaeuser, Puget Sound Energy, REI, and Boeing. Greenway partners have fostered relationships and trust among groups with disparate interests by working on commonly held goals.
- The Trust's partners recognize that it's important to connect young people of diverse backgrounds with the land. Mountain Works, a cooperative program

of the Trust and EarthCorps, with support from various partners, gives teenagers the opportunity to spend 6 days camping in the mountains and working on trails or removing abandoned logging roads. The program is free to participants.

- A four-unit environmental education program helps students in King County learn about forests, soil, water quality, recycling, the greenway, and the natural resources and processes that make the greenway special.
- National forest land represents a large component of the greenway. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WSDNR) administers the Forest Legacy program, which provides a mechanism to protect private land for the greenway.
- Forest Service personnel have helped organize interagency partnerships to more efficiently and effectively maintain greenway lands. The various managers of public land are working with other Trust partners toward a common vision for the greenway.

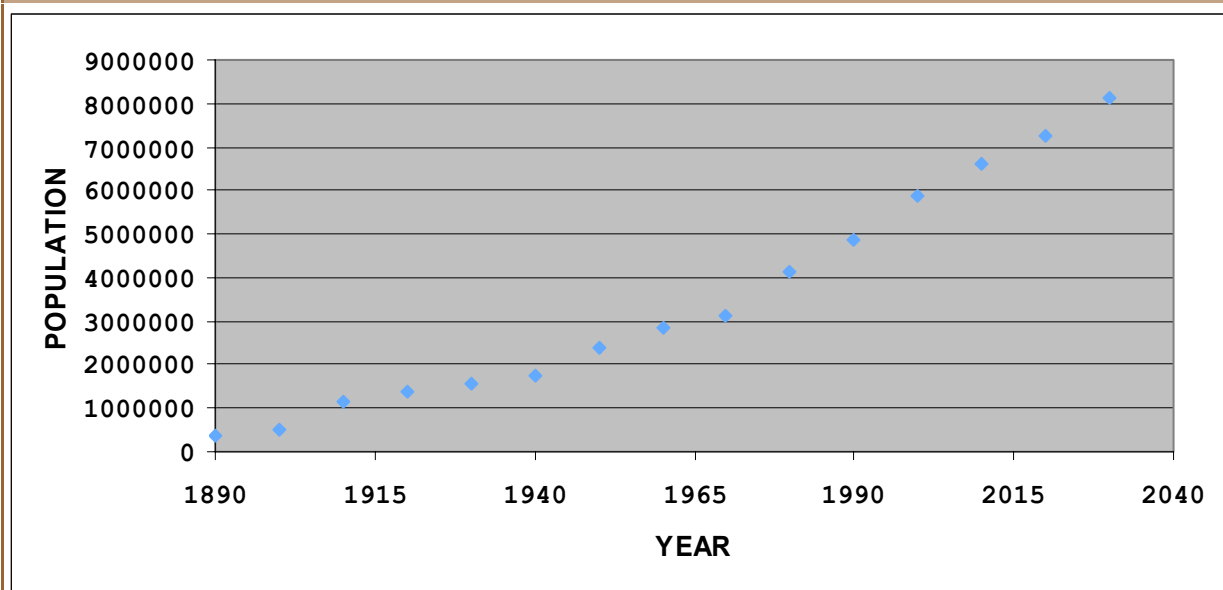
Background and Context

Nancy Keith, executive director of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, said the Trust got started “because of the need to keep a recreational resource at the back door of the city.” In 1990 a group of citizens organized a 5-day march from Snoqualmie Pass to the Seattle waterfront to raise awareness of the need to protect the wild areas outside the city for scenic, recreational, and ecological benefits. The Issaquah Alps Trails Club organized the march with support from corporate, state, and county sponsors. The marchers formed a legal nonprofit group in 1991. The Trust’s first publicly funded land acquisition—1,800 acres atop Rattlesnake Mountain—came in 1993.

The state’s population grew by about 2 percent per year from 1960 to 2000. It is forecast to increase by about 2 million people to a total of more than 8 million by 2030 (Figure 2).

Jim Ellis, a well respected and articulate civic leader, was the Trust’s founding president. The Trust now has a board of directors of 64 people, including major public and private land owners and managers, representatives of businesses and municipalities, the state Department of Transportation, recreational and conservation interests, and elected officials.

Figure 2: Washington State population—1890 to 2030.



Credit: Created from data provided by State of Washington, Office of Financial Management.

Process: The Greenway Concept Plan

A 70-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of citizens and local experts worked with a landscape architecture firm and the National Park Service to develop the Greenway Concept Plan, which was completed in 1993. They developed a goal and objectives for the greenway, assembled information about the area's natural resources, identified priority conservation areas, and agreed on a common vision for the greenway.

The goal was to connect an “already existing string of pearls into a continuous green necklace ... interspersed with the blue waters of lakes and rivers.” The building blocks were lands already set aside for national and state forests, water supply and shoreline protection, state and local parks, and natural resources conservation areas (Figure 3).

The concept plan sought to:

- coordinate planning for transportation, land use, and land management;
- specify how the greenway would affect regional and local planning efforts;
- protect and improve wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities;
- protect, improve, and interpret cultural, historic, and natural resources;
- develop a strategy for protecting important sites in the greenway through creative financing; and
- encourage public participation and communication about the concept plan.

The approved concept plan:

- outlined in broad terms 70 projects that would protect land from the mountains to the sound;
- proposed roles for the various community organizations, governments and agencies, businesses, and private landowners in the greenway;
- attempted to build coalitions and citizen support for the greenway;
- identified opportunities for action;

- respected community goals and the uniqueness of each town;
- recognized the need to balance both economic and environmental values; and
- wasn't specific about which parcels of land were of most interest, so that prices would not rise artificially.

The TAC took the plan to the local governments and received their endorsements. The Trust's approach was to support government actions when they helped advance greenway goals, and otherwise to work collaboratively to find solutions when conflicts arose. When the Trust is concerned about something a local government is planning, staffers meet privately with officials to discuss the issue and advocate for alternatives. Local governments and timber companies have cooperated with the Trust by postponing key land and timber sales while the Trust worked to raise the money to acquire the property.

Figure 3 : View from Mount Si, a state natural resources conservation area.



Photo by Jo Gravely

Protecting Land and Preserving Working Forests

A few state and federal programs and land management philosophies proved critical during implementation of the concept plan.

In the 1960s, most U.S. Forest Service lands in the area were located at high elevations in the Cascades. State-owned land formed a checkerboard pattern throughout what is now the greenway. Large acreages of private working forest were interspersed with small county-owned properties. In the 1980s WSDNR began to acquire properties through purchase and land exchange. The goal was to create larger blocks of state-owned land for greater management efficiency (Figure 4). For the same reason, the U.S. Forest Service also undertook some major land exchanges to eliminate checkerboard patterns in their land. It is far easier to manage land for timber when surrounding landowners are doing the same, so large blocks of working forest are important.

Figure 4: The view from Granite Mountain.



Credit: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

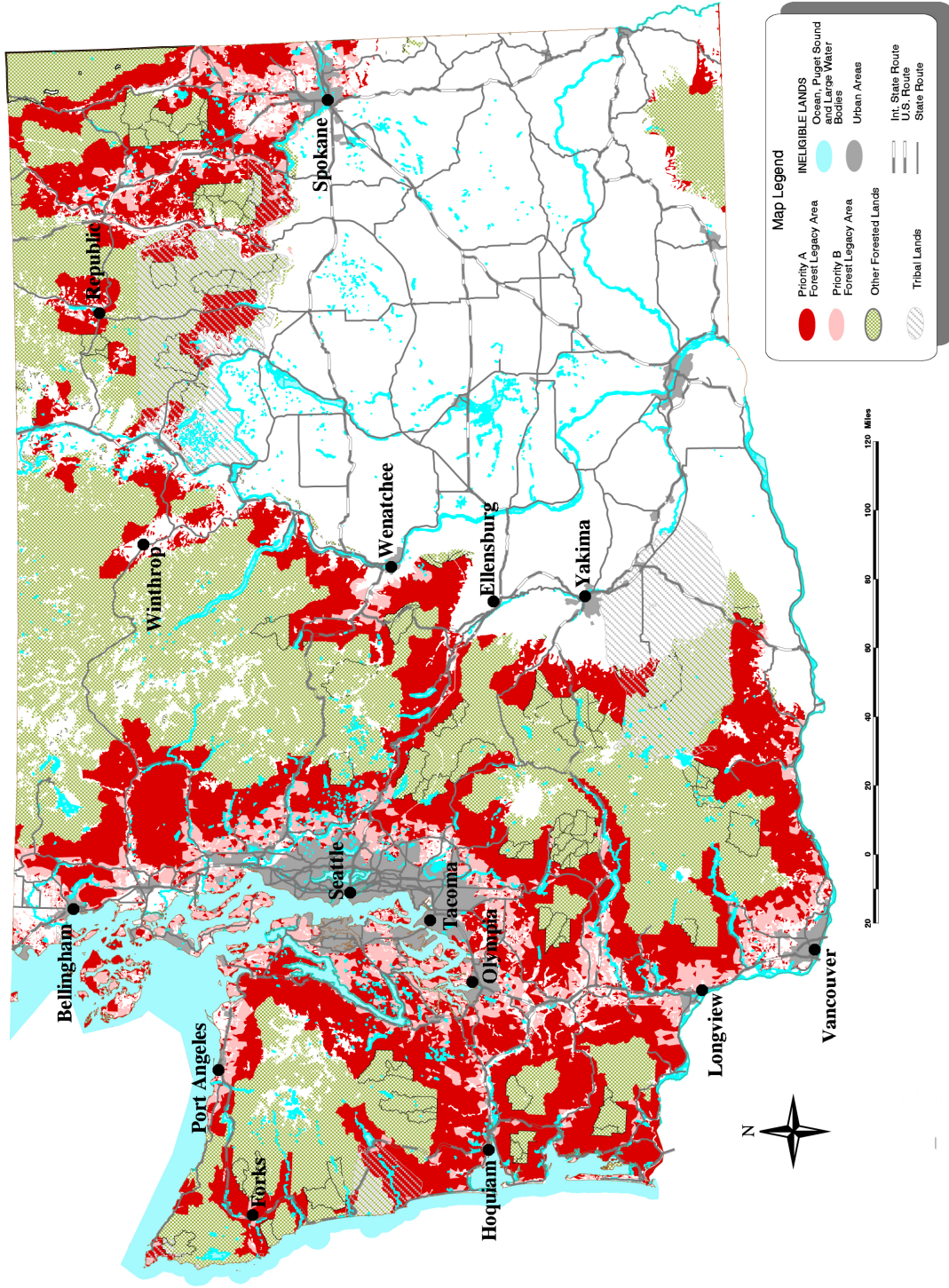
The 1990 Farm Bill established the Forest Legacy program (Figure 5, pg 6) within the U.S. Forest Service. Forest Legacy provides federal dollars to buy interests in land from private owners, both through fee-simple purchases and conservation easements. In the latter case the original owner often retains the right to harvest timber from the site. The first Forest Legacy program money in the United States was spent in the Mountains to Sound Greenway. The goals of the Forest Legacy program in Washington State are to “provide present and future timber management opportunities, protect water quality, and provide habitat for native fish, wildlife, and plants.” Since 1993 Forest Legacy staff in Washington State have finalized deals on more than a dozen parcels totaling more than 13,000 acres. So far, program staff have used fee acquisition to protect 250 acres and conservation easements to protect 12,913 acres within the greenway for a total cost of \$15.7 million.

A number of agencies and organizations have participated in land protection transactions in the greenway. Local and national conservation organizations play a role by watching what properties are or might be available and by facilitating transactions between buyers and sellers. The WSDNR manages land for timber commodities held in trust for schools, counties, universities, and other public entities. About 75% of the value of the timber goes to the trustee (e.g., schools) after harvest. This program allows working forests to persist in the state, particularly on the edge of Seattle in the greenway corridor. In the 1980s WSDNR won legislative approval to set up the Trust Land Transfer Program with funding to substitute purchase of other timber lands for some of the most ecologically important parcels in the state’s ownership, many of which are in the greenway.

“Instead of having I-90 turn into a strip city, which any major highway tends to do, we’ve got a wonderful wilderness and recreation area.”

— Nancy Keith, executive director, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Figure 5 : Priority lands for Forest Legacy program acquisition.
Red marks highest priority lands and pink marks transition zones.



Courtesy: Brad Pruitt, Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Public Involvement

The TAC worked with stakeholders throughout the area to develop the Greenway Concept Plan. When it was finished, TAC members presented the plan to government councils and service clubs throughout the corridor and received universal approval.

Executive director Keith feels that gaining broad public appreciation of the protected green corridor is a crucial step in ensuring its protection for generations to come. “There will always be pressures to convert these open spaces to other uses,” she said, “and new people will need to stand up and defend them.”

Volunteer involvement can motivate citizens to protect the greenway in the future. The Trust has hundreds of active volunteers who assist in the stewardship and restoration of the greenway. Some of the group’s major corporate backers encourage their employees to help with projects. Volunteers perform tasks such as planting trees (Figure 6), tending the native tree nursery, conducting environmental education programs, building and maintaining trails, removing abandoned logging roads, picking up litter, and restoring eroded stream banks.

Increasingly, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust Stewardship Program has been contracted by municipalities to do this kind of work on local government land. These contracts enable the Trust to recruit and manage volunteers to do the work, but do not cover all expenses of the program.

Figure 6: Volunteers in action.



Credit: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Results and Products

The Trust and its many public and private partners have protected more than 215,000 acres in the greenway since its founding. 2004 saw the largest public land acquisition in the greenway thus far—conservation easements were placed on 90,000 acres of private timber land along the front range of the Cascades. The greenway coalition works with developers to help guide growth to existing urban areas and to protect the most ecologically valuable lands.

The Trust has protected highly visible spots along the highway from development. As a result, in 1998, I-90 became the country’s first interstate highway to be named a National Scenic Byway. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has incorporated many greenways projects in the 20-year plan for the I-90 corridor. Among projects supported by the WSDOT are (1) a uniform signage program to guide travelers to greenway historic and recreation facilities off the interstate highway and (2) trail construction that will fill gaps in the regional trail system. Expansion of the trail system will enable people to safely walk or bike from the Seattle waterfront to the east side of the Cascade Mountains.

The Trust received the Puget Sound Regional Council’s “Vision 2020” Award in 1996. The Trust also received a national award from Scenic America for scenic and recreation preservation.

The Bullitt Foundation of Seattle provided financial support for research, writing, and publication of a book about the greenway (*Mountains to Sound: The Creation of a Greenway across the Cascades*) in 1992. The Trust has erected local history interpretive signs in the greenway. In 1996, in collaboration with the National Park Service and WSDOT, the Trust produced a 22-minute video called “Taking Charge: Successful Models for Scenic Towns and Highways,” distributed by the American Planning Association. The Trust has also published a tour guide to the greenway, a newsletter, and an informative Web site (<http://www.mtsgreenway.org>).

Management and Stewardship

The Trust helped establish the Biosolids Forestry Program in 1995, in cooperation with King County, the Weyerhaeuser Company, the WSDNR, and the University of Washington College of Forest Resources, to recycle treated sewage waste by land application to forests. The program fertilizes forest soils depleted by more than 100 years of harvesting; safely and beneficially disposes of waste; and generates funds for land protection. The program has won national certification and recognition by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as an Innovative Conservation Program with Public Benefits.

With the organization EarthCorps, the Trust developed a program, called Mountain Works, to bring young people (Figure 7), often from disadvantaged urban neighborhoods, into the mountains to remove abandoned logging roads and improve hiking trails. Participants have removed about 25 miles of roads so far. Staff volunteer coordinator Kelly Kirkland has built a broad network of contacts among youth groups, schools, and conservation clubs and recruits young people year-round through a weekly e-mail network.

Figure 7: Mountain Works volunteers.



Credit: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Figure 8: FWS employee with chinook salmon.



Photo by John and Karen Hollingsworth, USFWS

Since 1991 Trust volunteers have planted more than 400,000 trees. The group organized volunteers to plant 200,000 trees in 2000, and exceeded their goal by 30,000. Some of the tree planting improves salmon (Figure 8) habitat by providing summer shade that helps stream waters stay cool.

“If we engage our young people in exploring and understanding this natural treasure today, we will be able to count on having the adults who will protect it . . . tomorrow.”

— Jim Ellis, founding president, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

Financing

The U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy program has been an important source of funds for greenway land acquisition. Funds from the King County Biosolids Forestry Program often provided the required match for federal funds. In the 1990s the Trust financed land acquisitions through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, federal Transportation Enhancements funds, and state legislative funds used by greenway partners such as Washington State Parks and WSDNR. King County and some suburban cities have also passed bond issues that have brought significant funding to the greenway.

Founding president Jim Ellis attracted sustainable contributions from corporations. The Boeing Company, Puget Sound Energy, Microsoft Corporation, the Osberg Family Trust, the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, and several private citizens have each given more than \$250,000 to the Trust since 1991. In addition, Boeing loaned one of their executives to the Trust full-time for 10 years, paid his salary, and provided him office space. Boeing typically makes this arrangement with nonprofits for only one year.

Other donors include American Forests, the Bullitt Foundation, National Tree Trust, Plum Creek Timber Company, Puget Sound Energy, Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), and Washington Mutual Bank. Other integral partners include the Trust for Public Land, Washington State Parks, Cascade Land Conservancy, King County, and several of the cities in the area.

Benefits

The Mountains to Sound Greenway efforts provide the following benefits:

- help to identify up front the most important lands to protect ecological services, the continuation of working forests, landscape connectivity, aesthetics, and recreation (Figure 9);
- provide a framework for various partners to work toward a common vision;
- focus growth in logical places and slow urban sprawl;
- protect and connect large contiguous land areas with many important and diverse natural features;
- ensure the preservation of natural systems to protect water quality and salmon runs and to prevent soil erosion;
- build personal relationships and trust through cooperating to reach a common goal;
- support the diverse economies of the state, especially natural resource-based industries such as fisheries, forestry, and tourism, and the jobs these industries provide;
- demonstrate ways to engage corporations and other disparate interests in results-oriented conservation efforts;
- leverage funding sources to enable the purchase of land parcels that would have been prohibitively expensive without innovative, collaborative financing;
- enhance property values by controlling sprawl, preserving scenic views, improving access to recreational options, and targeting growth where it's most appropriate;
- improve quality of life for area citizens through enhanced connections to Northwest ecosystems and recreational options, and social connections to others; and
- provide public access to recreational opportunities.

Figure 9: Above Cooper Lake in the Cascades.



Photo by William Vogel, USFWS

Application of Green Infrastructure Principles

Principle 1: Protect green infrastructure before development.

Mountains to Sound Greenway founders recognized the value, both to the economy and to personal physical and mental health, of having the mountains accessible to Seattle-area residents by public transportation and recreational trails. The Greenway Concept Plan essentially served as a wish list for the protection of undeveloped properties that would be ideal for the formation of a continuous corridor. Many of the parcels in the concept plan are now protected.

Principle 2: Engage a diverse group of stakeholders.

Everyone involved with the Mountains to Sound effort agrees that engaging diverse stakeholders was Jim Ellis's forte and the most important contributing factor in the organization's success. For example, representatives of the Sierra Club and major timber companies sit on the Trust's board. The Trust worked with stakeholders throughout the area to develop the concept plan. They have successfully engaged hundreds of volunteers who contribute thousands of hours yearly. Staff make special efforts to include people of diverse backgrounds and foster a sense of commitment to the land across the broad community.

Principle 3: Linkage is key.

The Greenway Concept Plan was based on maintaining and expanding linkages between protected lands to increase their ecological and recreational value. Lands were strategically incorporated into the greenway to

increase the corridor's connectivity. Although it's important that the forests along both sides of Interstate 90 be part of the greenway so that people recognize its extent, the Trust has also protected vast tracts of forest land and important watersheds not visible from the highway.

Greenway partners include representatives of governmental agencies at all levels, corporations, private foundations, nonprofit groups, and private citizens. By working together toward a shared goal these groups have learned that it's safe to trust and compromise with each other. The Trust has leveraged funding from various sources, thereby linking sometimes disparate funders behind a common goal.

Principle 4: Work at different scales and across boundaries.

The Trust focuses on piecing together the 100-mile greenway corridor but also on restoring its parts to full ecological function. Not only have they protected parcels of land as large as 90,000 acres, they have worked to remove abandoned logging roads, plant trees, and restore stream banks. Both scales require collaboration with different partners in different jurisdictions.

Principle 5: Use sound science.

Recreational access was the initial motivation for creating the greenway. However, the broadened coalition of stakeholders brought to the forefront more scientific concerns such as watershed protection and wildlife passages. The concept plan encouraged the innovative approach of combined planning for transportation and land use and management.

“In a noisy year full of rhetoric and confrontation, the quiet successes of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust were a soothing civic balm Call it tenacious diplomacy, but the project has worked with communities, landowners and commercial interests to reach mutually agreeable, not mutually exclusive goals. The same creative energy applied to protecting green space is also at work to keep working forestry alive in the same corridor. The results have been breathtaking.”

— Seattle Times *editorial*, 1995

Principle 6: Fund up-front as a public investment.

Various federal and state funding sources were critical to many of the land protection transactions. The Trust did not rely on a single consistent and predictable source of public funds, but made the program more resilient by knitting together support from various sources.

Principle 7: Green infrastructure benefits all.

The protection of green infrastructure through the work of the Mountains to the Sound Greenway Trust helps ensure the continuation of natural resource-based industries and tourism and protects ecosystem functions such as flood protection, water and air quality, aesthetic beauty, and wildlife habitat. The greenway also provides a host of recreational opportunities, which is good for the economy and for the health of residents and visitors.

Principle 8: Make green infrastructure the framework for conservation and development.

The Trusts' founders defined their mission not as stopping growth, but rather as directing it to the most logical places. In one instance, the Trust staff worked for three years with developers of a large new suburb at the edge of Seattle and helped design a cluster/open space plan that saves 70 percent of the developable land as open space, providing a broad natural connector between large county and state parks. The concept plan identified crucial undeveloped lands for incorporation into the greenway so that conservation measures could be preplanned. The Technical Advisory Committee devised the concept plan so that it could serve as a guide for transportation and land use planning regionwide.

Evaluation

Unique, innovative, outstanding elements

The Trust has been exceptionally successful in gaining corporate support and sponsorship for its land acquisition and management projects. Charlie Raines, board member and director of the Sierra Club's Cascade Checkerboard Project, said this is because many facets of their work, such as planting trees, removing abandoned logging roads, and encouraging environmental education and volunteerism, have wide appeal.

The Trust has successfully reached out to people who aren't active in other environmental groups. "The greenway brings people together to accentuate the common ground," said Raines. "They do this probably as well as any organization I've seen."

The relationships formed among Trust board members with disparate interests in the area have made progress possible. Brad Pruitt, project administrator of Cooperative Conservation Programs at WSDNR, noted, "Jim Ellis got anyone who was using the landscape or who was a major player in the area on board with the greenway, or at least invited them to participate. He didn't isolate anyone. He recognized that preserving working forests was as important as preserving land for other uses."

Lessons Learned

Executive director Keith feels that the Trust has become expert in "the art of sustaining a diverse coalition" in its board of 64 people. The 15-member executive committee of board members does the nitty-gritty policy work and settles the big issues. The staff and the executive committee then present problems and proposed solutions to the whole board. This reduces the contention of debates among such a diverse group.

The board meetings include dinner, which creates a more informal, congenial atmosphere. Board member Raines said there's a critical mass of community leaders on the board, which makes the organization something people want to be involved in. He views the board meetings as worthwhile not only because he values the work the Trust is doing but also because there he can talk informally about other issues with many of the community's movers and shakers.

The Trust always emphasizes the work that others undertake for the greenway. They hold an annual event to celebrate achievements and recognize their partners—typically elected officials and community activists. Raines noted that the variety of people recognized for their work on behalf of the greenway indicates broad support for the Trust’s work. At a recent annual event Jim Ellis characteristically extolled the Trust’s partners for their efforts. “It gives me the greatest imaginable pleasure to see a new generation of conservation-minded leaders take on such huge challenges,” he said. “I can’t put enough emphasis on the creativity and remarkable cooperation it took to reach agreements like these [to protect various tracts in the greenway]. To see each of them come to fruition is a testimony to the skills of the people involved.”

Although he was pivotal in the Trust’s founding, Ellis continually emphasized that he wasn’t going to be around forever, so the group had to learn to stand without him. He carefully groomed future leaders by sharing successes and credit and welcoming others’ ideas.

Challenges

For all its success and broad support, the Greenway Trust faces its share of challenges for the future:

- *Ensure public appreciation for, involvement with, and stewardship of the greenway.* For most of the life of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, the group has worked behind the scenes to protect land without engaging in political controversies. Now, with significant parts of the greenway protected, the Trust’s role is shifting toward making sure that the public knows about the greenway and comes to appreciate it, so they will care about its future. Partly to meet that new role, the Trust kicked off an annual event in 2004 called Greenway Discovery Days (Figure 10). Towns and parks throughout the greenway hosted special events to spotlight the unique Northwest landscape and foster citizens’ appreciation for and awareness of the greenway. Events included an adventure relay race supported by REI, a greenway-wide scavenger hunt, a jazz and bluegrass concert, and dedication of a newly renovated historic railroad station. The 2005 event will feature several scavenger hunts, a geocaching treasure hunt, and an art show.

Figure 10: A kayak race during Greenway Discovery Days.



Credit: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust

- *Keep the greenway together as an interconnected and functional whole.* If people don’t understand the benefits the greenway provides to the region—ecologically, economically, and socially—they may not care whether pieces of it eventually are developed or altered in some other way. During financially austere times, there may be pressure to sell parts of the greenway for development to increase the tax base. Different governmental administrations may have different priorities for the land. Brad Pruitt said that although some private timber landowners are moving out of the area, WSDNR is committed to maintaining its parcels in the greenway.
- *Develop alternative solutions to address declining budgets for land management.* John Phipps, forest supervisor of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, sees the strong volunteer framework used by the Trust to protect the greenway as a potential model for other areas, especially in financially tight times. He sees public groups of citizens taking over stewardship of public land becoming more common in the future.
- *Patrol the vast, often inaccessible areas of the greenway to monitor use.* Garbage dumping and illegal river access are continual headaches, and crime and drug activity can overflow from the city into the anonymity of the forest. The Trust has held workshops to identify land stewardship problems

and craft solutions that will make the most of increasingly meager financial resources available for patrols to discourage littering, dumping, and other illegal activities. Meanwhile, there is more land acquisition, trail building, and road removal to do, so the challenge of keeping people motivated to continue improving these areas remains.

- *Retain a proper mix of competing interests in the coalition and the vision for the greenway.* Raines said that sometimes when a group gets too broad it also gets too shallow. “The challenge is to make sure that real issues aren’t swept under the rug in the effort to have broad support,” he said. He doesn’t think this is a big issue yet because there is still buy-in by environmental groups, but it is a concern for the future. He sees his role on the board as speaking for mainstream environmental groups. He emphasizes, though, that the board has a strong sense of working together and trying to find common ground.
- *Protect the ecosystem functions of the greenway, primarily its role as a wildlife movement corridor.* Currently, I-90 serves as a barrier to north-south animal migration, and WSDOT plans to expand a 15-mile stretch of I-90 in the eastern part of the greenway from four lanes to six. The Trust is part of a coalition of concerned groups that researched options and advised WSDOT of their “areas of concern” for making that stretch of highway safer for animal crossings. The coalition wants to disturb the least amount of land on either side of the highway while still providing a safe and appealing wildlife passageway. Raines said they proposed raising and lengthening some bridges so that wetlands at their bases can provide safe passage for terrestrial as well as aquatic animals. Another option under consideration is construction of wooded wildlife overpasses in steep areas

(Figure 11). The state has not yet decided which options it will pursue.

- *Ensure a stable future for the region and the greenway if private timber production in the area continues to decline.* What else will provide the backbone of the economy? Tourism helps, but it’s not enough. “Sustaining working, harvested forests was the only viable way to ensure that forests weren’t converted to other land uses,” said Keith. The Trust recognizes that if an area has a weak economy, there’s not much money for anything, let alone greenways, parks, trails, and other open space. Phipps said that it’s important to promote the working forest concept because if the land is unprotected and not used for timber, chances are that at some point it will be developed. He sees private timber lands as part of the solution, making conservation more sustainable and affordable. He acknowledges that working forests aren’t wildernesses, but they provide much better habitat and water quality control than suburban backyards and roads do.

Figure 11: Proposed design of a wildlife crossing near the town of Easton, in the eastern part of the greenway.



Credit: Washington State Department of Transportation

Despite these future challenges, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust is going strong. The group’s success is due in part to the broad appeal of the greenway vision. The greenway includes working landscapes where forestry and other complementary uses are encouraged. The greenway is a multipurpose network of conservation and open space lands—one that combines the desire to protect and enhance scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat with an interest in preserving community

values and strong local economies. By combining these goals, the Mountains to Sound Greenway will preserve the pearls of the Northwest for future generations.

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About Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a strategic approach to land and water conservation that links lands for the benefit of nature and people, helps identify conservation priorities, and provides a planning framework for conservation and development. Green infrastructure is different from conventional approaches to conservation because it looks at conservation values and actions in concert with land development and growth management. Green infrastructure projects bring public and private partners together to work collaboratively toward a common land conservation goal. They help move beyond jurisdictional and political boundaries by providing a process for identifying, protecting, and restoring interconnected green space networks that conserve natural ecosystem functions and provide associated benefits to human populations. The green infrastructure approach appeals to people concerned about biodiversity, habitat, and land conservation as well as people interested in open space and land use planning at the community, region, or statewide scale. It also appeals to smart growth advocates because of its potential to lessen impacts and reduce the costs of built infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure Case Study Series

This series of case studies highlights successful and innovative green infrastructure projects from around the country. The series was undertaken so that readers can learn from and improve upon approaches tried by others. We hope that thorough, well-documented examples will allow readers to see the many possibilities and to adapt successful practices to their unique situations and challenges. Each case study addresses the same basic pieces of the story: overview, highlights, background and context, process, public education and participation, results and products, management and stewardship, financing, application of green infrastructure principles, and evaluation. Eight principles of green infrastructure, which are elements of most successful efforts, form the core of the case studies. The series illustrates concrete, real-life examples of how to assess and protect green infrastructure, including details about how each step was implemented.

About The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund is a national, nonprofit land conservation organization that forges partnerships to protect America's legacy of land and water resources. Through land acquisition, community planning, and leadership training, the Fund and its partners demonstrate sustainable conservation solutions emphasizing the integration of economic and environmental goals. Since 1985, the Fund has protected more than 4 million acres of open space, wildlife habitat, and historic sites across America.

The Conservation Fund's Green Infrastructure Program was created in 1999 to build the capacity of land conservation professionals and their partners to undertake strategic conservation activities that are proactive, systematic, well integrated, and applied at multiple scales. The program is a cooperative effort of the Fund and multiple public and private partners. Program products include a national course, workshops and conference sessions, publications, case studies, demonstration projects, a Web site, and related educational materials.

The Conservation Fund would like to thank the Surdna Foundation and the USDA Forest Service for providing support for this and other Green Infrastructure Program products.