



# Issaquah Alps TRAILS CLUB

— EST. 1979 —

Dedicated to engaging the public to preserve, protect, and promote the land, wildlife, and trails of the Issaquah Alps, for future and present generations.

## *Newsletter of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club*

# THE ALPINER

January 2021

Our partners at **300 Trees** are giving away trees! As a Bellevue based organization their mission is to get more trees plant on the Eastside by giving them away. Learn more about the program and order your trees [here](#).

Join us and our partners at Three Rivers Trout Unlimited for a presentation on the Steelhead Sustainability Plan. . [Learn more about the event and register here](#).

If you are interested in getting involved with the IATC in more ways, please fill out our [volunteer form](#) and let us know what you are interested in.

If you're hitting the trails this week, please remember to [Recreate Responsibly!](#)

### Mask up!

Please be prepared to cover your nose and mouth:

- When you are **within 6 feet** of anyone not in your group
- When you are in a **busy area**
- When you **go indoors**



#RecreateResponsibly

[www.recreatorresponsibly.org](http://www.recreatorresponsibly.org)

# IATC Releases its First Annual Report

Hannah Wheeler - January 25, 2021

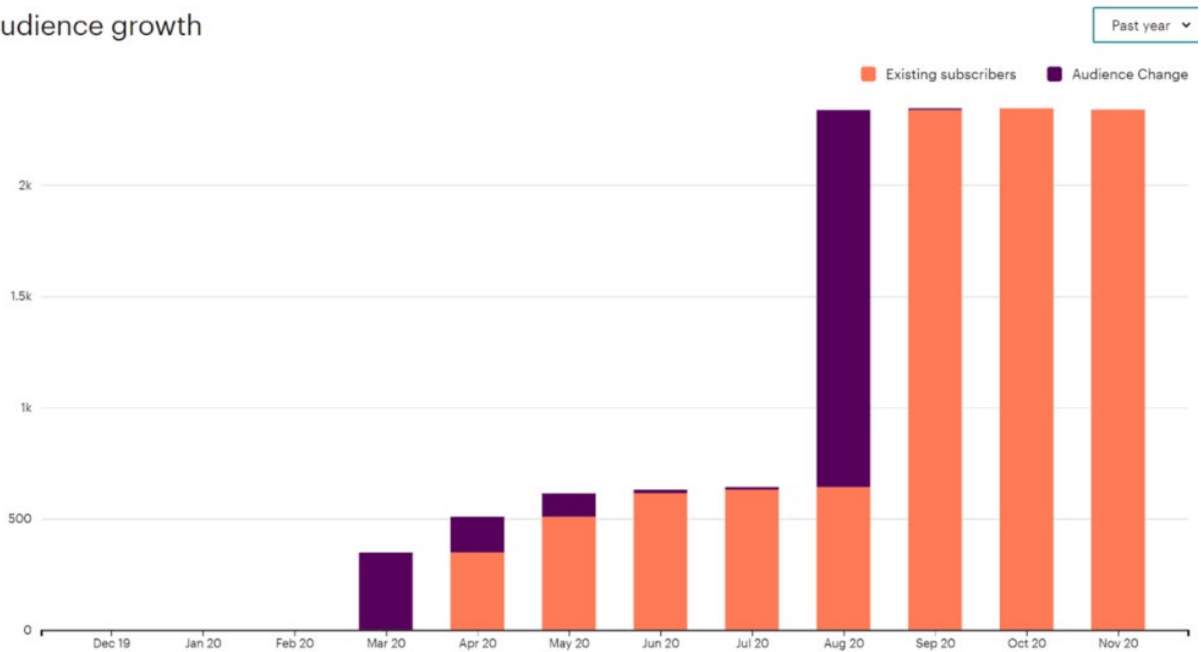
The Issaquah Alps Trails Club is proud to release its first annual report. Looking back on the year 2020, the organization faced many challenges. We made the difficult decision to pause our hiking program and all upcoming in-person events because of COVID-19 safety concerns. We also faced fundraising impacts due to the economic downturn, and saw a significant increase in the use of public lands without LNT (Leave No Trace) education to support the influx of visitors to the Alps.

The club met these challenges head on by pivoting our resources to developing a strategic plan based on work we had done as a board during our February Board Retreat. We sought a grant from Visit Issaquah to restart our hiking program in 2021 with a new focus, and we partnered with a coalition of organizations to promote responsible recreation on our public lands.

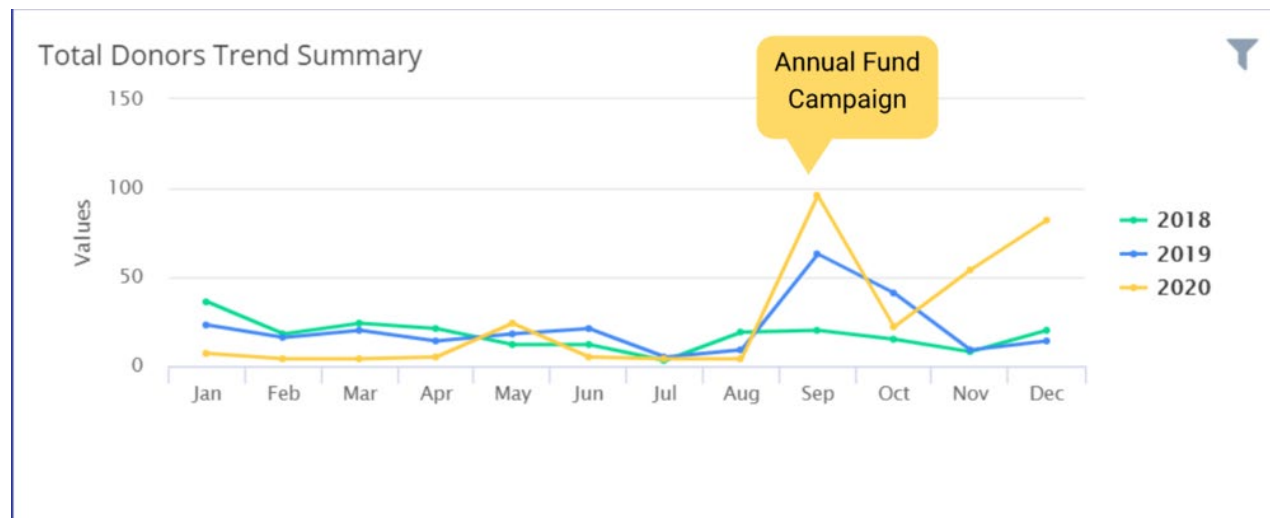
The outpouring of support we received from our members, coupled our hard work and planning lead to some major successes within the organization. Here are some key metrics of achievement from our Annual Report:

1. Land Advocacy Volunteers Increased by 150%
2. Donors Increased by 34%
3. Alpiner Subscribers increased by 272%
4. Organizational Capacity increased by 80%

## Audience growth



*Audience growth in number of newsletter subscribers over the year. The large increase in August reflects our partnership with Save Coal Creek.*



Number of donors throughout the year compared to previous years. The high point for this year in September correlates to our annual fund campaign.

As we head into 2021, we are looking forward to continuing to advocate for our trails, parks, and open spaces. We recognize the barriers that racial inequity has created in the outdoors. We are committed to making the Issaquah Alps a welcoming place for all through partnerships, education, and advocacy. We will continue to fight for climate action as drought and fire become a more permanent fixture in our environment. Finally, we are looking forward to some upcoming club projects that focus on the history of the club, as well as our first virtual Annual Forum for Public Lands.

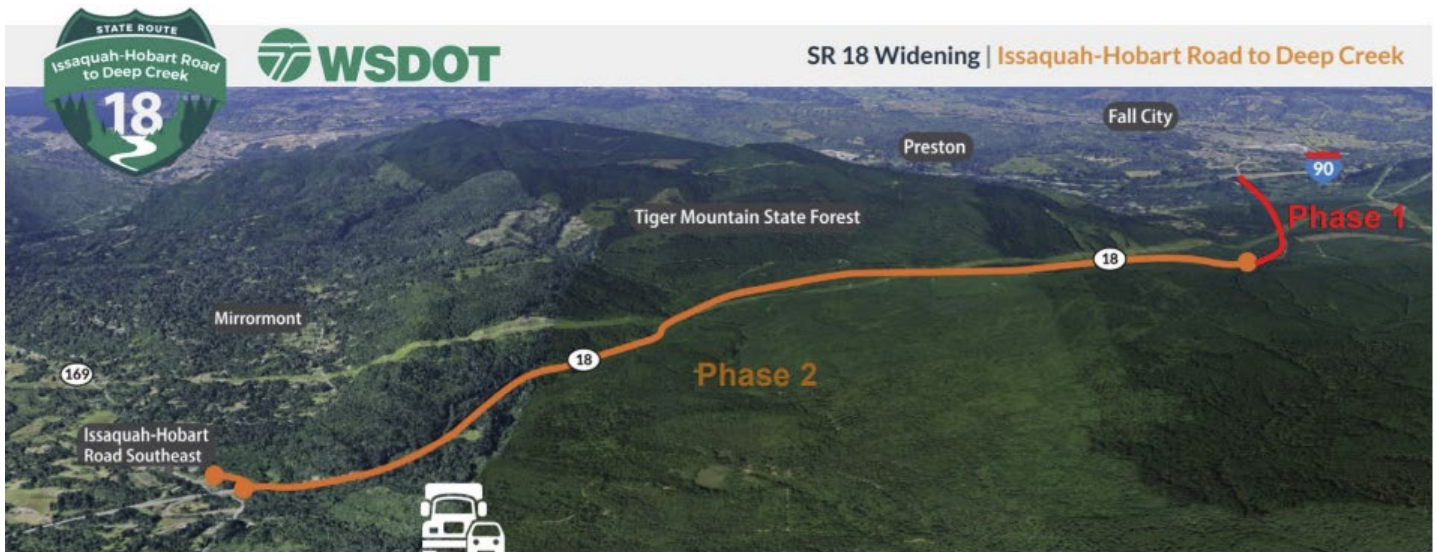
Thank you for your continued support, we could not accomplish all of this alone. [Read the full Annual Report here.](#)

## SR-18 Forum: Key Takeaways on Advocating for Design Criteria

Hannah Wheeler - January 13, 2021

The IATC hosted a public forum on December 22nd to address the current engineering plan for the SR-18 project. IATC President David Dunphy presented on this project and then responded to audience questions. The following article highlights some key points discussed during that event. For more information on the SR-18 advocacy work that the IATC is doing please [visit our advocacy page](#).

SR-18 has been undergoing several iterations of a redevelopment process to improve safety and accommodate our growing region by expanding the road. Early on in this process the IATC identified that wildlife connectivity and recreation access are critical to bring to that project.



*We are currently advocating for changes to Phase 2 of the engineering plan for this project.*

## Where we are now

Phase 1 of this project works on improvements to the SR-18/I-90 interchange in the city of Snoqualmie. Thanks to the dedicated work of the City of Snoqualmie and the Snoqualmie Tribe, WSDOT decided on a diamond interchange for this section which will greatly improve traffic and safety through this area. Phase 2 will work on the bulk of the project moving over Tiger mountain.

"[WSDOT] went through a listening process... created a technical advisory committee and released an initial plan for this phase 2 portion of the project in late November which is what we are commenting on right now" clarified David. They are currently working on a budget and will take that to the legislature.

## The Good

WSDOT is widening the road and adding a median to improve traffic safety. There are some S- curves they are going to work to straighten. They have identified 4 wildlife passages to include and 6 fish passages to widen along the road. When WSDOT expands roadways they are required to mitigate for wetlands and tree removal. There are currently plans for this as well.

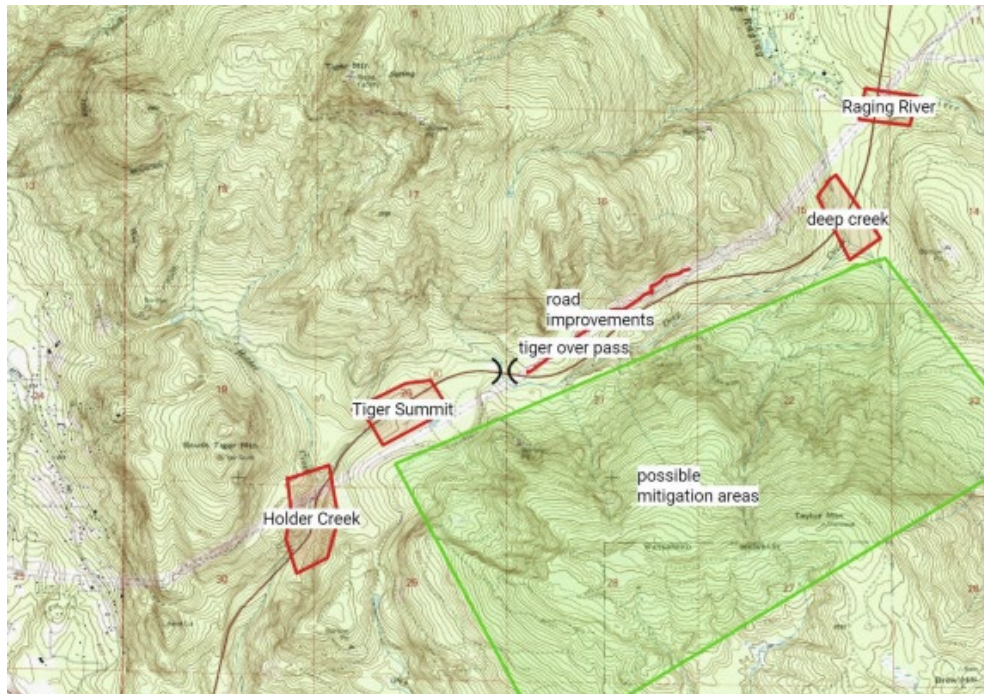
## What's Missing

"We are looking for clarity on wildlife connectivity." They haven't given much information about what the wildlife passages will look like or how they will accommodate large mammals. Additionally, there is currently no plan for an interchange at Tiger Summit, rather there will be a median preventing access to the trails at Tiger Summit. There is also a unique opportunity here to think about the regional trail system and there is currently no consideration for that.

We have coordinated with many other groups including the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust,

Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, city governments, and other partners to coordinate the effort to have these key elements included in the engineering plan for this project.

## Wildlife connectivity



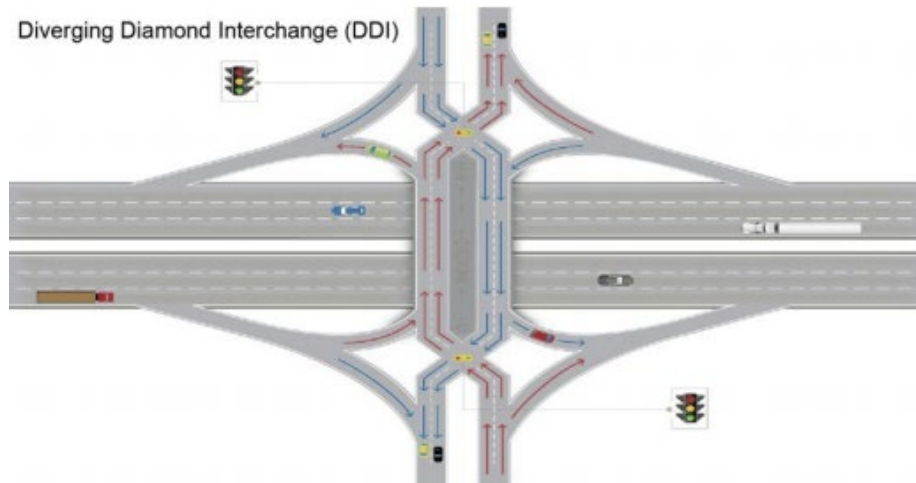
"How do we prevent the alps from being disconnected from the greater Cascade ecosystem?" SR-18 intersects the Snoqualmie, Sammamish and Cedar River watersheds. "This is a unique opportunity to connect these forest lands so that wildlife can have a continuous healthy habitat, but we need clarity on what these passages will look like and how they will accommodate large mammals."

The four passages WSDOT have identified primarily follow rivers through the corridor. "What we are asking is that we use a similar model to I-90 to allow for the passage of large mammals". Given that bridges already exist on SR-18 in key areas, expanding these to be wildlife underpasses seems reasonable. "What they do is bring the bridge deck up so that traffic can keep moving while allowing wildlife to move through the area." The key being separating wildlife from traffic and recreation. "Trail access is a separate issue to this as human activity is not compatible with wildlife mobility."

"In the absence of these connections and the presence of increased traffic, if we don't accommodate these animals we essentially build a wall preventing them from accessing the rest of their habitat." We are asking that these be included in the plan now so that we don't waste money having to go back and fix it later as we have seen with many fish passage culverts. We have an opportunity to do it right the first time.

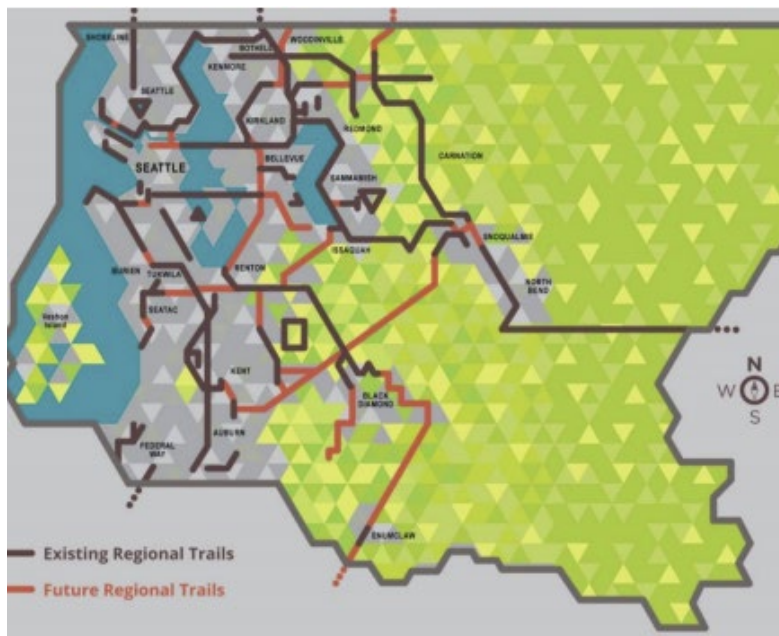
[Read more about wildlife connectivity.](#)

## Summit Interchange



The median WSDOT is putting in to increase safety across SR-18 currently doesn't allow for access to Tiger Summit or Taylor Mountain on the other side. "If you're coming from the City of Snoqualmie to Tiger Summit you could get there... but to get home you would have to go all the way to Issaquah Hobart Road, turn around, and come back. From the South, you would have to go all the way to the City of Snoqualmie and then all the way back over the pass." And this is not just true for the 4,000 recreationalists traveling there each week. Logging trucks, cell tower service vehicles, and other industry movements will have to go this way as well. Not only would this increase congestion in certain areas, the extra CO2 emissions from the increased travel distance go against the IATC's climate change efforts. Investing in this infrastructure supports industry, recreation, and safety. "It's the only reasonable solution."

## Recreation



The IATC is asking WSDOT to recognize the importance of access for hikers, bikers, and equestrians in this space and regional trails. "It's a really critical piece of connecting people to our landscape." There's not really an ask that WSDOT build these trails, but we want them to understand that there is a vision for regional trails and they shouldn't create infrastructure that precludes this vision from happening.

## Your Voice

We want to ensure your voices are heard before the budget goes to the state legislature." At that point it will become a lot harder to influence the project." [On our website](#) there is a sample letter you can send to the project engineer and our local representatives urging these engineering criteria be included in the project design.

"We haven't had a lot of opposition to the project from our legislature, but they are being very pragmatic about the budget, and they don't want to delay the project. All we are asking for is for the design to be included at this point." We are relying on WSDOT to tell us how much it will cost and what the design will look like so that we can collaborate on how to make it happen, but before that can happen, the design work needs to be done. "When you include these types of things as engineering criteria there is a lot of creative thinking that happens to make them work."

Finally, Dunphy urged us all to go see the opportunity for ourselves. "I encourage everyone to also go be in space. Maybe travel over SR-18 in the next few weeks and think about the opportunity we have here." This is a moment that we need public comment and pressure, but we will need to stay connected to this project as it goes into implementation. The IATC is always looking for volunteers to connect to projects so if you'd like to get more involved please reach out [here](#). "We recognize that this is a difficult year for the legislature and they are going to have to make difficult decisions. We want to find a balance between thinking about the future and being pragmatic, but we want to make sure we do this right because we really only have one chance to do this right."

[Learn more about the IATC's advocacy efforts on the SR-18 Project on our advocacy page.](#)

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# Why the IATC is Advocating for an Interchange at Tiger Summit on Behalf of Recreation

Lindsay Frickle - January 18, 2021

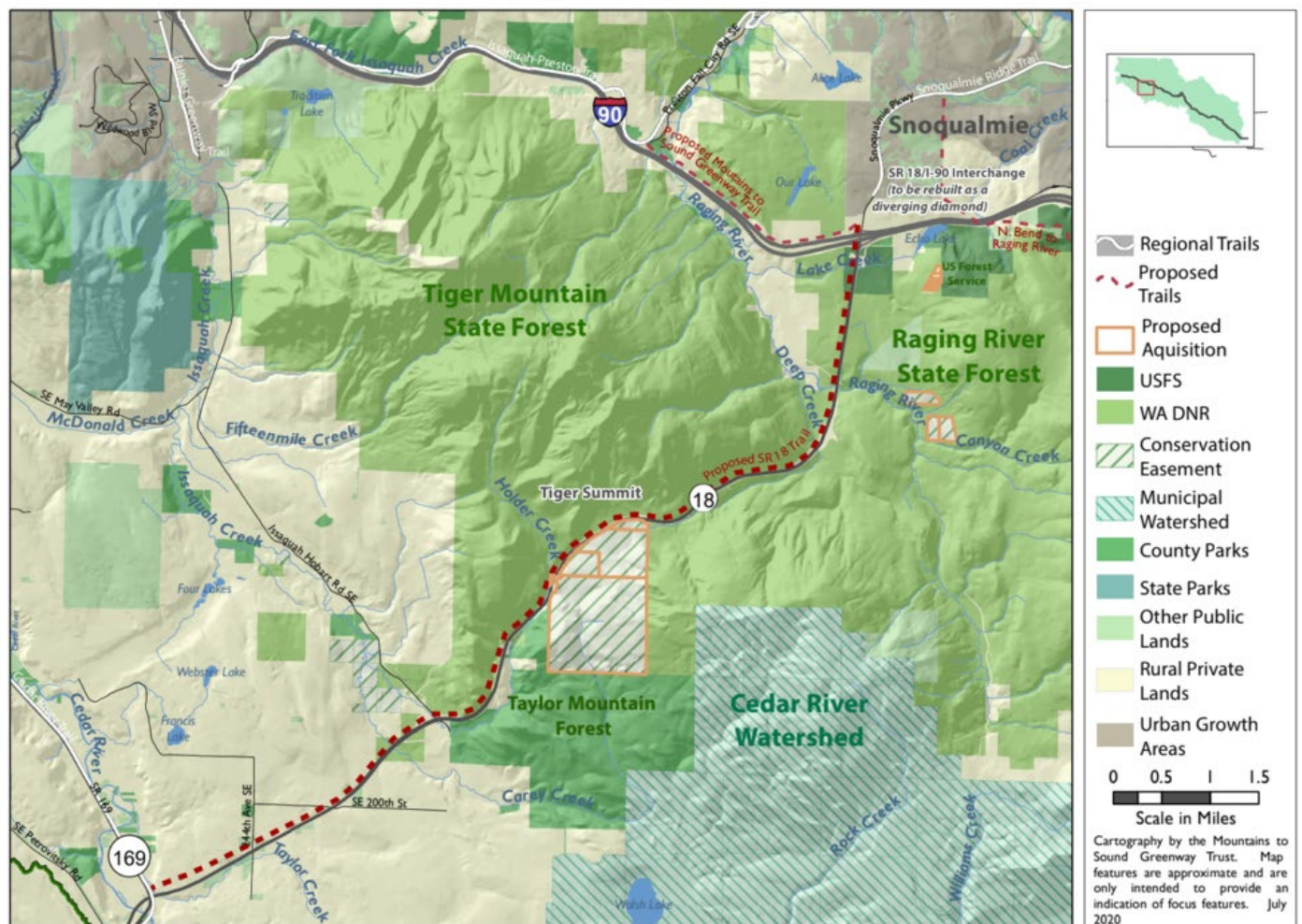
State Route 18 is undergoing improvements to help safely connect Maple Valley and the South Sound with Snoqualmie and the I-90 corridor. [This project](#) represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve wildlife connectivity from the Cascades to the entire Issaquah Alps, enhance recreation infrastructure for all, and provide safe, efficient highway transportation for our region. Unfortunately, while the current plan proposed by WSDOT this month tries to address important safety concerns, it does not include these recreation considerations.

## Tiger Summit Interchange:

Tiger Mountain State Forest is a 13,745-acre natural preserve that incorporates the West Tiger Mountain Natural Resources Conservation Area. One of DNR's most popular forests, Tiger is known for its lush landscape, hiking, and mountain biking trails.

Tiger Summit is a central trailhead that currently sees significant traffic from hikers and mountain bikers. The absence of an interchange will negatively impact accessibility to this outdoor recreation resource. The current [WSDOT SR-18 Plan](#), which we realize faces budget constraints, will build a divider across the highway, requiring anyone trying to access Tiger Summit to travel one direction only, adding additional travel time, GHG emissions and safety concerns. This is not an adequate long term solution for an area experiencing such tremendous growth in recreation. Planning for the interchange should be included at this phase of the design process.

## SR 18 Highway Corridor





## Hiking

There are 21 moderate trails in Tiger Mountain State Forest ranging from 0.8 to 11.9 miles and from 134 to 2,995 feet above sea level. Tiger Summit Trailhead is home to many of the Issaquah Alps' most iconic trails, including the 15 mile Tiger Mountain Trail (TMT) and trails accessing neighboring Taylor Mountain.

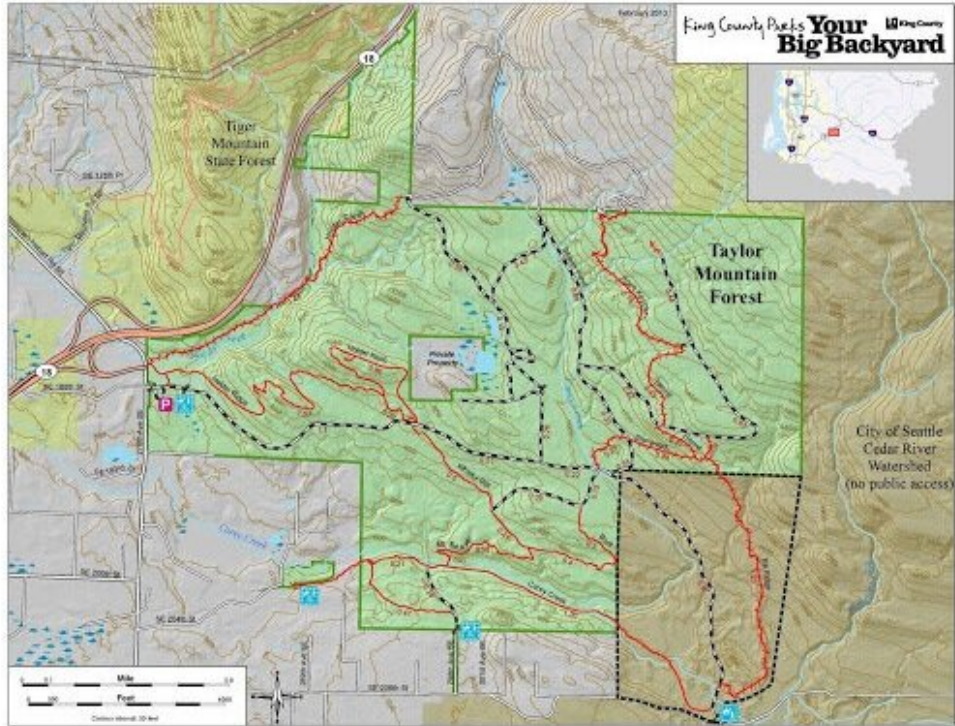


*Custer's Bridge, about mid way on the TMT*

Taylor Mountain Regional Park is nearly 2000 acre with an extensive trail system used by equestrians, hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and snowshoeing.



*Taylor Mountain Big View Hike with members of the IATC*



*Taylor Mountain State Forest*

## Mountain Biking

With many miles of mountain biking trails spanning a wide variety of difficulty - including a bona fide double-diamond DH trail and killer views of Mount Rainier from the summit - Tiger Mountain is one of Seattle's most popular mountain biking destinations. Taylor Mountain is close to Tiger and many of the trails are open year round. There is an unfounded reputation that the area is mostly muddy and less than desirable trails. What you will find instead are fun narrow trails that are open to mountain bikes. Future safe access to both mountains hinges on the WSDOT's ability to look at the consistent growth in use for this area and plan ahead for an interchange at Tiger Summit.



## What You Can Do:

We need your help to make sure our representatives know about our concerns with the current plan for SR-18. Find your representative below and contact them to voice your support of wildlife passages, a summit interchange, and recreation access to be included in the design for SR-18. Find a sample letter on our website [here](#).

## Representatives:

- Mark Allison- SR18Improvements@wsdot.wa.gov - WSDOT Lead Project Engineer
- Rep. Bill Ramos - Bill.Ramos@leg.wa.gov - 5th District State Representative
- Rep. Lisa Callan - lisa.callan@leg.wa.gov - 5th District State Representative
- S. Mark Mullet - mark.mullet@leg.wa.gov - State Senate

Find your representatives: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>

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# City of Issaquah Environmental Board Meets for the First Time

Hannah Wheeler - January 21, 2021

The City of Issaquah's newly formed Environmental Board met for the first time this month with board members coming from several familiar organizations including the IATC itself and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust. The purpose of the Environmental Board is to advise the City of Issaquah on "plans, policies, regulations, and programs related to environmental stewardship." Their goal is to "protect, preserve, and enhance the natural environment" of Issaquah and "take action on climate change."

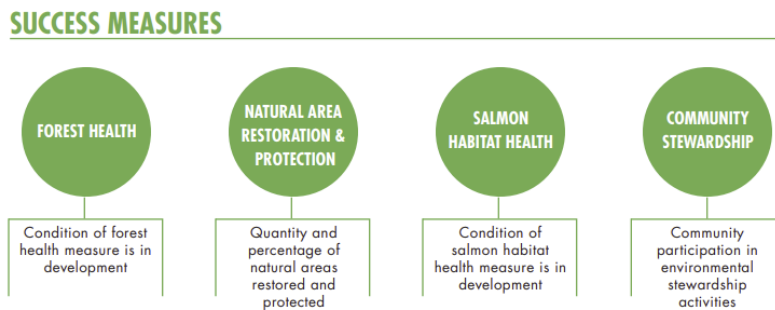
The formation of this board comes out of the City of Issaquah's Strategic Plan to "foster a safe, vibrant, livable, and inclusive community through effective stewardship and quality public services." This plan focuses on six priority areas which represent an equitable, sustainable vision of Issaquah around which initiatives will be organized; mobility, growth and development, environmental stewardship, social and economic vitality, city leadership and services, and infrastructure.



*Image from the City of Issaquah's Strategic plan outlining their priority areas and guiding principles.*

On the topic of environmental stewardship, the city's goal is to ensure that "environmental resources are proactively enhanced, protected, and stewarded" through a combination of "active stewardship from the community" and "thoughtful strategies, projects, and policies." The city may accomplish this goal through a variety of actions that may include updating environmental codes to improve protections, enhancing partnerships and volunteer opportunities to promote stewardship among community members, and creating a public land purchase fund for priority land acquisitions.

The city plans to measure success in environmental stewardship in the following ways:



*Image from the city's strategic plan outlining their definition of success.*

The city developed these goal areas through surveys, focus groups, and meetings with community partners, and the IATC supports the city's dedication to an equitable and sustainable future. Environmental Board Meetings take place monthly with updates posted to their website.

Read the full Strategic Plan:

<https://www.issaquahwa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5196/Strategic-Plan--Our-Issaquah?bidId=>

Learn more about the Environmental Board:

<https://www.issaquahwa.gov/507/Environmental>

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# Documenting Our History - A Call for Photos

Tom Anderson - January 24, 2021

The IATC Board has decided to move forward with the preparation and publication of a book covering the history of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club. The story can't be told without some old club-related photographs. Here's a good one:



That's club founder Harvey Manning and Chief Ranger Bill Longwell at the Salmon Days booth in 1982. Maybe you have some good stuff like that in the shoe box in the back of the closet. If so, please send it our way. We are not looking for general scenic photos, but things that tell the story of club events and activities such as:

- Club meetings
- Trail work parties
- Club presence at public events such as Salmon Days and Return to Newcastle

If you have something you would like to submit, please contact Tom Anderson at [tom.anderson3141@gmail.com](mailto:tom.anderson3141@gmail.com). We can take care of the scanning.

We are particularly in need of more photos of David Kappler on thin ice...



# Take Action Now to Support the Trust Land Transfer Program

IATC Staff - January 25, 2021

Our partners at Conservation Northwest are urging members of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club to take action to support the continuation of the Trust Land Transfer. This program has historically supported public lands such as Tiger Mountain. The trails club supports this effort and encourages its members to [learn more](#) and [take action today by contacting your legislators](#).

Since 1989, the State of Washington has spent more than \$800 million to protect about 128,000 acres of state public lands for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and other public benefits through a process called Trust Land Transfer (TLT). But this vital program is at risk of being overlooked in this difficult budget year.

Washington has about three million acres of public lands, including the parks, trails, and open spaces of the Issaquah Alps, managed by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Of this, almost two million acres belong to the Common School Trust. The Legislature created a process to protect some of the most pristine wilderness areas by using Capital Budget dollars to buy them out of Trust status.

Some of your favorite places may have been saved in this way. Such areas as Tiger Mountain, Cypress Island, Lummi Peak, Chopaka Lake, Elsworth Island, and many more were all established through TLT. The wildlands of the Loomis State Forest were protected through a similar process but using private funds. The last big TLT wins were when the Legislature appropriated the final \$10 million for Blanchard Mountain in 2018 and \$6.3 million for Dabob Bay in 2019.

Ask your legislators to keep this vital program alive- [the action form provided by Conservation Northwest makes it easy!](#)

Many candidates for TLT have limited timber value due to protected species or features. TLT is the only tool DNR has to protect such places and compensate with acres better suited for long-term revenue generation. Yet funding for TLT has declined since before the 2008 recession, putting at risk vital natural areas with strong public support.

The DNR, which recommended this program continue in its 2021 report, recently identified ten worthy candidates for TLT. In this letter from last fall, conservation leaders highlighted two of those ten: Devils Lake (Dabob Bay) and Morning Star (near Sultan), but the cases are also strong for Blakely Island and Eglon (near Kingston).

By including at least \$17.4 million in the Capitol Budget Bill for TLT, Legislators will fund the program and protect these four special places on our public lands. As the pandemic exposes massive demand for outdoor recreation, access to natural places is increasingly important. This funding will go a long way in providing invaluable contributions to public health and local economies, as well as wildlife and clean water.

[Please take action today by urging your legislators to fund the Trust Land Transfer Program.](#)

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# The Apparatus

**Club Founder**

Harvey Manning

**Executive Director**

Lindsay Frickle ([exec@issaquahalps.org](mailto:exec@issaquahalps.org))

**President**

David Dunphy (Governance Committee Chair)  
([president@issaquahalps.org](mailto:president@issaquahalps.org))

**President-Elect**

Anne Newcomb (Public Engagement Committee Chair)

**Vice President of Advocacy**

David Kappler (Advocacy Committee Chair)  
([advocacy@issaquahalps.org](mailto:advocacy@issaquahalps.org))

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