



# 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

July 2021

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club has opportunities for everyone to get involved outside, through our Adopt-a-Trail program, guided hikes, and partner opportunities.

[Learn more about each of the ways you can volunteer or join an event.](#)

The Seattle Time published a fantastic article this month celebrating long-time Issaquah resident and old-growth forest expert Jerry Franklin. [Read the article.](#)

If you want to get involved with the IATC please fill out our [volunteer form](#) and let us know what you are interested in.

## Upcoming Hikes and Events

[Saturday, July 24th](#)- Extended Forest Health Hike

[Wednesday, July 28th](#)- Green Issaquah Restoration at Berntsen Park

[Wednesday, July 28th](#)- City of Issaquah Committee Convening on Climate

[Thursday, July 29th](#)- Teddy Bear Hike at Lake Sammamish

[Saturday, August 7th](#)- Working Forest Weyerhaeuser Hike

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# Information on the Weyerhaeuser Tiger Mountain Harvest

IATC Staff - July 2, 2021



July 2, 2021

## Information on the Weyerhaeuser Tiger Mountain Harvest:

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, and the City of Issaquah are working together to minimize the impacts of this harvest. Our ongoing advocacy efforts, combined with concerns expressed by the community, are key in achieving the best possible outcome for conservation and recreation.

The Weyerhaeuser Company owns forestland on Tiger Mountain and recently received approval from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for a permit to harvest a section of second growth timber near the summits on West Tiger Mountain. Their application has been approved and includes required forest health practices including reforestation, retaining appropriate stream buffers, geologic reviews, and planning for signage and public education as this is an area of high recreational use. The application mentions the trail system in and around the proposed harvest area and the importance of maintaining a relationship with hikers during the harvest period as well as restoring conditions as appropriate for future trails.

While much of Weyerhaeuser's ownership on Tiger has been exchanged for public ownership, this portion of working forest with existing communications towers has been retained by Weyerhaeuser for decades. Our organizations have a rich history of friendly collaboration. In 1976 Ruth Ittner, a local trails advocate, negotiated with Howard Millan, Weyerhaeuser's first trained forester, land buyer, and recreation manager, leading to the establishment of the Tiger Mountain trail system. Historically, Weyerhaeuser has welcomed visitors to their forestlands and supported conservation efforts. These values and relationships made Tiger Mountain the popular regional outdoor recreation destination we enjoy today.

The Issaquah Alps Trails Club, City of Issaquah, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust are working with Weyerhaeuser in advance of the harvest on Tiger Mountain to produce outcomes that will benefit the public. As David Dunphy, IATC's Board President stated, "We know a balance can be found between the working forest, wildlife needs, and the interests of recreation users." It is our goal to work with Weyerhaeuser to find ways for the timber harvest to benefit habitats, future trails, and the public.

**Examples of potential public benefits could include:**

- Consideration of future trail locations, potential relocations, and improvements.
- Vista planning in reforestation and stand management.
- Trail building support after harvest use.
- Potential sale of harvested land to DNR for permanent conservation.
- Alignment with King County and DNR goals for healthy forest management.

We look forward to working with Weyerhaeuser to represent key stakeholders and our community at large.

Information about temporary [trail reroutes](#) can be found at <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/tiger>

More information on results of these efforts will be available soon. If you have questions or would like to offer feedback to advocacy leaders, please email Lindsay Frickle, Executive Director of Issaquah Alps Trails Club at [exec@issaquahalps.org](mailto:exec@issaquahalps.org).

# Takeaways from the Environmental Candidate Forum

Hannah Wheeler - July 21, 2021

The primary elections for [Issaquah City Council](#) and [King County Council](#) are coming up on August 3rd! Be sure to vote before then to make sure your voice is heard.



The Issaquah Alps Trails Club, in partnership with [People for Climate Action](#) and [Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery](#), hosted a forum last week to ask City of Issaquah Position 5 candidates, and King County Council Position 3 candidates about their positions on key environmental issues. Below are some key takeaways from that event. Please watch the full recording below to see the entirety of candidates' answers.

Candidates at the forum included:

*Issaquah City Council Position 5 candidates-*

[Jason Voiss](#) - Jason is an avid volunteer. He currently serves as the Planning Policy Commissioner for the City of Issaquah and on the mayor's recovery task force. He says that "Public service, at the heart of it, is volunteerism" and aims to continue his work as a volunteer in this new role.

[Rose Zibrat](#) - Rose has a background in Geology, and is working to bring a scientific, data-driven lens to policy. "I became the change I want to see, we need more scientists in government, so this is the year I'm going to do it."

[Russell Joe](#) - Russell has previously served on the Issaquah City Council. He enjoys working on public policy and is looking to return to this role, using his experience as a lawyer to "carefully analyze questions and issues before the council, an ability that will be very important as we weigh the important issues impacting Issaquah in the years to come."

### *King County Council Position 3 candidates-*

[Sarah Perry](#) - Sarah calls herself an "enthusiastic coalition builder" and seeks to bring our communities back together using new skills and strategies. Her campaign priorities are protecting our open spaces, forests, farms, and finding transit connections.

[Joe Cohen](#) - Joe grew up near Lake Sammamish and now aims to apply his 20 years of experience in law and policy that he earned working everywhere from the Obama White House to the US Department of Justice, at home in King County.

[Kathy Lambert](#) - Kathy is our current King County Councilmember and looks to our continued success in conservation and environmental policy as evidence of her ability to work towards a greener future. She says "It isn't making promises, it's doing and delivering."

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*Question 1- What is your campaign's platform and commitment to advance Issaquah's/King County's Climate Action so that Issaquah/King County achieves its GHG reduction targets (e.g., 50% reduction by 2030)? Please explain specifically how you would accomplish this in concert with your Council members, with City/County Staff, and with volunteer organizations such as People for Climate Action.*

City of Issaquah candidates each highlighted a different aspect of climate goals they'd like to reach. Jason focused on coalition building opportunities with local organizations, including the city's own Environmental Board, and looking to the experts guide policy. Rose emphasized the importance of education in wildfire safety for residents as climate change impacts grow. Russell looked at areas where we can improve sustainability in transportation, such as increasing electric vehicle use in city fleets and better transportation options.

King County candidates all recognized that the county is currently struggling to meet its emission reduction goals. Sarah emphasized our need to gather more data about how we can meet our goals, before partnering with cities. All the candidates agreed that King County should be a leader in sustainability, and both Kathy and Joe mentioned transportation as a sector that could be improved with electric vehicles, bus charging stations and better public transit to help us achieve that.

*Question 2- With unusually hot and dry weather and a major increase in outdoor recreation over the past year, wildfire risk is on everyone's mind. How do you plan to support healthy and resilient forests and the mitigation of wildfire risks in King County/Issaquah?*

All City of Issaquah candidates agreed that educating the public on wildfire safety around their homes is crucial to mitigating wildfire risk. Rose discussed the need for a broader community wildfire protection plan, and Jason emphasized the need for collaboration between the city and partners to make this happen using the recent effort to get a mass vaccination site to the Eastside as evidence of the power of working together. Russell affirmed his support for Eastside Fire and recommended everyone come learn more about wildfire safety on National Night Out, August 3rd.

King County Candidates focused more on the importance of healthy forests in keeping wildfire risk at a minimum. Kathy emphasized the county's responsibility to promote healthy forests on their own open spaces and brought up the Firewise program as an example of key public education. Both Sarah and

Joe focused on the need for collaboration in making sure our forests are healthy. Sarah mentioned partnering with organizations who know best, and Joe looked to the latest science practices for guidance.

*Question 3- Issaquah's Utility Company, Puget Sound Energy (PSE), has increased its coal and natural gas use, according to the city's latest Greenhouse Gas Inventory. They also burn these fossil fuels to produce electricity. These trends have caused an increase in Issaquah's GHG emissions.*

- *How can the City/County work with PSE and promote cleaner energy sources such as wind and solar, to help our climate?*
- *Have you, or will you, accept campaign contributions from PSE?*
- *Do you support the establishment of a Public Utility District (PUD) in NE King County (including Issaquah) to replace PSE as the District's electrical power provider?*

No candidates from either the city or county have accepted donations from Puget Sound Energy, nor do they plan to. Rose fully supported the establishment of a Public Utility District while the other City of Issaquah candidates expressed some hesitation. Jason hoped for more information on the issue and public input before making a decision that big, while Russell expressed concerns over the financial investment and potential cost to the community associated with creating a PUD.

All King County Council candidates expressed hesitation over the formation of a PUD and focused rather on utilizing new technology to make bigger changes to our energy consumption. Kathy specifically called out methane capture at landfills as an option to decrease our emissions.

*Question 4- How do you plan to collaborate with Tribal governments while balancing the priorities of the outdoor recreation community and the healthy stewardship of our public lands?*

City of Issaquah candidates all agreed that there's opportunity to listen to concerns Tribal governments have about land use and development, collaborate, and look at long-term solutions. Russell specifically called out his expertise in tribal law and government relations, while Rose and Jason focused on listening to, and supporting Tribal initiatives.

County Council candidates Kathy and Joe also emphasized the importance of collaboration with Tribal governments and discussed past initiatives such as the removal of fish culverts as examples of success to build on. Sarah mentioned her support of the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement and hopes to continue the ongoing conversation about finding ways to not "love our public lands to death."

*Question 5- Fast sprawling land use is a significant and well-documented contributor to greenhouse gas emissions whereas compact 15-minute communities reduce emissions.*

- *What policies or reforms will your campaign put forward as priorities for land-use planning?*
- *Do you support significant changes to the City/ County land use code to require reducing the negative environmental impacts of all new Commercial and Governmental construction projects within the city/county?*

King County council candidates generally support land and building code use changes, but all recognize that there must be a balance. Sarah specifically mentioned labor considerations and supports

the "Just transition" movement. Joe focused more on densification and promoting better transit options. Kathy brought up the growth management act as an example of success in balancing growth and development and emphasized the need for housing that supports future jobs.

City Council candidates each focused on a different aspect of land-use planning. Rose and Jason both support densification, but Rose feels that densification is not helpful without transit options to support it. She wants Eastsiders to get more out of what they are putting into Metro. Jason and Russell both cautioned that we should be careful about balancing land and building code changes with their impacts on people, especially those who own older homes, and making sure to listen to the community as these changes are made. Russell specifically mentioned the importance of embracing new technology in deciding how these changes should be made.

*Audience Question 1- Besides climate change, warmer conditions and non-native predators in our waters, new discoveries identify more hazards that the salmon face including loss of canopy that shades any and all waterways, tire residue runoff, light pollution at night on bridges and docks, and eliminating safe fish passage in the dark.*

- *What policies or reforms will your campaign put forward as priorities mitigating these impacts?*
- *Do you support significant changes to the City/ County land use code to mitigate these impacts?*

County council candidates focused on collaboration with local organizations, and deferring to their expertise. Joe brought up Trout Unlimited and their efforts to support Salmon, while Kathy brought up the existing grants for organizations and offered her continued support of these. Sarah added that this problem needs to be addressed with more urgency.

*Audience Question 2- What will you do about traffic problems through downtown Issaquah? What plan do you have to get commuters out of cars or at least help the flow of traffic?*

Rose has already brought us a few transit solutions, and continued to emphasize the importance of public transit across the region. She added that supporting telecommuting options for commuters is going to be crucial. Russell wants to start planning for future light rail options. Even though it's a long way off, it will be important to start creating a vision for that option now and include green energy considerations in that vision. Jason empathized with the problem on Front Street as he lives there as well. He emphasized that mitigation is key- he wants to increase multi-modal transportation by applying funding to the problem using federal funding and taxes.

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*We want to thank all of our candidates for joining us, and our partner organizations for supporting this forum. We were happy to have the opportunity to learn more about our candidates positions. Keep an eye out for your ballots in the mail this week and remember to vote on or before August 3rd.*

***Watch the full recording below.***

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# Immortalizing the History of the Issaquah Alps Trails Club in Print

Brianna Traxinger - July 22, 2021



The casual Issaquah Alps hiker--or even those that hit the trails daily--might not be aware how much the Issaquah Alps Trail Club facilitates access to their favorite park. In fact, they might not even realize that the IATC is the entire reason Squak, Tiger, and Cougar mountains exist as the recreational sanctuaries that they are today. Even within the club, the IATC is focused on the future of the Issaquah Alps: important, consuming work that leaves little time to consider the club's past and origins. Doug Simpson, however, is working to ensure that the rich history of the IATC--including its founders-- are never forgotten.

The IATC was formed in 1979 out of a need for conservation, access, and shared trail information for Issaquah's local mountains. The founder, local enthusiast and hiking book author Harvey Manning, for whom the eponymous trails are named, started a grassroots community, focused around the Issaquah mountains that Harvey cheekily named the "Issaquah Alps," quickly became a serious force for not only the Issaquah Alps but other local trail systems, including the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust. From its inception, the club's activity and news were distributed via quarterly articles, forming the *Alpiner* newsletter that still exists today. These articles, although purely functional at the time, have become a textual time capsule for the club's history, including both causal community events and monumental conservational wins. Although these charming vintage articles--often embellished with hand-drawn notes or drawings and many written by Harvey himself --detail forest updates, President's reports, and community meetups, are [archived](#) and available to read on the IATC website, Doug Simpson wants to bring them back to life in their original form.

Doug is a retired English teacher who was a [dedicated member](#) of the club from 2003-2019, including serving on the board for many years and ambitiously accepting the role of president after only one year in the club. He was also the *Alpiner* editor and primary author for much of this time, along with early club pioneers Bill Longwell, Ralph Owen, and past president Ken Konigsmark. In 2019, Doug, a self-proclaimed "print-person," proposed to the club the idea for an IATC history book, where he would



collate important articles from the *Alpiner's* 40-year history (many of them written by Doug) for publication in a printed book. The IATC board greenlighted this project, which is now in progress. In addition to Doug's article compilation, Tom Anderson, current board member and local history enthusiast, agreed to assist with the publication by supplementing the text with archival newspaper clippings and historical club [photos](#) that Tom had already serendipitously already been carefully collecting for the past five years as a personal passion project. Doug, who wants to make sure the IATC is looking to the past as well as the future, feels that the book is "something the club should have, an official document of it's important history," Now, with Tom's visual embellishments and a forward by Dave Kappler, IATC charter member and the longest active member of the board, the archival *Alpiner* will live on in a commemorative book available to all who enjoy and Issaquah Alps and their history.

A remarkable feature of the IATC is the inter-generationality of not only the parks' users, but the club itself: while finding the time to volunteer for conservationist organization may stereotypically be a retiree's game, the IATC board and volunteers span from recent college graduates to seasoned "oldtimers," as Doug calls the earlier members. While this mix of perspectives can only be beneficial for the future of the club, Doug wants to make sure that the younger club members, who weren't part of the establishment of the Mountains to Sound Greenway or the Bullitt family's donation of Squak Mountain to the state, remember the history just as well as those who witnessed and facilitated these momentous accomplishments. When asked what he hopes readers glean from the upcoming book, Doug said that he doesn't want "people to forget how much we had to do with all of those mountains," a desire that has motivated him to pull on his journalistic background to bring to life an IATC time capsule in print form. Doug and Tom, who have both previously authored Issaquah-related publications, are now hoping to complete the book by the end of the year so that it will be available for purchase via Amazon and the IATC by early 2022.

In the meantime, the *Alpiner* digital archive is worth a visit, as are [Doug](#) and [Tom's](#) previous publications. But there's something special about a good old-fashioned paper book, and we look forward to the IATC's history, supplemented with archival and current photos, to be available to peruse after a long day on the trails.

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# Hiking 101: Leave no Trace

Ash Lehto - July 23, 2021



Washington is a hub for people who enjoy being outside - from hiking to climbing, backpacking to rafting, people around here love to spend time in nature. It's important for everyone to feel that the outdoors is a space where they are welcome to learn and engage and live. While people are not new to our natural areas, we've built up urban areas and separated ourselves from the environment - which means that nature is now a place that we go to, visit, and are a guest in. We remember this when we talk about how to hike safely, and when it comes to interactions with wildlife. But we also need to remember this when it comes to the mark we leave on the spaces we enter. That's why there are the [Leave No Trace principles](#) .

Leave No Trace was started as a guiding set of rules for when in the backcountry, but it has since evolved to be applicable in all recreational activities. Leave No Trace provides a series of rules to follow to be sure that when you are outdoors, you don't cause any harm or destruction. Much how you are expected to behave and clean up after yourself at a friend's house or a public space, you shouldn't leave a mess in nature.

There are seven guiding Principles of Leave No Trace. These are fluid principles that are updated over time based on new discoveries in science and social norms by the [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#) . But the core of each stays the same, and they remain as important as they were 50 years ago.

The principles are as follows:

**Plan Ahead & Prepare** - Think back to how you prepare for a hike (or take a look at our article [Hiking 101: The First Steps](#)). A lot of planning goes into deciding what to bring on a trip, whether it be for rafting or backpacking or a stroll in the woods. When you bring everything you need, you don't have to use up limited natural resources and degrade the environment. Planning carefully means that you can avoid damaging your environment, putting yourself and others at risk, and minimize the likelihood of wildlife interactions.

**Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces** - You've probably seen the signs: "Stay on trail." These aren't here just for show. And yes, sometimes bushwhacking and finding your own way can be fun. But this goes back not only to planning ahead (don't go create a new trail and then get lost and need rescuing) but also to how you treat the environment. Trails are there for a reason - not just so you don't get lost, but so that we minimize the impact on nature. If everyone made their own trail, we would trample vegetation, cause soil compaction (preventing air flow in soil and compressing roots), intrude on untouched spaces, and bother more wildlife. While yes, trails are also an impact on nature, they help consolidate the traffic of people and minimize our overall impacts. Sometimes trails can be crowded, or might not seem like the more direct or fun route, but there's a purpose and method to their creation. And if you don't want to stay on trails to help preserve plants, at least do it for [crews](#) that volunteer their time, energy, and sweat to keep them functional and fun!

**Dispose of Waste Properly** - The nice part about urban areas is that there are recycling bins and trash containers around. In nature, there is nothing to throw your trash away in - except your own backpack! Plastic takes decades to break down, and even then, it's only into smaller pieces, so when you throw a wrapper or water bottle away, it stays for a long time and then the particles get into the ecosystem, damaging soil, plants, and wildlife. Same for other items, such as aluminum and even paper! It's also not uncommon to see food left around on trails, because "it will decompose". Decomposition is a process, it's not as straightforward as you might think. Leaving your banana or orange peel out doesn't mean it will be gone within a week. It takes time, and in the meanwhile, everyone else has to look at it. The more people leave their "compost" out, the more there will be, as well. This could also lead to wildlife being drawn towards trails more, looking for food and inevitably leading to conflicts.

Waste also refers to - you guessed it - our own body waste. Many trails have bathrooms at the trailhead, which you should always use to be on the safe side. If you have to go while on the trail, though, there are plenty of [guidelines](#) out there to make sure that your bodily fluids and solids leave the most minimal of impacts. There are lots of things to consider - how far from the trail you go, how deep to bury, distance from water, etc. So do your research beforehand, and bring supplies like [poop shovels](#) and [kula cloths](#) to make the experience more efficient and less impactful.

**Leave What You Find** - It's possible you've heard the phrase "Take only pictures, leave only footprints". What this means is that we don't take things that are found in nature. I know you might think "oh, it's only one rock" but if everyone thinks that way, and everyone takes a rock, or a flower, or whatever, then that number reaches dozens, hundreds, maybe thousands. Rocks in streams, shells on beaches, flowers on bushes, all play an important role in the ecosystem, no matter how small. If something is beautiful, take only memories or pictures, so that future visitors can enjoy it too.

You should also leave the environment as it is, in that you don't make any permanent changes, such as digging a trench, building forts out of logs, or creating fire pits. You are encouraged to take these down as you see them, to restore the space as much as you can. With that being said, legally constructed facilities should be left alone, so that you don't do any more damage by destroying it.

**Minimize Campfire Impact** - This is a tough subject, especially as we're in the middle of wildfire season. Overall - campfires can lead to wildfires, damage neighboring plants, and cause soil compaction (from footprints, creating campfire rings, etc), among others. That doesn't mean you shouldn't ever build a campfire, of course! In fact, a nice warm fire after a hike or on a hilltop can be a great way to end the day. But there are ways that you can be safe and respectful. Follow burn bans, for instance, and use fire rings that have already been created. Only build fires in areas with little underbrush and open spaces. And, as always, be sure to put the fire completely out before leaving. Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics also has [guidelines](#) for how to minimize impacts and determine if and how to build a fire in the best way.

**Respect Wildlife** - Whatever your relationship with nature, you must remember that you are a guest in the home of wildlife. From a mountain beaver to a bear, from a rabbit to a deer, from a brown creeper to an osprey, all wildlife should be respected. Never get too close to an animal, and learn to observe quietly and from a distance. Store food safely when staying overnight, and be aware of what wildlife may be spotted in your area. You should also avoid feeding any and all animals - no matter how badly you want to feel like a magical princess (we've all been there). For more guidelines about how to have healthy and safe wildlife interactions, check out our article [Hiking 101: Wildlife Interactions](#).

**Be Considerate of Other Visitors** - All other rules can relate to this one, but it's important enough to have it's own Principle. Everyone has a right to enjoy nature, it doesn't belong to just a few people. And there is no one "right way" to spend time outdoors. Whatever way you enjoy nature, make sure that you don't intrude on someone else's right to enjoy as well. Maybe you experience nature best by listening to music, or maybe you spend time on trails to exercise your dog or child. Maybe nature is for reading, running, hosting classes, or simply going for a walk. No way is the only way, but you can still be respectful of others. Use headphones, leash your pets, and know the rules of [sharing the trail](#). Above all, have a great time outdoors, and do your best to allow other people to, as well.

The [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#) has tons of great resources, information, and history beyond the 7 Principles. If you have questions, want to partner with them, or are interested in learning more about threats and solutions to environmental impacts, check them out!

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# The Issaquah Highlands: Advocacy in Action

Hannah Wheeler - July 23, 2021

*Thank you to Ken Konigsmark and Tom Anderson for providing information, quotes, and historical details for this article!*



*Grand Ridge Park came out of the three-way deal that created the Issaquah Highlands as we know it today.*

*"Open space is like radioactive metals. It doesn't do anything big until enough is put together for a critical mass. Nobody could come to Cougar Mountain from Seattle or Bellevue to go walking in 230 separate green spaces of 10 acres each, amid houses and freeways. That would merely provide 230 neighborhood parks. Only when the 2300 acres are massed together is there a Regional Park."*

*-Harvey Manning*

This quote describes the importance of having consolidated open space, rather than disparate small pieces of land. Harvey is referring here to the formation of Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, but this quote applies to the story of the Issaquah Highlands as well.

Many of you are likely familiar with the [Issaquah Highlands](#) . Some of our readers might even live there! Located North of I-90, between the Issaquah and High Point exits, this 2,223 acre site first began developing 20 years ago and was zoned to be rural.

RA-5 zoning means that there can only be one home every five acres, each with its own well and septic system. Across 2,223 acres around 228 homes could have been built in the Issaquah Highlands, creating an "urban sprawl" of large single-family homes and leaving no public or wildlife access to the open spaces and healthy habitat that exist there.

We know that this is not what the Issaquah Highlands looks like today. Instead, the highlands consists of 20% high-density urban zoning that includes retail, and is 80% protected park lands. This 4:1 agreement was reached only after the hard work of some vocal advocates, including the IATC's very own Ken Konigsmark, and the cooperation of the Issaquah Highlands and Port Blakeley to absorb two different Transfer of Density Rights projects.

A major hurdle we had to overcome in creating the Issaquah Highlands as we know it involved a "mystery buyer" who wanted to buy the entire 150 acre rural area to build his own private mega-estate. Additionally, he demanded the county allow an electrified fence to be built around an additional 200 acres of public land to "ensure his security".

Bob Derrick, the Director of the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) at that time, when pressed by Councilman Brian Derdowski about how this could be considered "public land" when fenced off by a private owner said "Well, the public can look through the fence and see it".

This particular fight was brought to the attention of the IATC when this "mystery buyer" proposed a back door route to his property off of a small rural road that Ken Konigsmark lived on. Ken "exposed all this to the press, to the Council, created a big stir about it and, ultimately, when the 3-party (King County, City of Issaquah, and the developer, Port Blakely) Development Agreement was approved by the County Council it was done so on the condition that nothing could proceed until Port Blakely reached a satisfactory agreement with me and my neighborhood." After several heated meetings the "mystery buyer" eventually backed out.

The final agreement between King County, City of Issaquah, and Port Blakely allowed dense urban zoning on one acre for every four acres of land that Port Blakeley donated to either the city or county for public ownership. This resulted in the dense urban village we see today that includes a mix of residential and retail space with direct access to public lands and trails. Another 150 acres was allocated for 40 "rural" home-sites for high-end homes. To make this possible, Port Blakely agreed to a Transfer of Density Rights.

[A Transfer of Density Rights \(TDR\)](#) is a zoning tool used to protect land with conservation value by redirecting development to an area better suited to accommodate it, and at the same time preserving the non-developed area. Generally, growth is compensated for by increased density on the part of the land that is going to be developed.

The Issaquah Highlands and Port Blakeley cooperated to absorb two TDR projects in this case. The first was 313 acres of the Mitchell Hill Connector Forest that ties Grand Ridge Park eastward to land owned by the Department of Natural Resources north of Preston. This created a corridor of roughly 3000 acres of public land that otherwise would have been carved up into homesites. Port Blakely paid \$2.75M for the density credits that were then shifted to Issaquah Highlands for use as additional commercial space. In the second, equally crucial, deal Port Blakely bought the density credits from the 102-acre Park Pointe property lying between Issaquah and Tiger Mountain that would otherwise have been covered by 300 condos on the slope uphill from Issaquah to Tradition Plateau. These two TDR

deals were essential to conserving these key open space parcels.

The final agreement between the City of Issaquah, King County, and Port Blakeley included the following:

- 1242 acres donated to King County as protected park land
- 241 acres within the Urban Growth Area dedicated to City and County park land within the development area
- 290 acres rezoned from rural RA-5 to high density urban zoning that allows:
  - 3250 residential units (60% multi-family) Note: 4000 homes were actually built, still only on 20% of the land.
  - 2.95 million square feet for office/commercial
  - 425,000 square feet of retail
- 50 rural home sites on 2.5 acre lots, totaling 150 acres, for homes worth \$2 million+ Note: There was continued opposition to this from community advocates, but Port Blakley did not concede this in the end.

Additionally, Grand Ridge Park as we know it now came out of this deal. Because of limits King County has on the amount of forest clearing that can be done for development on any given lot, Port Blakley purchased an additional 40 acres of land, then donated it to King County Parks. In doing so were given credit for the amount of clearing that could have been done on those 40 acres and were allowed to use that clearing "credit" within the rural area for the 50 homes getting built.

The Issaquah Highlands as it exists today serves as an emblem of what successful advocacy can achieve. The Issaquah Alps Trails Club remains dedicated to working with the public and our partners to preserve, protect, and promote our public lands now and into the future.

# The Apparatus

## Club Founder

Harvey Manning

## Executive Director

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Kelly Jiang

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