

November 9, 2022

Trailside Group
Attn: Barbara Rogers
405 NW Gilman Road, #102
Issaquah, WA 98027



RE: Forest Ridge Phase 4 Open Space Management Plan

Introduction

As part of the Forest Ridge Phase 4 Development, a variety of open space resources will be set aside in perpetuity for use by the community and to fulfill important ecological services. Properly managed forested open spaces provide access to natural areas for community members to interact with nature and experience a variety of recreational opportunities. This Open Space Management Plan has been prepared to guide the community on what types of recreational uses are allowed and how to maintain these important resources.

The 233-acre Forest Ridge Phase 4 subdivision contains approximately 73 acres of natural open space. These open space areas will contain a network of trails and undeveloped naturally vegetated areas. Per Kittitas County Community Development September 23, 2010, SEPA determination, an Open Space Management Plan is required that describes the types of recreation uses and improvements allowed within the open space areas, including a statement from a professional biologist that the proposed uses and improvements will avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife habitats.

Allowed Recreation Uses

The Forest Ridge Phase 4 has open space areas directly connected to surrounding forested areas containing networks of social and established trails. Active recreation use of all trails and open spaces internal to the development will be limited to biking and hiking with no motorized vehicles allowed. Passive uses such as, but not limited to bird watching, photography, and picnicking are all allowed. This plan does not limit the types of uses on adjacent lands outside of the development activity, however, the environment is similar between the site and adjacent forest areas, and both provide native habitat for many wildlife species. As such, visitors to the on-site trail system can seek out wildlife viewing opportunities.

Allowed Improvements

Improvements within the open space areas will be limited to the initial installation of trails, signage, and benches for resting and observing wildlife. Trails will be installed in a meandering fashion to avoid impacting trees. Trail surfaces within the open space areas will be pervious in nature and either be a dirt or woodchip surface. No impervious materials such as gravel, concrete, or asphalt will be used. Use of trails after dusk will be discouraged by the lack of artificial lighting. Trash receptacles will be bear proof and will be limited to trailheads adjacent to rights of way.

Wildlife

Different species of wildlife have different habitat requirements; therefore, it can be difficult to prescribe a best management practice for open space areas. However, managing for the perpetuity of a complex biodiverse forest system ensures many species are incorporated. To ensure the biodiversity of these areas, connectivity between the on-site open space to off-site forested areas was incorporated into the design. In addition, the designated open space areas include the protection of significant trees, natural succession of the forest ecosystem in terms of vegetative species' richness, snags, and large woody debris. This, along with the design that includes the lack of nighttime lighting, and the use of natural trail surfaces will help avoid and minimize impacts on wildlife habitat and individual species.

Maintenance

As is true with any trail system running through open space areas, maintenance will be needed to limit the intrusion of invasive species and trash and also offer safe recreational use for residents. It is recommended that at a minimum the condition of the trails and surrounding open space be evaluated by the HOA annually to determine maintenance needs. Specifically, invasive species and trash shall be removed in the spring and fall. Dirt and woodchip trails should also be evaluated annually for erosion with the replacement of woodchips to occur as necessary.

Wetland Resources, Inc.



Scott Brainard, PWS
Principal Ecologist