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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: MAURY ISLAND SITE

Introduction

Located on the west shore of Maury Island on lands formerly operated as a sand and gravel mine, this site is now a 250-acre open space area under the stewardship of King County Parks. Citizen activists and environmental groups challenged plans for mine expansion and advocated for public acquisition of the site. The land was purchased from CalPortland in December 2010.

The site contains pure Madrone forests and habitat that supports endangered species such as Chinook salmon, bull trout and orca. The site's nearly one mile of shoreline is the longest undeveloped stretch of Puget Sound shoreline in King County. When combined with the nearby 320-acre Maury Island Marine Park, the two sites represent the largest public holding of protected marine shoreline in all of Puget Sound.

The site features panoramic vistas of Puget Sound, Mt. Rainier and mainland King County plus access to the shoreline from the nearly five miles of trails for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. These trails connect to an additional three miles of trails on the adjacent King County Dockton Forest.

See site web page:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/recreation/parks/naturalresources/naturallands/mauryislandsite.aspx>

How much did the County pay for the property and what funds were used for the purchase?

The property, appraised at \$39.7 million, was purchased for \$36 million from the following sources:

- \$14.5 million from ASARCO environmental damage settlement funds For more information see: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2010news/2010-148.html>
- \$19.1 million advanced from the King County Conservation Futures Funds which are funds collected from property taxes levied throughout the County and dedicated to the acquisition of open space in cities and rural areas. There is an expectation that \$2 million will be paid back through private fundraising efforts.*

- \$2.4 million is attributed to the value of extending CalPortland's existing mining lease on Maury Island Marine Park, royalty-free, from 2020 to 2030, to meet the island's own gravel needs.

*As of March 2011. Cascade Land Conservancy and Preserve our Island raised @ \$600, 000

Do these funding sources affect how the site is to be managed?

In general ASARCO settlement funds were directed toward cleanup of sites contaminated as a result of ASARCO's Tacoma Smelter. The County's Maury Island Site is within the much larger Tacoma Smelter Plume area and as a result, contains elevated levels of arsenic and lead contamination on surface soils from airborne emissions from the smelter.

By state law King County Conservation Futures Funds can only be used to purchase land or conservation easements to ensure protection, conservation and restoration of open space values. "Open space" criteria include: wildlife habitat/rare plant reserve, salmon habitat and aquatic resources, scenic resources, low-impact passive recreation opportunities (including trails), park system additions, greenbelts and cultural resources.

In addition, only non-motorized use is allowed in designated open space areas (except for maintenance purposes, to control site use and protect the site. No more than 15 percent of the site's total surface area may be developed or maintained with non-vegetative impervious surfaces, if necessary for the protection of the open space resources (trail surfaces are exempt).

What rules currently dictate public use and how did those rules get established?

When Maury Island Site was acquired by King County on Dec. 30, 2010, the property became part of the King County Park System. The rules for park use codified In King County Code (Title 7) apply to all lands managed by King County Parks.

See the following for the full list of Park Rules:

http://your.kingcounty.gov/mkcc/clerk/code/10_Title_7.pdf

Currently, the site's trails are ***open to all non-motorized uses*** including:

- hikers
- trail runners
- mountain bikers
- equestrians and
- leashed pets.

Park rules ***prohibit:***

- Motorized vehicle use on trails
(*except for wheelchairs powered by electric motors and maintenance, police and emergency vehicles*).
- Hunting
(*since Park Rules do not allow discharge of weapons across, in, or into any King County park area unless the department has authorized in writing such a special recreational activity*)

How can park rules be amended?

Since any revisions to the county code must be done by ordinance, any proposed changes to Park Rules require approval by the King County Council. Public uses of any park site must also be consistent with the funding sources used to purchase the site, zoning and land use regulations and recommendations in an approved site management plan.

Why is the site not open to drive--in access?

Providing improved public access and on-site parking is a goal and options for such will be evaluated as part of the planning process for the site. The existing road network was neither designed nor permitted for general public use and may not be adequate for safe public access. Also, such improvements will need to be carried out in conjunction with required site remediation and reclamation needs.

Will King County Parks engage interested citizens, stakeholders and the community at large in future planning for the site?

Yes, all parks, trails, natural areas and forests within King County Parks' inventory, including this new site, belong to the citizens of King County; we are committed to involving the public in planning for the future of this spectacular site. Grassroot efforts involving citizen activists and key environmental and stakeholder groups supported by elected officials made this acquisition possible. We want to continue that valuable and effective partnership.

In addition, we have received many e-mails and phone calls from Vashon and other county residents, inquiring about current allowed recreation uses and expressing opinions about what uses should be considered appropriate. We want to be certain we hear from a widespread constituency during the development of our site management plan.

How will information about the site and updates about the planning process be shared with the public?

The following are example of ways we plan to communicate with the public:

- Public meetings/workshops
- King County Parks web site and blog
- FAQs/Fact Sheets
- On -site signage
- News releases/ news articles
- Updates/Briefings at existing “Friends of” and other stakeholder groups
- List serves

In addition, we will be coordinating with DOE on their public involvement process associated with the remediation planning process.

What methods will King County Parks use for involving the public in the development of the site management plan?

- A survey will solicit citizen’s ideas about the site
- A diverse “planning advisory group” will be formed comprised of representatives from various stakeholder groups—users, neighbors, environmental and cultural interest groups, businesses, and the community at large. This has been an effective approach used for our other King County Park sites. Meetings of this advisory group will be open to the public.
- Public meetings/workshops will be held at key points of the planning process
- The draft site management plan will be made available for public review/comment

Can the name “Maury Island Site” be changed? If so, how?

The current site name is considered a “placeholder” name until an official new name is established. Because of the significance of a park name, King County Parks will be seeking public input. Some examples of naming options might include inclusion as an element of the development of the site’s management plan, through soliciting recommendations from the community or a “naming contest”. Once a name has been chosen, it will be adopted via a management plan or County Council ordinance.

Will King County be responsible for addressing remediation and reclamation of the site?

Yes, plans for land reclamation and soil remediation will be an integral part of site management planning. King County has already begun discussions with DOE and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as well as with King County Development of Environmental Services (DDES) and Public Health -- Seattle King County. In addition, funding from DOE has allowed the County to hire a consultant to develop a remedial investigation report. King County is working with DOE to begin planning for an investigation and cleanup of contamination. They will enter into a legal agreement (Agreed Order) this spring or summer to begin this process.

What happens with all the permits issued to CalPortland for expanded mining operations, including improvements proposed for the dock?

King County and CalPortland agreed to transfer all regulatory permits associated with proposed expanded mining operations to King County. Most of those transfers have been completed. Since King County will be managing the site as open space, rather than as a sand/gravel mine, those permits will be amended to address the County's proposed plans for the site such as site restoration, installation of improvements that support passive recreation use and removal of the mining operation features, including conveyor belts and the dock. In addition, the County's Aquatic Lease with WADNR is limited to dock removal work.

What does the county currently envision may be appropriate uses for the site?

Future planning efforts will identify appropriate site improvements and restoration in conjunction with remediation and reclamation requirements. Improvements could include such things as trail enhancements, water access, restroom facilities, picnic areas and parking. Funding source requirements and restrictions must also be completed.

When does King County expect to have the site management plan completed?

Timing will depend on public involvement and coordination with other agencies on remediation and reclamation requirements. We striving to have a draft plan completed within about one year (or March 2012).

Where can I get more information about Maury Island Site?

For more information, including links for other information related to the site, please visit:
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/recreation/parks/naturalresources/naturallands/mauryislandsite.aspx>

What if I have additional questions about the site, the planning process or want to be added to a list for future updates and meeting notifications?

For questions about the planning and public involvement processes for Maury Island Site, please contact Connie Blumen, Natural Resource Lands Program Manager at connie.blumen@kingcounty.gov or by phone at 206.263.6371.

For specific questions about the soil remediation process on Maury Island Site, please contact Ron Timm, DOE Site Manager, at Rtim461@ecy.wa.gov or by phone at 425-649-7185.