

General Timeline: Paradise Valley Conservation Area - Farmer Frog Lease/RCO Conversion

4/12/2017: Motion 17-116 authorized lease for 7.5 acres to Farmer Frog at Paradise Valley Conservation Area (PVCA) for small scale food growing operation

4/18/2017: Lease signed without prior RCO approval

8/29/2017: Waiver of Retroactivity filed for Portage Creek 10.75 acres for RCO review to satisfy known conversion of PVCA. RCO declined to consider property as suitable replacement due to the lack of connection to Bear Creek Watershed/Chinook Salmon.

9/14/2017: Site visit with RCO staff intended to secure an exemption to conversion due to the Covenant placed on the site requiring historical use of the property

4/21/2018: Appeal letter from Tom Murdoch to RCO requesting RCO reconsider conversion requirement

5/7/2018: Response to appeal letter from RCO to County denying the request for reconsideration. Conversion stands. County begins to satisfy the conversion with alternative properties.

11/26/2019: County acquires Miller Pond located in the Little Bear Creek watershed (adjacent watershed to Bear Creek). County files Waiver of Retroactivity and prepares analysis designed to satisfy a portion of the conversion: 5.31 acres appraised for \$655,000.00. PVCA conversion area needs to be defined prior to appraisal of the conversion footprint in order to begin the process of satisfying the conversion. Next step per RCO: *“an alternatives analysis is part of a conversion approval process. That includes alternatives to conversion, such as no action or terminating the lease in this case (I’m not suggesting that action only providing as an example); and alternatives for replacement. While every sponsor has a preferred replacement property, alternatives must be considered, too.”*

7/25/2020: Parks staff identify additional 10 acres in Bear Creek watershed, adjacent to PVCA. Grant proposal to Conservation Futures staff 7/25/2020. Conservation Futures board declines to recommend the project to the Snohomish County Council for funding.

Snohomish County RCO grant proposals are currently penalized one point for each grant application due to the unresolved conversion issue. If the County was not working to resolve the conversion issue, it would lose 2 points. See excerpts from RCO Manual #7 for additional considerations below:

“The director may recommend to the funding board that a sponsor with unresolved conversion projects be designated as a “high risk sponsor.” A sponsor may be designated as high risk if it meets the following tests:

- *Has one or more unresolved conversions of which the combined Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and Salmon Recovery Funding Board dollar total*

exceeds \$1 million or 25 percent of all Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and Salmon Recovery Funding Board funds received by that sponsor, whichever dollar amount is less (NOT including local match or contribution) OR

- *Has a conversion of any size or amount that has been unresolved for 2 or more years after notification by the RCO, AND*
- *Has no record of substantial progress towards resolving outstanding conversion(s)."*

Snohomish County staff have worked diligently with RCO staff with the goal of making progress in satisfying the conversion. The inability to define the limits of the shared use parking area to add that footprint to the original 7.5 acre leased area has impaired forward progress.

The current recommendation from Parks staff is to take a step back and consider the long-term consequences of losing public access to what was planned as shared use parking between Farmer Frog visitors and conservation area visitors. The exclusive use of the parking area for high impact, unpermitted, unauthorized use puts the County in a precarious situation that extends well beyond the Paradise Valley Conservation Area.

September-November 2020: Site visits and continued discussions with Farmer Frog and Snohomish County about these issues

12/4/20: Site visit and discussion with Farmer Frog about these issues

12/19/20: Site visit Site visit and discussion with Farmer Frog about these issues

1/22/21: First official letter regarding relocation requirement sent by email and delivered in person.

2/17/21: Second official letter regarding relocation requirement delivered in person.

2/25/21: Public statement from Tom Teigen

2/26/21: Third official letter regarding relocation requirement sent by email and delivered in person.