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## **Snohomish County Releases Healthy Forest Project Plan**

*New 20-year plan works towards a sustainable future for region through flourishing forests*

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., January 21, 2022** – Today, the Snohomish County Office of Energy and Sustainability in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources released the Snohomish County Healthy Forest Project 20 Year Plan in partnership with Forterra. The Healthy Forest Project (HFP) is a new community stewardship program to restore and care for the forested parks and natural areas managed by Snohomish County. As part of the Green Cities Network, the county has chosen to focus on 10 pilot sites adjacent to key water bodies or salmon-bearing streams in the project's first phase.

This Healthy Forest Project 20-Year Plan explains: why now is the time to invest in the restoration and care of the county's HFP pilot sites; provides goals and objectives to enhance the current condition of these sites; and outlines actions to achieve the established goals. This plan is an important step toward implementing the Puget Sound Initiative, and the end results will benefit Snohomish County's residents and ecosystem.

"The Snohomish County Healthy Forests Project 20 Year Plan will benefit our environment, economy, and residents," said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. "This work will help reduce the impacts of carbon emissions, improve air and water quality, and enhance open spaces. By improving forest health, we are ensuring our quality of life can be sustained for generations to come."

"Snohomish County's Healthy Forest Project Plan takes on the challenge of restoring the well-being of natural systems at a landscape scale" said Michelle Connor, Forterra's President and CEO. "As people and communities, we thrive when our forests and natural areas thrive. This is a bold investment in a healthy future for us all."

Key priorities for the 20 Year Plan include:

- Supporting the active, adaptive management of Snohomish County's forests, especially urban forests, with a goal to continue this practice into the future to ensure lands in active restoration remain ecologically healthy.
- Enrolling approximately 935 acres of forested parkland and natural areas in active restoration and maintenance within the next 20 years.
- Maintaining an inclusive and successful volunteer program that encourages participation from a diverse network of individuals, families, schools, businesses, and nonprofits.

- Integrating social equity into program planning, so that forest enhancement activities are encouraged and accessible to diverse communities, ideally in or near their own community.
- Engaging long-term volunteers in this work by providing a high level of training and expertise, rewarding and celebrating service, and recruiting a diverse volunteer base with a variety of skill sets.
- Securing stable, sustainable funding so that the program has the staff and resources necessary for success.

Snohomish County and Forterra formed a partnership in 2019 to evaluate the health and condition of the county's forested areas, with a focus on urban forests, and develop a plan to help ensure that Snohomish County's vision of a sustainable, healthy region continues to become a reality. Snohomish County, the first county to do so, now joins Burien, Des Moines, Everett, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Puyallup, Redmond, SeaTac, Seattle, Shoreline, Snoqualmie, Tacoma, and Tukwila as a member of Forterra's Green Cities Network of partners.

This network in the Puget Sound region spans three counties (King, Pierce, and Snohomish), collectively serves a population of more than 5 million, and aims to restore and steward more than 14,000 acres of land. As part of this robust network of resources and expertise, the Snohomish County Healthy Forest Project will help ensure a livable and healthy region for all.

- For more information and to read the Healthy Forest Plan, go here: <https://forterra.org/subpage/green-snohomish-county>
- Direct link to plan: [https://forterra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/GC\\_Snohomish-guide\\_092421\\_PRINT.pdf](https://forterra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/GC_Snohomish-guide_092421_PRINT.pdf)

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