

Chapter 9 – Parks and Recreation

Introduction

This chapter describes public and private park and recreation facilities and resources and activities in the Greater Hansville Area (GHA) and other parts of North Kitsap County. The chapter describes current resources, how they evolved, and trends. It is not intended to be a directory of facilities and activities.



KEY FACTS

~ Public parks and facilities in the GHA consist of three Kitsap County regional parks, one community port district beach park and boat ramp, two state-owned water access sites and three state-owned tidelands.

The planned level of service for public recreation facilities in the GHA is met in most categories, according to the 2000 Kitsap County Open Space Plan.

All GHA parks are oriented toward outdoor recreation activities that take advantage of natural amenities.

The Driftwood Key and Shore Woods communities provide many recreational facilities for their members. More than a third of GHA residents live in these communities.

The nearest organized recreational programs for youth are in Kingston and Poulsbo.

The GHA has a legacy of “self-help” which has served the community well over the years in developing, maintaining and improving parks and recreation opportunities.

KEY TRENDS

While a countywide need for additional parks and recreation resources has been identified, Kitsap County government has not provided the financial means to meet the needs.

Although recreation needs are currently being met in the GHA, the national and regional trend of “doing more with what already exists” will undoubtedly impact how citizens act to meet our needs in the future.

The GHA has an abundance of scenic and natural areas, but as growth pressure continues, preservation of these limited areas is critical to retaining the character of the area, which provides highly desirable recreation opportunities.

The key element that has driven the current, positive trend is the activism of GHA residents over the last two decades.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Are there worthwhile benefits to GHA residents to developing and promoting our parks and recreation facilities as destinations for people from outside the area?

Should the GHA endorse and support an effort to establish a local parks district in North Kitsap?

What can GHA residents do to ensure that natural areas are preserved as Pope Resources divests themselves of their 1,500 acres of forest land in the GHA?

Where Have We Been?

Early Hansville-area residents swam and fished in Buck Lake. Residents fished for salmon in nearby waters. Salmon fishing resorts sprang up after a road was built from Kingston to Eglon and Hansville in 1924.

Hansville became a popular summer recreation area for visitors from the Seattle side of the Sound in the 1940s and 1950s. At one time in the 1950s six or seven resorts operated in the Hansville and Twin Spits areas. Visitors either stayed at the resorts or built their own summer cabins. The sport salmon fishery began a long decline in the late 1960s when fishing seasons were shortened to conserve the species. Most of the resorts were closed by 1990.

The planned communities of Shore Woods and Driftwood Key were developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s on Hood Canal. Driftwood Key attracted boaters and sport fishermen with its marina, launch ramp and private docks in the bay. Both communities were developed with recreation facilities for members who were predominantly part-time residents using their homes for weekend and summer recreation.

The GHA has an incredible legacy of “self-help” which has served the community well over the years in developing, maintaining and improving parks and recreation opportunities. As more people moved to the area to live year-round, citizens took the initiative to preserve the natural amenities that drew them here, improve recreational opportunities and accommodate newcomers.

With the assistance of Kitsap County, the community initiated and completed many improvements at Buck Lake County Park, including building the ball field, the Hansville Community Center and picnic shelter, installing new playground equipment, and designing and constructing the BMX track. At the request of the community, the county constructed the basketball court and improved the park restrooms.

In the early 1990s residents initiated a community planning process that emphasized preserving natural and scenic resources while accommodating population growth.

In 1992 the Hansville Open Space Committee commissioned the preparation of a community plan, “in recognition of the need for a plan to respond positively to growth pressures affecting North Kitsap County and Hansville.” The resulting 1993 Hansville Community Plan¹ proposed a network of greenways and trails that preserved natural areas while providing connecting trails between the neighborhoods and special places of the GHA.

Several significant community enhancements directly or indirectly resulted from this plan, including the 175-acre Hansville Greenway, the roadside trail along Twin Spits Road, acquisition of Point No Point property for a county park, and acquisition of Point No Point Resort by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Where We Are Now

Public parks and facilities in the GHA consist of three Kitsap County regional parks, two Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) water access sites, three Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) tidelands, and the Port of Eglon beach,

park and boat ramp (see Table 1). Two county road-ends and a county-owned parcel on Hood Canal Drive provide limited beach access. All of the parks are oriented toward outdoor recreation activities that take advantage of natural amenities.

Table 1 – Public Parks and Properties

Agency	Size	Shoreline/Tidelands Length
Kitsap County Parks	260 acres	2,270 feet shoreline
Washington DFW	4.4 acres	224 feet shoreline
Washington DNR	0	8,820 feet tidelands
Port of Eglon	1 acre	200 feet shoreline
Kitsap County Public Works	1 acre	320 feet shoreline

The communities of Driftwood Key and Shore Woods maintain private facilities for their members, including clubhouses, outdoor swimming pools, basketball courts and playgrounds. Shore Woods has two tennis courts, while Driftwood Key has a private marina with 88 slips, a boat ramp, and a few guest moorage positions. More than 35% of the resident population of the GHA lives in these two communities.

to the public for walking and wildlife observation.

While the GHA generally has abundant outdoor recreation sites and activities, facilities are limited for indoor and outdoor organized sports. Both Hansville and Eglon have community center buildings that are used for community gatherings and activities.

The Nature Conservancy’s Foulweather Bluff Preserve encompasses 101 acres of forest and wetland, with 3,800 feet of beach that is open

No recreation programs are offered by Kitsap County or any other public agency in the GHA. The county and Poulsbo Parks and Recreation offer recreation programs in Kingston and Poulsbo.

Trends

National

In 2003, Dr. Joel Lynch of the National Center for Recreation and Conservation² listed emerging priorities that are facing recreation planners. They include:

- Protecting and increasing the resources in growth areas
- Rehabilitation of existing facilities

Meeting the needs of changing populations
Responding to youth, especially urban

These priorities emphasize addressing growing populations in certain areas and renovating existing facilities. The trend seems to be one of “doing more with what already exists.”

Washington State

A similar trend is detectable in Washington. In 2002 the Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) published a study titled, “An Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State,”³ which is “intended to inform decision makers about issues and opportunities associated with outdoor recreation.” Some of the conclusions of this study also reflect the national trends. Several dealt with managing existing resources more efficiently.

According to the study, a state-wide survey revealed:

- An active population is pursuing close-to-home, low-cost activities
- The largest percentage of people engage in walking and bicycling compared to other types of activity
- Participation in individual and team-type sports ranked second (and competition for available facilities is increasing)

Kitsap County

In line with national trends, Kitsap County faces significant challenges to protect existing resources while meeting the needs of a growing population. The county’s Open Space Plan⁴ describes the following three “overarching open space and recreation needs”:

1. Preserve dwindling natural areas.
2. Meet accelerating demand for organized, scheduled recreation and facilities.
3. Provide traditional park space for informal recreation such as picnicking, pickup ball games and Frisbee throwing.

Recent history in Kitsap County illustrates the difficulty in meeting these needs. The Open Space Plan identifies a six-year implementation strategy utilizing partnerships with other entities and various funding

sources to meet the identified needs. The strategy depends on a bond issue to provide 50% of the funding to meet the plan goals, but no bond issue had been offered to voters at the time this document was published in 2005. In November 2002 voters rejected (by a 20% margin) a local sales tax increase proposed by the Kitsap Public Facilities District to fund parks and recreation. In 2004, the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners rejected an increase in development impact fees, which would have helped fund county parks.

The Greater Hansville Area

The results of a countywide survey commissioned by Kitsap County Parks in 2000 and published in the Open Space Plan⁴ suggested a strong desire for more opportunities for passive outdoor recreation such as scenic vistas, walking, picnicking and beach activities. According to the Open Space Plan, however, the GHA meets the “planned level of service” for these activities.

While many of us have scenic vistas out our picture windows or within a short walk or drive, the addition of Point No Point Park to Hansville public spaces has added unmatched scenic vistas for everyone to enjoy. The 4 miles of trail in the Hansville Greenway, the roadside path along Twin Spits Road, the Foulweather Bluff Preserve on Twin Spits Road, and access to the DNR tidelands south of Point No Point provide varied walking opportunities. New picnic tables at Point No Point and the community-built picnic shelter at Buck Lake Park provide classic picnic opportunities. Many GHA residents live on the beach or have access to a community beach, but everyone also has access, if somewhat limited, to two long stretches of public tidelands.

The people of the GHA have been the driving force over the last two decades in acquiring and developing the facilities that take advantage of the natural amenities of our area and provide highly desirable recreational opportunities.

County funding has not kept pace with demand for open space and parks, which will likely require the GHA and other

communities to contribute more locally to meet demand. The Parks and Recreation Subcommittee of the Kingston Community Advisory Committee is studying the possibility of forming a local parks district in North Kitsap County that could include the GHA. This type of arrangement would allow taxes to be raised locally to provide additional facilities.

Background

The GHA has a variety of recreation facilities serving many needs, but some types of activities are only available in more densely populated areas of North Kitsap County such as Kingston and Poulsbo. Table 2 lists 39 activities and related locations.

Private facilities include private property (beach, tidelands, lots and acreage), communities with private facilities, business properties, and private properties where restricted public access is allowed.

Communities in the GHA with private facilities include Shore Woods, Driftwood Key and Cliffside. In most cases use of the facilities and grounds is limited to property owners and their guests.

Captain's Landing Resort is the only GHA business property with recreation facilities.

The Foulweather Bluff Preserve is owned by The Nature Conservancy and open to the public for restricted uses.

Olympic Property Group owns more than 1,500 acres of undeveloped land in the GHA

and allows public access with restrictions. Other public facilities in Kingston, Poulsbo and other areas are owned and operated by Kitsap County, Washington State, City of Poulsbo and North Kitsap School District.

GHA facilities are described below. Activities are summarized in a subsequent section.

Public Facilities

Buck Lake County Park – Buck Lake Park is less than a mile from “downtown” Hansville on the eastern shore of 20-acre Buck Lake. The 20-acre park has a swimming beach, covered picnic area, volleyball court, outdoor basketball court, baseball field, BMX bike track, restrooms, parking area and the Hansville Community Center building, which is the gathering place for a variety of community activities. The lake is stocked with 10- to 12-inch rainbow trout every spring. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains a boat launch, which has a separate access road on the north side of the park with limited parking and a pit toilet. Only electric motors are allowed on boats.

walking, shore fishing, wildlife observation, and marine and mountain views. Facilities are limited to a small parking lot, portable toilets, picnic tables and a viewing platform. The park is accessible at the end of Point No Point Road and at the end of Gust Halvor Road from Hansville Road. A forest trail leads to a waterfront overlook and a rustic stairway to the beach. This park provides the only land access to Department of Natural Resources tidelands south of the lighthouse. A marker near the lighthouse describes the historic Point No Point Treaty signed here in 1855. The lighthouse is on the Washington State Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Point No Point Resort Property – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) owns the Point No Point Resort property and leases the operation and maintenance to the previous owner as concessionaire. The 3.4-acre site has approximately 224 feet of beachfront and is open to the public for beachcombing, fishing and hand-launching boats with a valid Vehicle Use Decal. RV camping and cabins are available for a fee. Hours of operation are at the discretion of the concessionaire. State officials and community members have developed a plan to preserve and rebuild the resort that includes a boat launch, pier, dock, boat house, residence house for the operator, cafe, RV park, camping and boat trailer parking. WDFW is seeking funding for the project.

Eglon Beach Park – The Eglon Port District has a 1-acre community park on about 200 feet of waterfront at the end of Eglon Road. The park has a boat ramp, picnic shelter, a handicap-accessible portable toilet and a permanent restroom.

Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Tidelands – DNR owns 8,820 feet of beach and tidelands in the GHA. Only the beach below the mean high water line

is public. This line is generally just seaward of the line of old driftwood logs on the upper beach. Foulweather Bluff beach (DNR-64, 3,364 feet) is a cobble gravel beach accessible only by boat. Point No Point beaches (DNR-68 and 69) are accessible by foot only from Point No Point County Park, and extend south 5,456 feet along Puget Sound. The upper beach is generally gravel; the lower beach sand and gravel. No facilities are provided on these DNR beaches, which provide opportunities for shell fishing, beach walking, wildlife viewing and marine activity viewing. Visitors must respect private upland property.

Other Limited Beach Access – Two county road-ends and a county-owned waterfront parcel on Hood Canal Drive provide public access to narrow sections of beach. Twin Spits Road ends at the beach between the spits. Hood Canal Place, just south of Shore Woods, ends at the shore of Hood Canal. Both of these road-ends are only 60 feet wide and are bounded by private property and tidelands on both sides. The third site is at the “hairpin” turn in Hood Canal Drive at the mouth of Jake’s Creek on Hood Canal. The county owns 200 feet of waterfront at this site. No facilities or parking are provided at any of these sites. Visitors must respect adjacent private property and tidelands. These sites are very small and provide limited recreational opportunities, such as wildlife viewing and scenic views.

Public Roads – In the GHA there are approximately 20 miles of county roads in addition to the residential streets in Driftwood Key and Shore Woods. Very few have shoulders suitable for walking or bicycle riding. One exception is the one-mile section of Little Boston Road, between Hansville Road and Cliffside Road, which was rebuilt in

2002 with paved bicycle lanes on both sides. One-mile long Point No Point Road has a narrow shoulder on the north side intended for walking. A crushed-rock, roadside walking path was constructed in 1995 along 2 miles of Twin Spits Road from downtown Hansville to the intersection with Hood Canal Drive. Some of the path adjoins the road pavement and some is separated from the road by several feet.

Private Facilities

The owners of the following facilities and properties prohibit public use or allow limited use by the public.

Hansville Community Center – The Hansville Community Center building was constructed by Hansville volunteers on county land at Buck Lake County Park in 1988. It is owned, operated and maintained by the non-profit Hansville Community Center organization, and is available for rent by both residents and non-residents of Hansville. It includes a large meeting room (maximum capacity 225) with 15 eight-foot tables and 120 chairs, full kitchen with refrigerator and freezer, coffee-making and food-preparation equipment, washing facilities, a projection screen, overhead projector, sound system and piano. It is used for various events and activities, including exercise and dance classes.

Private Properties – Private property parcels in the GHA range from small residential lots of less than 1 acre in Driftwood Key and Shore Woods to narrow, long waterfront properties around the perimeter of the peninsula, to 20-acre inland properties. Olympic Property Group owns approximately 1,500 acres of forest land. Private property is used by its owners for a wide variety of recreational activities.

Foulweather Bluff Preserve – This 101 acres of waterfront on Hood Canal was donated to The Nature conservancy in 1967. Public access is allowed along a ¼-mile walking trail from Twin Spits Road to the beach and 3,800 feet of beach, but the primary purpose of the preserve is conservation of natural systems rather than recreation. The unique and sensitive brackish marsh area is closed to the public. Fires, camping, and removal of shells, driftwood or any other life forms from the beach and tidelands are prohibited. A local stewardship group monitors the site. No facilities are provided.

Shore Woods Community – The Shore Woods community on Hood Canal is a residential and summer home community. The community's several hundred property owners own a common park area and beach, outdoor swimming pool, playground, tennis courts, outdoor basketball court and clubhouse. The facilities are for use only by residents, lot owners and their guests.

Driftwood Key Community – Driftwood Key, just north of Shore Woods on Hood Canal, is the largest planned community in the GHA. The homeowners association owns a common park area and beach, marina, boat ramp, clubhouse, swimming pool, playground and outdoor basketball court. The facilities are for use only by residents, lot owners and their guests.

Cliffside Beach Community – Cliffside is a smaller community on Hood Canal several miles south of Shore Woods. Cliffside has a private community beach.

Recreational Activities

Walking and Hiking

Off-Road – The best opportunities for off-road walking are the Hansville Greenway, Point No Point Park, the DNR tidelands and Foulweather Bluff Preserve. The 4 miles of Greenway trails are all through forests, while only short sections at Point No Point Park and Foulweather Bluff Preserve are through woodlands. Most of the walking is on beach and tidelands. The availability of tideland for walking depends on the tide, particularly on the long DNR tideland south of Point No Point where walkers must be aware of incoming tides. These tidelands are bordered by high, steep cliffs, and the only way to get off the beach at high tide is in the area near the lighthouse. Several miles of abandoned logging roads on Olympic Property Group land are available for walking and hiking. Walking groups from other parts of Kitsap County, Seattle and Sequim have been encountered on the Greenway trails.

Roadside – The 2-mile roadside trail along Twin Spits Road from the center of Hansville is separated from the road in most places, follows the shoulder in some areas, and crosses the road twice. The speed limit along this road changes from 25 mph in town to 40 mph at Hood Canal Drive. A narrow shoulder on the north side of Point No Point Road from Hansville Road to the lighthouse allows pedestrians to walk just off the road, where the speed limit is 20 mph. In 2002 the county completed reconstruction of a mile-long section of Little Boston Road from Hansville Road to Cliffside Road which includes bike paths (paved wide shoulders) on each side. Walkers frequently use this section of road. Shoulders on other roads are not paved and frequently non-existent, but many people walk Hansville roads.

Jogging and Running – Roadsides inadequate for walking are even more dangerous for joggers, but many GHA residents jog along roads and off-road trails and pathways. However, the trails through the Greenway are very rough and irregular and may not be acceptable for some joggers. The nearest ¼-mile running track is a cinder track at Kingston Junior High.

Dog Walking

On-Leash – Dogs are permitted on-leash at county parks outside of the picnic, playground and swimming beach areas. Pets are not allowed at the Foulweather Bluff Preserve.

Off-Leash – Dogs are not allowed off-leash at county parks. Many people walk dogs off-leash along the quieter roads, on their own property, and on abandoned logging roads in Olympic Property Group forest land. The nearest off-leash dog park area is at Raab Park in Poulsbo (on Caldart Avenue). A large dedicated off-leash area is planned at the new North Kitsap Heritage Park south of Kingston on Miller Bay Road.

Bird and Wildlife Viewing

The GHA is rich with opportunities for wildlife observation. All public recreation facilities offer viewing points – some formal viewing platforms and some beach access points. The Audubon Society has designated Point No Point Park as an Important Bird Area (IBA), which are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird.

The Kitsap Audubon website describes Point No Point Park as including “extensive views of Admiralty Inlet, marine, sandy beach, marsh, and wooded habitats. It is best known for alcids, loons and cormorants, as well as large numbers of Bonaparte’s and Heermann’s gulls in the fall.”

Kitsap Audubon conducts field trips to the GHA at least once a year. Point No Point and other beaches provide opportunities to view not only seabirds, but harbor seals, sea lions and river otters. Gray whales and orcas also have been seen in the waters around the GHA.

The view platform at Point No Point was constructed by volunteers with material purchased through a donation to Kitsap Audubon in memory of long-time Point No Point resident, Mary Rogers.

Nearly 100 species of birds have been identified in the Hansville Greenway. Three platforms in the Greenway provide views of Buck Lake and two beaver ponds.

Beach Walking

Since the GHA is surrounded by saltwater beaches, walking on the beach is a common recreational activity. Less than a mile of the 16 miles of GHA shoreline is publicly owned, but many shoreline property owners are tolerant of neighbors walking on their private beaches. All but 740 feet of this mile of public shoreline is at Point No Point Park. The DNR tidelands make available 1 2/3 miles for walking when the tide is out, but only the 1-mile section south of Point No Point is accessible from land. The Foulweather Bluff DNR beach is only accessible by boat.

Fishing

Saltwater – Hansville has been a salmon fishing destination for decades. T-shirts once proclaimed Hansville to be the “Salmon Capital of the World.” While that may have been a bit of hyperbole, the waters off Hansville and Point No Point have long been considered a very productive sport salmon fishery. A 2001 article in *Fishing and Hunting News* magazine describes Point No Point as the “Best place on the North End to fill your November two-fish salmon limit...

That area probably represents one of your better chances in Puget Sound for getting chum.”⁵

Point No Point Park is a popular shore fishing spot for both casting and fly-fishing. Since there is no place to dock, moor or launch in Hansville, boaters must come by water from other Puget Sound ports and launch sites, including the private Driftwood Key marina (some purchase lots just to moor their boats), the Eglon public launch ramp (useable only at higher tides), and public launch ramps at Salsbury Point County Park near the Hood Canal Bridge, and in Kingston. Bottom fishing for cod and flounder is common in both Puget Sound and Hood Canal. Hansville is in “Area 9” as designated by the State for fishing and shell fishing regulations.

Freshwater – Buck Lake offers the only freshwater fishing in the GHA, and in all of North Kitsap. The lake has a WDFW ramp, but only for human-powered boats and boats with electric motors. The lake is stocked by WDFW every spring with “keeper size” rainbow trout. Large mouth bass are also caught.

Shellfishing

Manila and little neck clams, commonly referred to as “steamers” are found on many gravel beaches in the GHA. Cockles, horse clams, geoducks, butter clams and littleneck clams are found on sand and mud beaches, such as the DNR beaches south of Point No Point. Dungeness and red rock crabs are generally found on sand and mud beaches. Crabs are caught by boaters using crab pots (traps) and by wading in shallow water.

Non-Motorized Boating

This category of boating includes kayaks, canoes, windsurfers, small sailboats, rowing sculls and rubber rafts. Buck Lake is suitable for these boats, but small for extensive

paddling, sailing or rowing. In this category, only sea kayaks are designed for use in unprotected marine waters like those that surround the GHA, and only when weather conditions allow. However, on calm days boaters use all types of small, non-motorized craft along the shores.

Hand-launched boats can be put in at saltwater access points with nearby road access, but parking is unavailable or extremely limited. Limited public parking is available only at Point No Point Park and Eglon Park and none of the road ends have parking spaces. Small boats may be beached on DNR tidelands and public beaches, but privately owned uplands must be respected.

Power Boating

Driftwood Key has the only moorage facility in the GHA. The 88 slips are available only to Driftwood Key association members, and there is a long waiting list. The largest slips can accommodate 44-foot boats. Some Driftwood Key homeowners have docks at their homes. Other power boaters keep their boats at public marinas in Kingston, Poulsbo and Seattle. Boaters with trailerable boats can launch them at the county park at Salsbury Point near the Hood Canal Bridge or in Kingston. Driftwood Key residents can use the ramp there. The ramp at Eglon is of limited use at low tides. There are no public docking or fueling facilities in the GHA.

Sailing

The private moorage at Driftwood Key is the only facility for sailboats in the GHA. Sailboat owners who do not belong to Driftwood Key must moor their boats at regional marinas or on private offshore buoys, which are vulnerable to severe weather because of the lack of sheltered bays. Sailing classes are offered in Kingston during the summer by Poulsbo Parks and Recreation.

Picnicking

Buck Lake Park has a sheltered picnic area with charcoal grills. Point No Point Park has several picnic tables but no shelters. Eglon Beach has a public picnic area with a shelter. Picnic tables are available at public parks in Kingston and Poulsbo and at Shore Woods and Driftwood Key for association members.

Playgrounds

In 1991 the Hansville Community Center joined with the Hansville Cooperative Preschool in raising \$5,000 to match county funds for playground equipment at Buck Lake Park. Hansville volunteers built the playground and installed the equipment. Shore Woods and Driftwood Key have playground equipment for members' use. Wolfle and Gordon Elementary Schools and Kitsap County Kola Kole Park in Kingston have a variety of playground equipment.

Bicycling

Road Biking – The GHA has only 1 mile of bike path along county roads. A section of Little Boston Road between Hansville and Cliffside roads was rebuilt in 2002 with paved bicycle lanes on both sides of the road. The 2001 Kitsap County Bicycle Facilities Plan⁶ lists the Little Boston Road work as the first section of a “High Priority” project that includes bike lanes along Cliffside Road and Hood Canal Drive to Twin Spits Road. The section from Little Boston Road to Hood Canal Place, at Shore Woods, is budgeted for resurfacing in 2005, but the exact configuration of the bike lane has not been finalized. The plan lists 7.7 miles of Hansville Road from SR 104 (George’s Corner) to Twin Spits as a “Medium Priority” project that will include bike lanes, but no date was established. “Low Priority” bike lane projects for the GHA include Point No Point Road from Hansville Road to the road end, Eglon Road from Hansville Road to the Eglon Beach Park, and Twin Spits Road from

Hansville Road (downtown) to the road end. Buck Lake Road from Hansville Road to Buck Lake Park is described as an “Opportunity Project” with no specific plan.

Cascade Bicycle Club of Seattle sponsors the annual fall “Kitsap Color Classic” bike tour, which includes a 25-mile route from the Kingston ferry to Hansville, and return through Driftwood Key, Shore Woods, Cliffside and Little Boston.

Mountain Biking – The GHA has no designated off-road bicycle paths. A few mountain bikers use logging roads on land owned by Olympic Property Group and trails in the Hansville Greenway, but the Greenway trails are short and bikers who respect the “wildlife sanctuary” component of the Greenway usually find other options. Olympic Property Group land near Port Gamble includes an extensive network of mountain bike trails.

BMX Bicycling – In 2003 a group of GHA teens convinced Kitsap County to allocate a portion of Buck Lake Park for a BMX bicycle track. They made presentations to the Hansville Community Center Board and Kitsap County Commissioners. They recruited a local landscaper to donate his time to help design and build the track, and worked with other adult volunteers to complete the project. The track was in disrepair by the fall of 2004, but local users were attempting to restore it. No other public parks in North Kitsap have BMX tracks. Some riders build tracks on their own property.

Basketball

Outdoor – Buck Lake Park has an asphalt-surface court with two backboards and nets. Shore Woods and Driftwood Key also have small outdoor courts.

Indoor – The nearest indoor courts are at Wolfle Elementary School, which also has several covered outdoor courts. Gordon Elementary in Kingston has similar facilities. Kola Kola County Park in Kingston has an outdoor court.

Baseball/Softball

The GHA has one baseball field. Buck Lake Park has a field with a backstop and dirt infield with bases. The outfield is rough but adequate for pick-up games. All three schools in the Kingston area have fields with backstops, and Kola Kola Park in Kingston has a small field. Organized youth baseball teams in North Kitsap are headquartered at a large Little League facility in Poulsbo on leased county land.

Soccer (Field Sports)

The only field in the GHA large enough for soccer and other field sports like football and lacrosse is at Buck Lake Park, but the surface is rough, weedy, and wet much of the year. Kingston-area schools each have several multi-use fields.

Tennis

The GHA has no public tennis courts. Shore Woods has two courts for member use. Kingston has a small public court. Courts are available at North Kitsap High School in Poulsbo and in one Poulsbo City Park.

Golf

There are no golf courses in the GHA. The nearest public course is on Bainbridge Island, but one is under construction between Kingston and Indianola. Kingston has a commercial driving range on West Kingston Road. Port Ludlow, across the Hood Canal Bridge, has a championship-caliber course.

Skateboarding

The GHA has no skateboarding facility. Kingston has a county-owned skate park.

Skateboarding will be safer in the future as the county incorporates wider shoulders or bike lanes when roads are resurfaced.

Swimming

Outdoor pools – Pools in Shore Woods and Driftwood Key are open in the summer for members and guests. Swim lessons are sometimes offered to members and others in the community.

Indoor pools – The nearest public indoor pool, at the school complex in Poulsbo, is open year-round.

Lake swimming – Buck Lake Park has a swimming beach with a lifeguard on duty in the summer.

Horseback Riding

The Hansville Greenway offers limited trails for equestrians. Many local residents ride on Olympic Property Group logging roads and on roadsides. The Kingston and Poulsbo areas have commercial riding stables.

Classes

Classes at the Hansville Community Center, Shore Woods Clubhouse and Driftwood Key Clubhouse are conducted by private individuals in arts and crafts, adult education, fitness and health, dance and martial arts. Kitsap County Parks does not currently sponsor any classes in the GHA. Some are offered at the Kingston Community Center, at Kingston area schools, and in Poulsbo.

Saltwater Diving

The GHA has no formal “underwater dive parks.” There is one adjacent to the Edmonds Ferry Terminal.

Sightseeing

The GHA is surrounded by marine and mountain views. Points of interest include

Point No Point Park and Lighthouse, which includes a treaty signing memorial. Park visitors can see marine traffic, the Cascade Mountains and fishermen in boats and fishing from the beach. To the west – from the beaches at Foulweather Bluff Preserve, the road end at Twin Spits, and other Hood Canal beaches – sightseers can see the Olympic Mountains and an occasional submarine heading for Submarine Base Bangor. The Hansville Greenway offers views of wetlands, Buck Lake and thick forest.

Off-Road Motorsports

Riding dirt bikes or ATVs is not allowed on any public trails or roads in the GHA, or on Olympic Property Group forestland logging roads. Some property owners ride on their own property. Kitsap County has no public off-road parks. The Tahuya State Forest near Belfair is the closest area offering this type of recreation. Some trails and roads in Olympic National Forest on the east slopes of the Olympic Mountains are open to trail bikes and off-road vehicles.

Shooting

Kitsap County Code permits shooting on parcels of land larger than 5 acres, but shooting is prohibited within 500 yards of any shoreline; from a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise; within 500 yards of specified lakes, including Buck Lake; and toward any building occupied by people or domestic animals or used for storing flammable or combustible materials where the point of discharge is within 500 yards of the building (Kitsap County Code 10.24.090). Exceptions include county-approved shooting ranges (none are in the GHA). Discharge of guns is prohibited in county parks except as designated by the park director (Kitsap County Code 10.12.080). Olympic Property Group does not permit target shooting on its property.

Kingston Rifle Club operates an indoor shooting range 6 miles south of Hansville on the west side of Hansville Road.

Hunting

Hunting is allowed in accordance with state law and county shooting ordinances, including on Olympic Property Group land.

Camping

The only public camping facilities in the GHA are hookups at the WDFW Point No Point resort, operated by a concessionaire. The next nearest campgrounds are at Kitsap Memorial State Park south of the bridge on Hood Canal and at Fay Bainbridge State Park on the northwest corner of Bainbridge Island.

Youth Sports Teams

GHA youth participate in the many club sport programs offered in Kingston and Poulsbo, and on Kingston Junior High and North Kitsap High School teams. A few club soccer and baseball teams practice occasionally at Buck Lake, but the field is substandard and teams rarely have enough players from the GHA to make it a convenient practice site for most team members.

Kitsap County Parks Investment

The Kitsap County Capital Facilities Plan for Parks and Recreation (covering the years 2000 through 2006) does not specify any projects for the GHA, but several non-sitespecific line items could be used here. The plan budgets \$750,000 per year to acquire “9 miles of Saltwater Access,” \$500,000 per year for “Riparian Corridors,” and \$800,000 per year for “300 acres of Unidentified Open Space.” Some of these funds would be used to match state grants if they are awarded for two GHA projects, which would help meet countywide needs.

Hansville Waterfront Park – In spring of 2005, Kitsap County was awarded a grant from the state Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account to help purchase land for the proposed Hansville Waterfront Park (Forbes Landing, near the Hansville Market). The county, which plans to match that grant, was negotiating the purchase with the property owner at the time this was written. The grant application requests \$1 million from the state with a local match of \$1,133,915. After acquiring the property, the next step will be to plan and develop the park.

Hansville Greenway Expansion – Also in spring of 2005, the county received a \$582,000 grant from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) that will be matched by the county to acquire land and trail easements in forested land south of the Greenway. The purchase doubles the size of the Greenway to 400 acres, expands the trail system from 4 miles to 9, preserves 22 acres of wetlands, and provides walking routes from downtown Hansville to Hood Canal.

Kitsap County published an “Open Space Plan” in June of 2000, which is actually an overall park facilities plan. Chapter V of that plan discusses “Demand and Needs,” in which existing “levels of service” are compared with National Recreation and Park Association standards and Kitsap County’s Proposed Level of Service (PLOS) based on the national standards and local surveys. Based on the year 2000 population of 1,980 people in the GHA (in the 98340 zip code area), the PLOS is met for the GHA in the following categories: open space, saltwater shoreline access, regional parks, walking trails, equestrian trails, mountain bike trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, swimming, outdoor basketball courts, outdoor volleyball courts, BMX tracks and community centers.

The study did not include private facilities, but did count public facilities not owned by the county. The GHA's population is not at a level that would rate dedicated facilities for many of those tabulated. The PLOS numbers are "per 1,000 population," so for the GHA (with a population of approximately 2,000, according to the 2000 census for the 98340 zip code) the PLOS would have to be at least .5 to rate one dedicated facility. The only facility tabulated with a PLOS greater than .5, where the GHA is not already serviced, is tennis courts. Camping and golfing have PLOSs over .5, but they are measured by "campsite" and "golf hole." It is impractical to provide this level of service one campsite or one golf hole at a time, and overall the county meets these PLOSs.

Impact of Parks on the GHA

Buck Lake Park, Hansville Greenway and Point No Point Park and Lighthouse are "destination" recreation areas for fishing, hiking, picnicking and sightseeing.

Buck Lake County Park is used heavily during the summer, and the parking lot sometimes fills on weekends. More walkers are using the Greenway trails every year, but it is not over-used. Kitsap County Parks agrees with the Greenway Stewardship Committee that competitive activities such as

triathlons are not appropriate on Greenway trails, considering its primary purpose as a wildlife sanctuary. Large groups of walkers are also not appropriate during certain times of the year when wildlife might be disturbed.

Point No Point Park is heavily used in the summer, which greatly increases traffic on Point No Point Road and causes congestion and illegal parking on neighbors' properties. At the request of residents, the county added speed bumps to slow traffic on the narrow residential road. Parking is limited near the lighthouse, and some overflow parking is allowed at the old Point No Point Resort. Possible acquisition by the county of the Forbes Landing property for use as a Hansville waterfront park would alleviate some of the visitor load at Point No Point Park. Neighbors are concerned about overflow of park activities onto adjacent private beaches and tidelands. Park boundary signs have been posted on the beach at Point No Point, and would also be required at the Hansville waterfront park.

Development and promotion of the GHA as a destination recreation area needs careful consideration. The positive economic impacts must be balanced with the negative impacts of congestion on natural areas and quality of life for full-time residents.

Sources of Information

1. Hansville Community Plan 1993 Final Report, April 15, 1993.
2. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan presentation to 2003 State Trail Administrator Training Workshop, Indianapolis, by Joel Lynch, PhD, National Center for Recreation and Conservation.
3. An Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State, October 2002. Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation.
4. Kitsap County Open Space Plan, Adopted June 19, 2000.
5. Joel Shangle, *Fishing and Hunting News* magazine, 2001.
6. Kitsap County Bicycle Facilities Plan, Department of Public Works, 2001.