

## **PRESTON COMMUNITY CLUB**

### **FOREST GATEWAY VISION**

The citizens of Preston have adopted a Forest Gateway Vision in conjunction with the Upper Snoqualmie Regional Open Space Initiative. That vision would not have become a reality without the dedication, determination and cooperation of the Preston Community Club, King County Council, King County Department of Parks & Recreation, King County Executive, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Preston Arboretum & Botanical Garden Society and the Outpost Conservancy.

The Forest Gateway Vision is a long-term effort to shape the future of the Preston community so its rural character and forested panoramas are not only preserved, but celebrated. Thus, it addresses the significant challenges this rapidly urbanizing county (13th largest in the nation) faces in maintaining its high quality of life while retaining its unique character and beauty. The vision addresses the following critical issues:

**Active Recreation.** A critical shortfall of active recreation facilities exists today. There are too few baseball and softball diamonds, soccer fields, running paths, volleyball and basketball courts, kite-flying open spaces and picnic grounds for our children, our friends, our neighbors and ourselves. These facilities improve the quality of our lives by providing the opportunity for us to join together in active, fun, healthy sports and other outdoor activities. The vision supports active recreation through the future Preston Park Ballfields.

**Cultural Heritage.** The history of the Pacific Northwest is a rich tapestry of colorful threads, woven of explorers, Native Americans, pioneers, timber workers, farmers, fishers, developers and technologists. Part of what makes this area a great place to live is that we can still see, touch and feel the vestiges of times gone by. The timber industry and the salmon and steelhead in our rivers are significant parts of our history that are incorporated into future plans for a Preston Historic Mill & River Park.

**Education.** Over the long-term, education is vital to retaining the environmental health of this region. In order to serve as good stewards of the land, people must understand both the unique natural environment in the Pacific Northwest and their tightly woven relationship with it. Without this understanding, there exists no basis from which to value the cultural heritage and natural splendor of this region. Therefore, it is crucial that citizens, young and old, be given the opportunity to learn to appreciate the unique qualities of their surroundings. The future Preston Arboretum & Botanical Gardens and the Preston Historic Mill and River Park provide this opportunity for education.

**Open Space.** The majority of us lead hectic lives at work to support our families and to provide opportunities for our children. For balance, we also need places to get outside and enjoy peace and quiet in a natural setting. As the population grows, the more we will need parks and natural areas for the relaxation and inspiration that nature provides. In order to meet the future demand for open space, we must actively set aside public lands which are not only readily accessible, but also highly interconnected. The Grand Ridge-Mitchell Hill Connector addresses this need for connected open spaces close to developing residential population centers.

The full *Forest Gateway Vision* provides greater detail on these Preston initiatives.