

KeyPen Parks steadily growing; in midst of developing Gateway Park

Parks director shares success stories, looks to the future

BY KAREN MILLER
Staff writer

When Scott Gallacher started working for KeyPen Parks in 2005, the organization had 244 acres. That number has now grown to 1,235 acres.

KeyPen Parks has also expanded to include five full-time employees, one part-time employee and three seasonal staff members.

Gallacher stopped by the Gig Harbor Chamber's weekly forum at Cottesmore of Life on Thursday to share the growth of the parks system.

Things all began with Volunteer Park, which was

the main park for the Key Peninsula, in 2006. In 2013, KeyPen Parks purchased Gateway Park, which is currently in development.

Gateway Park will serve a need in the most densely populated section of the peninsula, the 98389 area code. The public planning process aims to bring more than just a ballfield, Gallacher said, the goal is a community recreation and gathering area.

KeyPen Parks is organizing a committee to build a new playground. The first meeting is Aug. 18 at Volunteer Park.

Including Gateway Park, KeyPen Parks manages seven properties. The collection of parks includes everything from trails to shoreline.

In the north end of the

peninsula, 360 Trails have become a popular recreation area for bikers and hikers.

"This is the property that's really jumpstarted KeyPen Parks," Gallacher said.

It's beginning to draw events such as endurance races, mountain bike competitions and fun runs. In the fall, 360 Trails will host a mud run.

While growing fast, Gallacher said it's important to not grow outside of the organization's means. Small organizations must take careful steps.

"This is not going to happen overnight," he said.

Terry Lee, director of PenMet Parks, thanked Gallacher for all his work with KeyPen Parks. Lee said that while the parks departments serve different peninsulas, they combine to serve the entire area with family friendly spaces.

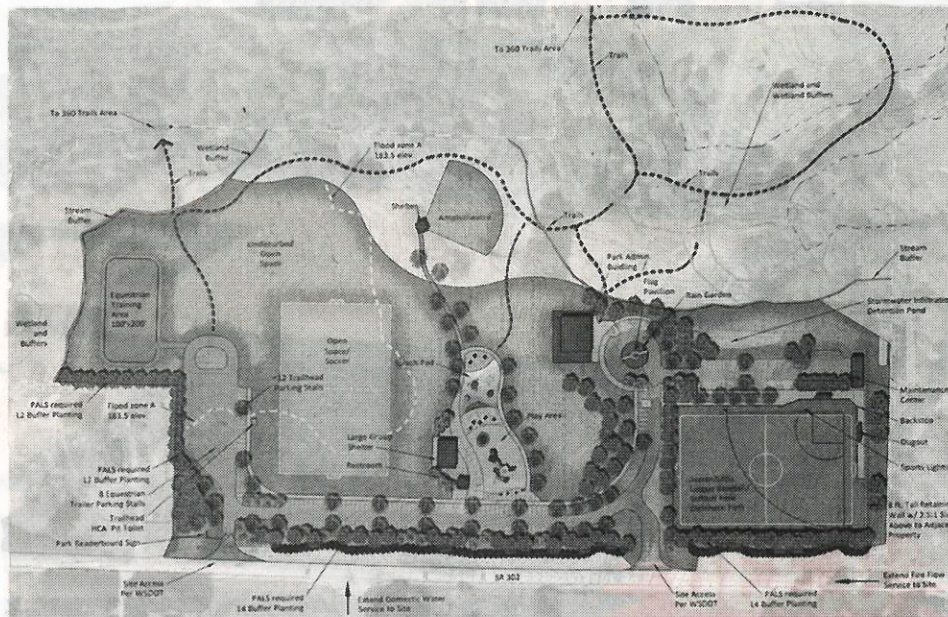
"We all benefit by what you do on the Key Peninsula," he said.

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HELP DESIGN THE PLAYGROUND AT GATEWAY PARK

The first meeting of the Playground Committee will be held at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 18 at Volunteer Park, 5514 Key Peninsula Hwy N, Lakebay. Anyone is welcome to attend and participate in the new committee to design the playground at Gateway Park.

More details about the meeting and the project can be found at www.keypenparks.com.



KEY PENINSULA PARKS Courtesy

Gateway Park's master plan for development on the Key Peninsula will feature multiuse areas.



A thick canopy of plants and trees will shade visitors on sunny days, and shield those visitors from the rain at newly proposed park on the Key Peninsula.

LEE GILES III
Staff
photographer

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