

# Development of the Key Pen Parks

By Rick Sorrels, KP News

Now that Key Pen Parks either owns or controls more than 1,200 acres of park land, let's see what they plan to do with it.

Metropolitan park districts, like Key Pen Parks, are required to develop and follow a comprehensive plan that is subject to review and amendment every six years. The plan requires public input, usually accomplished through surveys.

"There are three reasons for the comprehensive plan," said Key Pen Parks Director Scott Gallacher. "To identify what the public (taxpayer) wants, for internal planning purposes and for grant eligibility."

In the initial plan six years ago, the public identified land acquisition and establishing trails as the hot priorities. Since then, park land has increased from 22 acres to 1,233 acres, and trails have increased from none to 11 miles.

The park commissioners aggressively sought and used grant money and "matching funds" to obtain properties for a small fraction of their value. Trails were constructed primarily with volunteer help.

Now, six years later, 340 Key Peninsula residents have responded to a new survey, which will feed into an Amended Comprehensive Plan expected to be adopted in December or January.

The hot priorities now are restrooms, picnic areas/shelters, playgrounds, access points for the trails system, more trails and off-leash dog parks. All of these need capital funds, and the district has essentially no capital funds in its budget due the pending tax pro-

ration problem and expected non receipt of property tax revenue starting in 2014.

The 360 Park, Gateway Park and the Key Central Forest Park must first comply with county development regulations for road access before any improvements can be made to each of these parks.

According to Gallacher, the only improvements allowed would be placement of porta-potties and volunteer help clearing brush for trails. The 360 Park alone would need \$750,000 in road access work on SR-302, which is more than the total park's budget for 2013.

"Grant money might be out there, somewhere," Gallacher said. "But we haven't found it yet."

"With the drop in tax receipts, we have already been forced to use what capital funds we had available for operations and maintenance," Gallacher said. "A vault privy (toilet), without any water supply (like at Home Park) costs \$25,000 each. We will be lucky to be able to place a few porta-potties."

Gallacher said that if the parks levy passes in November, the \$700,000 that it will generate over its one-year life will only restore the operations and maintenance costs to maintain the existing parks in their current state. If the parks levy fails, the existing four full-time staff and two seasonal workers will be severely cut, programs will be cut and the agreement with Kitsap County's Horseshoe Lake Park would likely terminate.

No matter how great the Amended Comprehensive Plan is when approved, it will be shelved until the economy improves with increased property values and home sales.

# CAC celebrates 25 years of service

By Hugh McMillan, KP News

Citizens Against Crime (CAC) celebrated its 25th anniversary Aug. 15 with a barbecue and potluck dinner at the home of its president, Cindy Worden.

Pierce County Sheriff's deputies Lt. Gerry Lawrence and Sgt. J. Villahermosa attended the event and shared up-to-date information on local crime, noting that the area has witnessed an increase in burglaries and car prowls.

Villahermosa said that people need to be sure they lock their doors when away from home. That applies as well to vehicles, he

added, noting that unlocked vehicle doors are an invitation to thieves.

"When they cruise through a parking lot trying doors, if the door is locked they simply move on to the next vehicle until they find one unlocked. If they see any valuables such as a lady's purse on the vehicle seat, they smash the window, grab the item and disappear," Villahermosa said.

Worden said all of the CAC meetings are open to the public.

"Anyone interested in joining us, volunteering with us or just visiting to learn what we're about is most welcome," she said.

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