

HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Saint Edward State Park Seminary

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HABITAT ASSESSMENT

SAINT EDWARD STATE PARK SEMINARY

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to document regulated fish and wildlife habitats of importance associated with proposed construction activities around the existing seminary in Saint Edward State Park in the City of Kenmore. This report summarizes wildlife habitats of importance as defined in the Kenmore Municipal Code (KMC).

The study area for this habitat assessment spans the 5.5-acre lease area and extends approximately 900 feet beyond the lease area and the potential public parking area. Proposed activities include renovating the existing seminary building, installing a new asphalt drive aisle, and expanding and redesigning existing parking lot areas.

2 METHODS

2.1 Existing Documentation Review

Publicly available sensitive areas and habitat documentation for the study area were reviewed for this report. Sources include aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, the King County public GIS database (iMap), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) SalmonScape online mapping system, WDFW Priority Habitat and Species (PHS), National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, City of Kenmore Web Mapping Application, and general information on habitat types from Johnson and O'Neil (2001).

2.2 Fieldwork

Jasmine Palmer, wildlife biologist, of The Watershed Company visited the site on June 15, 2016, to evaluate habitat on the property. The study area was scanned for fish or wildlife habitats of importance. Vegetative structure and composition and presence of special habitat features were also noted.

3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 Project Vicinity

The project is in Saint Edward State Park, which is located west of I-405 and south of SR-522 (Township 26 North, Range 04 East, Sections 14 and 23) (Figure 1). Properties in the vicinity along Juanita Drive NE include schools and areas zoned as Residential 4 Dwellings Per Acre (R4) or Residential 6 Dwellings Per Acre (R6).

3.2 Study Area

The lease area is approximately 5.5 acres in size and contains existing buildings and parking areas (Figure 2). The study area for this habitat assessment spans the 5.5-acre lease area and extends approximately 900 feet beyond the lease area and the potential public parking area. (Figure 3). The surrounding area within this buffer is also entirely within Saint Edward State Park and includes forested, wetland, and meadow areas, and two streams. The study area slopes to the west towards Lake Washington, which is located approximately two miles west of the study area.

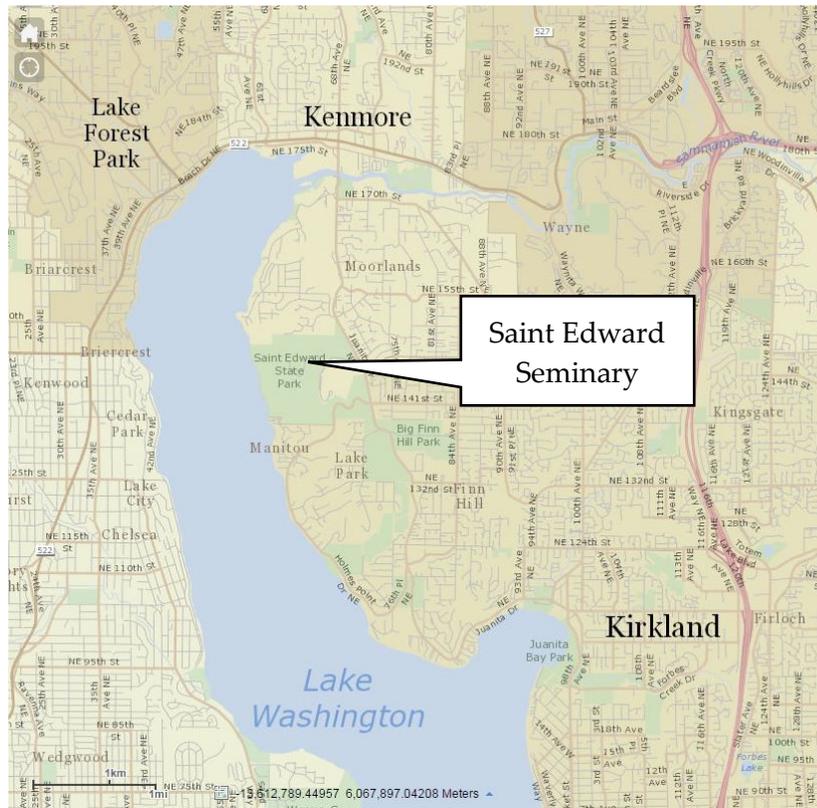
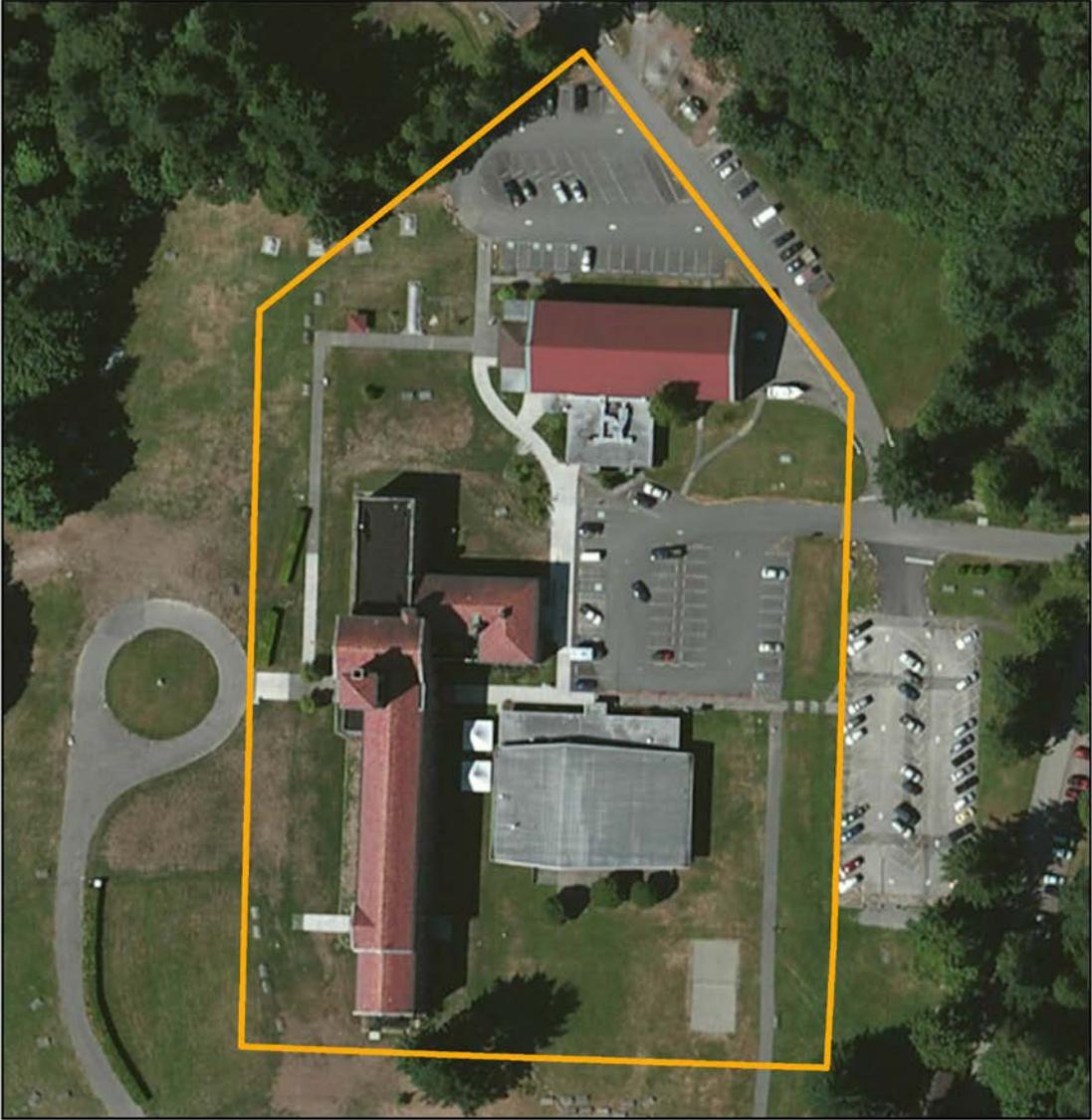


Figure 1. Study area vicinity map (Imagery source: King County iMap).



The Lodge at Saint Edward



1 inch = 0.02 miles

Legend

 Lease Area (5.52 acres)

Figure 2. Lease area

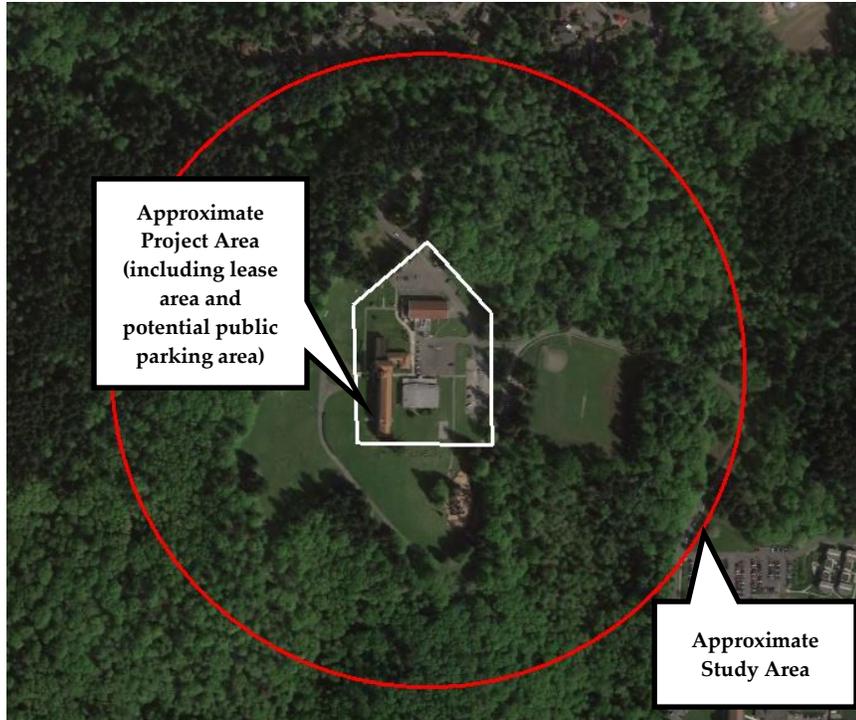


Figure 2. Approximate study area (Imagery source: GoogleEarth).

4 CRITICAL AREAS

For the purposes of this report, discussion of critical areas will be in terms of habitat value. Streams and wetlands are present in the study area and were delineated and are described in a concurrent report by The Watershed Company. Other critical areas in the study area mapped by the City of Kenmore Web Mapping Application include Landslide Hazard Areas and Erosion Hazard Areas.

5 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The habitat in the study area and vicinity can be broadly described as medium-density urban and mixed environs (Johnson and O'Neil 2001), characterized as having residential development with the retention of some wetlands, stream corridors, open spaces, and greenbelts. The majority of the study area consists of these retained, natural open spaces, which are described below.

5.1 On-site Habitat

Wildlife habitat in the approximately 100-acre study area was classified based on changes in vegetation and hydrology. Habitat patches in the study area include mixed coniferous forest, lawn and buildings area, and wetlands streams and riparian areas (Figure 3). Two small retention ponds are also present in the northeast edge of the lawn area (Figure 3). These different habitat types are depicted on a sketch map in Appendix A and described in this section.

5.1.1 Habitat Patch Descriptions

Habitat patches in the study site include a central lawn and buildings area surrounded by mixed conifer forest and some wetland and riparian areas. Outside of the lawn area, large downed wood and standing snags were present throughout the study area. The majority of the plants in this patch are native; observed non-native species include Himalayan blackberry and English ivy.

Lawn and Buildings Area

The central area of the study site has vegetation dominated by maintained lawn areas which surround the existing buildings and parking lots in the study site. Few ornamental trees and mature native coniferous and deciduous trees are present in this area.

Mixed Conifer Forest

A conifer-dominant forest is located throughout the outer study area. This conifer forest contains mostly Douglas-fir, western red cedar, bigleaf maple, and red alder in the canopy. Understory vegetative structure is complex with sub-canopy, shrub, and groundcover layers present. Species are diverse and include Indian plum, vine maple, salmonberry, low Oregon grape, and sword fern among others. A system of recreational trails is present throughout the forest likely receive a moderate amount of use.

Wetlands, Streams and Riparian Areas

Three wetlands and two streams are present in the study area. These wetlands are Class 2 wetlands and these streams are presumed to be perennial Type 4, non-fish-bearing streams; these habitat areas are described further in the *Saint Edward State Park Seminary Stream & Wetland Delineation Report* by The Watershed Company, June 2016.

Biodiversity Areas and Corridors

A Wildlife Biodiversity Area and Corridor is mapped by PHS overlapping the study area. This relatively undisturbed vegetated corridor generally covers the forested area in Saint Edward State Park. Biodiversity Areas have been determined to contain mostly native vegetation that is vertically diverse and is considered valuable habitat for fish or wildlife.

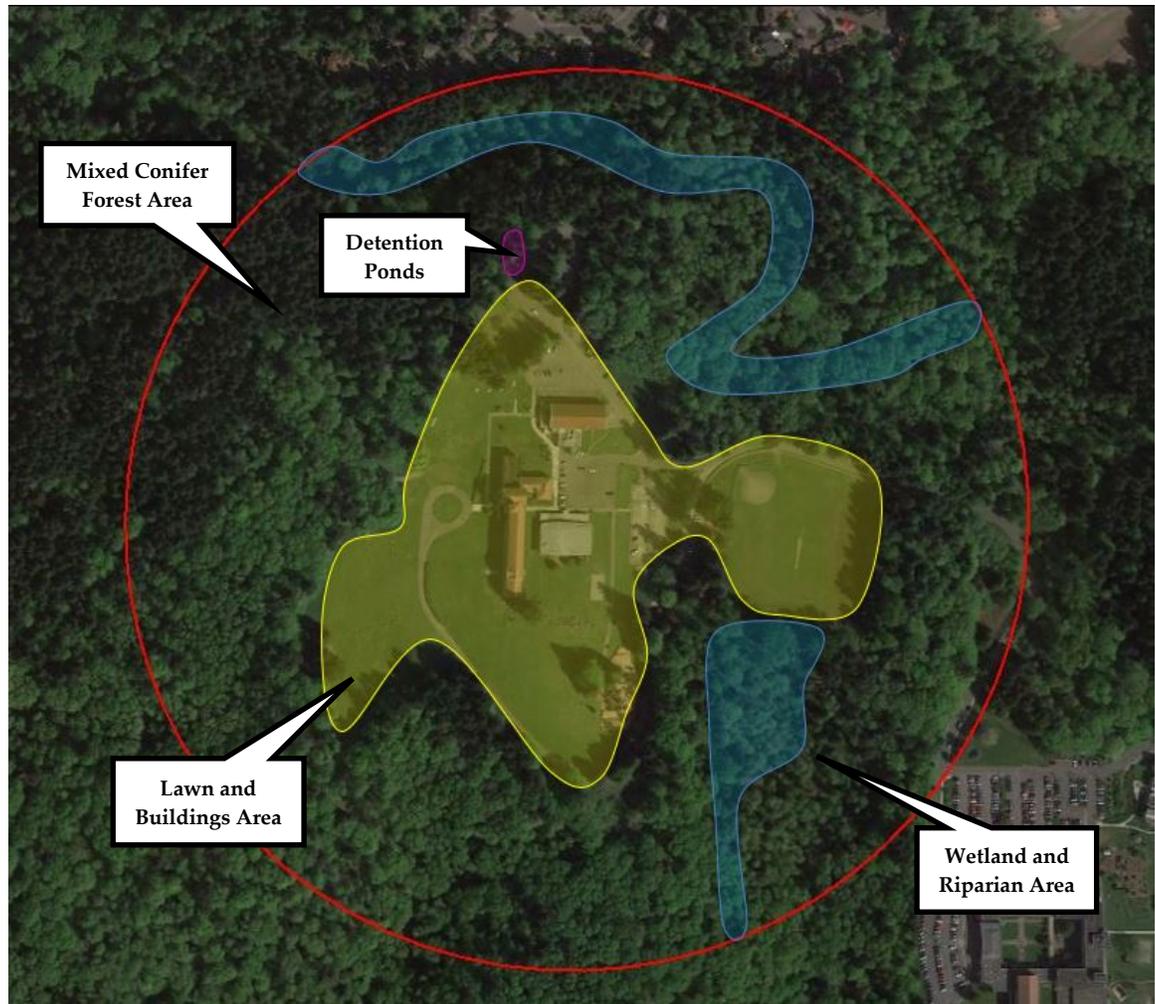


Figure 3. Habitat Patches identified in the study area.

5.2 Landscape Habitat Considerations

Habitat patches outside of the study area are considered as part of the overall landscape and may influence wildlife use of the habitat within the project area. The ability of the study area itself to provide habitat increases when there is potential that the greater vicinity can act as a source for wildlife. Saint Edward State Park comprises approximately 400 acres of generally undisturbed forested area. Saint Edward State Park is connected to Big Finn Hill Park to the southeast, which is connected to O.O. Denny Park to the south. Together, these publicly owned properties comprise a forested wildlife corridor, all of which are identified as a state priority biodiversity area and corridor. In general, the greater vicinity is a mix of residential development and parks/open space in addition to Lake Washington.

6 FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIES OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE

No fish and wildlife habitats of importance were found in the study area as defined by KMC 18.55.500. The literature review does not indicate the presence of any qualifying species in the study area, and none were observed during the site visits.

A review of PHS data indicates one bald eagle nest has been mapped in Saint Edward State Park approximately 350 feet outside of the study area and a quarter mile outside of the project area. No bald eagle nests or individuals were detected within the study area during the site visit. The study area is located 0.3 miles east of Lake Washington; therefore, it is also considered outside of the bald eagle shoreline foraging area.

The stretches of stream in the study area are not likely to be used by any fish, as described in the *Saint Edward State Park Seminary Stream & Wetland Delineation Report* by The Watershed Company, June 2016. Neither the WRIA 8 Known Freshwater Distribution of Salmon and Trout maps nor WDFW Salmonscape indicate use of streams in the study site by any anadromous fish. The nearest modelled use of streams is a half mile downstream from the study site (Salmonscape). Downstream from the study site, the stream is quite steep, with an average gradient of over 16 percent, which is assumed to preclude salmonid use. Additionally, the upstream watershed area is small, suggesting that the stream does not support fish use.

Although no species meet criteria for wildlife habitats of importance, dense and structurally diverse vegetation, in combination with year-round water sources, and special habitat features like snags and downed wood, provides potential habitat for other animals in the study area. Several birds were detected in the study area (Table 1). Snags present within the study site offer breeding habitat for cavity nesters. Evidence of breeding pileated woodpeckers (a State-candidate species) were observed in the mixed forested areas, this evidence included excavated snags and observation of a juvenile pileated woodpecker.

Table 1. Bird species identified in the Saint Edward State Park Seminary study area.

Common name
American Crow
American Robin
Bewick's Wren
Brown Creeper
Bushtit
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Northern Flicker
Orange-crowned Warbler
Oregon Junco
Pacific-slope Flycatcher
Pileated Woodpecker
Red-tailed Hawk
Song Sparrow
Spotted Towhee
Stellar's Jay
Swainson's Thrush
Tree Swallow

7 LOCAL REGULATIONS

The City of Kenmore regulates wildlife habitat in Kenmore Municipal Code (KMC) 18.55.500. Under this chapter, KMC considers Fish and Wildlife Habitats of Importance as Critical Areas. Habitats of local importance include presence of threatened or endangered state or federal listed species, heron nesting sites, Class 1 wetlands, Type 1 streams, and bald eagle habitat pursuant to the Washington State Bald Eagle Protection Rules (WAC 232-12-292). No habitats of importance meeting these definitions were detected in the study area.

8 IMPACT ASSESSMENT & MITIGATION

No impacts to fish and wildlife habitats of importance are expected from the proposed project. Therefore, mitigation is not anticipated to be required. Potential voluntary conservation measures could include limiting construction during February-July, the prime breeding window for birds.

9 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

Photographs

Saint Edward State Park Seminary
Habitat Assessment



Photo 1: Lawn and existing seminary in project area. June 15, 2016.



Photo 2: Snag with pileated woodpecker excavations. June 15, 2016.