



**King County**

**Dow Constantine**  
King County Executive

**Department of Natural Resources and Parks**



**Camp Fire USA**  
**CENTRAL PUGET SOUND COUNCIL**

## ***News Release***

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### **One mile of Puget Sound shoreline preserved with deal between Camp Fire USA and King County**

**Collaboration protects shoreline and open space from future development and focuses  
growth in urban areas**

King County Executive Dow Constantine and the Camp Fire USA Central Puget Sound Council today signed a land preservation agreement that will permanently protect one mile of pristine Puget Sound shoreline on southwest Vashon Island from development and allow Camp Sealth, a recreational and environmental education camp, to continue its legacy of providing the region's youth with fun and educational outdoor activities.

"This historic agreement not only fulfills our goal of environmental preservation but also helps promote smart growth within our urban areas – and it helps ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy this wonderful recreational and educational resource," said Executive Constantine.

See pictures of the signing ceremony on the county's Flickr page.

Under the County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, the two parties signed a permanent conservation easement that transfers development rights from 101 acres of the camp's most ecologically-valuable shoreline to King County. Camp Fire receives \$930,000 from the TDR revolving fund, which is supported by the sale to developers of development rights that can be used to add density to projects in the urban areas.

The TDR program is part of King County's regional strategy to steer future growth and development away from coastal areas, rural farms and forests, and into urban areas where the infrastructure of roads, transit and sewers exists to support greater development.

"We at Camp Fire are proud to be able to further this legacy of youth development, inclusion, and respect for the natural world," said Camp Fire CEO Bridgett Chandler. "By acting today to preserve forever this portion of Camp Sealth, Camp Fire guarantees that future generations will be able to enjoy the same experiences as those first campers nearly a century ago. Even as the region around us grows, Camp Sealth will continue to provide unspoiled natural beauty, fish spawning habitat, and a beautiful Puget Sound beach in King County."

More than two-thirds of the shoreline in central Puget Sound has been altered by the construction of bulkheads that block natural sediment from filtering down into the water and providing nutrients that are essential to marine life, from insects to threatened Chinook salmon and Orca whales.

Both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Puget Sound Partnership have recognized the importance of preserving remaining healthy shoreline. King County secured \$200,000 in EPA grant funds to support this agreement, and protection of this property helps to fulfill one of the top priorities in the Partnership's Action Agenda to restore Puget Sound.

Since Camp Sealth was opened in 1921, it has been a national model for cultural and wilderness education. Faced with tough economic choices during the ongoing recession, the non-profit Camp Fire organization could have sold valuable portions of its property to development interests in order to sustain operations.

Instead, Camp Fire leadership partnered with King County to protect this unique asset and secure the funding to sustain its commitment to serve our region's youth with year-round recreational and leadership development activities at its camps and in neighborhoods throughout the greater Puget Sound area.

Camp Sealth has served nearly 350,000 young people from King, Kitsap and Mason counties. The camp features more than 360 acres of pristine forest and marine wilderness, including a mile and a half of saltwater beach along Puget Sound's Colvos Passage with valuable nearshore habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species, including endangered Chinook salmon. The County's conservation easement will protect the camp's most pristine natural areas while allowing young campers to experience nature up-close through hiking and overnight excursions. The protected areas are also home to mature forests of Madrone and Douglas Fir trees, where bald eagles can be glimpsed nesting and fishing along the shoreline.

"Every year, more than 7,000 children, families, teachers, church groups, and non-profits cross Puget Sound to visit Camp Sealth," said Rick Taylor, the camp's director. "Our woods and beaches, wildlife, trails, and remote campsites provide the setting for our daily adventures. Campers and visitors learn about ecosystems, biodiversity, and stewardship as they explore our forests, wetlands, and tidal pools. We're pleased that King County is a partner in helping Camp Fire preserve this irreplaceable natural resource."

Over the past decade the King County TDR Program has protected more than 141,000 acres (220 square miles) of rural and resource lands from development by redirecting subdivisions for 2,284 potential dwelling units out of the County's rural landscape and into existing urban areas.

The community is invited to an open house at the camp on April 9, and again on June 25. See the Camp Fire website ([www.campfire-usa.org](http://www.campfire-usa.org)) for more details.

Learn more about King County's Transfer of Development Rights program at [www.kingcounty.gov/TDR](http://www.kingcounty.gov/TDR). To learn more about Camp Fire USA, visit [www.campfire-usa.org](http://www.campfire-usa.org).

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