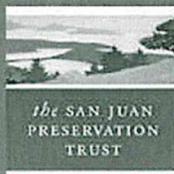




# LOPEZ ISLAND TRAILS PLAN

Lopez Community Trails Network  
Long Range Plan - 2014 and beyond

ISLAND CONNECTIVITY • VILLAGE WALKING PATHS • SAFE PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL



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## Lopez Community Trails Network Organization

In late 2009, a group of 29 Lopez residents gathered to discuss the feasibility of improving and increasing hiking, biking, and horseback riding opportunities on Lopez Island. This effort blossomed into The Lopez Community Trails Network (LCTN) with over 100 Lopez community members on the mailing list.

LCTN members are all volunteers who have been meeting regularly since that first gathering to develop a functioning organization. Simultaneously, many members have worked to inventory existing trails and absence of trails, locate potential trail corridors, partner with governmental and non-governmental organizations, and plan work sessions to build, maintain, and connect trails that will eventually create a network of trails on Lopez Island. The group has also hosted trail building workshops and work parties to build trail segments or help improve some of the island's existing trails.

### LOPEZ COMMUNITY TRAILS NETWORK

*. . . planning, building, and maintaining trails and pathways throughout Lopez Island*

#### OUR VISION

A Network of trails for non-motorized use on Lopez Island.

#### OUR MISSION

To facilitate and participate actively in the creation, use, and maintenance of a network of safe non-motorized trails on Lopez Island to benefit community members of all ages for active transportation, recreation, health, well-being, and quality of life.

#### OUR GOALS

- To develop plans for a system of trails that connect the village, school, public lands, and other points of interest
- To promote and improve safety on trails and roads for all non-motorized users
- To work collaboratively with public and private agencies, organizations, and landowners and the community at large to develop and support a trails network
- To establish a stewardship structure for maintenance of trails developed by the community trails network that is respectful of the land and those who care for it.

Being relatively flat, Lopez is a favorite island for bicyclists and although the roads are somewhat narrow, the island is bicycle friendly. The bays and inlets are home to numerous power and sailing vessels, as well as kayaks and other small boats used for fishing, crabbing, shrimping and recreation.

The island's residents are served by a small village located at the north end of Fisherman Bay where one can find groceries, restaurants, coffee shops, a bookstore, bank, post office, a community performance center, a medical clinic, pharmacy, and several small shops and galleries. Many other businesses and services dotted around the island support the island's infrastructure. Lopezians also enjoy an award-winning library housed in one of the island's former school buildings and their own island-managed garbage and recycling center, complete with a no-charge 'Take It or Leave It' exchange of used goods and equipment.

Lopez Island School District, the only school on the island serving about 220 students K-12, received a silver medal of commendation from US News and World Report in their nation-wide identification of excellent schools. The school district is also noted for its L.I.F.E. program (Lopez Island Farm Education) with an impressive teaching garden that supplies produce for school lunches as well as for community dinners held at the school several times a year.

One might describe the character of Lopez Island as a unique combination of physical beauty, quality of life, husbandry, art, and culture in a caring community of mutual support. Known as the 'friendly isle', residents offer a wave of the hand as they pass by in a car, on bicycle, or on foot. Lopez Island residents from all walks of life share an appreciation and respect for the land and the fragile environment they call home.



## Island-Wide Trails Planning

Lopez Community Trails Network began discussing the idea of building a network of trails from its earliest meetings in late 2009 and members enthusiastically worked on tackling several of the issues that lay before them. But before long, it became apparent that there was a need for a comprehensive, long-term plan that was sensitive to the needs and desires of the community. The group also recognized its need for assistance to create an efficient, functioning organization that would be able to work steadily toward common goals. So, in 2010, the group applied for a grant of technical assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCAP).

### **National Park Service Assistance**

In the fall of 2010, Alex Stone, a consultant in the RTCAP's Seattle office, first met with LCTN at one of its regular Thursday night meetings. She assured members of the group that the organizational process would take time and a lot of hard work, but would be worth the effort.

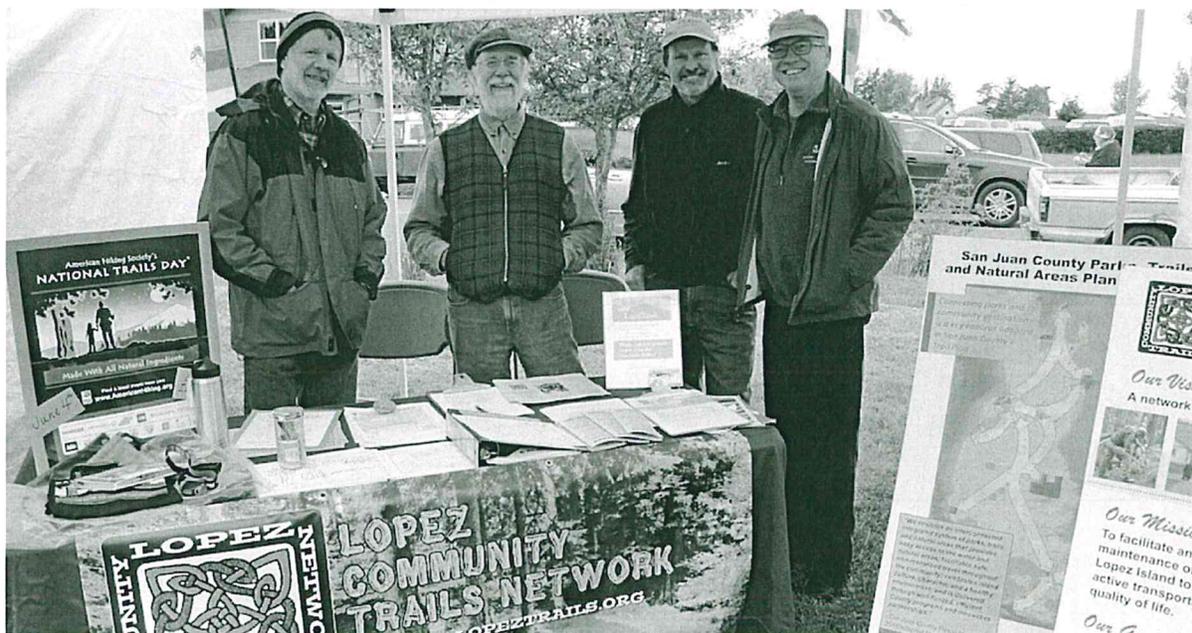
Over the next two years, she shepherded the group through the strategic organizational planning and public involvement process. She assisted with vision, mission, and goal writing, led the group to develop relationships and partnerships with a variety of organizations, suggested and supported various outreach activities, and guided the group through the development of a community survey to be used as input for this long-range plan. Alex also helped LCTN members establish several organizational procedures including formation of a steering committee, development of an electronic mailing list, creation of a website, and the development of forms for use in planning.



## Public Outreach

Below are some of the ways LCTN has been reaching out to community residents for help in developing the Lopez Island Trail Plan:

- **Community Hikes**  
'Go Take a Hike', Monthly hikes on and around the islands led by LCTN members, spring through fall.
- **National Trails Day Activities**  
Saturday Market booth  
Trail maintenance opportunities  
Hikes/Talks on island trails  
Community potluck
- **Lopez Community Trails Network (LCTN) brochure**  
Completed in 2011. Available at website and whenever LCTN booth is set up
- **Lopez Community Trails Network website (LopezTrails.org)**  
Set up in 2011. Provides information about LCTN activities, LCTN's vision and mission, Trails Survey: Spring 2012 results, and maps of several island trails
- **Local newspaper articles**  
Written periodically for 'The Islands' Weekly'
- **Island Trails Survey**  
Completed in spring, 2012. 277 islanders participated. Overview of survey and results on p. 13. Survey results details in Appendix C, p. 26. Survey, results charts, and all respondents' comments @ LCTN website: LopezTrails.org



## LCTN Trails Survey: Spring 2012

In April, 2012, LCTN sent out 1815 postcards with details about a local trails survey to every Lopez Island postal customer. The mailing included full and part-time residents. Community members were directed to the LCTN website to take an online survey, but were also given information about how to acquire and submit a paper survey. In all, 277 community members (15%) responded to the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to gather input for development of a long-range plan for a trails network on Lopez Island that matches the needs and desires of the Lopez community. Lopez residents of all ages and a few visitors responded to questions about how they currently use pathways, trails and roadways for recreation and non-motorized transportation. They also shared information about the types and locations of trails they might want to see on the island in the future.

In a separate shorter paper survey, information was gathered from Lopez Island students about where they live, how they get to and from school, and whether they desire the ability to walk or ride bicycle to school on safe pathways.

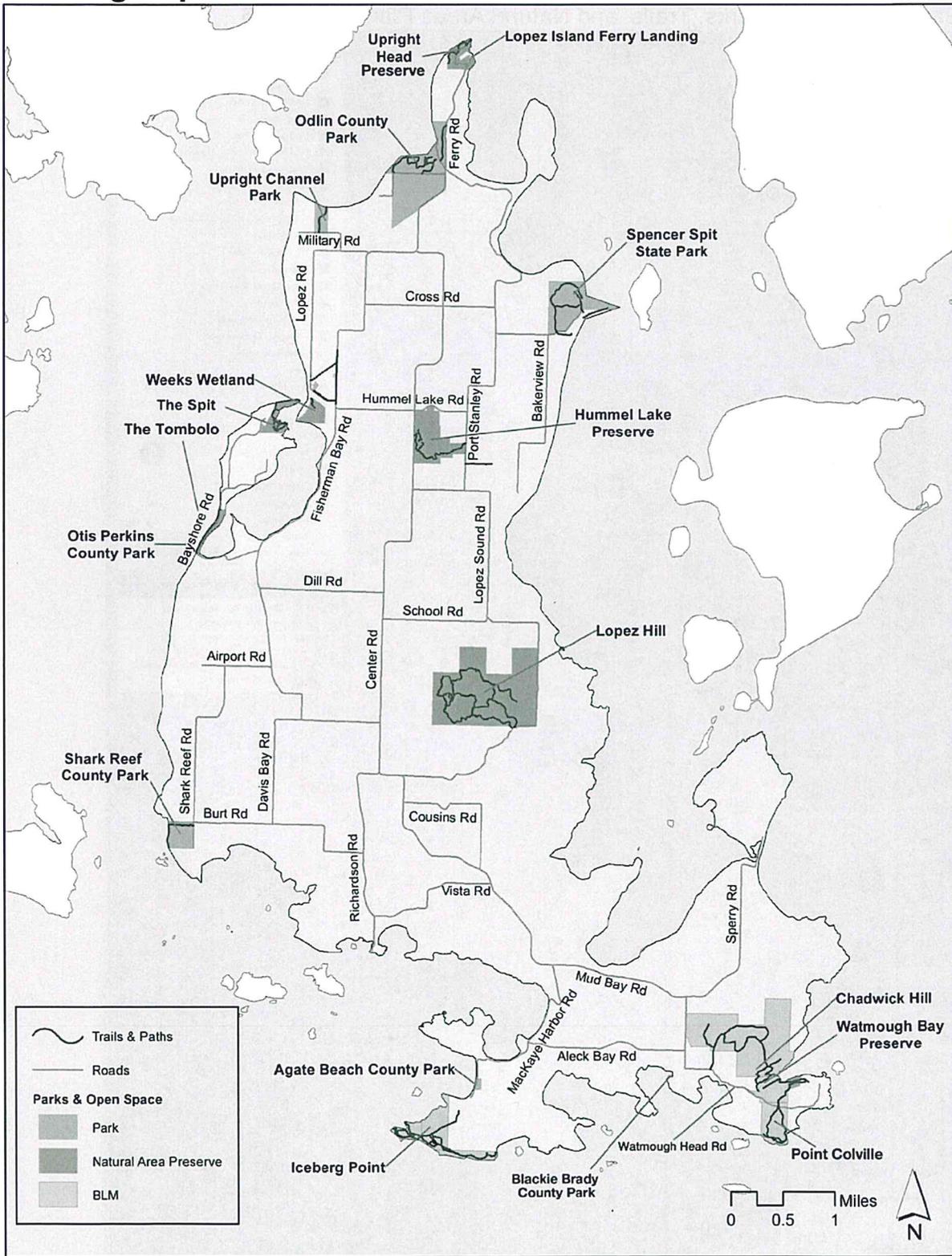
### Overview of Survey Results

The LCTN Trails Survey: Spring 2012 has served as a key source for determining the direction LCTN will take over the next few years. LCTN plans to take on trail projects that reflect the priorities of the majority of survey respondents: Connectivity of destinations via trails throughout the island, Lopez Village walking paths, and safe pathways to school. About half of those surveyed also expressed an interest in more beach access.

The main questions of the LCTN Trails Survey: Spring 2012 are included in Appendix B. Details of survey results for each major survey topic are included in Appendix C. In general, the vast majority of survey respondents were supportive of the trail project ideas suggested in the survey; many community members wanted to be added to the LCTN mailing list; and a large number of respondents wrote insightful, positive comments or offered new ideas/suggestions. Nearly half of the survey respondents were willing to consider the possibility of giving permission to use part of their private land for island trail sections. Several of the relatively few survey respondents who were not supportive of more trail building on Lopez offered suggestions or expressed thoughtful concerns about the stewardship of our island, as well.

More information about the results of both surveys is available for public viewing at LCTN's website, [LopezTrails.org](http://LopezTrails.org). There, one can find charts that show the numbers of responses to all non-personal questions and a complete list of all 321 comments to those questions. Because the comments were often multi-part responses to more than one survey question, the comments were recategorized for ease of tracking and use in planning.

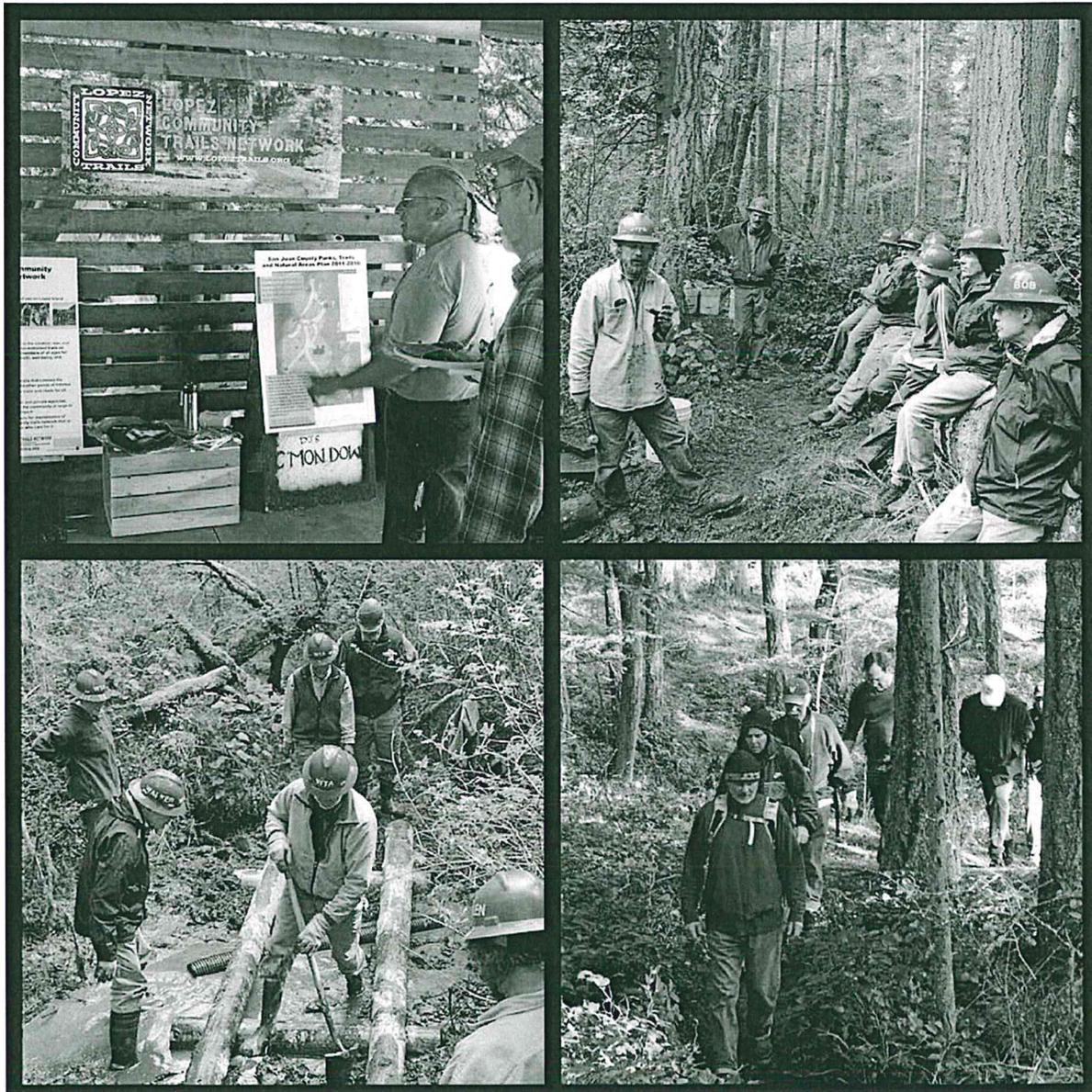
# Existing Lopez Island Trails



## A Network of Trails on Lopez Island Lopez Island Trail Project Goals: A Long-Range Plan

Over the next several years, Lopez Community Trails Network intends to work on trail projects that fit within the following three concepts:

- ***Island Connectivity***
- ***Lopez Village Walking Paths***
- ***Safe Pathways to School***



## **Lopez Village Walking Paths**

### **Project: Village Walking Paths**

Proposed pathways include:

- section between the Hamlet House and Lopez Clinic (completed)
- extension of the Hamlet House/Lopez Clinic trail section along Washburn Rd.
- walkway to Lopez Pharmacy from Hamlet House
- off road pathway from Common Ground to Lopez Village

***Partner:** LCTN will continue to work closely with the permanent Lopez Village Planning Review Committee as it has with the temporary LVPRC (ad hoc, SJC Council approved) over the past years.*

## **Safe Pathways to School**

### **Project: Safe Walking and Bicycling Pathways to School**

- First section: village to school, may include county road right of way along Dill and Center Roads)

***Partner:** San Juan County*

- Explore public and private trail section options going south, east and north of school.

***Partner:** Lopez Island School District*

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>For each proposed trail or section of a trail, a Project Criteria form has been or will be filled out by an LCTN project coordinator. See example in Appendix A.</b></p> |
|--|

**Lopez Community Trails Network Project Criteria**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Proposed Project Location:</b> | <b>Name of proposal writer:</b>  |
|                                   | <b>Date:</b>   |
|                                   | <b>Date approved by STC:</b><br><i>(to be filled out after approval)</i> |

| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Explanation/Description of how project fits criteria</b>                                   |
|---|---|
| <b>Connectivity</b><br>Links public lands, parks, or key destinations   | <i>What destinations does it link?</i>  |
| <b>Safety</b><br>Increases walkability, safe passage conditions for trail or pathway users  | <i>What current unsafe conditions does it address?</i>  |
| <b>Community Health</b><br>Increases physical activity and well being of trail or pathway users   | <i>What features would positively affect health and well-being?</i>                           |
| <b>Greatest Public Good</b><br>Benefits segment(s) of community   | <i>Who (what groups or individuals) would benefit from/use this trail?</i>                    |
| <b>Capacity/Expertise to Build Trail or Pathway</b><br>Team leaders/members to plan and trained volunteers to build                               | <i>Project planning team:</i><br><br><i>Trained trail building volunteers:</i>                |
| <b>Partners</b><br>Organizations or entities who will work with LCTN on this project  | <i>What have the partners agreed to do?</i>   |
| <b>Funding</b><br>Estimated cost, source of funding   | <i>Estimated cost of materials:</i><br><br><i>Plans for grants and/or fund-raising:</i>       |
| <b>Red Flags (if any)</b><br>Barriers, foreseeable problems or requirements (E.g., costs, neighbors' concerns, terrain, county regulations, etc.) | <i>Identify barriers that may hinder project completion or require extra problem solving.</i> |

Final Draft: 3-12-2012

## Lopez Community Trails Network Volunteer Opportunities

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Lopez Community Trail Network. We would like you to fill out this information sheet so we can get an idea of your participation preferences.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

### Lopez Community Trails Network Organizational Framework

The teams listed below have been formed to accomplish the various trails network tasks.

**NOTE: Team leaders are on the steering committee (STC) and commit to an extra meeting per month.** The STC is responsible for coordination of team activities and development of general protocols, trail project criteria, and work plan templates. Most teams currently have team leaders, but feel free to indicate if you would like to be a team leader in the future. All volunteers are welcome to attend STC meetings.

*Please mark (X) the way(s) you would like to volunteer:*

#### Trail Construction and Maintenance Team

- Team Leader** Responsible for conducting trail work projects on new and existing trails, will organize tools and project leaders as necessary
- Project Leader** Supervise work crew on a specific trail project
- Work Crew** Attend trail building classes when available and participate with hands-on building efforts

#### Volunteer Coordination Team

- Team Leader** Keep track of member names, contact information, and preferred jobs/duties within the organization. Track donations of time, materials, and/or supplies, as reported by team leaders. Also charged with volunteer recognition and appreciation
- Volunteer Recognition/Appreciation** Coordinate refreshments for work parties or other LCTN events. Generate ways to show appreciation

#### Trail Stewardship Team

- Team Leader** Responsible for coordinating and managing volunteer stewards for each section of trail created. Will collect steward reports and identify any maintenance issues to be referred to Trail Construction and Maintenance.
- Steward** Monitor a specific trail or trail section/report to team leader

#### Liaison to Government and Private Organizations

- Team Leader** Responsible for maintaining relationships with external organizations (e.g., Land Bank, Public Works, etc.)
- Liaison team member** Attend partner organization meetings as a representative of LCTN/report to team leader

**Appendix B—LCTN Trails Survey: Spring 2012**

*Below are the main questions asked on the Spring 2012 survey. The complete questionnaire can be seen at LCTN's website: [lopeztrails.org](http://lopeztrails.org)*

- 1. How do you currently use existing trails/pathways or island roads for non-motorized activities on Lopez Island?**
- 2. Would you like to see a new or expanded network of point-to-point trails on Lopez Island? If so, where?**
- 3. Would you like to see safe walking and/or bicycling pathways to the school? If so, where?**
- 4. Would you like to see more nature-oriented trails expanded or improved? If so, where?**
- 5. What type(s) of walking paths and multi-use trails (for bicycles, equestrian, etc.) would you prefer to see on the island?**
- 6. Are you interested in getting together with neighbors to discuss trail ideas in your area? We welcome your ideas and may be able to give you some assistance. If so, let us know how to contact you.**
- 7. A possible component of some trail plans might include asking permission of owners to use private lands for part of a trail. Would you consider having part of a public trail on your land or private road?**
- 8. Would you like to be notified of our calendar of activities (e.g., group hikes, trail building, National Trails Day) and monthly meetings (7:00 p.m., 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, library meeting room)?**
- 9. Do you have other suggestions, questions or comments?**

## Want More Nature-Oriented Trails Expanded/Improved

Most survey respondents (202 of 277) favored or OK'd the idea of adding, expanding, or improving nature-oriented trails, in general, while 18 respondents did not favor the idea. When queried about specific existing trails on the island, again, most people agreed that expansion or improvements could or should be made. But, fewer people considered expansion or improvement 'very important, top priority' than those who indicated that expansions or improvements were 'a good idea, do eventually'. (See chart.)

Those who were not in favor of adding or making any changes to existing nature trails discriminated among the trails listed. The trail systems these respondents preferred to leave untouched were: Iceberg Point (35 respondents); Shark Reef (29); Fisherman Bay Preserve (26); Chadwick Hill (25); Watmough (21); Spencer Spit (18); Hummel Lake and Odlin Park (15); and Near School (14).

This question elicited 60 comments about types of changes/improvements respondents would like to see on existing trails and/or reasons some would prefer to leave particular trails the way they are.

[Graphic chart showing above data is at [www.LopezTrails.org](http://www.LopezTrails.org)]

## Preferred Types of Trails/Pathways on Lopez Island

*Walking.* Most survey respondents (218 of 277 respondents) would prefer to keep walking trails as separate pathways, if possible. But, 109 respondents indicated that widened road shoulders may be appropriate in some places on the island.

*Bicycling.* Opinions regarding bicycle trail types were more evenly split. 130 respondents indicated they would prefer separate pathways for bicycles, while 165 people indicated that widened road shoulders are more appropriate for bicycles.

*Equestrian.* More respondents (101) thought horses should use separate pathways than widened road shoulders (38).

58 survey respondents made comments about issues with trail types.

[Graphic chart showing above data is at [www.LopezTrails.org](http://www.LopezTrails.org)]

## Willing to consider permission for private land/road to be part of a Lopez Trail

122 of 277 (45%) of survey respondents indicated they were willing to talk to someone about the possibility of granting permission to use their private lands for part of a public trail.

112 respondents said 'No thanks' and 25 survey takers indicated they do not own land on Lopez.

This question elicited 70 comments, many to share contact information. Some respondents had questions about public/private land use issues. Their comments were recategorized under the topic 'Use of Public/Private Lands' and can be found at the LCTN website.

[Graphic chart showing above data is at [www.LopezTrails.org](http://www.LopezTrails.org)]

## Survey Comments

LCTN survey analysts were impressed with the thoughtful responses and many useful ideas given by community members in the comment boxes at the end of each of five non-personal survey questions. However, they were also overwhelmed with the sheer number of comments to sort through; 321 total, many of them in depth and multi-part. So, a team of volunteers made an attempt to regroup the comments into categories that will help LCTN make better use of them for planning and incorporation into this long-range plan for future trail development on Lopez Island.

The categories are as follows:

### Suggestions for Trail Locations

- Connectivity
- North End
- Center (includes Village Connections)
- South End
- School
- Beach Access

### Trail Types/Usage of Trails

- Trail Type Preferences
- Walking Trails
- Bicycle Trails
- Equestrian Trails
- Other Trail Uses

### Ideas for Trail Improvements

- Signage/Maps
- Parking
- Miscellaneous Thoughts/Ideas for Trail Improvements

### Other Comments

- Safety and Accessibility
- Trail Stewardship
- Use of Public/Private Lands
- Funding
- Comments of Concern/Not in Favor
- General/Miscellaneous Comments

These comments have and will continue to be used for reference as LCTN moves forward with plans. Copies of the survey results and comments have also been shared with LCTN partners because many of the comments were about care and maintenance of existing public trails managed by San Juan County Parks, San Juan County Land Bank, Washington State Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management.

All re-categorized comments can be found at the Lopez Community Trails Network website: [www.LopezTrails.org](http://www.LopezTrails.org).