

# North Creek Village Project Description



North Creek Village is a brilliant, innovative model of the “Community in Nature” vision of design. As this vision is applied, human communities are creatively integrated into the natural world in a way that benefits both. Key features of North Creek Village include:

- Low Impact Development
- Preservation of Critical Habitat
- Environmental Restoration
- Conservation Community Stewardship
- Small-scale Mixed-use Neighborhood Village
- Community in Nature Education Campus
- Human Growth and Development

R. Gregory Ellis – manager of North Creek Village, LLC – has assembled a group of properties along the North Creek corridor of Bothell, Washington. This is an extremely sensitive ecological zone, serving as a wildlife corridor and including salmon spawning grounds. Comprising two historical family farms, a few residences and some greenspace, this relatively undisturbed verdant jewel sitting amidst the rapidly developing urban landscape surely has a special destiny.

This Fitzgerald subzone of the North Creek corridor is currently zoned R1 – one residential lot for each acre. This typically dispersed and highly individualized social arrangement, with each landowner encouraged to limit care and responsibility solely to their one square plot, is *not* the best use of this valuable and important ecological zone. Compact, creative development – as in the form of a well-placed neighborhood village, scaled to be sustainable – allows large swaths of land to be returned back to purely natural functions. This is the benefit and wisdom of the Community in Nature strategy: the health of both the human and the natural communities is strengthened and enhanced thereby.

Co-productively integrating human communities into the natural world is a *sustainable* solution – this is, after all, how traditional villages grew. Sustainable community models in these days, no matter where in the world they may appear, by their very nature

automatically become education centers – and this is an integral component of the proposed North Creek Village organic growth process.

The education center at North Creek Village is conceived as a “Community Education Campus.” Because of its unique setting along a relatively undisturbed, though still accessible, section of the North Creek, this site has remarkable potential as an educational resource for the entire greater community. In fact, this Education Campus will be the nucleus around which the village will grow.

The same values and principles that guide the growth process of the Sustainable Village also inform the development of the curriculum and teaching methodology of its Education Campus. This is essentially a “sense of place” curriculum for participatory, community-based, person-centered, life-long learning. Alongside the distinctly environmental education – such as wetland restoration, stream buffering, habitat protection, regional ecologies, and environmental stewardship – lies the complementary stream of personal and collective development. Sustainable systems – such as organic gardening, permaculture, renewable energy, community economics, and social technologies – also may be modeled, experimented with and learned from.

It is essential that the Community in Nature Education Campus grow organically in partnership with the greater surrounding community, so that a sense of mutual ownership can be achieved that responds directly to the people’s needs, as they evolve over time. The Campus becomes a nexus for the greater community, where people come to share (or discover) their special gifts. Students at every level interact with professionals, mentors, artisans, community leaders, and peers to design individualized lesson plans in consultation with educational specialists. Using this approach, learning can be directed toward the solution of *real-life* problems or challenges within the context of a supportive learning community. This is a curriculum for all ages; seniors especially will appreciate and enjoy meaningful involvement.

This plan intends to put education back at the center of community life, and community life at center stage in the grand opening of a sustainable future. Model communities like North Creek Village are beginning to pop up all over the world. In every case, the model community becomes an educational resource for the surrounding society. By demonstrating a more conscious and intentional way of living – in harmony with Nature, accentuating personal growth and development, acting in ways that benefit Humanity and the Earth, contributing to a healthy evolution of the planet – North Creek Village

will take its place among the growing global network of sustainable community models pointing the way toward a sustainable, more fulfilling and more satisfying, future.



Synopsis prepared by Village Design Institute – 21 November 2006