

# Fitness

# Ecology

# L.I.F.E. Trail

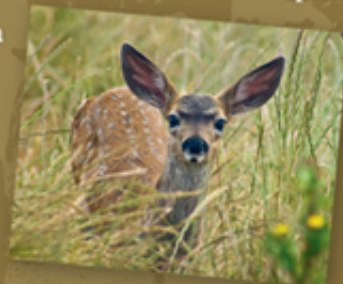
Through the Vita Parcours exercise system that is integral to the L.I.F.E. Trail, you are encouraged to create a program in harmony with your personal fitness goals. Vita Parcours offers a fitness approach that is individual and self-designed, competitive or non-competitive.

In support of the Lopez School District's Wellness Policy, the L.I.F.E. Trail provides opportunities for students to engage in vigorous physical activity. This promotes development of students' physical, mental, and emotional well being, through personal achievement on an individual or group basis. The public has access to the course from sunrise to sunset.



As designed by the Swiss, the one-mile path offers a route to wellness for any age and level of ability, from toddlers to senior citizens, and athletes to the mobility impaired. When it is complete, the one-way trail will have 15 sequential fitness stations, which can be started at any point and provide instructions to develop strength, stamina and agility at varying levels of difficulty. The first station is located south of the tennis courts, but those coming from the school will find themselves starting at Station 7 next to the school running track parking lot.

The site map locates and defines each station. Exercises such as log jump, parallel bars, gymnastic rings and balance beams can be adapted to personal need and ability. Color cues along the route help create a specific type of training: Endurance (green), Mobility and Agility (yellow) and Strength (red).



The LIFE Trail was designed in collaboration with ecologists Russel Barsh and Madrona Murphy to support scientific research, participatory study and stewardship.

Located on the south campus of school, the fitness course is enhanced by its route through three distinct ecosystems that include a rare deciduous willow wetland and habitat for the endangered Island Marble Butterfly. A beautiful white and green butterfly with a marbled hind wing, the Island Marble was believed extinct until a small population was found in the late 1990's.



The woodland segment of the LIFE Trail is an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of an otherwise undisturbed native island deciduous forest. The dense tangled growth of willow, crabapple, bitter cherry, ocean spray and other native shrubs is home to more than 30 western Washington songbirds, many of which are year-round residents; others come to nest in spring.

You may have to step carefully around a foraging chorus frog or small black salamander. Deer peer out from under arches of shrubbery. Summer brings a flush of tiny orchids, easily seen from the trail.

The trail offers students and residents lessons in ecology, biology, botany and natural history: this is Lopez before its wetlands were drained and forests felled more than a century ago. The LIFE Trail represents the hope of humans living peacefully in and around our native ecosystems.

Welcome to the new Vita Parcours, a fitness and ecology trail suitable for all ages and levels of ability located on the 28-acre Lopez School campus. Aptly named the Lopez Island Fitness and Ecology Trail or L.I.F.E. Trail, this new community resource is based on the original Zurich, Switzerland exercise model known as Vita Parcours (Life Trail). As you explore the many features along the mile-long route, you'll see multilingual signs that refer to Parcours Vita, Vita Parcours or L.I.F.E. Trail – one name in a variety of languages for this innovative path through nature to fitness, wellness and health.

More than 500 such trails exist in Switzerland, where construction is funded by Zurich Insurance, to promote the health of its country's citizens. The L.I.F.E. Trail, the first official English language public Vita Parcours in the U.S., is open for the benefit of all from sunrise to sunset. This Vita Parcours was built by a Lopez family in collaboration with the school and community residents under the guidance of the Vita Parcours Foundation in Marly, Switzerland.



The mission of the L.I.F.E. Trail is to provide everyone

consistent access to a rare island native habitat, with a two-fold purpose: to create opportunities for health and wellness through physical fitness and to cultivate environmental awareness and land ethic. We hope you enjoy the many gifts this path has to offer.

As part of the Lopez School District's vision, the L.I.F.E. Trail combines with the **Farm to School Program** and the **Evening Meals at School** to provide a unique layer of resources that support student and community health.

To learn more about these local initiatives, please visit L.I.F.E. Garden Program and Evening Meals at School at:

- [www.LopezIslandSchool.org/programs/garden](http://www.LopezIslandSchool.org/programs/garden)
- [www.LopezLocavores.org/evening-meals](http://www.LopezLocavores.org/evening-meals)
- [www.lopezclt.org/the-lopez-island-farm-education-life](http://www.lopezclt.org/the-lopez-island-farm-education-life)
- [www.HellerFamilyFoundation.org/life/home](http://www.HellerFamilyFoundation.org/life/home)
- [www.sshomesteadfarm.org/schools](http://www.sshomesteadfarm.org/schools)

