Green Valley Road Heritage Corridor

Location: Southeast King County
Length: 11.0 miles
Begins: SR 18 and SE Auburn-Black Diamond Road
Ends: SR 169

Corridor runs the entire length of SE Green Valley Road, beginning at a point just east of the intersection of SR 18 and SE Auburn-Black Diamond Road, and continuing to its end at SR 169.

Road history in local context

The Green Valley Road has an old and venerable history, and is very little altered from its late 19th century alignment. It has been known variously as the Lytz Road and the Dubois Road, the Green River Road, and more recently the SE Green Valley Road. The visual character of this corridor has always been agricultural, but its proximity to Green River coal and clay fields has shaped its history as well.

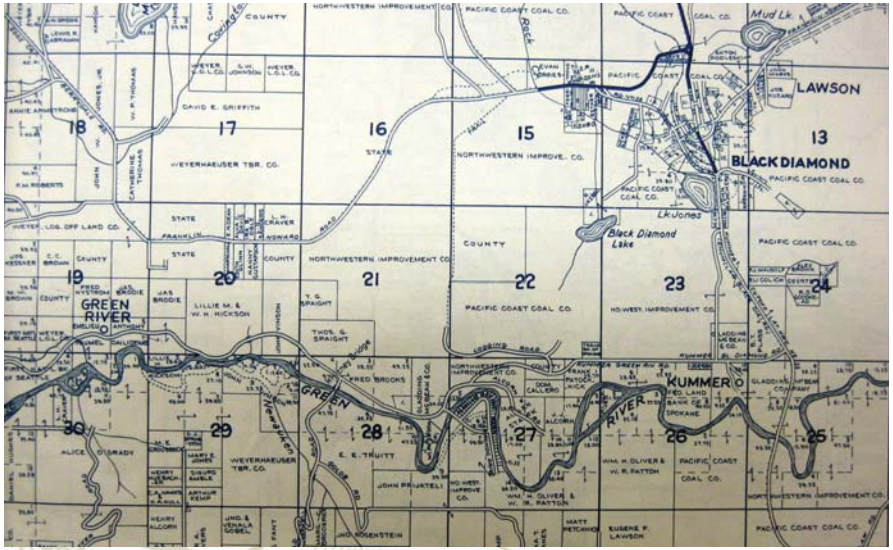
Today the road follows sections of trail and early wagon roads recorded on early GLO plat maps. The first county-built section was the W.D. Lytz Road No. 128, petitioned in 1884. It forms the central section of today's 11-mile corridor. Originally the Lytz Road turned due north, toward the coal mines of Black Diamond, at a point just opposite today's Flaming Geyser State Park. That northern extension of the Lytz Road has since disappeared from the landscape. The east section of today's Green Valley Road was County Road No. 130, established in 1886. It extended straight as an arrow along a section line from the current site of Flaming Geyser State Park to the tiny settlement of Kummer.

The C.C. Dubois Road No. 217 ran from Auburn, then still known as Slaughter, for about 3.5 miles east where it joined the Lytz Road. Established in 1888, the DuBois Road also followed an old trail that appears on GLO maps. The hand-written petition for DuBois Road is found in the County's Index of Road Records:

> 217: (Petitioned by C. C. Dubois et al). Beg. on old Green River road 3.63 chns. E of ¼ Sec. cor. on line between Sec. 17 & 18 T 21 R 5E runs thence easterly to Green River Bridge crossing same …thence easterly to Slough near Mike Burns place, cross slough thence easterly to Sec. Line between Ranges 4 and 6 about 10 rods from NE cor. Sec. 25, T21 R. 5 S.

All of the Green Valley Road appears in a Washington Map & Blueprint Co. atlas

Green Valley Road, c.1911. Courtesy of King County Archives



Metzker Map of the Green River Valley, 1936.

of 1900, and similarly on a 1907 Anderson map. Comparisons with Kroll and Metsker maps from the 1920s and '30s indicate how little the alignment had changed over those decades. But unlike the Naches Pass Highway (now SR 410) to the south, Green Valley Road remained an unimproved dirt road through a secluded rural valley until at least 1936.

Since 1894, entry to the west end of this corridor (then the DuBois Road) has been marked by the distinctive King County Landmarked Aaron Neely Mansion. The ornately decorated two-story frame farmhouse was built on a 320-acre spread bordered on the west by the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation. Throughout the early 20th century, other fertile valley tracts bordering the road were improved, and many subdivided into 40 and 80-acre dairy farms. Entire sections of forested land to the northeast remained under the control of Pacific Coast Coal, NW Improvement Co., and Weyerhaeuser Co.

Whitney Bridge, looking south from Green Valley Road, c. 1930 Courtesy of King County Archives.

Flaming Geyser State Park first appears midway along the road on a Metsker map of 1936. Subdivided lots along the south bank of a sharp bend in the river may indicate auto campsites. It operated as a private camp from the 1920s until purchased by Washington State Parks in the 1960s.

At far eastern end of Green Valley Road, around the Columbia & Puget Sound rail stop at Kummer, were holdings of the Denny Renton Clay and Coal Co., subsequently known as Gladding McBean Co. This firm operated silicon sand mines in the region, and manufactured the artistic terra cotta cladding on many Seattle commercial buildings of that era. The Kummer School, built for the children of District 123, still stands in small community of Kummer, a mining town established in the 1880s.

Residents of GreenValley Road historically formed a close-knit community in this somewhat isolated valley. Up until about 1970, a large sign at the west end of the road listed the names of all the families and how far up they lived on the "Green River Valley Road."

Sources: King County records: Assessor's Property Record Cards, Land Use and Aerial Survey - 1936-1941, Historic Preservation Program HR database, *Index to Roads Records, Engineer's Road Establishment Atlas – 1913,* Roads' Map Vault database. Maps: Anderson – 1888, 1907; Kroll – 1912, 1913, 1926, 1930, 1936, 1938; Metsker – 1926, 1936; Washington Map & Blueprint Co. – 1900, 1905, 1908.

Corridor signature

- Continuous but diverse agricultural landscape
- Secluded valley setting
- Quality agri-tourism attractions

Green Valley Road Heritage Corridor is a classic farm-to-market road, and the longest single road in the Heritage Corridor system. It showcases traditional yet evolving agricultural land-uses, with many picturesque historic barns dotting the landscape. Along the route are occasional visitor-friendly seasonal farms and produce stands.

Contributing features

The following **roadway features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Historic, curvilinear alignment along valley floor
- Mature trees in right-of-way overhanging roadway
- A stunning close-up view of the Green River at mile 8.0

The following **contextual features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Neely Mansion, King County Landmark
- Intimate scale of narrow river valley
- Backdrop of forested hills
- Expansive views across cultivated fields and pastures
- Intact historic farmsteads and barns
- Private river-rock wall fronting right-of-way at mile 8.3

Non-contributing features

The following elements in the right-of-way visually detract from overall corridor character:

- Sections of wide paved shoulder
- Rumble strips
- Chain link fencing right-of-way at mile 8.0, obscuring corridor's best river view
- Temporary jersey barriers at mile 8.4