

**Lake Whatcom Park & Lookout Mountain Park Meeting: November 5, 2015**

**Public Comments received from 10/26/2015 – 12/08/2015**

1. “We would like to express our concerns prior to the Nov. 5 meeting at Bloedel and urge the county to take into account the effects of increased traffic, both vehicle and human, on the properties adjacent to the park trail and on the lake itself.

As the property owners closest to the trail, we are your first line of defense—and we are in our 70’s and 90’s. For the last several summers, there has been a deluge of people, cars and boats. Cars fill the parking lot, line the access road, and Northshore itself. The dust from the access road is so thick it looks like a forest fire (we can’t open our windows), the cove is filled with people and boats, and the woods leading to the lakefront smell like a latrine. When Gary Rensburger occupied the cabin on the park property, he stopped fights, rapes, drug deals, and our greatest fear—fires. Now it falls to us.

This last year summer there were fireworks, beach fires, and the park had been, as the sheriff put it “discovered” by a gang from Skagit. And if we are not home, or out on our deck to smell the fires, we are fearful the whole hill along with our home will be gone.

So now you want to add more access, cars, people, and horses to this mess. We would like to know how you are going to manage this—and we mean actively manage, while minimizing the impact to those of us who live here—and by the way, pay waterfront taxes.

As a start, we would like to point out that the closest toilet is far away in the upper parking lot, and the only small ‘no-fire’ sign is attached to a gate well past trails to the lake and usually obscured by parked cars. A vault toilet and better signage would be a good first step. But the larger issue is the impact on the lake and those who live here—and we don’t think you have adequately taken that into account.”

2. “I have hiked from the Lake Whatcom Trailhead on the road up and under the powerline. In places there is a parallel trail to the road and powerline not shown on the map and it should be. It is fairly usable and more enjoyable than going up the road which is steep and in the open. The trail is in the trees and more pleasant. Please show it on the page 9 map and plan to utilize it where possible that starts at the trailhead.”

3. “I live at 2583 Northshore Road, Bellingham and I attended the community meeting last night. I love the concept of trails in this area for many reasons. My question is what is being planned to help with traffic issues and runoff along Northshore?”

1) Since 2000 dozens of homes have been constructed along the lakeshore and across the road, increasing the traffic and diminishing the number of large trees, therefore adding runoff. Oil runoff will be increased as we encourage yet more vehicles on Northshore.

2) Since the shoulders are almost non existent, safety is already a major issue for cyclists and walkers. The speed limit was raised from 35 to 40, at the same time that more families moved into the area. **Doesn't it follow that the issue of storm runoff and safety must be addressed before we significantly increase the number of cars along Northshore?**

3) We love to walk on the existing trails, but already parking is inadequate. Only one more lot doesn't seem enough to handle increased number of vehicles. I could not find anyone at the meeting who could respond to these concerns.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment."

4. "Love your plan. It would be great to have one more, long, world class MTB trail loop going south and east along the lookout Mt. Ridge. Would draw lots of people in. Love the big loop on lake Whatcom. Hope that our local trail expertise is included. This is transformative. Thank you."

5. "Attached you will find my comments. While I am an advocate for the equestrian community, I do recognize and appreciate the amount of thought and work that has gone into the latest draft. It is a good piece of work!

I have attempted to make my comments matters of substance rather than of opinion, I harbor the feeling that the design attempts to keep horses out of the way of the hike and bike users. I would point to the pictures on page 13. While the right and left pictures are folks out 'recreating', the center picture is one of our Back Country Horsemen members leading a pack string of mules that are carrying a half-dozen 8 ft timbers on each side. Snakily, let me see you do that on your mountain bike. Seriously, the equestrian community offers the capability to move materials over terrain unsuited for motorized traffic in much greater quantities than one can carry on their back or bike. Planning for more equine access would enable you to make more use of those capabilities.

Considerable detail has been provided in the plan, it is well organized, easy to understand and thorough. The authors have done a good job and are to be congratulated. As an equestrian user, I would offer several comments for consideration. Hopefully I have understood the plan and the points are accurate and relevant.

1) While loops have been provided for those on bikes or on foot, no such consideration has been given to equestrian users. We enjoy loops to 'out and back' rides as much as any other group. Why isn't the Lookout Mountain Loop Trail open to horses?

2) Trails designated hike and bike can be used by horses as well. Especially on the Lake Whatcom Park side, changing more trails to true multi-use would both enable loops for equestrian riders and provide more equestrian access earlier in the program. For example EHB2, EHB3, EHBA1, EHBA2 and EH1 are fine horse trails.

3) Equestrian trails are virtually all in the later development stages. The tacit disadvantage to this approach is that hiking and biking users will begin to assume that the parks are “horse free zones” leading to issues when horse trails become available. A much greater attempt must be made to insure the ability of all user groups to use the facilities from the outset.

4) Even where there are multi-use, i.e. equestrian, trails, access to them is limited or difficult. Examples:

1. WMU1 and WHEBA1 do not connect to any trail that would allow equine access to them. WHB4 is the ‘input’ trail to those two - it needs to be a multi-use trail.

2. Similarly, WHEBA2 is fed only by WH2.

3. There is not equestrian connection from the portion of the park near Squires Lake to the bulk of the Lookout Mtn Park.

5) Parking is addressed only cursorily. Frankly, calling a trail an equestrian trail without provision for parking of horse trailers is a fiction. The plan stages should address what upgrades to infrastructure will be planned in each stage.

6) While one could in theory access the southern portion of the Lookout Mtn Park from Squires Lake, there does not appear to be parking for horse trailers there +either.”

6. “The planned November 5th meeting regarding the draft plan for trail development at the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance lands, and the draft plan itself; <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/625/Lake-Whatcom-Reconveyance>; are inappropriately out of sequence with the recent formation of the Whatcom County Wildlife Advisory Committee. The Wildlife Committee needs to be given time to assess the area, and trail plans redrafted based on their information, before such plans ought to be brought closer to fruition.”

7. “A huge thanks to Park Staff for this plan and involving stakeholders and the community in this process. Please consider representation of the users of the Park by doing trailhead surveys or a county wide survey. It seems the mt. bike population, while certainly popular, is over represented at these public meetings. This is caused in part by their losing some of the trails they have built (illegally and unsustainably) and on the ground efforts to mobilize around a cause. Many casual hikers and walkers do not have the same issue to rally around and are thus a little less forthcoming with support and ideas. This would change if the balance of user

experiences shifts towards the allowance of environmentally unsustainable trails being included in the Park plan due to listening to the "loudest" voice. I believe this is known and has been taken into account to this point and I urge the County to continue on this course to provide the public the best recreation and conservation experience."

8. "Thank you for all your hard work, the plan is looking great. Reviewing materials distributed for next week's meeting, I add the following comment.

The Smith Creek basin trail system as presented in June's LW Trail Alternative 3 should be further considered for construction. I've never ventured into this basin, but topo maps suggest it's intriguing as a somewhat-more-remote hiking experience. Even if the trails were somewhat 'rugged', I feel access for hikers to explore and enjoy traversing this central canyon of the east Reconveyance lands should be provided.

I've attached an image where I overlaid the now-proposed trail construction map with the June Alternative 3 map. The yellow trails are suggestive of a far more immersive park experience than what is proposed currently.

I also notice the potential view designation for EMU8 has been removed from the map. I advocate for the creation of additional constructed 'view corridors' (currently provided in these lands where clear cuts have occurred), rather than any removal of viewpoints from the June map.

Thank you for considering my comments."

9. "I'd like to express my support for the Draft Recreational Trail plan, with two additions. I'd like to see Surf n' Turf, a user built trail in the Lake Whatcom Park included in the plan. I'd also like to see Blade Reversal, located in the Lookout Mountain Park, added as well.

Both of these trails would be excellent additions, and would provide even more trail opportunities for the mountain bike community.

Please consider the inclusion of these trails."

10. "Congratulations on your Draft Lookout Mountain and Lake Whatcom Park Recreation Trail Plan - job well done.

My comments will concern Smith Creek which we all know is right in the middle of the Lake Whatcom Park. There have been a number of devastating debris torrents. The last major torrent, January 10, 1983, has been the subject of extensive activity involving Whatcom County, DNR and Smith Creek neighbors. My point is that the various trail planners and participants must understand that at times Smith Creek can be very hazardous and potentially damaging to property.

The best advice is to stay far way from Smith Creek. Land slides along the steep sides of the creek are a concern. Slides have started along abandoned roads (see DNR records) along the top side of the creek. Example: is the view point at EMU2 too close or on an abandoned road? Would it be best for this trail portion to be hiker only?

The basin of Smith Creek is protected by berms on both sides. There should be no activity or trespassing on these berms. Unfortunately this has not been the case. At times we have seen upwards of twelve vehicles parked on private property along North Shore Road near-by the south berm. The main activities are drinking, camping and swimming in the lake. This all adds up to lots of debris left and way too much traffic along our dead end road. There are a number of high pilings at the mouth that are being used for diving off. In my view these pilings should be removed as they are an unwanted invitation to diving and are hazardous. Security is a major concern for the neighbors along North Shore Road, particularly after dark.”

11. “After reviewing the trail proposal presented at the 11/5 public forum I have a few comments I wish to submit. In general I am very pleased with the overall trail layout and the thoroughness of the plan presented, well done. As an attendee of all three planning meetings I have noted an inflated presence of the mountain biking community at each event. While I am pleased with the enthusiasm of this segment of the recreation community and fully appreciate the joy they find within their sport, I would like to encourage a broader analysis of the true recreation population that might frequent this new trail system. I would suspect the hiking community, or those seeking more of the "quiet recreation" that Mitch Friedman referenced in his video presentation, are not as organized as the biking community, yet reflect a much greater segment of the Whatcom population. In my experience mountain biking is not "quiet recreation" and great care should be taken to segregate this group to reduce conflict; your current trail plan seems to address this and I would encourage no additional bike trails.

I also am a strong advocate of volunteers taking ownership and stewardship of their public lands; however, I would highly encourage clear oversight of these groups or partnership with only those groups that have demonstrated leadership that adheres to the land manager's directions and mandates. The trails that some local biking groups have built are not in keeping with sustainable practices (Larrabee State Park example) and violate the IMBA trail standards that should be the basis of the biking trail network in this new reconveyance property.

Thank you for considering my responses and keep up the good work of bringing this new park into creation.”

12. “I am truly thrilled with the trail proposals and excited to volunteer and promote the development of these plans. With enormous gratitude! Thank you.”

13. “30-40 acres for a disc golf course, Please! Low impact.”

14. “Please provide access to the falls on waterfall trail when they are running it is impressive to see and very secluded. Please consider the amount of work required to demo vs.

modify. Thanks!”

15. “Consistent with existing protection provided by landscape plan – there should be no new construction on unstable slopes. Draft plan reads “where feasible.” Based on proposal that wiggle room should not be necessary.

Trail standards imply fords are an option. These should only occur if trails can effectively closed in wet seasons when mud can be left of ford or fords may over top.”

16. “Would like to see hike accessed paraglider launch at viewpoint on EMU2 trail - could land field where Smith creek crosses N. Shore Dr.

Also would like to see hiker accessed paraglider launch at south tower/viewpoint on WMU5 – landing area could be park property E Lake Samish Dr. or negotiated with private land owner. This could potentially be accessed by a carpooling system coming up private land roads with only a short hike into park property to serve hang gliders which can’t be carried very far.

Too much hiker only trail – keep some hiker only but maximize multi use trail.”

17. “I generally like the draft trail plan for Lake Whatcom and Lookout Mountain. Some issues should be addressed before a final proposal is approved.

- 1) The current Lake Louise Road parking lot appears to be the primary access point to the Lookout Mountain trails. There is no room in the existing parking lot for horse trailers. Parking for horse trailers needs to be provided or identify some other means for them to access the trails on Lookout Mountain. Access might be possible from the Plantation Rifle Range.
- 2) Sustainable funding needs to be identified for implementation and recurring maintenance of the trails in the two parcels.
- 3) While I support the idea to use mainly volunteers to build the trails there should be some enforceable way to ensure the volunteers adhere to the agreed trail standards.
- 4) Provisions must be included for recurring oversight of the backcountry camp sites. This should include reminders for users to remove trash and properly dispose of solid waste.”

18. “I have been hiking the new Lake Whatcom Park area for a few years now, mostly during the fall and winter months when the high country is unavailable for hiking. Yesterday, after a great hiking season at Mt Baker, I once again came back to Stuart Mountain to do some hiking. When I arrived at the parking lot I noticed a sign stating a meeting had occurred on November 5th regarding a draft plan for trail development. When I returned home I logged onto your web site and reviewed the trail plan. In that plan on page 22, EBD1 and EBD2 are the trails I hike **EACH** week during the fall, winter and early spring months. According to the draft

plan both of these trails will be "Biking Descend" only trails. Are you aware that many more hikers use these trails than mountain bikers do? In the years I have hiked these trails I have observed only four bike users but I've witnessed easily over a dozen people hiking it. The vast majority of time I see no one else on these two trails however I do notice the occasional single bike track or hikers boot print.

For me these two trails are the best hikes in and around Bellingham as far as difficulty. I know of no other hike as difficult as this yet so close to Bellingham. When I meet people hiking this route all hike it for the same reason I do, it's a heck of a work out in a fairly short distance. It's a perfect training hike for staying in shape or preparing for the high county hiking season. I would urge those that are in charge of the new trail system to reconsider having this as a "Bike Descend" only for the following reasons:

- 1) This would be the only really steep trail that is extremely close to Bellingham that will also be part of the Whatcom County Park system.
- 2) It's the quickest route/trail to obtain views of the water and mountains and also to access the top of Stuart Mountain.
- 3) During winter months it is also the quickest route to access the higher elevation areas for snow shoeing and cross-country skiing. The Lake Whatcom Park will be the closest area to Bellingham that can provide snow activities during winter months when snow falls above 2,000 feet. If hikers were banned from using this trail it would add considerable mileage and time to reach these higher elevation areas making them much less likely to be used.
- 4) This trail is quite steep in a number of places and therefore the mountain bikes have caused erosion in some of the steeper areas making it questionable for full time bike use.
- 5) At the very minimum this trail should be a hiking trail only during the winter months to limit erosion that will result with mountain bike use during the wetter times of the year.

In conclusion I am very excited about the new park and the additional areas that will be made available for the public's use and enjoyment. I am hopeful that this particular route will continue to be accessible for hikers for the reasons I have outlined above. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions I can answer."

19. "First of all, I would like to thank the trail planning folks for listening. The current proposal is a huge improvement over all three options last spring. Thanks!

That said, as a mountain biker, I still have some suggestions:

First, Surf and Turf should remain open. It could be rerouted for drainage issues and habitat. Having a hiker only trail in the general vicinity will only invite some to poach, causing user conflict. Avoid conflict by keeping it open.

Second, the trails off Repeater road should remain open. This is a great area with great trails that are an asset to the Sudden Valley community.

Third, I'd love to see Gnargus (aka Waterfall trail) remain open. The waterfalls are beautiful there and I would love to continue to see them.

Thanks again for listening and for all the work you do."

20. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

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23. “I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, walker and schlogger (slow older runner) I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city. It is forward thinking ideas such as this that makes Whatcom county such a great place to live in.

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24. “I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a trail runner and hiker I am SO excited about these new possible trail systems. Access to nature is why I call Whatcom County my home. I enjoy our trails almost every day I have taken part in several trail builds in our area.

Please continue to make outdoor recreation a priority in our area. We have such beautiful forests all around the lake. Let's preserve them for non-motorized, public use for generations to come.”

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Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!”

30. “I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am really excited about this opportunity! I hike every weekend and would love to explore more of this beautiful county I call home. My children hike with me often and it would so wonderful to share this special place with them along the water and over looking Lake Whatcom.

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34. "I am writing in response to the potential for new low impact hiking trails, walking paths, and the opportunity for close-in camping opportunities afforded by the Lake Whatcom and Lookout Mountain area and the county's plan for this area.

As a family who lives in Ferndale and is not close to many hiking or walking paths, with the exception of the short trail system in and around Hovander, we would be excited to have more lowland trails that offer ease of access, opportunities for hikers of varying capabilities and desires for length and difficulty. We already enjoy the trail system in the Chuckanuts thought our son, who is now 7, has found the trail system there too difficult for his young legs so we do hope there will be a number of trails that provide opportunities for families with strollers/Bobs, and destinations (streams, vistas, loops) that work for all ages and abilities..

We also expect that creating a new lowland trails network here in Whatcom county will help continue the area to develop into a year-round destination for hiking and being in a pacific northwest forest ecosystem.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

35. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am please by the idea of having more trails so close to home. Seven years ago, when I started planning to move to Whatcom County from Georgia, friends understandably wanted to know why. One of my stock answers was "the book of hiking trails in the County is 254 pages long!". These trails have enriched my life and improved both physical and mental health, as I made friends who shared this interest.

It's exciting to see that the County is planning to expand the network of trails, considering the needs of different experience levels and environmental protection. As an older hiker, I realize that the Cascade trails won't always be possible for me and my cohorts. Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

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waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed. It is wonderful to see this opportunity coming to fruition.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

42. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

43. "Hi, thanks for making the information available about the proposed trails. I am a runner and hiker and have always considered a run on the north shore (Hertz trail) as a treat. It is a wide and easy to use trail.

My comment is that I hope you'll reconsider the trail EHB2 that feeds into the Hertz trail in two places. Primarily, I think that letting bikers on this will change the current character of the Hertz trail. With mountain bikers wanting to go faster on EHB2, they'll also want to go faster on the Hertz trail. I run out here because I don't have to worry about fast bikers on a flat trail. Currently the bikers are slow and include a lot of families (I was there this weekend and came across a couple with a baby cart and a family of 4 riding their bikes). People walk their dogs on this trail, young people take up space by the lake to play all day... having more and faster bikers is going to seriously change the character and current use of this trail, which already seems to be maximally used in the summer as it is (so adding more users seems like a bad idea). Please consider either making EHB2 a hiking only trail or not having it feed into the Hertz trail if bikers are allowed."

44. "Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the proposed plans for trails in the reconveyance area. The trail plan needs a few adjustments.

## Staffing

Before any trail development work is started, the County must consistently apportion the necessary funds for staff and equipment to monitor and maintain the area. Unfortunately, the current level of staffing is inadequate to support the current level of activity with none of the proposed trail developments.

The Lake Whatcom Park area, Smith Creek, and the BPA line has worsening and unattended problems with parties, litter, human and pet wastes, fire rings, etc. The area has been misused for decades as a party and ORV area. With more traffic and more access, the responsibility for preventing problems and maintaining a healthy park environment will increase significantly. It would be reckless and counterproductive to build new trail facilities without a robust staffing plan to protect the area.

## Remote campsites

Remote campsites in area national parks and in the Mt Baker National Forest present enough challenges to their administrative agencies for enforcement and maintenance. Yet they are not in an area near a major drinking water supply, not in an area known for decades for parties and ORV abuse, and not in an area with an elaborate system of trails and roads that facilitate access close to a major population area. The area near the Y Road trail access suffered a serious fire this past year and was started by just the kind of camping activity that the proposed remote campsites would foster. That fire could have easily been far more devastating. The increased risks caused by these proposed sites, with facilitated access through improved roads and trails (Ironically, the gates and capacities that can be ignored by dirt bikes, ORVs, and others at the same time can be real barriers to fire and public safety vehicles.) makes no sense compared to their limited recreational value.

## Horses

Horses simply do not belong in the Lake Whatcom watershed, and the City and County have both had prohibiting regulations in place for some time.

[http://lakewhatcomarchive.whatcomcounty.org/asub\\_fldr/stewardship\\_solutions/hobby\\_farms/whatcom\\_codes.shtml](http://lakewhatcomarchive.whatcomcounty.org/asub_fldr/stewardship_solutions/hobby_farms/whatcom_codes.shtml)

If the argument is made that the trail is different from a permanent horse farm (for which a permit would not be allowed), the burden falls on the riders to prove a lesser impact, a futile exercise if the implied goal of horse trails and facilities is to encourage use.

Further, inviting horse traffic will cause increased erosion and exacerbate the risks of slides on the steep slopes around Smith and Austin Creeks. Despite signage, curious riders will start exploring the other trails and orphaned roads in the area. Geologists have warned for years that the risks for massive slides and debris torrents are acute in these basins. An unknowing

group of riders could easily cause severe problems by using the old roads and hiking/biking trails. This has already happened with the limited number of trails now in place.

## Parking

Certainly more capacity is needed for the Lake Whatcom Park. Less capacity would be needed if we drop the (probably illegal) plans for horses. Placing a parking lot (P3) on the north side of Smith Creek would be a tragic misuse of a beautiful meadow area. Without direct access to the trails or the lake, people would likely not use that spot anyway; they will tend to park on the road as they do now. Expand the space near the current parking areas.

Thank you for your time and consideration.”

45. “Overall I say well done! I am very pleased generally speaking with how you all worked to address the concerns of the different user groups. I am primarily a trail runner and hiker which means the majority of the trail system will be open to me. I don't have attachments to particular existing trails. I don't like horses on our trails. They are far more destructive to the tread than any other user group and they don't care about the condition of the tread because after all they are on a horse. The backcountry horseman are a small user group with a loud voice and some control because they offer trail support for other user groups maintaining trails. So I realize this user group is not going away. At the very least, please start requiring the equestrian users to use manure catchment bags so the rest of us trail users don't have to tromp thru their shit. Dog owners are required to pick up after ourselves so it should be no different for equestrian users.

Mountain bikes are permitted on most trails in whatcom county. As a person who does not ride mountain bikes I am pleased you are limiting their use somewhat in the New park. After all they have Galbraith. As a no mountain biking trail user I ask that the trails in the new park not be built with berms and other mountain biking features except where mountain biking only is permitted. Parks is fighting a losing battle with the highly organized mountain bikers. Your efforts to reclaim Surfin Turf was quickly thwarted. The sign at the top is now gone and the trail is in full operation. Even though I am not a fan of how the mountain bikers readily poach trails and dig new trail where they like I don't think Parks will win this battle. So my suggestion is to allow their existing trails but make modifications to make them more sustainable. I know ...I hate giving into their rogue tactics too but it is just a war you are not going to win. Frankly, the tread width suggested is too wide. Yes we need wider trails nearer to the trail heads but trails can narrow soon after. This is a criticism I have of both city and county parks trails. The tread width on many of our local trails are as wide as roads. More narrow trails are easier to build and will require less maintenance in the future. I can agree 48" tread near high use access areas makes sense. But for hiker and biker trail the tread can be 18-24" wide once away from the trailheads. Most people don't hike very far so trail users spread out very quickly. The trails shared with horses do not need to be any wider than 36". 3 feet is plenty of room for everyone. When horses come by other trail users often leave the tread anyway to make room. I can't think of anywhere we need to use gravel for the tread except near high use trail heads. I

have been working on the trail up to Oyster Dome and nowhere did we bring in gravel. It is one of the highest use trails in the region. Ask WTA and they will show you how to build a solid trail without carting in loads of gravel.

Providing back country campsites is a bad idea unless Parks is prepared to closely monitor, clean up messes, and enforce fire bans. There are plenty of other places to backpack. We don't need it in a county park.

I was running on Stewart Mountain last week and I have a few observations. There are old trails that I think we're old logging roads that have become sediment moving slides during rain events. One old road I accessed from the Y road goes right by the wildfire burn from this past summer. The trail needs to be addressed! It is an erosion mess! I hope parks plans to deal with more of these old logging roads. Currently people are accessing the new parks land on Stewart from the Acme side of the mountain. I saw hunters driving around up there this past weekend. I hope there are plans for gates.

Another issue I don't see addressed is the utility lines thru park land. I understand they have an easement that pretty much allows them to do as they please. In other parts of the country local groups have take over maintenance of the powerline right of way. A low growing habitat was created that prevented soil erosion and created biologically diverse habitat. If everyone is so concerned about trails, in our watershed that provides our drinking water why is this not being addressed? Furthermore, there was a clearcut Lookout Mt and not a word was mentioned about it. It does not make sense that Parks has to accommodate by only building during the dry season and yet logging goes on all year. I digress.

The trail community is poised to help in any way we/they can to build this new trail system. Let's just hope we can get the numbers out to help maintain it too."

46. "My name is Geneva Faulkner and I was born in Bellingham and raised on Whatcom County trails. They are near and dear to me as a dirt-crazed trail runner and mountain biker. Like many others, the outdoor recreation opportunities were a driving factor in my decision to move back to Bellingham after several years living in other parts of the country. I'm a big supporter of the reconveyance and am thrilled at WCPR and DNR are taking concrete steps in moving forward. Thank you for keeping the public involved in the process.

A couple points based on the information in the Draft Plan:

### **Natural Resources**

Please include other species in your critical habitat analysis and mapping. Marbled murrelets and bald eagles are important, yes, but don't exist in a vacuum.

- As far as marbled murrelets are concerned, sanctioned and planned trails would obviously be constructed to avoid ESA impacts and include proper buffers. I don't think it's a stretch

to assume that future illegal trailbuilding activities would not undergo a rigorous planning process (at least in terms of ESA impacts). I'll discuss my views later on *existing* illegal trails, but I think that the marbled murrelet highlights the importance of streamlining the trailbuilding process and developing good, open relationships between planning staff and trail users. Why? To encourage trailbuilders to use legal channels that account for ESA impacts (as well as grade issues and liability, etc.) It may be impossible to completely stop illegal trailbuilding, but making the process less contentious means that future trails will be built to agreed-upon standards and will include mitigation for sensitive habitat.

- I support using native species only – no Kentucky bluegrass, please. Keep the trails and trailhead parking as low-impact as possible.
- Please include low impact development (LID) features at trailheads. Gravel, rain gardens, permeable pavement (only if pavement is absolutely necessary), etc. to reduce stormwater runoff and water quality issues.
- I'd like to see more emphasis on forest management practices in the final document. This summer we witnessed forest fires in Whatcom County, including the Stewart Mountain fire. How does the County plan to coordinate forest management with adjacent landowners to sustainably manage a maturing forest? I am in favor of logging *only* in the case of ensuring stand health through selective/mechanical thinning. As climate change continues to produce some crazy weather around the globe, we may see more frequent, intense forest fires in Western Washington. While some factors contributing to wildfire (lightning, drier conditions, etc.) are not directly manageable, selective thinning and managing surface and ladder fuels should be practiced in a context-sensitive manner and with the cooperation and collaboration of adjacent landowners to decrease the likelihood of majorly destructive wildfires.

## Recreation

- Along with being a trail runner and mountain biker, I'm also an environmental planner. From a planner's perspective I understand the County's desire to dismantle existing illegally built trails. Liability, sedimentation, and erosion concerns are major issues. Plus, I understand that the County may not want to set a precedent for being lenient about illegal trailbuilding. I fully support efforts to curb *future* illegal trailbuilding by streamlining the process for legal trailbuilding and coordinating with local user groups to make the process open, transparent, and collaborative. However, that said, I also understand that the illegal trails in question are some of the best on the mountain and have been instrumental in shaping Bellingham's outdoor recreation reputation. I do not agree with the County's decision to dismantle these trails. Instead, bringing existing illegal trails into compliance with IMBA trail standards, where possible, would go a long way in building a good relationship between WCPR and user groups. I realize this may be tricky and not wholly possible, but I believe it is worth the effort.

- I'm in favor of minimizing the presence of logging roads by converting them to singletrack where possible.

### **Connectivity**

- Please include trail connections from Repeater Road and Sudden Valley.
- Others have mentioned it, but I will add my support for ample connectivity to Galbraith.
- Please add as many decentralized, multimodal access points as feasible. Trailhead impacts can be high when they are few and far between and heavily used. Think of all the cars parked along Samish Way at the Galbraith south entrance at peak times. Galbraith effectively only has two main trailheads, which isn't sufficient for the volume of people using the mountain. I fully support increasing WTA service and implementing a shuttle service to reduce single occupancy car trips. Headways can be increased over time as part of the project phasing.
- It would be great to see a map of the proposed Lookout Mountain trails with Galbraith's existing trail network to better understand the connectivity between the two areas.

### **Typos/Clarification**

- State Environmental Protection Act should be changed to State Environmental **Policy** Act (top of page 10).
- There is mention of an Environmental Analysis that will be prepared under SEPA. Please clarify whether this is a SEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Analysis (EA).

Thank you once again for seeking public input in this process. Overall I'm a huge supporter of this effort and appreciate the major efforts of WCPR and DNR."

47. "From: Jackie Yereance - Equestrian, member of Backcountry Horsemen, dog walker, senior citizen, long time trail work volunteer.

The November draft was well thought out. I think that it is a good basis for moving forward knowing that it will need to be adapted as it is implemented.

There are two issues that concern me at this time

1. Parking - parking has been a long time and ongoing concern for parks in Whatcom County. Providing adequate parking for all users for the new parks needs to be a top priority for both planning and implementation.

2. I feel that including park roads as part of the equestrian trail system is a good idea. With this in mind it is important to make sure that these roads are safe and pleasant for horse and rider and to have access to attractive destinations and to single track forest trails as well.”

48. “I am writing today as a frequent visitor of a land owner at Lake Whatcom. We enjoy both access to the lake, on the owners property, and access to the trail by parking at the trail head.

I have concerns about the proposed plan to make an additional parking lot where you have proposed to do so. First I am not convinced it is needed. I have yet to be unable to find a spot at the trail head when hiking. That said if this is a problem, the proposed location does not have easy access to the trail head. You must either crawl through the brush to get over the stream or walk up the narrow roadway. I have done both, and both are dangerous and certainly not convenient.

My second concern is that because there is no public access to the lake in that area, private property owners will have people trespassing as they look for a way to the lake. This can cause security issues and damage problems.

It seems to me that the proposed parking lot location simply is not a good choice.”

49. “I am writing to you today to share my concern about the proposed development on Stewart Mtn.

I am an avid hiker, and homeowner on the lake. Developing more trails, campgrounds, and parking lots is an ill thought out idea. First, Lake Whatcom is the water source for Bellingham; adding traffic and construction to the area will negatively impact the water source. Second, sound travels over water. In the summertime we can hear camp Firwood from miles away. I can only imagine what increased trail use will do to the amount of noise. Third, putting a parking lot near a lake with no direct lake access, is asking people to trespass. Will the county be paying for homeowners to put up fences? Finally, the current parking lot at the trailhead is sufficient; I have never seen it filled.

Please reconsider your development plans.”

50. “I have been visiting a dear friend's cabin at Whatcom lake for decades. It has been in her family for three generations. I visit the cabin and we hike the trails and enjoy the serenity and beauty of this wonderful place. I recently learned that a parking lot is being considered on the field near behind the cabin. What a tragedy to have that green space that is loved by so many taken over for parking and for what? There is plenty of parking at the trail head and the field isn't conveniently located to the trail head. If it is not for the trail. The parking lot would invite people to walk through private property to access the lake as there is no public access at this particular point.

It would change the serenity and beauty of this part of the lake. I beg of you to reconsider this plan...what does it possible serve but increase traffic and cause problems for the long time residents of that part of the lake. It would be so sad.”

51. “I am very excited regarding the new land acquisitions and proposed park plans on Lookout and Stewart Mountains. I also am a citizen who enjoys frequent mountain bike and hiking excursions, and would love for "Surfin' Turf" on Lookout mountain to be included in some form, and for access to the user built trails near Repeater Road to be included in some form.

Thank you for being open to user feedback.”

52. “My name is Kevin Quillan, and I am a second year graduate student here at Western Washington University in Bellingham. I want to take this opportunity to show my support for initiating the proposed plans for Bike/Hike/Equestrian trails at both the Lookout Mountain and Whatcom Lake areas. To do this, I think it is best if I convey what these trial mean to not only myself, but our community.

I have recently moved here to Bellingham from Boone, NC ,not only to peruse my masters in Geology, but to continue my passion in mountain biking. Where I come from, and many other places I have visited, there are not the same opportunities to begin mountain biking, or to continue personal goals in mastering your skills as there are here in Bellingham. This is a result of the amazing work that has been done thus far to build and maintain the trails that we have such as Galbraith and Chuckanut! I know many people that use mountain biking as a way to escape and stay fit during the stressful lifestyle many of us have, and if we can add new trails that will encourage new people to try and discover the same means to escape and stay mentally and physically fit, then we should do all that we can! I think the presence of user built trails in this area is a testament to the effort the community is willing to put into having more trails, so having the backing of the community would be amazing!”

53. “I was pleased to see a lot of positive changes in the latest draft for the reconveyance lands — more biking trails and diverse trail usage (single and multi-direction). There were however a few prominent existing mountain biking trails still missing from the plan. It would be a shame to deprive the mountain biking public of these enticing and valuable trails.”

54. “My family has owned land on North Shore Drive for over 100 years. It has recently come to my attention that you are considering paving the field across the road from our cabin to make a parking lot! That field is habitat to multiple species of animals, not to mention the tranquility it provides for humans. As a land owner, I am writing to strongly oppose this proposal. My grandfather sold that field to the Parks Department in the 1970s BUT never with the intent that it would be turned into a parking lot.”

55. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

My hope is that when the trails are built, they are sustainable and have adequate funding to maintain. My particular concern is that bicycle trails will be built to avoid erosion and harm to the watershed.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

56. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

As a hiker, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!

Our family uses trails all over Whatcom Co. We appreciate the access to the outdoors and understand how important preserving the watershed of Lake Whatcom is as well as habitat for animals besides ourselves.

Thank you for considering the preservation of this area as well as others with a vision to the future."

57. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan. I am a new Bellingham resident, and the availability of so many trails was a large factor in deciding to live and work here.

As a hiker, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly

an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

58. "I am writing in response to the public meeting on November 5 about the trails plan.

I will use new trails for trail running and hiking. I am a frequent user of trails in Whatcom and Skagit County.

As a hiker and trail runner, I am thrilled by the idea of having more miles of trails so close to home. This is truly an unparalleled opportunity to give thousands of Whatcom residents and visitors access to the waterfront along the lake, peaceful forests and ridge lines with stunning views. Few places can offer such diverse attractions so close to a bustling city.

I am particularly excited to see that the County plans to include wide number of trail types that offer an outdoor experience for trail users of all experience levels; work with local transit agencies to create new opportunities for alternative access to trailheads; and commitment to providing high-quality recreation while also protecting the Lake Whatcom watershed.

I am happy to discuss with greater particularity.

Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

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Thank you for responding to the needs of hikers in this plan!"

61. "Washington Trails Association respectfully submits comments on the Lake Whatcom Park and Lookout Mountain Conceptual Trail Alternatives. Founded in 1966, Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the country's largest state-based trail maintenance and hiking advocacy non-profit organization with more than 13,000 members and more than 3.3 million unique annual website visitors. Washington Trails Association's mission is to "preserve, enhance, and promote hiking opportunities in Washington state through collaboration, education, advocacy and volunteer trail maintenance."

WTA is greatly pleased to see the total trail mileage between Lake Whatcom and Lookout Mountain increased to 98 miles. This plan addresses the trail community's request for varied user experiences and trail types, from wide class A trails to more rugged class D trails within the same park.

This plan would create a world-class park that provides a high-quality trail system and protects the Lake Whatcom watershed while providing ample trail experiences. Hikers will appreciate the inclusion of both multi-use and hiker-only trails. The mileage listed in this plan does a good job of recognizing the need for all trail users to have space to pursue their activity, be they hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, or runners.

Given this park's convenient proximity to the city of Bellingham, these proposed trails will be an incredible addition to close-to-home recreation opportunities for Whatcom residents. We were particularly pleased to see that the County plans to work with local transit agencies to coordinate transportation routes to the trails. This will both ease parking lot congestion and make getting outdoors easier for people of all economic backgrounds.

The Parks Department could reduce costs by drawing upon the passionate volunteers and organizations in the community to help construct and maintain and by incorporating some existing user-built trails where it is compatible with watershed protection.

The outdoor recreation community is eager to hear more news about sustainable funding

opportunities and how the project will be implemented. WTA looks forward to working with the county to make sure trail standards are maintained and the environment is protected as the many volunteers, local organizations, and Whatcom County employees work together to make these trails a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this process. Please let us know about any additional support that can be provided.”

62. “This email is pertaining to the information that was presented at a Community Meeting at Blodell in early Nov. The subject was the future uses of Stewart Mt.

We are concerned about the possibility of a parking lot being built on the lower field. For homeowners along the lake, we have to take environmental issues seriously. The fact that you are considering a parking lot ( with all its toxins and garbage) in this lower field so near the lake is shocking! Think this through carefully.

Along with drainage and environmental issues we have other concerns:

- \* How would the hikers get to the trails? Walk on the road? Hike through the woods and build another bridge to cross the creek?
- \* The trails at the end of North Shore Road are heavily used. Should you be thinking about diverting future hikers, bikers, and horses to other parts of the mountain? Why concentrate all activities beginning in the same area?
- \* The lower field serves as habitat for both large and small animals. Some of these are field animals, not forest animals. Where will they go? With the present activities on the trails the animal population is dwindling. How disappointing it would be to have to uproot mother nature at its finest.
- \* We are also concerned about increased traffic on North Shore Road, a road that is already way beyond its capacity.

We have been property owners across the road from the lower field for a great many years. In fact it was my father and uncle (Devenus and Victor Pearson) who actually sold the property (field) to the Park's Department. My grandparents purchased the property in 1906. We have seen many changes to that field, from forest, to pasture, to raising hay for cattle, but never did we think someone would dig it up to make a parking lot! We urge you to look elsewhere for future parking lots.”

63. “After attending the planning meeting at Bloedel recently I have concerns regarding the park at the end of north shore road.

I've lived on northshore since 1977, my husband since 1950's.

- Oily runoff from cars driving along the roads around the lake is something I've observed first hand in the lake water. Inviting more traffic along a road situated next to the lake under the guise that the new park helps protect the lake is foolish. More cars = more pollution to the lake. Instead consider access to the new park from Wickersham/Park or Acme valley instead of northshore. Perhaps run a road under the power lines.

I've hiked the area of the "new" park over 40 years. At the meeting it was repeatedly said that co-existing with wildlife in the park and watershed was of utmost importance. When hiking the park area of Stewart Mt I used to see bears, coyotes, deer, rabbits....But recently the trails are inundated with people -and their dogs (off leash)!!! Now no wildlife can be seen. But dog crap is everywhere.

The plan shows an addition of a parking lot in the field across the road from 3199 N. shore which is the former Pearson house (built in 1904) and purchased by my husband and I in 1977 as only the second family to live in the historic home at the time. We restored the home and raised our family there for 28 years before moving to Agate Bay. The field that is being considered for parking was formerly owned by the Pearson family before they sold it to the Parks Dept. That family still owns property across the road from the field. While I can't speak for them, I assume they had no intentions of that beautiful field, which we all still use for hiking, apple/blackberry picking, and peaceful enjoyment become a parking lot! A travesty!

Who is going to police all this new park activity? As it currently is, cars are broken in to and driving winding, narrow North Shore Rd is harrowing enough!

Campsites are in the park plan. Who is going to clean up/monitor campsites and/any outhouses? I assume there will now need to be park rangers!?! This, of course, means more tax dollars being spent. Parks in theory sound great but we can't even afford the ones we have. I am not willing to be taxed more! Stewart Mt and the lake have been havens that are being destroyed by more people, more cars, more dogs....Sad."

64. "Hello, I live at 3201 Northshore Rd. directly across the street from the pasture that I'm told will be turned into a parking lot for users of the old railway trail. Here's my two cents:

I use the park, including the pasture, daily. I love the pasture and hope it stays as is. However, I understand that parks are meant to be shared and society as a whole will be benefitted if

others have access to them. I am not opposed to a parking area but have concerns regarding its location and access.

First of all, is anyone certain that there is a need for a parking lot? I've never been on the trail when the parking lot was so crowded that cars turned away and could not find a place to park.

Cars turn around in my driveway daily (on weekends it's multiple times daily) because they miss the left turn to go up the hill to the park. Will this parking lot solve that? Will there be an appropriately sized sign indicating where the trail is and where parking is? Currently, the sign with the little orange flag sticking out the side is inadequate.

If people park in the pasture, how will they get over the bridge and up to the trailhead? Will there be a separate trail along the road for people to access? Will the bridge be widened or will people be on the shoulder of the bridge as cars use it simultaneously?

Where exactly in the pasture will the parking lot be located? I don't want to look at a pasture full of cars or porta-potties, which is why I live out here, to get away from traffic and noise and a constant flow of people. How will this parking lot be balanced with my high property tax which reflects my environment that this parking lot will negatively impact? Will my property taxes go down because I now live across from a parking lot?

I'm not opposed to improved access to this paradise, but, I would like to see much more specific plans before I can say I'm in favor of it."

65. "First of all, I would like to express a big thank you for all of the hard and conscientious work your team has put forth on the Lookout Mtn and Lake Whatcom Park Trail Plan. As a resident of Bellingham, and frequent and avid user of the local recreation resources, it is motivating to see how you have incorporated such a broad array of public comment into the proposed trail plan. I can appreciate the amount of detailed work that has gone into the plan thus far, speaking from experience working for the I know I speak for many trail users (mountain bikers, runners, equestrians, hikers, etc.) when I say that it makes it encouraging to be a part of this ongoing process, and to look forward to lending a hand when it comes time to get more (volunteer!) boots on the ground to bring this new recreation resource to fruition.

With that in mind, I would like to comment specifically on the Draft Trail Plan as presented on Thursday, November 5th. I am primarily a mountain bike user, though I also use trails as a runner and a hiker. Here are my specific comments:

**Repeater Road (Access and trails):**

Request County Parks to evaluate private land access solutions with the Sudden Valley Homeowners Association in order to establish access to existing user-built trails off of Repeater Rd in Sudden Valley. In addition to this access of Repeater Road, it would also be good to evaluate additional parking/trailhead options off of Lake Whatcom Blvd in order to prevent unsafe trail exits along the road. I have personally been a part of the trail scouting, evaluating

potential routes for climbing trail/multi-use trails to connect Lookout Mountain and Repeater Road trails (Repeater Rd to ~Stumpwater area) and am hopeful that these options could fit into the final trail plan.

**Surfin' Turf Trail:**

Please consider the viability of the adjustments to the existing "Surfin' Turf" trail in Lake Whatcom Park. This type of trail speaks to the quality of "advanced-level" trails that bring people to Bellingham to ride/visit [ergo visit restaurants, hotels, move here!, etc.)

**Trail Slope (for Bike Descend)**

The draft trail plan shows a target grade of 12% grade - recommendation is to consider a target grade of 15% for the descend only trails to take advantage of the amazing terrain while creating world-class "advanced" level trails. For substantiated reference, the IMBA target/recommended grades for black diamond and double black diamond trails is 15%. Allowing a bit more aggressive grade would likely result in trails that provide a greater "value" to the local recreational resource (and the community for that matter) by standing out as something special (if they're too easy, they won't be destination trails), all the while maintaining the commitment to slope stability and protection of the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Again - thank you for all of your work and attention to comments thus far. We residents of Bellingham and users of the trails look forward to the progress of this great project. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.”

66. “Hi there, to whoever it concerns, I just want to express my concerns for continued trail access to Sudden Valley and the surrounding areas.

We need to **figure out a solution to SV access from Repeater Road along with the other locations adjoining Sudden Valley the mountain bikers frequently use.** I know you're working with WMBC, and I'd love to encourage you guys to continue working with WMBC to find solutions that keep the numerous active users of these trails happy, vibrant, and participating in the SV community.

I'm a biker living in Sudden Valley and know dozens of other riders who would love to see continued access to the trails we love and care about.”

67. “My name is Joshua Loeffler and I am a resident of Sudden Valley. I have notice in the trail plan that you have left out the trails connecting to repeater rd. that connects to Sudden Valley.

That is one of my all time favorite spots to ride my mountain bike! Please take an interest in it and help is always available! More connector trails into Sudden Valley would be a huge blessing and also a overall activity booster for the SV community! Thanks for your time and the opportunity for the citizens of Whatcom County to have a word about the endless ideas for new trails on the beautiful land of Washington State.”

68. “I wanted to voice my support of the proposed draft plan for the Lake Whatcom conveyance lands. I mountain bike, hike, and trail run and like the way you've set up the trails. Keep up the good work. It looks like you've already looked at connector trails to link different parks/trail systems (Galbraith, Chuckanuts, Blanchard, Alger) and I would like to suggest you keep these as a high priority.

Thanks for your work and for listening to users' feedback. I can't wait to see the changes start!”

69. “Hello I am still concerned and uncomfortable with a number of trails not included in the park planning. They are:  
blade reversal  
Surf and turf

These trails are exceptional trails and even with them being off the radar and not public people have traveled from far away to ride and experience this level of expert recreation. These trails are a perfect example of what people will travel to ride. Supporting economy, groceries, hotels, shops, restaurants. I am aware these trails are currently too steep or on private road but please work with the WMBC and mitigate and fix these short term problems. Trails can be rerouted and fit into the plan for this park program. With the addition of these trail la this park can rise from an average park to an exceptional travel destination. Please save the trails!!!!”

70. “Hello, just wanted to reach out and thank you for the recent meeting that was held to outline trail direction for the new park. As a mountain biker I am very pleased that WCP took our feedback as a group and applied it. The addition of directional use trails and added connectivity is very exciting to see. I am particularly excited about the options on Stewart mountain as it is one of the prettiest areas with the best views. Brown Pow is a trail I currently ride about 2 -3 times a month and really enjoy the trail and the forrest it takes you through. I also urge you to look into making Surf n' Turf a legal trail and working with the WMBC to make it a sustainable trail. While the trails on Stewart are steep they can be modified to minimize any environmental impact and enjoyable as a more advanced trail option for riders. Thank you for all your hard work and I look forward to being a part of the process as this project proceeds.”

71. “My name is Jeff Soine, and my family has been a part of the North Shore of Lake Whatcom for over 100 years. When I was a young boy, by grandfather and his brother owned

all the property that is now being contemplated to be turned into a parking lot for park access at the end of North Shore Drive. My grandfather and his uncle were raised on the old Pearson family homestead that backed up to Smith Creek. Unlike Walt Larson, my grandfather didn't want to fight the parks department and decided to sell the property rather than wage a legal battle over the property that to us was a back field where one day we had hoped to build a home. There are many days we regret him making that decision, but he did it with the promise that the land would be held by the parks department and HE NEVER would have sold the land if he ever even an inkling that it would be turned into a parking lot.

I hope you understand the significant issues and damages to our property that would occur if a parking lot were to be put at that location. It would be very difficult to keep people from trespassing, as a lot with no lake access would encourage folks to find a way to get to the water. That way would definitely be across our property. Please reconsider your idea to create a lot in that space. It was sold to you by my family Uncle Vic Pearson and and my Grandpa Devenous Pearson and they would both roll over in their graves knowing that wonderful land would be wasted on a parking lot."

72. "I moved to Bellingham to ride mountain bikes , to establish a mountain bike focused company and to live in a community that values trails in our open spaces. After a life of experiencing other communities, I've come to see Bellingham as the center of American mountain biking. Our local trails show up often in international publications, and are the measure which other trails are gauged. Studies show there are nearly as many mountain bikers on trails than hikers. Additionally more and more frequently I see people traveling to come ride in our town.

After the trail planning meeting, I'd love to see the addition of Surf and Turf into the E. Lake Whatcom trail plan. We represent a majority of trail users in Bellingham, and are overwhelmingly the trail builders and maintainers in town as well. our industry has brought to town companies like Kona, Transition, Freehub, Canfield Brothers and the myriad bike shops.

The phrase "if you build it, they will come" is never more apropos than in this instance. I would like to see our community actively working toward building and legitimizing as much technical and demanding trail as possible.

Lastly, there was a lot of talk about issues with funding this project- I believe working with WMBC, we would be able to build ALL of the new trail with our legion of volunteers.

"If you will it, it is no dream, dude." - Theodore Herzel"

73. "I'm a Bellingham resident and would like to voice my support for the development of mountain bike trails in the reconveyance area near lake whatcomb. Specifically I would really appreciate the opening of the repeater road area and surf n turf trails to mountain bikers. I feel that the development of mountain bike trails in the area will positively impact all residents of

whatcomb county and Bellingham.”

74. “This draft looks excellent overall, from my point of view as a trail user who mostly mountain bikes. My only worries are that the trails accessed by Repeator Rd, as well as Surfin Turf, are not included in the plan. These popular areas would not only be a great addition for Bellingham area residents, they are the sort of trails that people come from out of town to ride- while they are here, they of course greatly add to the local economy.

Thank you for your efforts thus far.”

75. “Thank you for all the great work, the new plans look great. But I do have a few comments.

**As a Back Country Horseman:** There is still not defined equine access at either park. Parking is planned but not definitive .Equestrian trails do not connect to the trailhead on Lake Louise..

**As a senior and grandparent:**

Seniors and kids are not highly represented but cannot be ignored. Both parks are catering to the aggressive trail users. This is due to the steep topography of the areas and is not intentional. However the Lake Whatcom Park includes the Ken Hertz Trail, a special trail for users of all ages and abilities.. Most importantly, it is one of only two practical Lake Whatcom public accesses.

I do not feel that the aggressive trail users should be routed down the mountain onto this trail. Users whose primarily objective is trail use should be routed higher on the mountain. The Ken Hertz Trail use should be encouraged for lake access, either by enjoying the lakeside hike and bike or water access.

**Re North Shore residents:**

I don't believe planners are comprehending the traffic issues and they are not taking residents issues seriously.

From .6 mile east of the Forks restaurant to the end of N. Shore Rd the owners properties are bisected by North Shore Rd. In other words- the road runs through their front yards. Several of these beaches are communally owned. Often several families share a beach This is a great way to utilize a limited resource. It allows beach ownership at a reasonable price. It takes pressure off the public beaches. Safety for these residents cannot be ignored

I have heard suggestions of side walks and crosswalks. These suggestions show a lack of comprehension of the problem. Some of these beaches are 25 ft.wide. That would call for a lot of crosswalks. Residents do not want the road widened or sidewalks. That would only encourage speeding.

The only solution I can think of is a lowered speed limit. Even a seasonal lowering would help. I realize this will be the task of other agencies to address, but the Parks dept should be aware of it.

Most N. Shore residents use the park extensively and are very much in favor of it.

**As an independent User**

Although I recognize the importance of tourism in our area, residents should come first. Trying to attract crowds of people to the area is not in our best interests. Residents pay taxes and contribute to the economy far more than tourists.

The number of non-competitive trail users greatly out-number the competitive users. The primarily objective should be recreation for residents. A few competitions are ok but they should be secondary.

With increased traffic in the northwest, environmental concerns, and busy schedules, area parks are desirable. The goal of previous trail and park workshops was to have a park within a short distance of every county resident. Trying to make a park a "destination" is not desirable.

Thank you again for all your work."

76. "I would like to offer some input on the Reconveyance Draft Plan, but first I want to thank you for all the work & consideration of everyone involved!

As a mountain biker, I would really appreciate the existing Repeater Road trails being considered for future use, possibly with some climbing & connector trails to help with some of the current issues.

Also, the Surfin Turf trail is really popular, and is worth salvaging with some smart & sustainable reroutes. I believe there is a viable solution for this and it's worth pursuing!"

77. "I have a few comments and suggestions to consider as planning the development of the new areas around Lake Whatcom proceeds:

1. My preference is for single-use trails, but I know this is difficult to accomplish and please everyone. If a trail is multi-use, it needs to be wider to allow for bikes or horses to pass hikers. Making a trail wider, of course, increases the environmental impact.
2. Designating bike trails as ascend only is good; even then, signage needs to remind bikers to signal before passing. I hike a lot in Larrabee Park where numerous trails are used by bikers and hikers. There are serious hazards with this mix. Certainly no trail should mix bikers descending and hikers.

3. For trails used by bikers, how can they be built to prevent or at least minimize erosion? Bike tires cut into the soil and create a nice indentation for water to flow in.

4. Is it possible to omit building any equestrian trails? When hiking in Larrabee and in the mountains, I have seen the significant trail damage caused by horses' hooves. Also, there is the "paddies" left on the trail. This is a watershed area and that would affect the stream and lake water quality.

I appreciate the detailed planning work that is being conducted and the opportunity for public input."

78. "I wish to thank you wholeheartedly for all the work that has taken place to make this parkland available for community use. There is so much more enthusiasm and call for more trail use in Whatcom County and I know that the community is very excited about the potential new trails on this plan.

As an equestrian I would like to express my appreciation for the inclusion of horse riders in the current plan. The equestrian community is smaller than that of the mountain bikers and therefore will not have as many users (or voices) as the bikers or the hikers, but I am very glad to see that even though our numbers may be smaller, we have not been excluded from the trails proposed.

As the trails are developed, I would like to request that equestrian use be considered with a view to making the new trails as multi-user as possible. Separating user groups does not make for twice as many trails but makes for fewer trails for all of us. I have also experienced with bikers on Galbraith and in other areas, that working together makes for more community, greater enthusiasm for our joint trails and more volunteers for trail maintenance. Shared use prevents attitudes of entitlement and division. Working together, maintaining the trails as a community, and educating users to understand the needs of other users is, I strongly believe, the best way for us to approach the newly planned trails. I personally have seen a huge shift in the attitudes on multi-use trails. Our local bikers have been fabulous in recent years learning how to respectfully work with equestrians. Equestrians have become much more savvy to "leave no trace" principles and are far more likely to fix trails as they go (holes, downed limbs, etc) and to remove manure from the trail surface. The training of horses to be more confident (use of obstacles and fear reduction training) also means that modern horses are less spooky on trails and are not as fearful of bikes and runners than they may have been in past years. In general... we are becoming a more educated and accepting community and we should encourage this trait by creating multi-user trails, and limiting single-user trails.

There may be, of course, terrain issues to consider as the trails are constructed and there may be areas where it is impractical to create trails that include stock use. However, I wish to

encourage the planning committee to do whatever can be done to allow horses and stock on as many trails as possible.

I would also like to request that turnpikes be considered as an alternative to bridges where possible as these have longer lifespan and are safer and more durable for equestrian use. Where bridges are built for stock use I request that the bridge builders consult with the equestrian groups (such as Back Country Horsemen) to learn the safest construction methods such as, triple stringers, thick bridging material, rough surface, toe rails, etc.

It is also wise that the committee recognize the long history of stock use in this county and the fact that many miles of trails on our surrounding hills were originally created and have been maintained by equestrians. Modern users may include more bikers and hikers, but that certainly should not mean that stock users should be excluded on any level. There are many equestrians in this county who have been (and are) able and willing to take an active part in trail building and maintenance, packing in supplies and tools, packing in gravel, etc. Horses are also useful in initial trail construction for packing loose soil to prevent creating holes and sinking spots later in the life of the trail. Most trail riders carry full saws, lopping sheers, short shovels and other equipment and spend many hours throughout the year maintaining the trails they and others use.

Overall, I wish to express that equestrians are valuable and respectful trail users and should not be seen as damaging to trails. We look forward to gaining access to these wonderful new trails, help create and maintain them, and have access to as many of them as possible along with all other user groups.

Thank you so much for hearing my viewpoint.”

79. “I would like to add my voice to the conversation around the Lookout and Stewart Mountain reconveyance trail network planning. Overall I was extremely happy as a mountain biker, hiker and forest lover living in Bellingham to see that the goals include reestablishing a mature forest environment as well as working with the incredible community of trail builders and users in town to establish a world-class destination trail network to add to the riches Bellingham already has. I look forward to this process continuing, and when the time comes to put tools to dirt I look forward to contributing some sweat equity to this trail network as well!

I would like to ask that the parks district consider the WMBC's proposals to reopen and legitimize the Surfin' Turf trail on Stewart, as well as the trails in the Repeater Road area on Lookout. Surfin' Turf in particular is a trail of legendary status amongst not only Bellingham local riders but people from all over the state, who come to Bellingham specifically to ride some of these signature trails. The WMBC has established a proposal for rerouting of Surfin' Turf to follow parks district guidelines, and I believe that based on the example of the new trailwork done in Larrabee State park, the WMBC and Bellingham's rider-builder community can deliver on this proposal in a way that both respects the environment as well as maintains the incredible spirit of Bellingham riding. The Repeater Road trail segments present some access concerns,

but the WMBC has proven in the past that they are capable of working closely with private landowners to allay concerns and create a plan that works for all interested parties.

Overall, I'm incredibly impressed with the responsiveness of all parties, the parks district in particular, to feedback in this process. As a new Bellingham resident, watching this develop has made me very proud to live in this town and in Whatcom County. Thanks so much for considering our input."

80. "I would like to commend Whatcom County Parks & Recreation for developing a Trail Plan that takes into consideration the interests/wishes of the major user groups (hikers, mtn. bikers, runners, backpackers, equestrians, nature lovers). I am also encouraged to see that considerable attention has been paid to the critical goal of protecting the environment (trees, soils, streams/drainages, habitat, the lake, etc.). The importance of keeping the Lake Whatcom Reservoir watershed as healthy as possible cannot be overstated.

I present the following comments for consideration in the Final Draft planning process:

1) Eliminating inappropriate trails: It was encouraging to hear the comments of the user group representatives who have played a big role in crafting this plan. The only outlier in that regard was the WMBC representative, who expressed displeasure that trails in the Repeater Road area of Lookout Mtn. and the "Surfin' Turf" trail on the Stewart Mtn. side of the park are not included in the Trail Plan. That position has been reiterated in WMBC emails and Facebook messages to its membership. I am quite familiar with those rogue trails, having GPS-mapped and photographed them, and shared that info with WCP&R employees earlier this year. The trails were built in violation of various rules related to soil disturbance, critical areas buffers, protected habitat, surface runoff, and other environmental concerns; in fact, they violate various aspects of the County Critical Areas Ordinance, County Planning permit processes, Lake Whatcom Watershed rule, and SEPA regulations. Significant portions of these trails are built very close to and, in some cases, across streams, gullies, and other drainage features. It is hard to imagine a way that these trails could be modified to meet appropriate environmental standards, while satisfying the wishes of a small subset of the mountain bike community that seeks extreme riding parameters. I encourage WCPR to adhere to the conditions of the Draft Plan and keep these trails out of the mix.

2) Keeping recreational user groups engaged in the process. Full build-out of the Trail Plan will take years to accomplish. In the meantime, WCPR should encourage recreational user group leadership to: a) keep their constituents informed of the steps in the build-out process; b) encourage volunteer participation in the official planning, building and rogue trail decommissioning process; c) strongly discourage constituents from all forms of illegal trail building activities.

3) Financially incentivize legal trail building. I am concerned that illegal trail-building activities will continue, even after Trail Plan implementation commences. Something more concrete needs to be done than simply posting signs forbidding such activities. One possible solution

would involve the use of financial incentives to discourage illegal trail-building. Specifically, allocation of annual funds to Trail Plan implementation should include sufficient resources to decommission existing illegal trails. The building of new illegal trails would, by definition, take funds out of the official trail-building pot to finance decommissioning of the illegal trails. Perhaps such a mechanism would create enough peer pressure to eliminate those illegal activities. User groups could enhance this process by getting their volunteers involved in both user education and trail decommissioning efforts.

4) Preventing motorized transport on Reconveyance Lands: Locked access roads for service vehicles currently exist in both Lookout Mtn. and Lake Whatcom Parks. As the plan states, these roads should be maintained. However, non-service use of these roads should be denied to all others. As recently as several months ago, mountain bikers were using gate keys illegally to gain motor vehicle access to rogue trails for both trail-building and riding purposes. We encourage WCPR to create a more secure gate and monitoring system to keep the Reconveyance Lands free of unauthorized vehicle access. In addition, we encourage WCPR to formally deny any form of shuttle service for mountain bikers and other recreational users beyond official parking areas and service road gates.

The value of the reconveyance lands cannot be overstated. It is of utmost importance to future generations that development of recreational facilities on those lands be done with all due care and deliberation. Rushing the process benefits no-one in the long run.

These comments are presented from the perspective of an avid hiker, mountain biker, and environmental advocate. Thank you for your consideration.”

81. “I'd like to express my support for what you've done so far. I like the direction this plan is going.

I'd also like to reiterate that I think we should be including existing user built trails in the recreation plan.

(Surf n Turf, Brown Pow, Cougar Ridge, Stump Water, Waterfall Trail).

Please work with the WMBC to come to an agreement on any reroutes that may be needed to keep these trails.

I'd like to see the Parks Dept work out Repeater Road access and maintain the user-built trails in that area.

I'd also like to see the addition of a connector trail from Repeater Road to Lookout Road.

Finally, please review any options to provide mountain bike exits at the end of trail WBD4. On the draft trail plan this trail ends without good alternatives to continue down or out.

Perhaps WH2 could allow mountain bikes.”

82. “As a mountain biker and hiker, there are user-built trails on Stewart Mtn. that I've ridden and hiked for years. I don't see them on the park plan, and that has me concerned that those trails (those that in many ways parallel the power line road, as well as the local legend 'Surf and Turf') might become inaccessible to the local and visiting riders. I have friends who came to the City of Subdued Excitement specifically to ride trails such as these, and ended up moving here, or planning future visits where they will stay at local hotels and dine out in Bellingham's fine array of eateries.

I personally also look forward riding trails on the Sudden Valley side of the lake. Thank you for the amazing work you are doing to enhance the recreational opportunities here, and at the same time protecting these vital watersheds.”

83. “I am an avid mountain biker and was reviewing the new draft for Lookout Mountain and Whatcom park. It would be great to include user built trails for mountain biking as there are quite a few that are very well built and common for people to come to from quite a ways away (Seattle, etc) just to ride those.

Thank you for including mountain bikers in the plan and I look forward to seeing what the future can bring.”

84. “I am writing to voice my opinion on the omission of Repeater Rd and Surfin' Turf from the county parks plan. These two areas have user built trails that are world class, sustainable, and would be a huge boon for the sudden valley businesses if a bunch more people were attracted to the area. The amount of work that has gone into these trails is staggering and the cost would be immense to replicate. Please make them permanent contributions to this areas recreational draw.”

85. “Watershed trails Stewart Mountain.

Trail EHBA1 is listed as a phase 2 project in the current trail draft. This trail would be part of the proposed Bellingham-Mount Baker trail and has support from the County Parks Commission, County Executive and the Bellingham City Mayor.

The trail corridor in this area is currently the most used trail corridor to reach the view at the top and to access the downhill bike trail. Trails in this corridor have been used for the last four years for trail races to reach the view point at the top. Changing the EHBA1 to phase 1 would extend the current system up to the view point and allow more trails to be used in the current trail race. Building this trail at the same time as upgrading the EHBA2 trail would make it easier to focus trail building efforts in this corridor. It would make the two trails more seamless if routed and built at the same time. Building these trails as one project would give volunteers,

the public and supporters a measurable goal, a trail to the view point.

I am recommending that trail EHBA1 be added to phase 1 projects.”

86. “Trail planning comments for the lake Whatcom watershed trails.

Trails EHBA1 and EHBA2 on the Stewart Mountain side are shown as bike ascend only. These sections of trails would be used for the proposed Bellingham-Mount Baker trail system. The trail system is envisioned to be multi-use and bi-directional up until the trail reaches the wilderness boundary.

The multi-use, bi-directional trail has support from the County Parks Commission, County Executive and Bellingham City Mayor.

By re-designating EHBA1 and EHBA2 trails as bi-directional it would make the EMS2 trail a multi use, bi-directional single track loop.

The existing trails were built as moderately difficult directional down hill bike trails. Switching the direction would conflict with current use and would be difficult to enforce.

With the current configuration the only two options for descending from the upper power line area on bike would be to take the difficult EBD2 downhill or ride the road. If you provide a moderate single track option to descend from the top this would better suite average and beginner rider and those not looking to bomb down the mountain.

These trails could be built safely for bi-directional use by keeping the trail tight and slowing down descending traffic and keeping the trail corridor open with clear sight lines.

EHBA1 is located south of the road in a steep section of hillside. The Bellingham-Mountain Baker trail as shown on the map provided the county parks parallels the road to the north were it would be easier to construct the trail and provide for more view opportunities.

It's my recommendation that EHBA1 and 2 be re-designated as multi-use bi-directional and that EHBA1 be located north and above the access road.

Thanks for all the work.”

87. “Lake Whatcom watershed trail planning Stewart Mountain.

I'm making a recommendation to add trail EHBA1 to phase 1 projects. This trail is part of the Bellingham-Mount Baker trail proposal. I have worked closely with the County Parks since the 2011 user group meeting to help plan new trails and mitigate user built trails. Since that time several user build trails have been built including EHB1 and EHB1. By adding these trails to the phase 1 projects, the Parks are reaffirming the idea that asking for forgiveness is more successful then working through the process. Of course these trails are now being use and need to be upgraded. If the Parks want more people to be involved with the process and believe that the Parks can accomplish trail projects in a reasonable time frame, putting user built trails ahead of planned and community supported trails is not a great way to show that. It also allows user built trail routing to dictate trail corridors when those may not be the best routes, which reaffirms that if you want a trail corridor, build it first."

88. "Lake Whatcom watershed trails Stewart Mountain.

Looking at the phasing map again trail EMU2 and EMU3 are phase 3 projects. These trails are part of the proposed Bellingham Mount Baker trail and have public support. This trail corridor is already being used to access the view point at the top of the park. It's my recommendation to build part of EMU2 and all of EMU3 in the first phase. EMU3 should be one trail starting at the top of EHBA1.

The goal is to build the Bellingham-Mount Baker trail section in the new park as one project. This section of trail would consist of EHB3, EMUS5, EHBA1, EMU2 and EMU3. It would be much clearer if there's trails were linked together as one trail.

Two other recommendations: first remove the dead end trail to the campsite at the end of EMU8. Put the camp sites along the trail. The reason being people will naturally cut down to the trail instead of going back to circle around. This would cause braided trails in this area that you find at most campsites. Second there is a natural view spot on the road 100 yards before the the intersection of EMU3 and EMU4. This view is one of the few that overlooks the lake without viewing the power lines. It would need to be maintained and kept open. This could be done as a phase 1 project. I have show the location and view on the attached map with a photo.

Last year Cascade Mountain Runners did a online public petition to show support for the Bellingham-Mount Baker trail we recieved 296 signatures in support. I've attached the survey to back up these recommendations. I would be happy to provide the data on the survey if you would like to see it."

89. "We are writing to express our strong support and appreciation for the draft recreational trail plan presented at the November 5 public meeting.

Our loosely formed coalition, representing environmental, recreation, watershed and quality of life constituencies of Whatcom County, congratulate you on this plan that strikes a sound balance between environmental and recreational considerations. That our diverse group has

found common ground from which to support your most recent draft is a testament to the commitment of Whatcom County residents to create a legacy and “do it right”.

We very much appreciate the thought, dedication and hard work it has taken to put together this complex proposal that effectively blends recreation, water quality, wildlife and environmental values. The variety, length, and connectivity of the proposed trail system, as well as the large tracts of land left undisturbed, showcase a thoughtful and sustainable park for our and future generations to enjoy. Sustainability and environmental protection are justifiably paramount concerns while providing first class recreational opportunities for a variety of trail users from casual dog walkers, equestrians, bikers, hikers and joggers to more challenging long distance routes and downhill mountain bike trails.

Your receptivity to our input is also deeply appreciated. Continuing in this vein, we would like to highlight continued emphasis on several key points:

- The narrow and problematic North Shore Road is a concern that needs to be addressed as use intensifies with the development of the park.
- Enforce no/low tolerance for rogue trail building or continued use of illegal trails or trails designated for closure.
- Retain large tracts of trail-free sensitive areas to promote wildlife habitat and watershed protection.
- Procure adequate funding for development, layout and construction of sustainable trails and access points.
- Strive for accurate representation of would be users through countywide survey or trailhead surveys. (For instance, over 70% of respondents to the recently released Upper Nooksack Recreation Survey cite hiking or walking as the reason of their visit.)
- Assure that trail and environmental standards are adhered to as various volunteer groups, stakeholders and County crews work to improve existing trails and build out proposed trails.

With sincere appreciation and great expectations.”

90. “I've attached a letter providing feedback for the third Reconveyance planning meeting. Overall, the meeting went very well and I felt like the input from the biking community was understood and taken into consideration. There are a couple items that I would like work on addressing but overall, the planning process is heading in the right direction.:

On behalf of the WMBC, I'd like to thank you again for hosting the 3rd public planning meeting for the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance at Bloedel Donovan Park. We were again happy to see

such high attendance and passion from the mountain bike community along with our conservation & recreation partners.

First and foremost, we'd like to say that the amount of effort in the most recent draft was very apparent and appreciated. It shows that WCP took the input and desired user experiences from the mountain bike and recreation community into consideration. Rod and Reid's efforts of scouting trails and exploring the landscapes with Eric and other user groups displayed far more boots-on-the-ground knowledge in the latest version. We were happy to see that it was an amended version of "Alternate 3" which provides the most trail opportunities within the park.

#### Trail Types:

This was an area of concern for all user groups after the last two planning meetings when the earlier drafts showed a homogenous trail network that didn't indicate the various types of uses and trails. The most recent plan showed that your staff listened to the overwhelming feedback to provide multi-use along with unique experiences for different user groups. In particular, the flexibility surrounding "ascend-only" and single use trails for mountain bikers is a progressive approach to limit user conflicts while also allowing our group to have a bike-specific experience on a percentage of trails. In the previous meeting's comments, there were 143 individual requests for single use mountain bike trails, so it's obvious the park's staff did incorporate this feedback.

#### Additional Input:

While we feel the most recent Draft Plan is headed in the right direction and much improved, we do have a few areas of concern that we'd like to give additional feedback. Those areas are outlined below.

#### Repeater Road (Lookout Mountain):

In our discussions with trail users and residents of Sudden Valley (SV) and along Lake Whatcom Boulevard, the lack of proposed trails in this area is still of concern. Many current users have stated that they'd like to have the trail network extend into this area. Additionally, there are several user-built trails that are heavily used in this zone and these are primary recreation spots for these residents. However, these particular trails and this area, in general, do pose challenges because of access points and we recognize this is an issue to be resolved. One item we've heard from the SV residents is they would like to help County Parks staff work to gain trailhead access with the SV Homeowners Association. We have compiled a list of hikers, runners and bikers from SV who will bring this to their HOA as well and we are happy to share those contacts with your staff as well.

Over the past couple of months, our crew has spent time scouting this area with the intent of alleviating these access concerns on Repeater Road. We have determined a well-routed and beautiful connector between Lookout Mountain Road and the top of Repeater Road. For residents coming in from Gate 5 of Sudden Valley, it would provide them connectivity into the greater trail network. It also would connect into any future Glenhaven/Cain Lake trails. For

mountain bikers looking to access the pre-existing trails off of Repeater Road, it would give them this opportunity without having to gain access through SV – if that isn't resolved.

Additionally, we have scouted potential routes along the Lake Whatcom Boulevard corridor and have found viable multi-use routes from Lake Whatcom Boulevard to the top of Repeater Road. These are important connectors not only for mountain bikers, but residents along the lake and from The Firs Camp would greatly benefit from this access point as well. (See Exhibit A – Repeater Road to Lookout Road Connections)

#### Ascending Trail (Stewart Mountain):

In the draft park plan, there is a user-built mountain bike route that is currently being used in both directions by bikers and hikers. While most of the mountain bikers ascend that route, there is historical use in both directions on that trail including builders of those trails and we feel this likely will be met with resistance from those who have been recreating on Stewart Mountain for a decade or longer. (See Exhibit B – User Built Bike Trail)

#### Surfin' Turf Trail (Stewart Mountain):

Per our discussions beginning in August of 2013, we understand there are several areas of concern for this trail:

1. The grades of several sections of the trail (particularly above the exit) are unsustainable.
2. The exit is poorly located and mountain bikers exiting onto the Hertz Trail could be problematic.
3. The overall steep grade of that section of Stewart Mountain.
4. Potential Eagle habitat near the bottom of the trail.

While we are aware of the potential issues surrounding this trail, we also know that this is one of the most beloved trails in Whatcom County and some have said, Washington State, and is the type of trail that brings people into our area to ride bikes. This is a desirable route for many reasons: the vigorous climb required to get to the top, a full top-to-bottom route that ends near the lake for a post-ride swim in the summer and, of course, the beautiful views along the Hertz trail.

In the previous meeting's comments, this trail was the 2nd most mentioned trail by users (behind Cougar Ridge) and in those comments, 117 people suggested to have user-built trails incorporated where they make sense. As such, it is our belief that there are solutions that alleviate all of the above concerns. In late 2013, we spent many days scouting this area and proposed necessary routing changes along with several smaller reroutes to bring the grade down and bring it into acceptable trail standards. We are attaching that proposal again for your review (See Exhibit C – Stewart Mountain Proposal), but have summarized our solutions to the above 4 concerns:

1. The proposed 3 major reroutes would bring the overall grade from 17% to 13.6%. It is possible to bring that grade down further with several, smaller reroutes that would still allow us to retain the trails character.
2. The exit would either be altered or the location moved altogether. Also, we recommend a chicane or similar choke point at the proposed hiking trail and/or Hertz Trail intersection that ensures mountain bikers dismount before entering the Hertz Trail. Bikes are allowed on the Hertz trail, so a concern we've heard is how riders on Surfin' Turf would exit onto it, but that is easily resolvable.
3. The section of Stewart Mountain where Surfin' Turf is located is less steep than the ridgeline to the north of it that WCP has a proposed hiking-only trail (where a user-built hiking trail already exists).
4. We would move the exit section north to get away from potential eagle habitat if that is proven to be an issue. This would be the same issue for the exit of the proposed hiking trail in that location.

In closing, we look forward to working through the final planning phases with your team at Whatcom County Parks that will create a world-class park while also protecting our watershed. If you would like to discuss the above items with myself and the WMBC Board, please don't hesitate to reach out to us."

91. "Attached is the Whatcom Land Trust letter of support for the draft recreational trail plan. What a great job County Parks and Recreation did in drafting this up -- I am sure there will be plenty of good comments and suggestions, but the draft really defines the vision that started in 2007 (and even earlier). Thanks again!:

I am writing this letter to express Whatcom Land Trust's support for the draft recreational trail plan that was recently presented at the November 5th public meeting. This plan strikes a good balance with the landscape and its proposed benefactors. We appreciate the thought, dedication and hard work it has taken to put a proposal of this magnitude together, blending sustainable shared and single use recreation and water, wildlife and environmental protection.

The variety, length and connectivity of the proposed trail system as well as the large tracts of land left undisturbed showcase a well thought out and sustainable park for our and future generations enjoyment. These undeveloped tracts promote wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and a wonderful availability for solitude and reflection. It remains paramount to keep sustainability and environmental protection in the forefront while providing recreational opportunities for a variety of trail users, from casual dog walkers, equestrians, bikers and joggers to more challenging long distance routes and downhill mountain bike trails.

The vision for transferring state lands to the county for park purposes, began many years ago and supported by so many groups and organizations, was to provide a very real asset for the residents of Whatcom County as well as the countless visitors who will be the benefactors of superb recreational opportunities. This plan, as developed, identifies those community assets and clearly defines that original vision. Thank you for the good work on this.

We offer our help and insight as we move into the next steps of this proposal.”

92. “I was unable to attend the latest public meeting, but having reviewed the latest draft proposals, I would like to express gratitude to the parks department for adopting to the feedback provided following the previous draft proposal. I'm still a bit concerned that there aren't enough bike specific trails though. On both sides of the lake, it seems unreasonable that hiking specific trails would exceed the mileage length of bicycle specific trails. Cyclists cover distances at greater speeds than hikers, and as a result we need more trail to provide a comparable experience in terms of usage time. Logically, with such an abundance of mountain bike enthusiast in the area, this usage time should be equal to, if not greater than, the hiker only usage, meaning that the B and BD trails should be roughly twice as long as the H only trails in order to provide an equitable experience. But in all instances, there is actually less bicycle specific terrain than hike specific?

Part of this may be addressed by simply incorporating existing trails in the reconveyance plan that are currently omitted. This includes the three trails off Repeater Rd as well as Surf-N-Turf on the Stewart side. And I would encourage additional bike-specific trail planning/developments on both side of the water. In an age of video games and digital fixation, I'd like to see us using this land to provide as many opportunities to connect with the outdoors as possible. It's not every day that we have a chance to create a park like this. Lets take this moment to keep Bellingham at the forefront of recreational opportunity and lay a foundation for future generations to get out and explore.”