

I am the president of the Deming Water Association. We are a small water system for the community surrounding the Mt. Baker Senior/Middle School complex on Mt. Baker Highway. I Have just become aware of the planning process for Baker to Bellingham Recreation Area and will begin participating with the April 10 public Meeting.

Generally, I personally am in favor of DNR expanding the recreation opportunities in our area as it will benefit our economic base and provide additional ways for our county citizenry to enjoy our natural resources. Even though I support developing motorized recreational areas as part of the over all plan, as president of our water association, I must make sure some risk factors are raised to be evaluated with the proposed Sumas Mt. motorized trail system.

Our water supply comes from artesian springs from a deep-seated bedrock formation that is part of the Sumas Mt. geology and hydrological network. Our water source originates from the Sumas Mt. geological formation. We would ask that as part of the planning process for expanding the recreational use of public lands, DNR assesses the risk to our water supply that the motorized trail system might represent before proceeding with it's development. Specifically, the first thing that comes to my mind is petroleum pollution (gas and oil) getting into our deep-seated bedrock water supply. Also, currently we do not have any asbestos in our water. I have heard that there are naturally occurring asbestos deposits in the Sumas Mt. Area. If this is true it would be important that the an assessment of potential risks of off road vehicles stirring up the asbestos and freeing it to enter our drinking water source that comes from the Sumas Mt. Area be completed.

Thank you for your work and time spent on opening the recreational opportunities in our county. I look forward to attending the future planning meetings to raise our concerns for the safety and protection of the Deming community water supply, so that they can be included in any environmental assessments that are done as part of opening up the Sumas Mt. area to motorized recreation trails.

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The natural environment of Whatcom County special. Let's keep it that way.

We are life long residents of the west side of Sumas Mountain(a.k.a. Nooksack Mountain) . We built our home on property the family has had since 1949. We have hiked up the mountainside all our lives. We are a family of loggers and understand and support the industry. We do not support ORV use on forest lands and have witnessed the destruction ORV enthusiasts cause. We have had near misses with ORVs as they enjoy their destructive sport. It is a frightening and unnecessary experience.

The DNR monitors the forest practices on the mountainside behind us to ensure that soils stay put, trees get replanted, and this form of agriculture continues for future generations. An ORV park is NOT compatible with this duty.

At the Whatcom County Council hearing your representatives heard testimony from our community members living on or near the proposed ORV parks, overwhelmingly opposed. I did not hear testimony from any one favoring these Parks to say they lived in the community. I hope you found this testimony enlightening.

From the ORV community we heard several main themes: ORV is a family sport; ORVers are responsible and teach their children responsibility; ORV use is the [only] form of outdoor recreation that disabled family members can easily enjoy.

--Yes, ORVing can be a family sport, but it is also a sport that is enjoyed by significant numbers of younger, less responsible individuals. Indeed, from observation, that is the norm.

--Visit, I presume you have, Walker Valley ORV Park and you will see that informal trail blazing is common; riders don't stick to the established trails but create their own. The argument that we need this dedicated ORV trail system to prevent off trail riding on our mountain is notevident.

-- Lost Lake (known to us as Hidden Lake), a Nooksack Valley School District Aron Molinder school park, is next to the proposed park. ORV riders will find this lake and inevitably feel the need to ride into it, defacing a fragile lakeside. What remedies will we citizens have when that happens?

-- We also have Silver Lake County Park next to the Red Mountain proposal. Silver Lake is a quiet, serene lake, heavily used by our county residents and tourists and horse riding enthusiasts. Motor boating is prohibited. This noisy ORV sport is incompatible with Silver Lake recreation.

--I do not know how to respond sensitively to the claim that ORV use is the only form of outdoor recreation disabled family members can enjoy. Who am I to judge this? But I would believe other outdoor recreation opportunities could be found that the family could enjoy with their disabled family member.

--I am always chagrined and saddened when real people are impacted negatively by a public policy that is not outweighed by a "greater good". There is not a greater good in this proposal. Many people, not just our immediate mountainside neighbors, will be negatively impacted, from noise, loss of privacy, increased road risk, loss of property value and, so importantly, over stretching our emergency services (our e. m. s. and fire protection is volunteer!), both fire, and law enforcement. We worry about forest fire on the mountain behind us, especially in recent years of high heat and low humidity. Aren't you worried about the increased risk of fire from an ORV park?

A the Kendall Community Center meeting, one of the DNR staff suggested that the agency would add staff for education and enforcement. In this age of stretched state general fund dollars, is that realistic? I hope that you would not propose using scarce out door recreation funding for this on-going staff expense.

And the big picture, encouraging carbon use is something that DNR Commissioner Hillary Franz has said should not be a part of DNR policy: "This policy must look at our natural resource areas, particularly our farms and forests, as critical areas that will actually help reduce carbon emissions." I am wondering whether her words have gotten to you, our local, no-doubt well intentioned, DNR staff.

Finally, why do you not reconstitute your committee and make sure that the local community, all views, are adequately represented on the B to B Advisory committee?

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I am a recent transplant to the Silver Lake / Red Mountain area. My husband and I bought our house there almost 2 years ago, knowing that we would have a 1 hour-each-way commute to work, specifically for the quiet, peacefulness and beauty of the area. Opening Red Mountain to off road ATV and motorcycles would destroy the very peacefulness that we specifically chose. Not to mention that with more vehicles, the area is quite likely to become more urbanized, more trashy, and distinctly less pristine.

This past summer, we all saw the dangers of forest fires. With climate change, our summers (peak tourist time) are expected to grow hotter and drier. The inadvertent sparks from brushing a metal vehicle part against a stone, or a poorly extinguished fire, or a random cigarette butt, could spell disaster for the entire area and community. Please do not increase our risk.

Please, please, keep the area open to hikers and mountain bikes only.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

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I was unable to attend the last meeting regarding the proposed uses of designated DRN lands. I was hoping it was not too late to give my input. I am coming from the trail rider (Horse) perspective mainly, but I also do a lot of hiking and trail running.

I grew up going to Silver Lake Horse camp with my 4-H group and riding the trails. Every year our family goes up to the horse camp to camp. The difference is we no longer bring our horses when camping. While we used to be able to access the Heady road trails from Silver

Lake as well at trails up Black Mountain and Red Mountain. Sadly most of those trails are gone. Now our only option is one trail up Red Mt.

As a trail rider, I enjoy rides at Stuart Mt and Red Mt as well as Chuckanut, Heady Road and Veddar Mt. It is nice to have the options to choose from. I have looked over both of the current proposed user maps and would like to say that I support Concept D. Currently the 4 main user groups, motorized, hiker, mt. biker, and horse rider have already sort of "unofficially" claimed their own areas for use. For the most part, they as a whole tend to respect each others "turf." The mt. bikers use Galbraith Mt. Most horse people respect that and stay off that area. The motorized users mainly use Sumas Mt/ Paradise Valley Road area. The hikers can use pretty much any area. The horse people do pretty good working with the hikers and do an awefull lot of trail maintenance that is of benefit to all user groups.

Over the years though, the horses have been losing more of their trail access. The areas open to riding are becoming more limited all the time. It would be a big hit to our optional places to ride if we were to also lose Red Mt. to motorized users. With the Silver Lake Horse Camp already there, it would be the ultimate demise of the horse camp to lose the use of its one last remaining trail.

I ask that as you consider the possible uses of these proposed areas, that you consider limiting the motorized users to one area. All other user groups can work together to share the trails, but the motorized vehicles because of their excessive speed and noise can be dangerous to both hikers and bikers, and are especially dangerous to horses. Giving them a "mountain" that is all to themselves seems like the safest solution for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read over this. I hope you will consider some of my concerns and ideas as you work to put together the best possible plan for the use of our public lands.