

Now that Baker to Bellingham planning will be limited to non-motorized recreation, will the membership of the Committee be updated?

I see six representatives of motorized vehicle advocacy organizations on the Committee listed on the Baker to Bellingham web page. This is over one third of the total membership of the committee. While I appreciate the willingness of these individuals to contribute their time and energy to the planning effort to date, it seems incongruous and inconsistent with the updated Baker to Bellingham planning goals to continue a process where over one third of the planning membership has stated interests at odds with the planning goals. I understand that these individuals may engage in non-motorized recreation as well as their motor sports, but they are on the Committee representing and advocating motorized vehicle activities which are now irrelevant to the planning process. In fact, unlawful off-road vehicle activity in some of the Whatcom County forested areas is clearly at odds with non- motorized users and is responsible for some of the strong anti-motorized sentiment expressed at recent meetings.

It is inappropriate to continue representation of motorized vehicle advocacy groups on the Baker to Bellingham Planning Committee. If Committee membership at the current level is desired, additional membership from non- motorized outdoor recreation groups can be increased to replace the motorized group representatives. We don't have baseball players planning rules for swimming or soccer. Can we keep representation on this important committee consistent with the current goals?

I am deeply disappointed with DNR's performance and complete disconnect of responsibility toward the motorized community in Whatcom County.

DNR took all the right steps and made great progress with this recreation plan until the Whatcom County Council meeting where Tim Stapleton utterly dismantled our cause with a disgusting performance; and has since discontinued communication with us. His attendance at our committee meetings over the past two years has been non-existent. Per the council, his inability to answer even basic questions - which anyone who had attended the planning sessions would have known the answer to - doomed the result of the WCC's decision process on zoning amendments.

More frustrating than Tim Stapleton's singular lackluster appearance is the fact that the Whatcom County Council stated on record that if DNR could answer their questions and provide some sort of plan outline that the necessary zoning amendments could be reconsidered. This is when DNR gave up. This is when DNR broke my trust.

The truth is that by giving up on legitimate motorized recreation, DNR has done injustice to EVERY recreation group as well as the local landowners. Unregulated trails will not stop, or be something that can be reduced with DNR's current attitude. Yes, it's been mentioned more than once, but falls on deaf ears.

Individually, I think several of our DNR representatives have done a great job; thank you Dana Leavitt, Glen Glover and Chris Hankey. As a whole, DNR has lived up to its historic reputation with our user group. You have forgotten, ignored or given up on the fact that we are a part of the Whatcom County community.

Give yourselves a pat on the back DNR, you will make at least 51% of the population happy while putting in the least amount of effort.

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BAKER TO BELLINGHAM RECREATION PLAN

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

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Didn't sleep well last night, as most of you may not be surprised.

Last night, I think Bill hit it best, in that after all the public input, work over the last 2+ years, and outreach we, the motorized community, did to help move this process along through the county council, only to have the DNR's upper management, namely Tim Stapleton, tank the interview/presentation at the council level (more than one will agree, and has said this was a bad move from the get go, to change the planned presenter at the last minute) , effectively setting the stepping stone for snubbing out the planning of motorized recreation needs in Whatcom County, after the dnr stating this is a 10-15yr plan of which we, sorry... You... are only 2 yrs into, is shameful.

It is truly a situation/feeling that I had hoped I never felt, but now can't help but feel, that when I signed up for, and accepted the position on the committee, I was to be a voice representing a large number of like minded individuals, putting ideas out there on behalf of ALL of those people. But, I guess in the end, those voices need to be heard on an individual basis to have any credibility.

For those still on the committee, I truly hope you all get what you hope to. It has been a pleasure working beside you for these last 2 years, and I am sure we will run into each other.

I am writing to encourage your work for finding a safe route off Highway 542 for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. I am a trail angel for this trail in Eureka, MT and I have seen the financial benefits it brings to my community. I urge you to help find a safe and environmentally sound route for the trail.

At tonight's meeting, while listening to comments made by my neighbors, I was watching the panel, in particular, Lance Hansen. When mention was made of bird watching, mushroom gathering, the Audabon Society, etc, he was suppressing snickers. Publicly showing disdain for those forms of recreation. I think that was highly inappropriate at a meeting of this sort. Since this was a comment opportunity for residents to voice their care and concern for their natural environment, it would have been appropriate for, at least one panel member to show his/her appreciation for that concern. Not once did a panel member applaud a citizen's concerns. The only applause from one member of the panel came after a woman commented that 'her husband wasn't happy if he didn't have a motor under him', and that she appreciated the ORV'ers' point of view.

This is a struggle between cultures: the culture of those who want peace and quiet, and have moved to an area that affords them that, and the culture of unlimited freedom to do as one pleases, no matter the consequences to others and their way of life. If concern for the environment and the peace it brings cannot be agreed upon by your ORV panel members, if that was an example of their 'working together', then I submit the panel should be disbanded and a new start begun.

The current plan does not include the trail east of acme from the south fork to the middle fork. This is the only section of trail missing to complete the connection between bellingham and mt baker.

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Very disappointed to hear that you have left out ALL motorized recreation planning from the Baker to Bellingham plan. Once again motorized users will be blocked out of public land. Can you tell me how much motorized access do we have in Whatcom County compared to non-motorized access?

Your vision is narrow minded and unfair. Public land should be shared by all user groups.

I attended the DNR Meeting at Mount Baker HighSchool. Unfortunately, the time for public comments expired before I could speak. This is what I would have said.

I read online the synopsis of comments made from previous meetings. There was a range of anti-government and anti-regulation remarks, but in a nutshell, their argument regarding ORVs seemed to say this -- "The reason I break the law riding my ORV is because you will not give me what I want, which is an ORV park in Whatcom County." This line of reasoning seems to be saying that because I can buy an ORV the public has a responsibility to give me a place to ride it.

To me, this is a little like saying that because I can buy a fishing rod, I have a right to fish where I want, when I want, for what I want.

However, rather than waste time trying to find the perfect analogy, let me get to the point. We know a great amount of damage is done to public lands and to private land by ORV riders.

These scofflaws have little reason to fear any consequences because there is virtually no enforcement of laws governing their use of or access to the public lands. Because you have, I think, seven ORV organization leaders on your advisory committee, I think it would be a good idea to use their expertise to design a sting operation to catch some of these criminals.

Certainly, they understand the ORV mindset better than the rest of us and should be able to give good advice on how to plan such an operation. I see it as something analogous to the way the Highway Patrol is able to interdict impaired drivers. A few thousand dollars in fines, perhaps the occasional arrest for some egregious act of vandalism like destroying the redds in a salmon-bearing stream, would certainly get the ORV population's attention as well as give some protection to private landowners.

I hope you will bring this idea before the advisory committee. I think it will reduce some of the existing abuse to our public lands and help direct ORV riders to use the sanctioned sites that already exist. Once the abuse is corrected, then there should be time given to maybe finding some alternative sites for their use like abandoned gravel pits or other environmentally degraded locations.

The Mt. Baker Group of the WA Chapter, Sierra Club, would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your work on the Baker to Bellingham plan. We applaud that you requested community feedback, patiently listened to many voices, and that you have now responded with a forward-looking plan that does not include off-road motorized use.

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We are pleased and support the act of opening DNR lands to recreational use.

We thank you for listening when Whatcom County Council unanimously rejected the re-zoning amendment for discussion. We fully support the decision by DNR to **NOT continue with attempts** to include motorized trail use in *any* future concept maps.

We support this process and urge you to take the following steps:

- 1) Continue listening to Whatcom County residents who are most impacted by the additional use of roads and land in the areas surrounding their homes.
- 2) We urge you to disband the original Advisory committee and instead invite

applications to form a new Advisory **council** who represent a balanced range of interests rather than the heavy-loading of motorized vehicle users. We would advise you to invite some of the well established hiking groups as well as residents in the area. This would allow more community stakeholders and outdoor enthusiasts to share their knowledge.

Further, please note that Whatcom County growth rate is among the highest in the nation^[1], according to the 2016 Census report. As increasingly more people move to our region, we anticipate the need for more resources and areas devoted to outdoor recreation. Simultaneously, we also must remain aware of protecting our lands, streams, fish, birds and all wildlife. The forests provide soil stabilization, sequester carbon, and provide critical habitat for flora and fauna. We encourage the DNR to adjust forest practices that respect our land and manage forest land sustainably and

pesticide free.

To this end, the Mt. Baker Group would be like to hold a conversation with DNR representatives regarding these issues. Please contact us to arrange a meeting at your convenience in the near future.

https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-Topline-Report_FINAL.pdf

Last night during the Working Meeting, a committee member blatantly stated that he owns property on Red Mountain from which he openly said there is 'dispersed recreation'. He put this comment in the context of off-road motorcycle riding on his property & obviously beyond on DNR lands. Shocking that a committee member feels so comfortable making a public statement regarding participation in illegal activity on DNR land, during a DNR meeting, with DNR Staff present. This is quite a revealing look at the reality of illegal riding taking place on DNR lands. This committee member has stated at other DNR meetings that he & his group are part of the solution to illegal trails. He has promised the greater community that we should trust him & his club to curb illegal riding on Red Mountain & Sumas Mountain. Yet last night he publicly confessed to illegal riding. This is whom we are to trust? DNR selected this person to be part of the 'solution'? Get real.

Perhaps even more shocking was the complete lack of response from the rest of the committee and DNR staff! None of you stepped up to address this statement. Many on the committee even chuckled at the comment! So to you, it would appear that illegal trail use on DNR land is a joke. Well it is not a joke to those of us who live here. Shame on every single one of you who sat on that committee & said **nothing**. For those with whom I have spoken directly about enforcement & you personally promised you

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would step up? There was your chance & you blew it.

My husband and I urge you to protect the quiet in wilderness areas, for our sake and for the sake of the animals who can't escape the noise either.

One person with an ORV or other motorized vehicle can spoil the wilderness experience for everyone else within miles. We go to the woods for peace and cannot find it if we have to listen to revving engines and loud music.

It's too late to prohibit motorcycles from the roadways, though they disturb us in our homes and gardens. Our solice is to get away from the noise by going to the mountains. Pease preserve the quiet there!

I attended the Deming meeting, expecting a group pushing for ORV use areas. It seemed reasonable to have such areas though I am not sure they would keep users out of other areas. Also, Red Mountain seemed like a good place as I do not hike anywhere near the area.

Since I had not followed the idea, I was surprised to find that the vast majority of attendees were in opposition. On reflection, I see it as a NIMBY meeting and can only sympathize with the people's reaction to the prospect of having an ORV park in their neighborhood.

It is hard to see how the opposition from Deming area residents might be turned around. This is especially the case in light of the history that was presented at the meeting.

I know from experience that it is difficult getting a community involved in planning for a change, but quite easy to get them out once the plan is revealed.

Maybe, if the murrelet situation is resolved, some area off of FS 38 could be found. However, this would not be anywhere near as convenient a location as a spot off of the Baker Highway and so would probably siphon off fewer ORV users.

Thanks for suggesting I send on a bit more information on a possible trail easement on DNR land from the Ostrom Conservation Site (owned by Whatcom County Parks and managed by the Nooksack School District) and Aron School Park (owned by the Whatcom County schools in common and managed by Nooksack School District). I'm attaching written comments that I submitted tonight that provide some background. You might recall that when I was making oral comments, I didn't read all my written comments as I was told that all of the west side of Sumas Mountain is not being considered for any kind of recreation largely because of the presence of asbestos. The area I'm describing is not in the Swift Creek basin, which is primarily where asbestos is an

issue. In fact, the earlier plans showed the proposed motorized trail system extending over the crest of Sumas Mountain onto parts of the west side of the mountain. It would seem that if the geology was appropriate for motorized recreation it would be appropriate for non-motorized recreation. At any rate,

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I strongly encourage you to consider including this in your plan. Having worked in the public sector in parks for over 30 years, I completely understand that just because something is in a plan doesn't mean it will get funded. But I also know, as you pointed out, that if it's not in a plan it won't be considered for public funding.

Here are the parcel numbers and/or section numbers of the properties that would be affected by this proposed trail:

400426332476: Ostrom Conservation Site 400531155330: Aron School Park

400426456348: DNR parcel that shares a corner with Ostrom 400426, 400425, 400436 and 400530: Sections owned in full or in part by DNR that separate Ostrom from Aron.

I've also attached the earlier Concept E plan with the Ostrom Conservation Site and Aron School Park noted in bold ink.

Thanks for considering this. As I mentioned this evening, Whatcom County Parks (where I worked for 10 years until retiring 7 years ago) came very close to securing this easement from the DNR almost 20 years ago. The person in charge of easements at that point then retired, things changed and the DNR did not want to pursue any public trail easements until further planning had occurred. I'd hate to see this slip through the cracks and have to wait another 20 years to be considered. If there are valid environmental or health reasons why this trail

doesn't make sense I can understand why it wouldn't be considered, but we shouldn't dismiss the idea based on the idea that no trails should be planned on the west side of Sumas Mountain due to the presence of asbestos in certain parts of the mountain.

I'm writing to show my support for a new route for the Pacific Northwest Trail in the Mt. Baker area to be created. Currently the trail follows a scenic highway up Mt. Baker, which is considered one of the most dangerous road walks along the PNT. When I thruhiked the trail this past summer, I skipped this part of the trail because it wasn't worth the risk, which is a shame because hiking up to Mt. Baker in such a beautiful area would have been amazing. The proposed alternate route to take the PNT off the highway would greatly improve the hiking experience.

This is a letter to reaffirm my opposition to allowing motorized ORV/ATV vehicles on DNR Lands in Whatcom County.

The residents of Whatcom county have overwhelmingly spoken in opposition to any plan to include these motorized vehicles.

As you move forward with this plan, I encourage you to include local residents who actually represent environmental groups as well as non motorized recreational groups such as berry pickers, bird watchers, fishermen and photographers so that your committee is more balanced.

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Would you please send me a copy of the Baker To Bellingham Recreational Advisory Committee Charter? I cannot find it online and several folks have asked about what it says. I would appreciate a copy of both the historic, in play these past two years charter, and the current revised charter.

Is the ORV use on state forest lands off the table now that Whatcom County Council voted not to change their laws? In other words. since the county prohibits ORV use on commercial forest lands, is this plan moot?

Would you have a meeting agenda and previous meeting notes available on line?

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your work on the Bay to Bellingham plan and the community feedback you have requested, patiently listened to, and to which you have now responded with a forward-looking plan.

Thank you for focusing on the non-motorized recreation opportunities, and NOT continuing to entertain the possibility of ORV use in our county. I understand the desires of the ORV users, and hope they will continue to use street-legal vehicles on the DNR roads as allowed by law, and NOT continue creating their own trails (cutting down trees and damaging the forest-lands and streams).

Please know that there are members of the community who are eager and happy to help volunteer putting in non-motorized-use-trailheads and signs. Just reach out to us and we will be here.

*I also encourage you to seriously consider disbanding the current Advisory Committee and asking for a new group of citizens who represent a balanced range of interests, rather than the heavy-loading of motorized vehicle users.

I would like to include my name to support activities and development for mountain bike trails, down hill and motorcycle dirt riding with and with out license plated street legal motorcycles. I have ridden for over 20 years throughout the northwest and hope to see more riding possibilities in this region.

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