

Thank you for your work thus far on these issues. No matter where you stand you have given a lot of your time and effort to this issue. Be aware that this community will also do the same. We live here.

My family and I frequent the areas around Silver Lake, Red Mountain & Slide mountain EVERY weekend (and soon to be week days) for recreation, restoration & I live in Maple Falls. I have lived in Washington State for over 40 years and worked in criminal justice, law enforcement & clinical social work in every corner of this county. I know the effects that motorized vehicles have on the land & the well being of Whatcom County citizens.

My husband & I recently took another trip up Red Mountain to see how things have been treated. As we went along, both driving & hiking, I was not surprised to see the amount of off road trails that have been hacked, dug & ripped off the roads for ORV riding. I saw numerous dumps of trash. I did not see anyone but ourselves trying to pick some of it up. Two dirt bike riders came up on us at one point riding our tail and then when we pulled off they did not wait to see why they just passed on a narrow dirt track to ride on the trail. They did not make any attempt to communicate that they would come by us to do so.

We encountered other drivers, 4 ORV's and one other dirtbike rider that were polite and considerate. During the time we were up there we continually heard the ORV's & dirtbikes revving it up just ahead of us on the trail. Were they going to come around a curve without slowing down? Would we be able to jump out of the way quickly enough?

As we went back home we could hear the ORV's & dirtbikes all the way down to the Mount Baker Highway. When I am at home I hear guns shooting 7 days a week at the gravel pit off the Northfork Road and elsewhere. I own guns & I like to target practice locally. I think we should ban it on Sundays. At least one day a week of not hearing guns seems reasonable. At the very least enforcing a time limit of 10am to 1pm so we don't have to hear it all day long would be nice. Oh and how about no shooting after dusk? I have called the sheriff's a few times on that one & they are very reluctant to drive all that way out to do ANYTHING-let alone give someone a citation, when they have limited staff, to tell a target shooter to knock it off. The only time they are interested is if it is an automatic weapon & then they still do nothing. Come on up to my place you can sit on our porch and check out the noise— 7 days a week all day long.

This "recreation area" is one of the last areas of continuous land for animals to migrate through, for humans to find relative space, peace & nature. Not noise, rowdy partying/recreation & exhaust fumes on the trails. When you open up these areas consider this, it won't be just the locals using them, we will have more people seeking the peace & "wild" from all over. We can manage the use or we can mangle it.

Where are the folks who are going to pick up the trash? Every trail that was off the logging road on Red Mountain that had been blocked by logs— the logs were just moved aside or the riders just rode around them. Where is the question of actually making trails for hikers, birdwatchers, horseback riders and other non motorized users being explored?

If a person can ride an ORV thru those rough trails with a broken hip, or a mental handicap, they can do that in an area designated for it. They might also consider non motorized sports that cost a lot less money to experience and is a lot easier on the body and their mental state.

I'm glad you are looking at different plans and making it for non motorized use only. These valleys have air inversions both in summer and winter. Imagine if folks from all over our state & out of states came up here with their ORV's and contributed their exhaust to our air at that time. That is why the 10 lane freeway that was proposed on highway 9 was shot down years ago. Now how about

some more land management and less proposals to ruin the land and air?

This summer I went up to Twin Lakes for a hike. When I came down there were about one hundred cars parked all over the road. It was ridiculous, dangerous and I bet most folks forgot how great their hike was when they had to deal with that crap. We need more trails and access. It is obvious from the overuse we are now experiencing of these trails. DNR land is primed for that, with wonderful views & challenging terrain & great picnic spots. Nature means "natural."

I have added some pictures and hope you will post those along with this email.

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Please keep motorized recreation in your plans. As our population ages it becomes more important than ever. I still love the outdoors as much as I did 50 yrs ago but I can't hike anymore. Remember to keep public land open to ALL of the other public, or just the young.

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I am a resident of the South Fork Valley. Just over one year ago I retired from the Planning & Development Services Department of Whatcom County. I worked in the Building Services Division for 22 plus years, including approx. 11 years as Division Manager and approx. 5 years as Deputy Fire Marshal. I submit the following comments based primarily on my experience as Deputy Fire Marshal.

Let me state that there is currently occasional and informal use of DNR lands by local/County residents for hiking, ORV's and horseback riding. I have no objection to this use. However, the plan to create a designated and listed destination park for recreational use on DNR lands within this County will likely have a significant impact on the number of users who will now potentially come from state-wide, out of state and/or across the border. Whether that increase is 4 fold, 7 fold or whatever the ultimate number becomes, it will have a serious impact on our local emergency services.

It is my understanding that the DNR has almost no local fire response resources, no injury response resources, and no law local law enforcement response resources. In case of a fire and/or medical services response, the local fire districts will have to be first on scene and will be primary and incident response command. They will be required to provide most of the necessary staff, resources and equipment. These districts are already understaffed and underfunded. Such necessary and potential remote response will strain already thin resources and put other County residents at potential risk as a result. It will likely also cost local County residents additional money to support this kind of incident response. The same basic scenario applies directly to the Sheriff's Office regarding any necessary potential response to illegal activity. Adequate emergency response resources simply do not currently exist, which presents a very real and serious concern. Therefore, any plan and planning budget that does not include additional funds and resources for local emergency responders is an incomplete and inadequate plan. If it hasn't already occurred, I encourage the Committee to meet directly with the affected fire districts, Whatcom County Fire Chiefs Association and the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office to discuss resource needs.

On a personal note, I hope the plan also includes adequate budget and resources to police and restore the inevitable environmental damage and remove the inevitable litter and garbage that will result from increased recreational use.

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I am in favor of concept E. I like to ride dh bikes and would like a spot with shuttle access to the top of the trails.