



COMMUNITY MEETING COMMENTS

Settlemyer Hall, Bellingham Technical College, Bellingham | November 29, 2016

Comments transcribed verbatim, and are in no particular order

STATION 1 – ECONOMIC VITALITY

- How can DNR support local businesses?
- How does having access to recreation opportunities help your community's economic vitality?
- What businesses or organizations directly (or indirectly) benefit from recreational activities in the area?
- Describe other economic opportunities that relate to outdoor recreation.
- What are the opportunities for the future?

COMMENTS

- Lunch or dinner after trail rides
 - Proximity of local facilities/restaurants
- Recreational events
 - Regional draw to the local area
- Not just competitive events – experience events (world-wide draw)
 - Hotels, restaurants, shops, increase economic impact
- Have money to do sport; more disposable income
- Draw for larger companies to move personnel to outdoor recreation rich communities
 - Good paying jobs
 - Intern schools, large entities impacted
- Opportunities to lease land for recreation event as revenue source
- Shops that benefit from purchasing equipment/training
- Clinics (3-day clinic for women, kids – activity based)
- Guiding services
- Big capital improvement; resource creates draw for generations; not as much ebb & flow of the other economic sources – stability
 - World class quality of life resources
- Balancing demand for access
- Planned events
- Point visitors to resources in rural areas
 - Food, telephone, hotel
- Trail Signage for nearby economic opportunities
- Cost associated (local investment) with recreation activity
 - Maintenance – dirt bikes, mountain bikes, 4x4
 - Want to recreate where you're living

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- Rotating user groups
- Closing areas seasonally
- Local investment – local support w/ regional draw
- Nearby breweries

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STATION 2 – QUALITY OF LIFE

- How can outdoor recreation in the planning area contribute to a vibrant community?
- Are there changes to your area’s outdoor recreation opportunities that could be made to benefit your community?
- What are some of the things you value/enjoy in the landscape?
- What is the single most important aspect of the area (try for a single word to describe)?

COMMENTS

- Signage – looks more official as opposed to lands with issues people don’t know who owns; do whatever you want
- Enforcement/patrols needs met
- Education of sanctioned areas for use
- Back country ski trail opportunities
- Drives rural service economy
- Closer recreation opportunities
- Fun
- Better signage
- Increased communication between user groups
- Unlocked gates; drivable roads
- Linkage trails
- Easily accessible recreation maps
- Joint planning between landowners (DNR & Parks)
- Economic opportunities
- Exercise/health (mental too!)
- Youth involvement in outdoor activities
- Inspires stewardship
- Consider traffic effect on county road system for county residents
- Big trees, wildlife/birds, views, seclusion, clean air, quiet, big rock faces, clean water, waterfalls, wild flowers, mushrooms, challenges
- Gives landlocked (city) families and opportunity to get on the broad landscape
- Solace, opportunity, community fun, multi-faceted, future
- Leave no trace education/ethic

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STATION 3 – RECREATION EXPERIENCE

- Non-Motorized Recreation Opportunities
- Motorized Recreation Opportunities
- Dispersed Recreation Opportunities

COMMENTS

- Want dirt bike – single track trails, diversity of trails
- ATV – want diversity of trails
- Ability to have kids riding
- Want to stay at home (in the area) and ride; not go to Canada or Skagit County
- Longer trails with camping along the way
- Trail corridor for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNNST)
- Long climbs and descents for mountain bikes and moto
- Shuttle trail system with a 3000’ vertical change in elevation
- Area for kids to build experience riding mountain bikes or motorcycles
- Enduro cross area built with trees and culverts
- Single direction trails for mountain bikes
- Dispersed camping areas large enough for trailer/camper
- Motorized trails – 2-way trails for challenge and more mileage
- South Fork Whatcom County Parks coordination
- Vedder – private trailhead or partnership
- Saxon area – more parking and trails
- Moto/mountain bike coexist on trails; Sumas to start
- Long distance trails with connectivity
- Single track remote access to old growth forest
- Segregate users for safety: hike/mountain bike/moto
- Hiking only trails
- Directional trails for mountain bikers and hikers
- Good signage



STATION 4 – Conservation

- Do you have concerns about impacts to the environment from recreation?
- Social factors to consider when planning for recreation?
- Do you have suggestions for how to use education to reduce recreation impacts to the land?
- Any other comments?

COMMENTS

- Water quality of Lake Whatcom watershed in Stuart Mountain, Mirror Lake
- Potential impact of motorized trails to water quality
- No motorized use in Lake Whatcom watershed
- Motorized use impact to hike/horse
- DNR establish primitive natural areas for gathering to be in nature for foundations who do “nature immersion” to let people interact simply with nature – like a pavilion to provide education, then go off into nature
- Earth living skills school
- Need clean areas for gathering of natural foods/medicine
- Proximity to urban is key to make it (pavilion) close for families to connect to nature
- Impacts of:
 - Going off trail
 - Leaving trash
 - Driving cars (air/noise pollution)
- Have educational material available at REI, motor bike stores, etc.
- Protection of native plants
- Non-motorized less potential impacts to native plants
- Adjacent lands affected by what happens on DNR lands
- Frogs, raptors – address these
- Visitors causing fires
- Road access – if roads are built, it makes it easier for users to trespass onto private property due to proximity
- Good signage to keep folks where they belong and not go onto private property
- Built trails should be properly built – some user built trails contribute to erosion, etc.
- Bikes dumping fuel so they can get under gate
- Outdoor toilet use – need pit toilets to keep land clean
- Non-existing law enforcement
- Does DNR have sound decibel rules? Like USFS has
- Why have it (noise rules) if we can’t enforce
- Separate motorized from non-motorized

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- Each use has a separate area
- Having an area that is managed is a form of conservation as opposed to non-authorized trails
- Keep trails out of areas that will be impacted (riparian, etc.)
- Trials bike areas – less impact than traditional motor bikes
- Trial group wants input once areas are defined
- All groups want input once areas are defined
- Large parking areas for dirt bikes to gather
- Dirt bike camping areas
- Trailers need large parking and wide turn arounds
- Seasonal trails in more sensitive/impacted areas – also for safety
- Stewart Mountain is better for mountain bike, hike, non-motorized because connectivity to Lake Whatcom Park
- Gailbraith – really good example
- Some separation: everyone can have recreation just not in same spot
- Animals, fish, birds
- Signage, educate folks on sensitive areas (balds, etc.)
- Bad apple – not everyone knows to pull off trail with dirt bikes when horses are on trail
- Stewart Mountain – mountain bike
- If you have a trail, you need facilities, at least a toilet
- Keep in mind if you build a trail, it needs maintenance
- Have to prevent trail cutting
- Van Zandt Dike and Sumas Mountain better for motorized than North Fork
- Be careful where motorized and mountain bikes are allowed
- Nowhere legal to park for motorized
- More families



BIOLOGY SUITABILITY

- Timber sale at Walker Valley (future of trails)
- Timber harvests impacts to recreational trails compared to timber harvest impacts to wildlife, biology
- Migratory bird assessment
- What went into determining wetland buffers – Whatcom County critical Areas Ordinance
- Elk habitat on Table Mountain – should we specify elk wintering area?
- Buffer rules vs. wetland rules
- Previous trail experience – seldom show elk
- Recognition of old growth & marbled murrelet
- Lake Whatcom watershed water quality – in recreation planning Erosion – dependent on trail activity type
- Year round recreational activities compatible with biological constraints
- Possibility of trail in elk habitat – co-management of landscape
- Access – forest management & recreation taxes don't provide recreation access
- Roads on private land built with tax dollars possibly for firefighting
- Unmapped bald associated with friendly cabin on the west side of Sumas Mountain

GEOLOGY SUITABILITY

- Single track? Be plated? – covered by state law – know before you go
- Single track – what does that mean
- What does white mean on the map – high suitability
- Will DNR coordinate with Whatcom County next to the re-conveyance area for trail development?
- What are soils risks? How sensitive soils are, poorly drained soils for example
- What are the effects of alluvial fans – streams like to wander – risk to permanent facility
- DNR go to the same extent for planning when they go to logging? Consult with biologists, geologists, Forest Practice rules, HCP, etc. all on line
- What map layers do you use? Probability – Forest Practices, state lands mapping tool, county site development
- Will there be zones for types of recreation? Single track, double track
- Do you have LIDAR data available for the area? Getting better resolution every month
- When a user group goes out and builds a trail will a geologist have to go out and check every segment of trail? Depends on county permitting
- When building trails are they taking into account the \$\$ it takes to maintain the trails for the future?



WRITTEN COMMENTS

- Please provide legal motorized trail systems in Whatcom County.
- Opening up areas for recreation is excellent. Doing so, however, should be done in ways that void adverse impacts on adjoin lands and roads (that could amount to a taking, correct?!).
- Please keep bikes & motorcycles off horse trails.
- Save the last of old growth.
- If possible try to stay away from getting private land owner permission for access to recreation areas. This often can become a headache down the road.
- General concern for water quality, sustainable forest practices, access.
- Design facilities for multi-season uses; W. Whatcom County has such a mild climate, outdoor recreation is an option all year round. Thanks for all your time & effort.
- Please help rafting/kayaking access specially raft takeout Nooksack River in Maple Falls. Thanks.
- Please protect the river from dams. The free flowing nature of the river is highly valued by the boating community. Thanks.
- Excited that DNR is advocating for community use of DNR land. I'm looking forward to more mtb trails, especially with road access for shuttling.
- I'm really excited to see trails developed on DNR land. I especially hope there will be options to drive to the top of trails and ride down – "shuttling."
- Primary desire is to have legal mountain bike & motorcycle trails of varying difficulty. Coordination with the local groups will help route & build trails that meet the needs/wants of the user groups.