

Baker to Bellingham Community Meeting

Listening Station Feedback

Feb. 20, 2018

Station #1 – Concept E

- No motorized – too much of a fire hazard, people have houses and bee keeping right next to DNR land
- No motorized due to environmental impacts
- The Whatcom County Council, at present, does not allow/approved motorized recreation with more people in the area; why approve it now? Also, it is illegal because of the council's former decisions 30 years ago
- Motorized recreation utilizes mufflers and spark arrestors
- Are there successful examples of DNR parks/ trails co-existing with close neighbors?
- Slides/steep slopes on Sumas in areas proposed for ORV use
- \$500,000 in salmon enhancement below Sumas ORV area
- New trails are being cut by ORV users in defiance of current laws
- ORV noise has been serious issue for past 20 years for neighbors – this is not a hypothetical problem
- The court has affirmed the right to prohibit motorized recreation use due to property value, quality of life, wildlife disturbance
- Locals determined to organize legally around ORV use; which would delay process of planning for other users
- Recreation use (all kinds) will increase erosion, cause landslides, muddy streams
- Do not have law enforcement or fire staff which will fall on county services
- How are users prevented from trespassing on private land?
- Threatened/endangered species disrupted
- Hunting will be affected by ORVs
- Public just now informed of this process; no input earlier
- Motorized recreation is supported by many in the local community
- No ORVs
- Support ORVs
- Make this double track only
- What about all of the folks who live at the base and on the flanks of Sumas Mountain? We don't want the noise or runoff from all of those ORVs! This is our home!
- Please plan safe legal areas for those in the off-road vehicle sport
- Too much noise from ORVs; put ORV park far away from other activities please
- No ORVs!! On any Whatcom County DNR lands; respect existing ordinance; fire danger, safety, noise – bad ideas

Station #2 – Concept D

- Aquifer for 5,000 people between Red Mountain and Sumas Mountain – concerned about contamination

- Noise pollution in valley between Red Mountain and Sumas Mountain
- Concern about impacts to game animals and displacement by motorized activities
- Asbestos and heavy metals can be stirred up and get into aquatic system; was this or will this be considered?
- There are over 6,000 people who actually live within 1 mile of the proposed motorized areas. And not 1 single person on the advisory committee to represent us. Yet, motorcycles get 2 representatives! What?!
- EMS are paid for local needs; don't need additional costs associated with recreational extractions, fires, etc.
- Wants to see an ecosystem assessment of potential impacts on "everything"
- I keep hearing that if we have "sanctioned" ORV areas we will be able to provide better enforcement via access to NOVA grants. Are you aware that the NOVA commission rates "new acquisitions" as their lowest priority for funding because they can't keep up with the maintenance of existing facilities? (NOVA 13-18 plan)
- I like that motorized recreation area would be concentrated in 1 or 2 main areas
- Geology/topography on top of Sumas forms a "bowl" and may be the most suitable for motorized recreation
- Continue to consider Middle Fork for non-motorized recreation even though more studies of impacts to murrelets are needed
- Not enough law enforcement and fire protection
- Critical services will become the burden of the county
- Erosion on salmon bearing creeks and disruption to threatened species
- Would like to see hiking trails and infrastructure for seniors in the Columbia Valley area
- No ORVs
- No ORVs – fire danger, safety, noise, ridiculous planning
- Pro-motorized use; I believe this would help regulate the garbage dumping; user groups do a lot of volunteer clean up, thank you
- Yes to ORV, equal access means expanding opportunities for motorized activity; non-motorized already has many areas in comparison; motorized vehicles/activity do a lot of cleanup because they have the capability; Dirt bikers are not dirt bags – stereotypes should not be considered; motorized access increases opportunities for individuals with disabilities

Station #3 – Concept D

- ORVs on Sumas & Red Mountain
 - Sumas is an easier location
 - Red Mountain has the best trails – want to see these types of trails on both
- Canyon Creek is only legal trail in Whatcom County – operated July – August
- Concerns for traffic to and from trailhead; wildlife and birds
- Destruction of soil – soil is living, it becomes dead dirt with destructive vehicles; may never recover with continued use; similar to garden; compacting
- Forest has high ecological value
 - Destroying it
 - What's left of our forests to be preserved

- If riding is your life, then what does it keep you from doing: youth getting outdoors – values of doing safe, wholesome activities; learning stewardship
- Proposal isn't just for local riders, ORV destination within 1-2 hours of 2 of the largest metropolitan areas of North America
- Impacts on local community due to increased use is unimaginable
- Sumas Mountain has cougars and bees (both sited multiple times per year on homeowner's property); motorized use will push them onto property even more
- Organized riding areas supports long term stewardship
 - Versus unsanctioned trails
 - Organized cleanups
- Consider trespassing issues for neighbors from ORV use
- ORV trespassing, cutting new trails on steep and unstable slopes, driving through streams and a culture that values going off trail (even with designated trail system)
- Noise of ORVs
- Fire danger from ORVs
- Stress on resources – fire, EMD, first responders
- Committee bias – too many ORVs; need representation from the Columbia Valley (5,000 people)
- Uphold DNR trust mandate – resource protection for environmental maintenance for future beneficiaries – no ORVs
- Need enforcement
- ADA access
- Safety associated with locked gates (up-to-date keys)
 - First responders
 - Difficulty opening gates
- No ORVs on Red and Sumas mountains
 - Run a farm on Red Mountain
 - Concerned with safety – gas and alcohol
 - Enforcement issues
 - Wildlife concerns
 - Lack of funding
 - Private property/creeks/erosion
 - Wildlife – salmon and endangered species
 - Parking considerations, private property
- Stacked the committee
- More hiking trails for children and seniors
- Safe and legal ORV areas benefits
 - Better than current unsanctioned
 - ADA (ORV supports ADA for people who can't walk or hike)
 - Safer for first responders (sanctioned trails); law enforcement at trailhead
- Concept D – Consider driveways at lower North Fork
 - Road/driveway maintenance with increased use
 - Buffer from residence to trailhead or staging area – noise
 - Likes D for level of motorized recreation

- Likelihood of conditional use permitting
- Want to see Stewart Mountain as mountain biking; more mountain biking on Slide (more space)
- Need better term for conditional use
- Motorized on Red Mountain (not great for mountain biking)
- Will Sumas Mountain affect Gold Mine Trail? (Important to protect)
- Enjoy driving logging roads – questions about opening gates
- Because Sumas Mountain is completely surrounded by residents and farms
- Support all uses except motorized
- ATVs should consider purchasing land for their desired recreation – private enterprise
- ATVers do own land on Sumas and Red Mountain
- Is going back to ORVs resource protection?
- Looking at suitability maps, there appears to be little that is considered any better than moderate suitability – this is not good enough to provide adequate resource protection
- ORVs are not legal at the present time; t present time Whatcom county Council does not approve ORV recreation – this was established over 30 years ago in 1983
- No ORV
 - Fire danger
 - Environmental degradation
 - Wildlife
 - No ORV
- Yes ORV – safe, legal access
- No ORVs
- In favor of ORV user groups – police each other, take care of trails and land, more volunteers; to change chaos, we need organization

Station #4 – Concept E

- When do we know County verdict on amendment (motorized use)?
- How do we make sure off-roaders stay within the boundaries?
- Concept E needs to include the water access on Concept D in Maple Falls
- Why make new trails when they can already use the extensive road system?
- What pass system is being looked at?
- No, No off-road vehicles
 - No one to control
 - No fire control
 - How to prevent trespass onto private property?
 - Creeks on mountains with salmon are unsuitable for off-road (on DNR's maps)
 - Endangered/threatened species
 - Noise will drive out large mammals
 - Hunting destroyed
 - Bears and cougars will go down to people's homes
 - No money
- Sumas and Red Mountain have ORV – like
- Need more mountain bike on south side of mirror lake, and in Slide Mountain

- South side of Stewart Mountain – need access for mountain bikes
- At last committee meeting asbestos on Sumas Mountain was mentioned – what about?
- ORV – denuded areas, fuel spills, erosion, North Fork Nooksack river fish hatcheries will be affected
- Fire concern – roads don't support mass evacuation
- Mountain bike connections to county park will continue into DNR to south – Mirror Lake
- Motorized vehicle users do a lot of trail maintenance and do care about the environment
- Likes Concept E because there is more motorized, keep it equal to non-motorized amount
- If mountain bikes/non-motorized has ten areas for example, let's expand motorized to have ten
- For ADA individuals motorized offers recreation opportunities
- Big no to having motorized trails and separate parks
 - Cannot pay for enforcement, so local residents will pay for emergency, fire, search and rescue support
 - Process misinformed – flaws such as getting word out on the survey – locals know before this year!
 - Recreation on private lands would solve the problem
- How can we prevent access into rivers/ block off sensitive areas?
- Swift Creek slide floods farmlands which when tilled, asbestos gets airborne; feds have spent millions; motorcycles would undo mitigation; avoid asbestos at Swift Creek
- Since mindset is they don't like rules, they go out on undesignated areas
- Why no town hall public comment tonight?
- Connect Whatcom County South Fork Park to DNR Middle fork up to Forest Service boundary leading to Elbow Lake and Ridley Creek trails (non-motorized); it is in County Council's 20-year recreation plan; and PNT wants to relocate there too!
- Also want the Elbow Lake connection in the plan; PNT (future), Bellingham to Mt. Baker Trail, Ridley Creek Trail
- Murrelet strategy may allow (depending upon option selected)
- At the last committee meeting the committee said we want PNT/riding trail in the plan and as a conditional use
- Likes dirt bikes, ORV trails in Whatcom County; want to be able to ride in nature with future family; 4x4 clubs clean up litter and are responsible
- 1987 we fought this exact fight – motorized trails on Sumas Mountain, and the county council stopped it; huge fight, huge amount of energy and here we are again; we've fought this fight before and we'll fight it to a standstill again; even more people would be affected now
- I keep hearing that local people should have gotten involved sooner, but we enthusiastically support non-motorized recreation development and it never occurred to any of us that DNR would spend 2 years working on an illegal plan
- UGA – Kendall and UGA Columbia Valley do not want motorized within neighboring lands – 5000 people are represented (population expected to double within 15 years)
- No off road; non-motorized ok
- Noise is biggest concern; 24/7 noise to residents near Sumas Mountain
- Motorized use will stress wildlife; trash
- I do not want motorized on Sumas
- Motorized/ORV impacts upstream on salmon (\$500,000 Nooksack River enhancement)

- Very concerned about threat to DNR trust land posed by ORV use by fire, erosion, timber damage
- Noise is a major issue with all ORVs; many, many (read all) residents would be subjected to this ruckus on a daily basis; is the needs of a few really more important than the needs of the many?
- Yes ORV
- On Sumas there is an existing network of illegally constructed eroding trails and stream crossings
- I am in favor of a non-motorized option; the ORVs are too controversial and will delay the implementation of a recreation plan that would benefit so many people
- Yes to ORV – safe, legal access

Station #5 – Challenges and opportunities

- Dirt bikes become stewards of the area
- ORV responsibility due to illegal trails
 - On steep & unstable slopes
 - Through fish bearing streams
 - Trash dumping on ORV trails
 - Shift to Whatcom County for fire & EMS
 - Vandalism on adjacent properties
 - Culture that values going off-trail
- Provided economic study #6 showing little benefit & low numbers
- Neither Red Mountain nor Sumas Mountain are suitable for ORV use; no money for enforcement or fire control; this will become a financial burden to Whatcom County; how will guns and alcohol be regulated?; fish bearing streams, endangered species, movement of large predators towards residential areas concerns; also, lack of local committee input; signs or garbage
- Noise levels – what are the maximum acceptable noise levels?; shooting concerns, fire concerns
- Give off-road community a safe place to off-road and help take care and give ownership
- Youth opportunities with parents versus drug use; future generational use
- How will there be funding for monitoring, DNR is already strapped?
- Have education & enforcement days like at Walker Valley ORV area to educate users, show examples
- Support ORV use; gives opportunity to help clean up, get volunteer base to clean up
- Concerned absolutely that ORV voice is not being heard and more illegal use and dumping without designated places to ride
- 35% of committee represents ORV community; ORV community, zero per cent represents actual community that lives here; noise from bootleg and ORV activity is already an issue for many
- Sumas and Red Mountain are surrounded by people who live there; Columbia Valley was incorporated, third largest city in Whatcom County; Columbia Valley is a UGA
- Benefit to have ORV use in one area; know where issues are at – example North Fork medical response
- Can there be drive up mountain bike trails? Shuttle services?
- Recreation corridor between South Fork and Middle Fork Park, County, PNT trail, Mt. Baker trail
- 30-years ago – North Fork ORV use didn't take care of land, DNR had to clean up, don't respect area
- Don't like listening station format
- ORV pictures, #1-4, for record of Walker Valley ORV damage

- Picture #5 – Sumas Mountain showing ORV use and soil damage
- Against ORV use – soil damage and compaction, death of soil, plants won't grow; stream pollution
- List ORV use Yes or No
- ORV Access Chart:
 - Yes – 21
 - No – 14
 - Dude, seriously it's going to get clear cut
 - DNR's mission to protect and preserve our forest; ORVs by their very nature run counter to this
 - No, they make all other recreation impossible
 - Equestrian
 - Hiker
 - Bird watcher
 - Keep peace and quiet
 - Maybe, done carefully
- Is there a plan to beef up wildfire response from increased motorized recreation? Increased EMS response? No cell service, hard to find and extract
- How far is trailhead and access road and trails from private residences? Is there a buffer for noise?
- Control and enforcement of noise and safety near homes?
- Monitor and control actual ORV use? Unsanctioned trail near where I live; DNR doesn't seem able to control
- 30 years ago Sumas Mountain ORV park proposal; noise, behavior, don't stay on trails; even noise test didn't work then or now; people live here, choose to live and sacrifice to do so
- How does ORV use align with Commissioner's four principles on climate change?
- Is this what we want to see?
- None of us want to trash the area; taking photos of rigs and taking them out of context helps on one; we are responsible and take care of the trails; please come see when we show up to pick up garbage dumped by people that are not 4x4 people
- Please do your research; look at our club pages, you will see how much garbage we clean up yearly
- What is the point of posting these pictures without knowing where they are taken; could be anywhere and taken out of context
- The fact that you have all that garbage to pick up speaks volumes
- Yes it does speak volumes, people go into these places because they don't care, we do; if the area was sanctioned, more caring people would be there, it would be policed, minimizing the garbage
- The economic benefits of ORV (only 5.5% of all recreation in Washington state) do not make up for the damage to environment, property values, community peace and quiet
- Motorized vehicles are very noisy, destructive to vegetation, pollute the air and waterways; non-motorized do none of these; DNR's mission is to preserve and protect our forests as natural resources; there is nothing about ORV etc. that preserves or protects our forests
- ORVs only account for 5.5% of the economic benefit from recreation in Washington state; most other types of recreation are not compatible with ORVs
- As a dirt bike community, I fear that we will not be heard for our endeavors on riding in Whatcom County again; dirt biking is a great family activity and we deserve to recreate just as anyone else

- I have lived in Whatcom county for 42 years; back in the 70's and 80's, I was able to ride with my father in multiple areas in the county; now my father and I cannot take my nephew riding anywhere in this county
- The fun of a small percentage of the recreation community should not be allowed to destroy peace and quiet of residents, taxpayers, voters
- Motorized trails are necessary for peace and tranquility in my quality of life and that of my family
- 11% of statewide population participate in ORV, that means 89% don't; a more relevant study might be: what percentage of Whatcom county population participates in ORV
- Off road vehicles do not stay on trails; ORVs trespass on neighboring private lands; ORVs are loud; ORVs infringe on people's homes; no off road vehicles
- Yes Orv; safe legal access

Station #6 – Challenges and opportunities

- Excited for the opportunity to ride with young son legally in Whatcom County – great bonding opportunity; for ORV as well as hiking; would like trails for a variety of uses – designated areas
- ORVs incompatible with every other kind of recreation she can think of; neighborhood/community terribly impacted by ORVs; don't feel safe recreating by myself; garbage, alcohol, toilets, fees; not a high income community, always lived in a low income community; ORV accounts for only 5.5% of economic benefits, and that number of participants account for 1.8% of total recreation
- 11% ORV users, yet 35% on committee represent ORV, how is the 11% figured?
- Concept D 54% total areas in B2B for motorized use, why?
- Why is there not 1 representative on committee of 5,000 plus people who live within 1 mile of property ORV areas border and share ingress and egress on single road?
- Managed recreation area better than non-managed
- Fire management risk in motorized area 2017?
- ORV have not been successful stewards of the land; completely oppose motorized recreation in Whatcom County, issues:
 - Riding off designated trails
 - Ride through streams
 - Dump trash
 - Sound impacts
- Support of safe legal ORV use, better in controlled areas than all over
- ORV clubs have successful stewardship on DNR land through annual clean up drives, building bridges over salmon streams for all users
- No ORVs, fire danger, safety, noise, ridiculous planning
- No motorized ORV, yes to all the others
- How much liability do you carry? People on horseback and ORVs are a recipe for a fatality! No ORVs
- One ORV in the woods disturbs hundreds of different species, plants, animals and humans alike and pollute any air and water they touch; one hiker bothers next to nothing
- Red Mountain – no ORV on here – better suited for stock, great stock camp – higher use; Sumas – live near an area in Pierce County, a nightmare – brings a myriad of problems – fire, guns, fights, alcohol

- Opportunity – ORV community members would be happy to meet with non-motorized community to talk about issues
- No ORV on Red Mountain or Sumas; no LEOs to oversee it, no grants available, no fire resources available, your own maps show Red Mountain and Sumas unsuitable; endangered/ threatened birds in Red Mountain and Sumas driven off by noise; salmon creeks endangered; noise drives large mammals into community – bears and cougars not a nice thing in your back yard – better in the mountains; hikers, trail runners, benefit and bring dollars- drive up property values, rather than drive them down
- No ORVs in any land in Whatcom County
- Live next to DNR land – already garbage, shooting, etc., what is the plan for monitoring? Live on Mosquito Lake Road – people are making comments that are not from Whatcom County
- North Fork/Slide Mountain – already there in the 1990's – ORV incompatible with non-motorized, became a motorized mentality – when Walker Valley close down, they came here, good people, but bad outweigh the good, beg of them not to do this again; I know they need somewhere to go, but not here, not sustainable, not compatible, don't stay on trails, driving recklessly on roads, can't sustain it
- #1 concern is fire danger in dry summers that get hotter and hotter
- Fire danger – no ORVs, if we have ORVs –how will you enforce? Fines?
- Resident and taxpayer – property values are important – property values decrease with noise and motorized recreation, non-motorized and parks increase property values
- East county live adjacent, how will DNR regulate use, fires, riding, noise? Bad idea
- What data do you have that ORV users will stay on designated trails?
- How do we answer issue of increased fire risks from increased use especially by ORVs?
- What will you do to mitigate impacts on families or households living near the trailheads?
- Where to get money for staffing enforcement?
- No ORVs – solution for that sector to do what skiing sector and shooting sectors do – purchase the land that would be designated for recreation; flaw in survey – interpretation in comparing ski sector as they already using the land when that is a private enterprise
- Opportunity – mountain biking at North Fork Nooksack
- Designated DNR trailhead in Whatcom County for horses – have one at Whatcom County at Vedder; but would like one at Steward mountain
- CO2 from ORV use – do we analyze this during SEPA? Do we know they exceed human health standards?
- Law enforcement/response?
- Law enforcement –slow response time, understaffed; community never heard about this until 2 months ago – website? Never put a flier at the Deming library
- See trails for non-motorized; once loud machines get up there, wildlife is gone; recipe for a fatality; children on horseback, who will accept liability, it's frightening
- What income is generated from ORV park that isn't already generated? Discover Pass funds for DNR is only 8%
- Research on property values – does it adversely affect property values? Potential for fire – had a fire on Red Mountain, lucky the wind was not blowing that day; spark arrestors on ORV – who will police that? It is so dry during the summer

- Partner with County Parks or USFS – USFS requires all vehicles be street legal and licensed drivers, how will you connect roads and police if we partner with USFS?
- Where did the fliers get posted? Did they get posted in Kendall, Peaceful Valley, Columbia Valley, Crossroads, Kendall Library, EWRRC?
- Where will money for first responders come from? Who will foot this bill?
- ORV use is harmful to trust beneficiaries because it weakens public support for DNR operations as a whole; it increases fire risk, and if we establish a parklike area, it may end up being re-conveyed over time, i.e. Singletary; if we didn't have a trail, then no one would hear about it; we may lose 2000 acres up here
- Citizen of Whatcom County support opportunities for all user groups irrespective of his own opinions and views
- Trails for ATVs or motorized should also include opportunities for disabled folks
- Motorized use should also have opportunities in Whatcom County
- Upper and lower trails or shuttle concept for non-motorized uses
- Need more recreation around here – motorsports, cycling, as well as supporting the tourism industry
- Support the ORV zoning amendment
- Run a tourism company for mountain bikes – national coach for mountain bikers
- Look at the other large landowners – how many have ORV parks? None. That's because they are looking out for the interest of the shareholders (beneficiaries) – undivided loyalty
- No ORVs; in other states its OHV, not ORV; this is a different context – off highway – the first responders will be at county, not DNR responders, if they can get cell service
- Opposed to any motorized use in Whatcom County; number of ORV trails in Washington is over 1,000 miles, when is that enough? Opening Pandora's Box, people come from all over; even some of the ORV people don't want them coming from all over; use gates where illegal use is happening; Question the whole process, really don't know when ... haven't seen an environmentalist when I came to the meetings, who will that be? Mandate that DNR requires non-impactful only, didn't see a mandate to require ORV
- ORV community makes big cleanup efforts – constant and ongoing by Mt. Baker Motorcycle Club
- Been dirt biking since he was 2; like to see an area where when he is older, he can ride all he can ride with his kids – see an area to ride not on the roads
- No ORV on DNR lands; fire danger, safety, degradation of ecology, hurts wildlife; NO
- No ORVs on any land in Whatcom county
- No ORVs