

# Baker to Bellingham Community Meeting

## Listening Station Feedback

Feb. 21, 2018

### Station #1 – Concept E

- Another route for the sea to ski , the current route is so congested
- I like the plan; want mountain biking at North and Middle Fork; ORV would be good at Sumas and maybe Red Mountain
- 2016 Whatcom County Parks plan has Sumas planned for horse use
- Would be nice to be able to do a day family dirt bike trip and not have to go to Walker Valley or Naches one time per year; get off the computer
- ORV parks have been planned before with success; this is not a new concept
- Walker Valley is not a model of success; it supports the idea of no ORVs
- The Middle Fork is a nice causeway to run from Bellingham to Mt. Baker; now there is no way
- Concept D concentrates ORV to a very small area given the fees I've paid; want a fun family experience; example – Hood River, Crescent Butte in Moab, Sedona
- Need to have a linkage without going on roads
- Need to be able to mountain bike to Mt. Baker from Bellingham – need linkage
- Want to go to Eagle View and this will cause more people from other areas to come and make noise
- Do not want it to be like ... they have screwed it up
- Make potential Bellingham to Baker trail multi-use but not motorized
- Concept D – I am in favor of this concept; but not the zone on Stewart near Park Road

### Station #2 – Concept D

- Live locally, was not aware of process, concerned about many potential impacts such as noise, wildlife, water resources, fire hazard
- Would like to see diversity on committee (e.g. wildlife viewing, low impact use)
- No concept provides connector from South Fork Park to Middle Fork; critical missing link from Bellingham to Mt. Baker
- Great to see access to these areas once again – able to drive roads to lakes and other areas
- Seems to be skewed representation of hiking trails versus motorized access
- Concern about motorized vehicle access to/near Avon School Park and Lost Lake on Sumas Mountain
- Interested in more non-motorized access on Sumas mountain
- Currently zero motorized access in Whatcom County and would like to see some areas opened
- As a motorized user – interested in stewardship aspects associated with access
- Support a plan that includes motorized access – will help link to ORV funds
- Great place to have local place with family in motorized access areas
- Non-motorized use on Sumas seems more compatible with the local community

- Some of those that moved to the Kendall area did so for quiet and solitude; motorized use and noise could disrupt this
- Don't believe there is enough suitable land on Sumas Mountain to support motorized use
- Yellow areas of suitability maps are not moderately suitable – they are marginally suitable on Sumas Mountain
- Concerned about noise on east side of Sumas Mountain adversely affecting populated areas
- The only access to Sumas Mountain (also near proposed trailhead) is next to a church
- Would like to see a 100% non-motorized option
- Feels like there has been an effort to minimize input from local community in process
- I support opening an ORV recreation area in Whatcom County so our kids can have a place to ride

### Station #3 – Concept D

- ORV stewardship:
  - Volunteer hours and cleanup
  - Grant match
- Concerns for wildfire – spark arrestors; access for volunteer fire department
- More opportunities for diverse recreation interests to work together
- Pro ORV
- Trail difficulty rating; challenging trails not just cake walk
- USHPA for Sumas
- ORV provides ADA access
- More ORV organized clean-ups on Red Mountain
- Limit ORV to Sumas
- Red Mountain access for USHPA launch site
- Moderately suitable lands are really marginally suitable – there is not enough suitable land to warrant a suitable location for motorized trails
  - Salmon stream
  - Exposed asbestos
  - Noise
- Noise, wildfires
- Better outreach, direct mailings to rural community
- South Red Mountain – public recreation access
- Connect DNR land, National Forest, County and local municipalities through a southern route
- Sanctioned areas for ORV use
  - Use volunteer organizations
  - Vested interest
  - Self-policing
  - Volunteer time for grant match
- 80's sound test on Sumas showed no noise pollution
- Walker Valley is over-used, need another location
- E-bikes are quiet
- Developed trails reduce fire potential from ORVs

- Designated trails could lead to increased regulation
- Hoping for non-motorized use of a Bay to Baker trail (point to point)
- Support for Bay to BAKER Trail – non-motorized corridor
- Mountain bike trails at North Fork
  - Middle Fork needs to be added
  - Sumas ORV is good
  - Red Mountain good for horses
- As much trail as possible, support Bay to Baker Trail
- An equestrian advocate for non-motorized use
- Garbage problem on Red Mountain
- Support ORV use in Whatcom County
- Red Mountain good for motorcycles
- Pro Bay to Baker Trail
- Birding opportunities
- Water quality data to show public impact of designated trails
- Support connecting loop trails
  - Connections between systems
  - Connecting large systems with connecting corridors
- Support for Bay to Baker Trail
  - Backpacking
  - Youth groups
  - Horseback riding
  - Scout troops
  - Longer than day trips connected

#### Station #4 – Concept E

- Will there be access to Canyon Lake Community Forest Park (bridge washed out to the forest)?
- Does DNR have enough enforcement to appease impacted neighbors?
- Would off-road club be willing to remove trash weekly?
- I like this plan better – disperses use better – allows multi-use and self-enforcement
- Not seeing long distance connectivity between all public lands
- Motorcycle on Stewart Mountain – don't agree
- Galbraith was great for horseback riding but now impossible because of dirt bikes, trails everywhere
- The wheeling community are not the ones dumping trash
- So far I like this one the best with Red Mountain; fishing opportunities ; motorized and dispersed activities
- A lot of us would gladly get involved in clean-up days (motorized community)
- No place for looped/shuttle for mountain bikes in the county; not many places for family mountain bike recreation (without extreme climb)
- As far as trash, it's usually new users, we teach (E&E) them, i.e. Walker Valley (all motorized groups teach younger generation what to do)
- Appreciate all motorized types and groups coming together tonight
- If motorized develops, create clause that if trash gets dumped DNR will close the trail

- More education
- Concern with trail reconstruction, post-harvest – how will we rebuild?
- Sanctioned ORV areas will improve the trail system areas already established
- Single track motorized systems are low impact and sustainable
- Proposed plans need to have connection to the Bay-to-Baker trail system
- Will the DNR test water quality before and after trail improvements to show success?
- What is DNR's policy on E-bikes? Motorized or bike?
- We need an ORV area in the Whatcom County area for all the local motorized enthusiasts to use; it would allow families to enjoy riding together
- Endangered species are most important; marbled murrelets and salmon; what I have seen from ATVs is noise, trashed trails, erosion and trash; they have their trails now, so don't give them more, we will pay the price in the future
- Concept E is flawed because it does not include mountain bike trails at the North Fork
- I am in favor of hiking/mountain biking trails; I like the trail connection to Lake Whatcom Park
- I would like to see an area for trails that allows a person to hike from Bellingham to Mt. Baker; follow the Middle Fork River
- The difference in the trash pickup between Walker Valley at 4,000 pounds and Sumas at 3.65 tons is staggering
- Put your ORV tracks in your backyard not mine;
- They are my backyard and I love it; more ORVs
- The state (DNR) lands are in trust for all of us – not just those who consider it “my backyard”

#### Station #5 – Challenges and opportunities

- Picnicking areas under-utilized, need for motorized recreation, how does that affect ecological functions
- Parking permit for funding access to recreation sites
- Look at other states and British Columbia for examples of tiered trail systems
- Mileage of trails seems low; use more of existing trails – less costly
- Opposed to ORV use on DNR land; doesn't meet; no loss of ecological function in trust mandate
- See opportunities for long distance hiking with areas for camping
- Extended non-motorized recreation opportunities between Bellingham and Mt. Baker – connectivity
- County ordinance change, will it allow for motorized recreation on other DNR lands than shown on the plan maps?
- The committee provide all materials to the county council prior to decision on the proposed amendment including all public comments
- SEPA in 2018 is optimistic
- Existing trail system at Walker Valley ORV area is a mess of erosion and trash; if that's the model system, that is not an improvement in any manner; lends support to an argument for on ORV in Whatcom County
- In picture #3 is in Sumas an unsanctioned trail area on logging roads within 1 mile of Mt. Baker highway, 3.65 tons of garbage collected versus picture #2 in Walker Valley ORV area sanctioned ORV area, 2,500 pounds of garbage collected mostly on surrounding roads not on sanctioned area; just proves with a sanctioned area there is less trash and easier to hold trash cleanup events

- Need trash cleanup on Red Mountain, clubs that want to use this area help cleanup could help with local community perceptions of ORV use
- Active ORV users/riders create a lot of tax dollars
- I am in full agreement for a Bellingham to Baker trails as proposed by Daniel Probst
- For those opposed to motorized use of trails as well as building that occurs outside of DNR permission – wouldn't it make sense to have more access to sanctioned trails for these groups so that use is monitored rather than leave them no access and forced to build renegade trails
- Has the DNR considered restoration to decommission un-used logging roads and turn them into single track with rich, biodiverse ecological systems?
- Is it better to have an organized and sanctioned area for ORV than to continue to operating in a destructive manner
- It would be great to get from the urban areas (Bellingham) to the big forests; ideally corridor(s) to the national forest without driving and parking
- Non-motorized – I would like to see addition of existing trails (all) at the North Fork: not just a portion; also would like to use existing trails for non-motorized use at the Middle Fork; would like to see both Stewart and Mirror Lake for non-motorized; Motorized – would like to see Sumas and Red Mountain as motorized zones using existing trails
- Separate ORV from non-motorized; Red Mountain is a great area for ORV; give ORV something in Whatcom County
- Since there are some people opposed to motorized vehicle use with the NIMBY argument, maybe we should consider “seasonal use” – similar to how Orcas island has “mountain biking seasons”; to start with ... this would be temporary solution – a “trial phase” to see if it is as terrible as people think
- More trails up the Middle Fork to Mt. Baker connections to nearby trails to PNW Trail

#### Station #6 – Challenges and opportunities

- Sanctioned areas are great
- Allow for stewardship and a vested interest and damage control
- The argument about “it doesn't work” is a moot point – never been sanctioned areas before
- Concerned about the “pollutions – trash, noise, wildlife, increased fire hazard
- If allowed to build ORV what will DNR do to enforce the use?
- The committee has not responded to comments from public in January and February opposing ORV
- 30 plus ORV parks existing, for neighbors of Sumas Mountain, only have one home, not 30; noise would be extremely impactful
- More hiking and connector trails to go from Point A to Point B
- People who ride ORVs have every right to do that legally; he can understand how much fun it is and why people like doing that; what he can't understand is why a very small percentage of people can be allowed to offend/inconvenience a large percentage of people when it's not necessary; he has to believe there is a lot of acreage that is not beautiful or fragile where ORVs could be operated with a minimum of damage
- Motorized use is essential for balanced interests of all; physically disabled individuals have opportunities when riding in or on motorized vehicles

- Motorized use is not conducive with other forms of recreation; everything else you enjoy, BCH, fly-fishing, mushroom picking on a level of quiet and stewardship; ORV brings trash, fire; every area with ORV gets trashed
- See a trail that connects Bellingham to Mt. Baker; the only portion missing is the South Fork to the Middle Fork – not on any of the plans
- Ideally, inter-connection for all uses would be ideal – camp/horse, Bellingham to Baker, would be fantastic, bike packing, space needed without being on a forest road; integrate existing trails, especially if sustainable; why tear it down
- Don't believe in discriminating against activities – don't do one activity over another; be an active participant is important; raise children to be law-abiding – this will deter trespassing; Galbraith and Walker Valley – many eyes, minds – shining examples of where people stay on trails, joyful use; dispel stereotypes of ORVs being irresponsible, should be allowed to experience all types of recreation in a responsible way; community trying to do the best for everyone: give and take; get kids outside and off the iPads
- No one's recreation should trump the residents safety
- How are we addressing the issue of invasive species? Stuff will travel really well on people, vehicles, and animals; already have a rather unusual and invasive plant on Red Mountain (garlic mustard) that will be easily spread
- Like to see connecting trail between Mt. Baker and lake Whatcom (Middle Fork ) connection
- 5 most popular things to do – ORV not on the list – revenue is 1/10<sup>th</sup> the revenue of wildlife viewing
- 42 years in Whatcom County; pay taxes; have no ORV trails in Whatcom County; 4.5 miles usable trails in Skagit County – lack of representation for the taxes they pay; use ORV to get up to nature – not be in town or Bellingham; one of the things he's noticed – people doing illegal trails, drugs without access; give them the "authority" without pressure up here; Red Mountain drug example – hurts him, this land; support ORV use
- See an inclusion of a plan to connect South Fork to the Middle Fork – trail corridor
- Support non-motorized use of Bay to Baker trail in the Middle Fork corridor, South Fork to Middle Fork; non-motorized use expands recreation potential for Bellingham and long distance hikers
- No ORV
- It makes no sense to suit up for a ride and enjoy the nature, beauty and grandeur when riding the ORV demands focus on trail – can't smell (exhaust), can't hear the birds, can't look to see the beauty
- It's hard to believe that there are no suitable areas that are not beautiful, sensitive and vulnerable where ORVs wouldn't bother anybody
- I support ORVs (times 5)
- Create 4x4 comradery with son and as he recreates; enforcement and education officers are out there; his son is enjoying the recreation as a family; all recreation
- See connector trail from Mt. Baker to Bellingham up the Middle Fork – non-motorized
- Upper Middle Fork could be good hiking – solitude, even with weather constraints, have back countryesque experience
- Need an area to teach youth a good trail building stewardship; give them the right to speak up when they see something not right; if we don't have an area, they won't know what is right or wrong
- Motorized recreation does not support clean air – DNR mission says we will, going against the mission statement

- 11% ORV participation – not true from Wa.gov.fact – economic benefits of outdoor recreation in Washington
- Motorized committee members welcome the opportunity to meet with the non-motorized opponents to discuss mutual concerns and how to address and mitigate them
- 3<sup>rd</sup> generation ORV user teaching the 4<sup>th</sup> generation responsible recreation use
- The evidence on the ground in Walker valley indicates trails are masses of erosion and environmental degradation; if this is the model for Whatcom County, I say no to ORVs in Whatcom County
- Motorized recreation is great for family recreation; it gets kids out of the house
- Motorized recreation is very therapeutic
- ORVs need to slow down, muffle bikes, stop damaging environment
- ORVs need to correct their problems; ATVs can go down a trail and have it better because of the broad base of it, doesn't trench it like a bike does
- Support ORV, also horseback, hiking – get an area where they could get 4x4 off road to trail would be nice
- I am 11 years old and love to ride dirt bikes; I would like to ride my dirt bike in Whatcom County without getting into trouble
- Motorized use is essential for balanced interests of all; physically disabled individuals have opportunities when riding in or on motorized vehicles
- I would like to see a designated ORV area, so that the kids have a place to ride with their family; since everything in Whatcom County right now only allows street legal vehicles
- More non-motorized trails; biker/hikers/ trail runners all take care of their zones; we do cleanups, maintenance, and have little impact on soil and surrounding wildlife; these activities are what breed more humans to care about their land
- The ORV community loves to do other recreation too; we love to hike, mountain bike, hunt, fish and just enjoy nature
- Where is the trail connecting Bellingham to Mt. Baker? Isn't it what the majority of people want? Connect through the Middle Fork