

October 25, 2016

Via electronic mail to bnr@dnr.wa.gov

Board of Natural Resources
PO Box 47000
Olympia, WA 98504-7000

Re: **Singletary Timber Sale**

Dear Members of the Board of Natural Resources,

Each of our organizations has a strong interest in recreational opportunities on public lands. This is especially true in the Skykomish Valley where a growing population has put significant pressure on a few low elevation, multi-use recreational opportunities like Wallace Falls State Park. On most weekends the parking lot is full by the early morning, and visitors looking for a nearby outdoor experience find few offerings. Damage to the trails and forest due to overcrowding in Wallace Falls State Park has also been a long term concern.

In order to encourage appropriate recreational opportunities, our organizations have supported recreation based recommendations included in many DNR advisory and focus group reports. For example, we support the non-motorized trail plan developed through the Reiter Forest Focus Group process. This plan will significantly increase the miles of trails available for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians in the Forest Board lands which DNR manages next to the Wallace River. One of the most compelling components of the trail plan is the opportunity to disperse the overcrowding at Wallace Falls State Park, through the utilization of a newly acquired Snohomish County trailhead and building miles of new trails which will connect the new trailhead to the existing trail system in Wallace Falls State Park.

However, we were disappointed that after the trail plan was completed, DNR decided to offer an almost 200-acre timber sale on the edge of the new Snohomish County trailhead and along the boundary of Wallace Falls State Park for almost a mile, right on top of the new non-motorized trails. We understand DNR's fiduciary responsibility, but question why this location was selected due to its unique recreational potential and its status as Forest Board land.

The Reiter Forest non-motorized trail plan represents a previous investment to expand outdoor recreation opportunities in the Skykomish Valley. However, the location of the Singletary timber sale will diminish this opportunity by degrading a pristine outdoor experience in such a beautiful area. Due to its location along the State Park boundary, this clearcut will also contribute to resource damage including windthrow within Wallace Falls State Park which will be highly visible to visitors. We believe that this area can be managed in a way that can maximize the recreational experience, compensate junior taxing districts and increase tourism visitations and tax revenue for local taxing districts. We also believe there are other ways to compensate the recipients of the timber sale revenue besides logging this area.

Opportunities such as Trust Land Transfers, Natural Resource Conservation Area designation, and re-conveyance for a county park, along with new creative solutions should be explored before offering the Singletary timber sale up for bid.

There are few places in our state where forest board land lies in such close proximity to a state park that serves almost 200,000 visitors each year and is used to define recreational opportunities for a whole county. The location of the Singletary timber sale is one such area. The unique opportunity to solve several long term problems, and provide significant benefits to the citizens of the county and the state, justifies a long term vision for this area.

We respectfully request the Forest Board to delay the sale of the Singletary timber sale until the new Commissioner of Public Lands, junior tax districts, elected officials and the public can explore options to protect a portion of this area, maximize recreational opportunities, and create a buffer along the new county trailhead and Wallace Falls State Park while also ensuring local revenue to junior tax districts.

Sincerely,

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