

## **PRESENT (P)**

### Washington State Parks

(P) Brian Yearout  
(P) Janet Shonk  
(P) Julie McQuary  
(P) Dennis Mills  
(P) Michael Hankinson  
(P) Lisa Lantz

### Ad-Hoc Committee

( ) Joyce Murray  
(P) Linda Gough  
(P) Bruce Brown  
(P) Steve Severin  
( ) Lt. Jerry Lawrence  
( ) Morgan Scherer

### Consultants

(P) Bruce Dees, Bruce Dees & Associates  
(P) Derrick Eberle, Bruce Dees & Associates  
(P) Joshua Hail, Bruce Dees & Associates  
(P) Bethany Marsh, Bruce Dees & Associates

### General Public

Please see the attached sign-in sheet.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this first public meeting was twofold: to explain the project's background, process, and goals; and to elicit input from members of the community. Each attendee was provided the opportunity to speak to the group and/or provide written comments.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *Introductions*

Bruce opened the meeting by introducing himself. He then introduced and thanked Debbie Austin – the representative from Senator Jan Angel's office – for attending, followed by introductions of the representatives from the Washington State Parks Commission and Bruce Dees & Associates. Bruce also introduced the members of the ad hoc committee and explained their role throughout the planning process.

### *C.A.M.P.*

Next, Lisa Lantz gave an overview of the C.A.M.P. process and post-C.A.M.P. issues (i.e. laminated root rot). She also called attention to a mistake in a recent newspaper article, noting that only six acres – not the stated twenty-five – had been clear cut for safety purposes. Lastly, she called for a balance between recreation opportunities and public safety, citing the Commission's "Tree Risk Policy."

### *Funding*

Following Lisa's presentation, Brian Yearout explained the biennium budget process for Kopachuck. Next, Bruce discussed the objectives of the master plan, as well as the project process and scheduling. Lastly, he showed several maps and photos of the park, highlighting existing conditions and sharing comments made at previous public meetings.

### *Public Comments*

Finally, Bruce invited each person to share his or her thoughts and concerns about the park. He also provided cards so that attendees could provide written comments as well. No consensus or votes were taken. The individual comments, organized here according to program element, were as follows:

## **COMMENTS**

### 1. Kitchen and Picnic Shelter

- A. Recommendations were made for a natural and durable structure (e.g. Wapato Park).
- B. Elements desired included: tables, benches, electricity and running water, BBQ grills, and a stove.
- C. A view would be great but not at the expense of trees.

- D. Suggested sites included by the upper or lower restrooms and anywhere that would not require extensive tree removal or asphaltting.
- E. It could be a good source of revenue for the park.
- F. Brian Yearout noted that although funding for the construction of a shelter is likely, it is not guaranteed.

2. Playground

- A. Strong preference for no playground.
- B. There are already plenty of playgrounds in the neighborhood; therefore, Kopachuck Park should focus on environmental educational opportunities/experiences.
- C. It was expressed that "Kopachuck is trees, not playgrounds."
- D. The general sentiment expressed was that Kopachuck Park is itself a playground, making an artificial playground unnecessary and obtrusive to the overall feeling of the park.
- E. There was a suggestion for exercise station signs that showed exercise/play opportunities in nature.

3. Parking Lot

- A. Several people recommended making the parking lot smaller.
- B. One person suggested that lowering the parking fee would prompt more people to use the parking lot, thereby: 1) increasing revenue for the park, and 2) decreasing the number of cars parked along roads leading to the park.
- C. Dennis Mills explained that the road is a country road, meaning that he has no parking enforcement authority along the road.
- D. Several attendees doubted, however, that those parking along the road would use the parking lot even if the fees were lowered.
- E. Several people expressed a desire for the concrete blocks to be removed and for the parking lot to be more "natural looking."

4. Restroom

- A. There was support for replacing/renovating the restrooms but with a clear preference for making the new restrooms look natural/rustic.
- B. (Written Comments) Restrooms and other structures should be of timber logs (cabin type), with more open space closer to the beach.

5. Campsites

- A. Although a couple of attendees did express a strong desire to keep the campground, many were in favor of not having it.
- B. Installing a gazebo on a concrete slab at each campsite would be good.
- C. Kopachuck campground was a great local resource for scouts and other young people to experience living in nature – often for the first time – and to learn practical camping skills, preparing them for challenges in the future.
- D. A gazebo would not stop a falling tree; moreover, the concrete slabs would be obtrusive in the more rustic/natural atmosphere of the park.
- E. In lieu of reopening the campground, put energy/money into developing the trails.
- F. The campground by the lower restroom has already eroded.

6. Beachfront/Shoreline

- A. Along with its natural forest, the park's main highlight is the beach.
- B. Improved beach access for kayakers would increase park use.
- C. As gravel paths are not conducive to easy access for people carrying their kayaks, a suggestion was made for a narrow asphalt or sanded fiberglass grating "kayak path" from the parking lot to the beach.
- D. Eroded areas and downed trees need to be cleaned up.

- E. There was considerable concern that removal of trees did/will increase erosion.
- F. Regarding erosion caused by the tides and measures to prevent that, several attendees did not want to see money spent on temporary fixes: improvements should be permanent.
- G. One attendee suggested the installation of bulkheads.
- H. Another attendee stated that the county's new shoreline management plan needs to be taken into account in the master planning. He also questioned what risk management plans were in place for future problems/policies.
- I. One attendee expressed a desire for more open space near the beach.
- J. (Written Comment) Provide kayak and row boat lockers near beach that you can rent.

7. ADA Accessibility

- A. There was concern expressed over the costs of making Kopachuck, particularly the trails, ADA-compliant.
- B. There was one suggestion to renovate the bathrooms but leave the trails as they are.
- C. Michael Hankinson (State Parks staff) noted that ADA compliance is not optional but the law in place.
- D. The trails should have trail rating signs posted.
- E. ADA access is not a concern for just those in wheelchairs but for the elderly and those with strollers as well.
- F. Viewing opportunities up top would be good; regardless of viewing spots, however, beach access is important.
- G. Lincoln Park in Seattle was given as a good example of drive-in ADA beach access.

8. Trails

- A. One attendee suggested beautifying the trails using native vegetation (e.g. rhododendrons, etc.).
- B. There was a suggestion of using the former campgrounds (i.e. already partially developed areas) for trails.
- C. One attendee noted that the trail to and from the beach on the south side of the park needs to be improved.

9. Interpretive Signs

- A. Types of signs desired included: tree identification, trail rating, root rot explanation/significance, play/exercise opportunities, and historical/geological/sociological background of the site.

10. Design Standards

- A. There was an overwhelming desire to keep a rustic, natural feel to the park as well as to any additions/renovations made to it.

11. Other

A. Trees

- 1) Very few trees look like they are going to fall; therefore, many questioned how much of a concern root rot actually is.
- 2) One attendee pointed out, however, that if the State can prove root rot, it would be irresponsible to not cut down the affected trees.
- 3) Several people suggested planting disease-resistant trees.
- 4) There was concern over how tree clearing would affect the water table and erosion.
- 5) The majority of attendees opposed cutting down trees and clear cutting, particularly in rarely used areas.
- 6) Safety is important, but concerns should be balanced with environmental protection measures.
- 7) Washington State Parks' staff noted that there was no current plan to cut down any more trees.
- 8) The park is a treasure that needs protecting, not just for humans but also for its many resident animals.
- 9) One attendee stated that trees are "not something that needs to be cleaned up," a sentiment echoed by several others in attendance.

B. Day Use/Park Elements

- 1) There was support and excitement for school use of the park.
- 2) A study/survey of user group types is needed in order to minimize conflict in use.
- 3) Maximize both park use and the user's experience.
- 4) One attendee noted that all of the proposed elements – with the exception of the playground – could be good but that would depend on where in the park they were located.
- 5) One example of this was the amphitheatre (and any element that would cause heavy noise pollution) which one woman strongly opposed but which was later described as a potentially benign park feature.

C. Park Atmosphere

- 1) One attendee noted that the park currently looks closed.
- 2) Frequent park visitors love its natural, undeveloped, rustic atmosphere.

**POST- PUBLICATION ADDITIONS TO THE MINUTES**

By request, the following comments are being included in these minutes:

- A. There are no plans to close the park.
- B. While there can be no assurance as to future funding, [the State representative] believes since the legislature funded this project they would intend to fund the improvements.

*These are the minutes as we understand them. If there are any additions or corrections, please contact Bruce Dees & Associates immediately.*