

## **Miller Peninsula Planning Public Comments June 2021**

Most rewarding to visit is Clallam County's Tongue Pt...please send continuous info to me about this new SP <sup>1</sup>

You haven't addressed the traffic issue especially when turning left , East, out of Diamond Point road. It's dangerous now. Can't imagine RVs trying to exit and the backup it will cause on DP road <sup>2</sup>

Last year my homeowners insurance went up significantly due to the ISO fire rating. I was told that the Washington Survey Rating Bureau, WSRB, looked at the ISO rating map and said we do not have a fire station within a close enough proximity and therefore our rating fell and our rates increased. I feel that putting a "destination state park " in our neighborhood puts us at an even higher risk of fire in the area. Is the state allocating money to build us a closer fire station?

Please address this concern. I see fires caused by careless campers popping up all over the west <sup>3</sup>

Olympic Environmental Council is a 501(c)3 educational organization headquartered in Sequim and Port Townsend, that has focused its efforts on protecting the environment on the Olympic Peninsula from bad planning decisions for over 30 years.

Our members include kayakers, birdwatchers, hikers, protesters, armchair activists, troublemakers, and public policy aficionados. We have been actively involved in the struggle to prevent inappropriate development of the Miller Peninsula since 1990 when our members objected to the Parks Commission about the proposed giveaway of the land to Mitsubishi.

Our organization's consensus position is that for this property, less is more, and even less is even better, and that in this case our mantra would be very simple "Don't pave paradise to put up a parking lot."

Over the past decade, plans for this unique property have shape-shifted in response to the demands of special interest user groups, with often contradictory desires, but rarely addressed the fundamental realities of this site, which include the serious TRAFFIC issues (one long access road), the current inability to address FIRE management, the inhospitable, unstable headland and the cobbled beach below that make it unsuited to either hiking or watersports, and the lack of adequate WATER on the Miller Peninsula, that is already problematic for the area's full time residents.

It is our observation that the current planning process is failing to align with the agency's mission, which includes transparent public process, and that Park planners must retreat and address realistic constraints on this project that have already been raised, some repeatedly in public comments, but not yet adequately answered.

Our concerns are focused on the differential and asymmetrical impacts of various groups' desired activities on both the environment and on each other's recreational needs. For instance Mountain Bikers want places to go fast, w/o concern for running over hikers or scaring horses. And hikers want to be able to walk on trails w/o being harassed by horseflies. And car campers and RVers want places to camp that allow campfires, have clean bathrooms and let them take showers and dump trash. We understand the pressure that Parks is under to serve all classes of users and all demographics, but service to the agency's mission statement

### **VISION**

Washington's state parks will be cherished destinations with natural, cultural, recreational, artistic, and interpretive experiences that all Washingtonians enjoy, appreciate, and proudly support.

### **CORE VALUES**

The agency has adopted the following core values:

Commitment to stewardship that transmits high quality park assets to future generations

Dedication to outdoor recreation and public enjoyment that welcomes all our citizens to their public parks

Excellence in all we do

Involving the public in our policy development and decision making

Support for one another as we translate our mission into reality

requires that serious issues that have been raised by the public be addressed, and that in the wake of substantial changes to some of the most basic community understandings, and to the State's financial conditions, changes such as those brought to us through COVID, that review of concerns raised in the public's input received during the past decade is in order.

It appears that given Commission direction, the time for something close to SEPA review for a significant development project has arrived.

In 2007 it was stated that this project had not yet reached the level of SEPA, but given the very serious nature of problems already provided in public comments (as recently as 10-31-2020) involving availability of WATER, problems around FIRE, and already serious TRAFFIC issues, as well as the serious wildlife habitat disruptions that will inevitably be caused by many of the proposed activities, it appears that we are "there now" and that pretending that project planning of potentially large scale development project involving road construction, traffic management, building construction, sewer and electrical utilities, potable water, and lighting, can continue without consideration of reality-based issues like availability of water, availability of wildfire response, traffic impacts, and habitat disruption/destruction of what is currently a significant wildlife corridor is totally at odds with "Excellence in all we do."

<https://parks.state.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/15610/03-April-2007-Adopted-Planning-Principles-and-Concept> "SEPA Review: Following review, staff has determined portions of the action proposed for the Commission by staff is exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act. Other elements, requesting the Commission set direction for future planning, constitutes an action; 1) too early in the planning and decision-making process according to WAC 197-11-055(2); and, 2) would not limit the choice of reasonable alternatives according to WAC 197-11-070(1)(b); and, therefore a SEPA determination is not required. Staff will issue a determination and develop appropriate environmental documents according to SEPA, following Commission direction"

In November 2016, direction was noted "The State Office of Financial Management (OFM) requires a predesign study for capital projects with costs exceeding \$5 million. A predesign report is a document that explores alternatives, conveys programming information, and provides a cost estimate for a proposed capital project."

The capital costs or other consequences of this project cannot be predicted without consideration of these matters.

"This predesign process involves considering alternatives and selecting the Commission-owned property that is best suited to and ready for development. The process then goes on to identify appropriate park facilities and other amenities, estimate development and operation costs, anticipate financing, and detail necessary regulatory compliance, construction, and other critical paths toward completing the project"

I assume that tonight is the kickoff for Phase 2 of the planning process.

"At this stage, the planning team suggests potential alternative approaches to address the various issues and concerns raised by people in stage one. No preferred alternative is established, rather this is an opportunity to understand the range of possibilities."

I look forward to your meeting this evening, and hope to come away pleased to find that you have already addressed all of these concerns.

Joe Breskin

Olympic Environmental Council <sup>4</sup>

I have noticed some maintenance on the trails recently. Who does repair maintenance and construction of these trails? I would like to help them. Contact names and numbers? <sup>5</sup>

Please note that there are many Olympic Peninsula citizens who would prefer to keep Miller Peninsula state Park mostly undeveloped. We have so many wonderful parks here on the Northern Olympic Peninsula that are open to all, but Miller is unique. It offers a nearly pristine environment. Hiking the trail to the beach makes you feel as though you are exploring a hidden wonderland of deep ferned gullies and sheltering evergreens, an undiscovered forest. Then you emerge onto the beach to view the seabird sanctuary of Protection Island, with the seals in the surf and gulls overhead, and a sense of peace descends that would be lost in a throng of visitors who need only drive to an easy walk to the shore. Please don't take away the unique experience this park offers to walkers, hikers, and equestrians who appreciate its beauty.

Miller also shelters wildlife, including deer and cougar, whose habitat would be further diminished in a developed park, and whose existence becomes more threatened each year as development encroaches.

While I wouldn't mind a small area for day use, or even a small campground away from the central part of the park and the main trail to the beach, it would be heartbreaking to lose the treasure that the park is now. I even say this as a senior who at times has limited mobility, making me unable to take that trek to the shore. But I know it's there, and that's what is important. There are many, many other places where I can drive to the beach.

So please do not make this park like all the others! Preserve what makes it special, maintain the wildlife habitat, and keep it for generations to come. <sup>6</sup>

Please please please: Inhibit overuse!

Develop the park into a research and education facility

Restrict activities: bikes one or two days; then horses one or two days; hikers daily.

A better inventory is needed of the animals, insects, plants, etc.

Minimize the need for expensive infrastructure and upkeep (pipes, sewage, water, etc.)

No camping, or maybe 10 backcountry hike/bike into camping sites.

Otherwise, a day-use park — picnic tables, trash cans, and bathrooms

Promote birding and native plants and what is unique to this land

Remember a 3K-acre forested, open space is rare

Water is scarce and will get scarcer with global warming and the area's population growth

Plan for future generations that will need such a space

Name the park: Salish Sea State Park

We are globally, and locally, in another world from yesteryears when the park concepts began in the U.S.; when it was encouraged to bring people into nature to recreate. Our environments are endangered; hence, we are endangered. We must appreciate this parkland for what it holds, continues to grow, particular state and federal protections that apply to it, and pass on this information to visitors. As a comparison, thousands of persons come to the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes several islands. It is a money maker. No one can camp at this Sequim Refuge site (although next to it is a county camp park, but the traffic without it is huge, anyway). Visitors from around the world will make Miller Peninsula a destination if promoted properly.

Parks should stand back and look at the global environmental situation and plan a park to protect. Educate the public why it must be kept intact; about the wildlife rooted in the soil and the mobile wildlife that use and need this area — the bears, the big cats, the fox, and the small to the smallest. Keep the lands complexity and teach the visitors about the complexity and what that means to human lives. The next generations will appreciate this and the knowledge will be passed on.

**Thank you for your attention to the very important matter. <sup>7</sup>**

Hi--would you please define "full service state park" and what it includes. I have not been able to find it on the website. <sup>8</sup>

I love in Sunshine Acres in Diamond Point

Before this project goes further

1) Fire is a major issue No fire dept .The Diamond Point one can't even get volunteers to work on it now

2) Water - we are in a drought now in Washington state State Parks take immense water consumption from landscape to campers to showers etc - Diamond Point has only one well and th state park would be tapping into it

3) Ground water contamination due to installation of septic sysmtems

4) Staffing you plan on spending all this money for a new park when there are

a- no low income housing in Sequim

b- no rental homes under \$2000 due to the intense real estate market in Sequim those that were renting their homes up and sold if you look all over the county there are help wanted signs everywhere.

That is because their are no rentals here any more workers

In order to staff a park this size means a large work force-- also crime

will park be open at night? rangers living on sight?

Diamond Point has ONE lane road in and only ONE land road out

One campfire or cigarette butt and we would be locked in with no way out

a major study of fire hazards needs to done before proceeding

Also even now the traffic off the 101 is insane in summer it can take 10 minutes to cross the highway just imagine all the campers horse trailers hikers trying to get into and out a park on a one lane road???

Spend the 40 million on all of the other wonderful parks that are already built and could use upgrades <sup>9</sup>

The Peninsula Trails Coalition supports bicycle use and the possibility of bicycle camping in this park. We also support a trail connection between the ODT trailhead at Diamond Point Road and the park trailhead. There appears to be enough county right of way on the west side of Diamond Point Road to allow a paved trail connection to be planned for and funded and constructed at a future date. Please use my contact information to involve me in the planning process. <sup>10</sup>

Having watched some of the meeting of 6/30/21, I have come to the conclusion that the place would be better off left alone. Why intrude into natural space more than we already do for the sake of giving humans somewhere to walk, ride a bike or horse ?

Then when a bear or cougar frightens somebody who files a complaint you send someone out to kill it. Being close to 70, I will be dead before anything gets done anyway with all the tree huggers debating over which tree to cut and which one to save.

I can see my nine-hole par 3 golf course suggestion is definitely out of the question; too much damage to the natural beauty and environment for tree huggers, trail buffs and nature lovers. <sup>11</sup>

**The** zoom session presenting options for developing Miller Peninsula into campsites, RV accessibility, cabins, a lodge, rock walls, zip lines, tree houses and climbing steps, sports, on and on, never mentioned real time, present day climate concerns/sustainability efforts we must adapt to in the future to help guide citizens into realistic expectations of recreation outdoors. Change in behavior begins happening when government level mission statements recognize its responsibilities to curb use of fossil fuels, electricity and water resources and to educate the public on foreseeable preservation efforts of our state's limited natural lands. We believe, first, that the present Mission Statement needs to reflect the reality today. The Mission Statement should take into account climate change environmental concerns. An example: "The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide sustainability to our environment through memorable outdoor and educational experiences that enhance their lives."

Second, the options on the table for tree removal, pouring cement, building zip lines, rock walls, tree canopies, bringing in more electrical power and water availability for campsites in Miller Peninsula, etc. center around traditional thinking of providing for the American leisure time. We need to look forward. To support sustainability, we need our trees to remain on natural lands for obvious reasons of support to wildlife. Why pour cement for more impervious surfaces? Why use lumber for more building? Why strain electrical and water supplies? Sequim and surrounding communities have motels and hotels for all budgets. Miller Peninsula is no Lake Crescent. There is no boat launch or views to brag about.

Third, we support trail enhancement for Miller Peninsula. Nature trails for the handicapped could be constructed, and beautiful madrona groves line the paths. Many early wildflowers abound in the shady trails. Owls and other birds abound now.

Fourth, we support an amphitheater for education, with ranger led walks for youth and adults alike. Miller Peninsula is very muddy and wet in the winter months. But in the dry months, it is ideal for hiking, bicycling, horse riding, etc. We equate it to other State Parks in Washington where trail suitability is its best use (Kirkland, Wa - Bridle Trails State Park, St. Edward State Park, etc.)

Thank you for accepting our comments. <sup>12</sup>

Parks are wonderful but I have a few concerns that I hope you consider as you move forward. Traffic getting onto the 101 from Diamond Point. My main concern is the campfires. The smoke will add to the air pollution. They will add a thick layer of smoke especially on foggy morning that we have along the coast and it stinks. Also fire danger. Diamond Point road is a single lane and the only way in or out of the community. Could this be a No open fire campground? Also the extra traffic as camper try to find beach access. There is no public beach access. There is a boat launch but No parking. I think campers this close want access to the beach and there isn't any. Please consider these concerns as you move forward. <sup>13</sup>

I'm concerned about:

- \*. Traffic - Diamond Point Road and Highway 101, especially turning east onto 101 is already a challenge. Just add a couple of people with large vehicles or trailers = long wait to turn either left or right without a traffic light
- \*. Additional people in our quiet community
- \*. Water access for campers
- \*. Fire danger and access to water to douse
- \* Camp parties (booze, drugs, guns, impaired people doing stupid things)
- \*. Wildlife endangerment
- \* Nikki mentioned the possibility of events held at the park - what kind of events and how many people involved?
- \* Homeless camp? Is there something in place to ensure no campers decide to just move in?
- \* Trash overloaded cans in the park or tossed along Diamond Point Road
- \* The boundaries of the park shown on the map go right up to our Diamond Point development. Why not reduce the footprint of the park so we can have a buffer zone

I'm sure there's something else I haven't thought of yet. I vote to keep the park for day-use only and let overnights go to the hotel. <sup>14</sup>

My concern for all is entrance and exit to and from Hwy 101 and Diamond Point. This affects more than just Diamond Point/Sunshine Acres - Anyone using Hwy 101 will be affected by the backups too. And it's already a dangerous intersection. And how much more traffic can DP Road take? Hwy 101, DP Road, and Sequim Bay Road can't really support the increased traffic on these 1 lane roads.

Exit band entrance ramps for DP Road and widening this area to 2 lanes would also help. I think a traffic light or roundabout would not be a good solution to traffic flow issues.

Why change Sequim Bay State Park with the addition of camping to Miller Peninsula State Park?? SBSP provides a small campground for visitors and locals alike. It's maintained and has an active boat ramp and dock. All of which is close to Sequim, which is a big plus for Sequim and visitors alike! It would be awesome to see the state to acquire additional surrounding land, even if it's across Hwy 101, to allow for some of the additional needs of this very popular park. An area for vehicles with boat trailers would help as well as expansion of the camping facilities here.

Expanding Hwy 101 to 2 lanes each way and an exit/entrance ramp would also alleviate the traffic issues in that area as well.

Thanks for this opportunity to give input to things that are important to the community I live in! <sup>15</sup>
Miller Peninsula state park is a beautiful park. I've been riding horses there for 15 years. In the last few years its seen an increase in foot & bike traffic. I'm grateful that more people are using it. It's important for everyone to have access to parks like this. I'd love to see some general public education about the diversity of this park. Im concerned about an email from another group that I read that talks about curtailing use & requiring reservations to use the park. Miller is a jewel. It was built by us & for us & we should continue to have year round access. The state parks work hard, really hard, to help people experience & enjoy what our state has to offer. No Denali park here, keep this park for everyone. <sup>16</sup>
First, Hello again and I hope this finds you healthy and well. Very happy to hear the results of the traffic survey confirm the need for traffic revision on 101 and Diamond Point Road. Would this be completed before the Park opens? I understand the need for more camping spaces on the Peninsula, being a long time camper here. Could you clarify why you would close Sequim Bay State Park to camping? It has the boat launch, the beach access and all the facilities already in place. Is there an underlying problem with Sequim Bay State Park that would require it to be closed for camping ? Looking forward to your reply <sup>17</sup>
I live in Diamond Point. The Miller Peninsula State Park will have a huge impact on our neighborhood. I know you had a ZOOM meeting last week but many of the people in Diamond Point were unable to attend either because they were traveling, had visitors for the 4th, or couldn't figure out how to connect. Many of my neighbors and I would like to meet with you in person. I can arrange a time to use our beach club so we can meet outside and maintain distance. A good day for us would be August 12. We need time to arrange our travel and visitor schedules and also to look into options for the park that will impact us the least. Please let me know if August 12 works for you. I think meeting with the people most effected by the park is the right thing to do and will help calm some of the fears and concerns my neighbors and I have. <sup>18</sup>
The Miller Peninsula property provides a rare opportunity to visit an undeveloped waterfront along the Olympic Peninsula. This should absolutely be preserved as a wild area, rather than creating just another waterfront camping area. Those who want to park their RV next to the water can do so at Sequim Bay State Park. Please locate any developed camping and recreation at least a mile from the beach access and the ravine leading down to it. <sup>19</sup>
As a long time resident of Clallam County, I urge that the Miller Peninsula property be maintained in its current state, rather than 'developed' into campgrounds and playing fields. Our current climate issues do not support this kind of destruction of natural ecosystems for human recreation. <sup>20</sup>
We are writing as a member of the Diamond Point community in regards to the Miller park project. The current status of park should be maintained and no further development be made to the area. Many homeowners in Diamond Point are concerned about the increase in traffic as there is only one road in and out of DP, also the congestion at the intersection of DP road and highway101. Also water is of great concern to the community as we rely on the aquifer for our needs. Increased use from park users during the high volume season will strain resources, especially in times of drought. Fire danger is also high on the list as we are surrounded on three sides by forest with no fire station in close proximity and only DP road for evacuation which is a major problem in any kind of disaster that requires quick exit. Please take the communities concerns into consideration. We have more issues than those listed above. <sup>21</sup>
I support the development of the Miller peninsula into a destination state park for our region. I view this as an income-generating opportunity for our state parks. There is clearly a demand for family camping and day use recreation activities. Thank you for planning ahead to make this large state-owned property more accessible to the public. <sup>22</sup>
These comments represent my own nit any organization to which I belong.
If the number of capsules are scaled to the amount of water available to service the, then the proposed

plan 1 based upon a traditional development offers the best option to enjoy nature and preserve it as well<sup>23</sup>

I am against development of Miller Peninsula State Park into a Destination State Park. I am very concerned with the DP neighborhood being land-locked by a State Park with RV Campers. We have one road in and out (as told to us by PUD when they're fixing downed power lines repeatedly every winter). The increased traffic on DP Road will endanger the residents as well as the local deer. I am very concerned about tree removal, damage to native plants, and harming wildlife and avian habitat. I am very concerned with people outside our community being looky-loos, also with campers looking for beach access on private properties. I am very concerned with increased fire potential given the effects of climate change. We have a tiny volunteer fire dept. and few if any working fire hydrants.

The 3 proposed plans for building out MPSP are unacceptable to me.<sup>24</sup>

I am AGAINST any development of Miller Peninsula State Park into a Destination Park.

I am very concerned with the Diamond Point neighborhood being land-locked by a State Park on three sides. We have one road in and out (which often has trees downed by wind, already causing access and egress issues). The increased traffic on Diamond Point Road will potentially endanger residents when egress is necessary.

I am very concerned about tree removal, damage to native plants, and harming wildlife and avian habitat. I am concerned with the trails that currently lead directly into our neighborhood inviting hikers to "explore". I am very concerned with people outside our community looking for beach and boating access. I am also concerned with the increased fire potential given the effects of climate change. We have a tiny volunteer fire dept. and few if any working fire hydrants. I am very concerned with the increase in water usage for an aquifer that will struggle to keep up.

All 3 proposed plans for building out MPSP are unacceptable!<sup>25</sup>

First, I will quote from Joni Mitchell's song: "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've lost til it's gone. Take paradise and put up a parking lot". That about sums up how I feel about your plans. There are no good options, and I can't figure out why they state wants to invest so much money when we don't have enough to take care of our people. I'm sure it's all about projected revenue and the beauty of pristine nature be damned. What happens to all the wildlife and beautiful plants? I love the wild rhodies along the existing trails. How much of this will you destroy?

I do not believe it will increase our property values but more likely the opposite. Most of us chose the area for its quiet, nature, and lack of traffic. I also like the like of street lights so I can see the stars. If I wanted traffic, I'd stay in the Seattle area. I also dislike the idea of fires so close to our community. It is bone dry out here for months at a time. The campers will inevitably drive around the neighborhoods and some will ignore private property signs/boundaries. I've seen campgrounds in neighborhoods shut down because of such issues.

That said, it seems this will be forced on us.

Best Options:

1. Leave it as it is. It is a lovely place to take an evening stroll, a hike, a bike ride, or take your horse. Advertise it as a destination since I see the big parking lot is rarely full so I think the general public is unaware. They will have to pay the day use fee or get the pass so it will bring in some money.

2. Build out more day use options since you obviously want revenue. That is usually all that matters - money. Less investment to get a return on your money more quickly. Have some of the features like your amphitheater and your ziplines. It will bring in the money that is behind this push and coincidentally get people out in nature which is what you use as your marketing ploy. Have some wheelchair friendly trails. Maybe put a few camp spots around that lot that already exists?

3. Village Center is the best of the three awful alternatives as it is more compact possibly leaving some of the trails pretty lonely still. It also brings less campsites. The Lodge will definitely attract those who don't like camping. Since it seems we really only get to choose among the three alternatives, this is the best as it includes a nod to saving the wildlife who will be displaced, doesn't destroy as much vegetation, and comes with more trails which is a benefit to all of us. I would rather the 400 or so campers we may see descending on the area in the summer be contained in one area - less overall impact to nature. <sup>26</sup>

July 12, 2021

Re: Miller Peninsula State Park Planning

I wish to comment on proposed alternatives for Mille Peninsula State Park. I attended your June 30 online presentation and reviewed materials on your website. While I agree that "nature within reach" is an appropriate vision for the park, I fail to see how the alternatives offered reflect that. I cannot support any proposed alternative at this time; I would like to review your ecological integrity assessment in more detail and see a current wildlife study for the area.

In general, I see the level of development in all three alternatives (1 Immersed in Nature, 2 Village Center, and 3 Traditional) as excessive and beyond what is sustainable given the resources available on the Miller Peninsula. Some of the concepts discussed in each alternative make sense, such as small camp area(s) in 1, concentrating development and boundary expansion in 2, and east-side trailhead development in 3, but the scale of proposed developments in all is excessive.

Specifically I consider it unwise in the extreme to propose a commercial lodge and deluxe rental cabins in the park. Lands under tribal ownership to the south would be the logical place for such commercial developments to be located, undertaken by private parties. Park lands are limited and should be used for purposes other than commercial development. I also consider "adventure" recreation facilities, such as zip lines, ropes courses, aerial tramways, climbing walls, etc. incompatible with a natural-area park like Miller Peninsula. Park lands should emphasize camping, hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, picnicking, nature study and wildlife viewing, environmental education, and research. As low elevation lands on the north Olympic Peninsula continue to develop, these are the activities that will become increasingly in demand.

Campsite development should be limited to the more recently logged forest areas on the park's periphery and emphasize low-impact camping, tent-camping and small campers and trailers. Full-service RV campsites with electric and sewer hookups are better served by private campgrounds in the area that currently accommodate these types of vehicles.

I am particularly concerned that sensitive areas are proposed for some of these developments. Unique botanical areas such as the madrona grove in the southeast section of the park and mature, naturally regenerated Douglas-fir stands (which are increasingly rare in the Puget Sound lowlands) should be off limit to development and open to limited foot traffic only.

Lastly, the climate crisis is affecting every aspect of the Olympic Peninsula ecosystem and poses serious concerns over water use and wildlife risk on the Miller Peninsula. Park planning should reflect this reality and address these two important issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to share some preliminary comments. I look forward to staying involved in the planning process. <sup>27</sup>

With regard to the Miller Peninsula, I would request that the planning group consider a very low impact alternative in order to minimize the adverse impact on the madrona forests, other natural areas and wildlife. In keeping with that concept, I would like to see the wildlife corridor as well as the smallest allowed campsite alternative which will put less stress on the water systems and emergency services, and minimize sewer and trash accumulation. In addition, I would like to see no beach access on the Discovery Bay side. This will stop the inevitable trespassing on private tidelands as campers and day use individuals walk from one public beach to the other public beach. Thank you for your consideration. <sup>28</sup>

Please keep in mind the mission and purpose of state parks. The proposals put forth are more in keeping with some sort of amusement park and not to provide reasonable, passive enjoyment of nature. Keeping it simple is better for the place and people. The lack of site sensitivity expressed to this point is egregious. The planned use should have a small footprint and result in minimum impacts. It is a marvelous place to take a quiet walk and be immersed within the natural world. Please do not destroy this for the plants and animals that live there and the people who visit. So keep all the RVs at Sequim Bay and if allowing camping, design walk-in sites and minimize vehicle intrusions. A resort with stores and every modern convenience is to be avoided. Keep the built footprint small and rustic, a throwback idea but one that will be quite novel in the future. Don't mess this up. If in the future people want to camp in the parking lot of a shopping center they can destroy at that time. <sup>29</sup>

The Miller Peninsula property should be "managed to protect and conserve significant scenic and natural features" and remain as much as possible in its natural state. People go to state parks for the natural beauty and lack of development.

Mountain biking, horseback riding, and hiking are the main attractions of Miller Peninsula and should remain as such. There is no need for development of further "attractions".

I would also like to see

- 1) camping--more tent sites than full service RV sites with vegetation providing privacy between sites.
- 2) limited number of cabins/yrts

One overriding concern is that a thorough study of water availability hasn't been done yet. <sup>30</sup>

My husband & I have lived full time on East Sequim Bay Rd for 28 years and tent camped on the property before that. We have biked and walked Miller Peninsula property. We were relieved when State Parks acquired the property. We have attended the planning meetings over the past ~15 years.

I grew up camping at state parks. I thought we did this because we liked it. As an adult I found out we did it because it was all we could afford for vacations. At 69 I still prefer tent camping to a lodge, I enjoy it more and sleep better! I live in the forest surrounded by native plants with zero landscaping. I attribute this lifestyle of outdoor recreation and living with natural surroundings to my childhood growing up camping and picnicking in State Parks.

I believe the only way people will value and preserve natural areas is for them to spend time outdoors in undeveloped areas.

Thank You for the careful consideration of this land, the informative presentation on June 30 and answering all the chat questions. Here are my comments from that session and some additional thoughts. In no particular order.

#### Sequim Bay

I support continuing camping at Sequim Bay State Park, at minimum the lower loop and RV loop. I understand there is road noise and I also know this campground routinely fills during the summer. While it may not be desirable for some, others seem to think the attractions outweigh the noise. Waterfront camping is special and limited on the Olympic Peninsula. I understand you have land movement issues and wonder if there is some work that can be done up hill and on adjacent properties that could help with water drainage. There is an area east of the State Park where movement on The Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) has been found to be due to water runoff from Hwy 101 and some drains not functioning.

There should be camping for boat owners using the boat launch. Trailer parking should NOT have priority over camp sites.

Consider use of the closed group camp area for ODT biker/hiker campsites.

I suggest wall tent or platform tents rather than cabins. If some one needs to have a door to lock & walls there are motel/hotel, cabin & airbnb rentals in the area and then use the park during the day.

In your discussion of concessions. I could support the concept of short term, not permanent changes to the park type... bike rental, food truck, no permanent buildings to be run by concessions.

Consider how to make left turns off & onto Hwy 101 easier.

#### Miller Peninsula Property names

Discover State Park discover: the forest, nature, yourself, connections and the real world!

Forest Discovery State Park

#### ALL TRAILS SHARED USE horse, bike, hike

There is a county disk golf course nearby, don't duplicate unless there is a real need.

Having the boundary to include Cat Lake and wildlife corridor to the National Forest land to the south is a BIG plus! Please work with adjacent landowners on this.

Do not build a lodge. This competes with existing business in the area. I do not consider lodging and restaurant to be recreation. The mission & vision for Wa State Parks of caring for the land, stewardship for future generations, outdoor recreation and public enjoyment can all be achieved without a lodge and restaurant.

Yes, please do the "development" in the last logged areas. Leave the rare and high quality plant areas untouched.

Please have good connection to the ODT. ADA if possible.

Have ODT hiker/biker campsites. Separate from other campers and in natural setting.

In looking at the 3 proposals on the computer it is difficult to make out the orange color vs red, there is a mislabel the Diamond Point trail is as Diamond Point Rd. I may not be getting the details correct.

I wish to see camping. Personally I would prefer camp sites with a bit of space & natural brush between sites rather than open areas of grass.

Separate utility campsites from standard

Only offer electric. No water or sewer hookups

No generators at any time.

Quiet hours 9pm to 9am

Provide food lockers

Consider no campfire pits at each site. Instead make a group firepit as a campfire talk area in place of an amphitheater. Talk and show & tell lectures rather than slide show style. Have a community fire which could go on for a short while after or before the talk and then be put out by a ranger or volunteer? Let people bring their own marshmallows or corn to pop?

In general I would like to see the development be clustered rather than spread out, develop less land.

No road going farther in... as in the immersed in nature where the road goes most of the way to Rocky Pt. Emphasize people using trails rather than driving. To get to the water by car go to Sequim Bay Park. I understand that limits who can get there and some day it will leave me out too. Minimize roads.

I would favor wall tents and tent platforms over cabins.

Put these in separate loops from other campers.

Use permeable surfaces to avoid runoff. I know this is a low rainfall area and we have been getting more heavy rains recently and that is predicted to increase with climate change.

Have rainwater gardens... gutters drain to area with native plants.

Also have rain barrels or catchment system for rain water and use for show & tell.

Use Sequim Prairie native plants

Make multiple areas of pollinator gardens with native plants.

Minimize grass areas.

Do not use herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilizers

In standard campground areas have a central covered area for cooking in the off season... rain & cold.

Consider a rock or brick fireplace with a steel cook top... wood heats the rock/brick and radiates that heat out... it also heats the steel top which can be used to cook on... I've used some built by the CCC in the 1930's they make off season more enjoyable and can be shared by other campers who don't have heated RV's with kitchens.

I have difficulty having State Parks building cabins, hard tents, glamping or lodge and restaurant... I support the simplest low cost way to get people to spend time outside. What can a minimum wage worker with a family afford for a weeks vacation? Please consider having something the low income can afford. Other people have more options.

Have volunteer program in exchange for camping fee and annual pass .

Anything built (ie Administration building )should be LEED, energy efficient, solar panels use for show and tell.

Administration building should be for Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay, not regional facility.

Have information to give all visitors that this area is not a rain forest, it is low rainfall... conserve water, that food people eat will kill wild animals, have grey water disposal for tent campers so dish water is collected and food particles are not left where they attract animals.

Consider from opening day being strict with campers about leaving any food, dishes, dish pans, utensils out. All must be in vehicles or food lockers. It really makes a difference in being able to observe wild animals being wild.

Consider a dish washing station for campers... a inside sink with running water and a counter to wash & dry dishes. This also helps with off season tent camping.

No entrance fee for hiker biker.

Be a Dark Sky Park.

At least have any outside lights point down, use red light in at least one area of camping, rest rooms on motion & daylight sensors & use red lights

I am unclear how the ropes course, canopy walk or climbing wall fits into the day use areas.... Would they be open to anyone all the time? Only with a ranger lead activity? How would they be safe? How do you minimize injury/bullying/daring? How do these activities lead to a life long attraction to outside activities and preserving natural places?

A zip line seems out of place here.

Are there other activities that would appeal/attract teens? Way finding, paper map orienteering, hunting for specific natural features or plants like a scavenger hunt or?

Have some first come first serve campsites for travelers to discover a new place and those of us who don't know what we will find along the way or how far we will travel.

Include a group camp area.

Include a horse camp area.

Consider a shuttle bus between Sequim Bay Park & Miller Peninsula Park

Wildlife sightings

Elk, cougar, coyote, heard trumpeter swans last winter

In dry summers, a cougar is often seen at the creek in the County Park in Panorama Vista.

Wildlife cameras on Miller Peninsula contacts

Kim Sager-Fradkin Wildlife program Manager for Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Natural Resources

[Kim.sager@elwha.org](mailto:Kim.sager@elwha.org)

Dylan Bergman Wildlife Program manager for Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe & Port Gamble Tribe

[dbergman@pnptc.org](mailto:dbergman@pnptc.org)

Thank You for doing what you do to preserve this land for future generations. <sup>31</sup>

The Miller Peninsula is a unique place on the Olympic Peninsula, with unusual plant communities that thrive in the rain shadow and easy-to-access trails. It is one of the few areas of the Olympic Peninsula where people can experience manzanita stands, a beautiful madrone forest (E Diamond Point Trail), snowbush ceanothus, buffaloberry, yerba buena and many other plants that thrive on dry soil. It is also an easy-to-access trail system that doesn't require driving on rutted dirt roads, making it perfect for an half-day hike getaway and easy for families with children to enjoy.

Please do not overdevelop this park. It is a treasure to those who live near it and I believe people visiting the area will also enjoy its rustic charm. In society today we do not get enough time to escape our phones and constant demands, and right now Miller Peninsula is one place where we can do that. More and more people are embracing the low-tech recreation that state parks offer as a way to

destress and reconnect with the land and the people that you are spending the day with. Based on the alternative plans that were presented by State Park staff, it appears that the State Park system wants to take away a lot of that simplicity and bring a busy and cluttered mentality to the park. People leave their homes, jobs and cities to come to state parks to get away from that. If State Parks decides to develop Miller Peninsula, please keep it restrained. A few tent camping spots and ADA accessible trails should be the only thing that State Parks adds, if they need to add anything at all. Diamond Point Road and the community cannot handle RV traffic and congestion. Please do not permanently damage the community with lots of development and crowds. It would also destroy the flow of traffic on Hwy 101 to add a signal or roundabout to the intersection with Diamond Point Road. It is the only access road from the mainland to Sequim, Port Angeles, Forks and the west side and creating a stop there would be a disaster for travel. The rest of the north Olympic Peninsula is developing fast, and it's important that we keep some areas free of that development. Miller Peninsula would be the perfect place to create a sanctuary for people, wildlife and plants from the uncontrolled development and constant pressure of our modern world.<sup>32</sup>

As member of BCHW and a frequent volunteer trail maintenance person (and also an equestrian and rider) at Miller, my number one request is that all trails remain multi-use and that new trails be built to mitigate the loss of any that are "repurposed". Only one of the proposed options includes "horse campsites" and I would like to see this added to all of the possible plans. It is my hope that development will be as minimal as possible and still allow camping sites. Huge play structures belong in city parks, not in places where people have the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful natural environment. Make this a place to learn about our native plants and animals. There are already parks with ziplines, climbing structures, and ball fields--leave this park in a more natural state so visitors can actually feel like they have escaped the crowded city life and be immersed in nature. I know that many state residents are looking for places to enjoy the great outdoors and it is good for people to be surrounded by nature, so leave it as natural as possible for the good of all. Thank you for considering these requests.<sup>33</sup>

Dear Miller Peninsula Park Team -

Having been part of the groups over the years defending the miller peninsula for park use – from fish pens and the Mitsubishi golf courses – it's nice to see our efforts come to fruition. I've taken an active role in helping protect this area all my life, for future use for us all to enjoy.

In the following comments I believe we can do better than just the three options mentioned in the June 30, 2021 meeting.

My suggestion would be to make this Park a hybrid of the 3 options presented. I would suggest nontraditional, low impact, fewest people at any one time. The idea here to create a park looking toward the future in Washington state. To take on the responsibility to protect, appreciate and respect the land, wildlife, and neighbors. The choices should not be limited to just these three options. There should be room to choose a very low impact option such as leaving the trails as is, or allowing fewer people at any one time to truly enjoy nature – some of the Washington population may want an option like this.

COMMENTS:

1). Avoid beach access if possible – if not - allow beach access only to the north beach or near Sequim Bay.

A). Avoid beach access - if possible:

To help protect the cliffs from graffiti, protect the feeding areas used by Harlequin ducks, eagles, oyster catchers etc. To keep dogs, horses from depositing fecal matter on the beaches, polluting clams,

oysters, and tidelands.

B). Allow beach access only on the north beach or Sequim Bay:

If beach access is allowed on both sides of the park there will be clashes with private property and private tideland owners as campers, dogs, horses hike from one access to the other. This can also leave unnecessary fecal matter on clam beds. As mentioned in the meeting, people don't look at signage (which is needed regardless) so allowing access to only the north side - would be a way for the park to be a good neighbor to Diamond Point residents. The people of Diamond Point, like myself, have helped protect this land for years, to help get to this point for a new Park. I would suggest no access on the Discovery Bay side, and if that gets voted down, then access at the furthest southern point only, not at the alluvial fan. This will help keep folks and pets further away from private tidelands, that will be in their line of sight, and prevent further deterioration of the cliff face. I would also hope that WA State Parks would assist in designating the park boundary clearly to help in this effort.

2). Avoid the campfires:

Camping for the future should not include fires as we head toward global warming, air pollution, and the increased risks of forest fires. We are already getting familiar with burn bans, plus we don't use fires when hiking in many places already. Let's make this a Park of appreciation – at all age groups and abilities. We have an opportunity here to start showing our little ones that campfires aren't always needed for a camping experience. This change needs to start, Washington State Parks should start spearheading this change.

Also of note, in this area the prevailing winds are from the west in the summer – so all campfire smoke would drop down into Discovery Bay – which is not the way for the park to respect the wildlife, and its neighbors.

3). PROTECT UNIQUE SPACES

Places like the madrona forest should be protected from too much use (or too much love), its uniqueness to be preserved.

4). ENSURE THAT WHATEVER OPTION IS SELECTED – THE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR WILL BE INCLUDED.

5). SELECT AN ENTRANCE TO THE PARK THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE DIAMOND POINT ROAD.

6). ENSURE THAT THE PLANNERS, DESIGNERS, AND OTHER DECISION MAKERS KNOW ALL ASPECTS AND HISTORY OF THE AREA BEFORE MAKING PERMANENT DECISIONS.

7). ENSURE THAT SEWER AND WATER USE WILL NOT NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PARK.

8). WASHINGTON STATE PARKS WILL PROVIDE WELL DEFINED BOUNDARIES AND SIGNAGE, ESPECIALLY NEAR PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PRIVATE TIDELANDS.

I appreciate your time in reviewing my suggestions. I would just like to make sure the Park is created or maintained, as is, in the right way. Here is our chance to appreciate what we have, and take on our responsibility to protect it, without destroying it further.

If I can help in anyway, go over the animals in the area, how the natural area has changed in a lifetime, or other aspects of the community and area, please let me know.

Thank You <sup>34</sup>

I have enjoyed hiking at MPSP for years, and appreciate the development of more trails and parking with restrooms and maps.

However, enough. I do not want to see this precious wild land carved up with roads and campsites. I

want it to remain an undeveloped Park for hiking, biking and riding only. No more cars, no more people; protect the valuable wildlife habitat that is there ....it needs every acre it can get. We humans have plenty of space to recreate.

Enough already. Leave it alone. Why do we have to pave and "improve" everything? <sup>35</sup>

With regard to my earlier comments, I would like to propose an alternative approach to the Miller Peninsula. Create a park based on a trail system only. This would minimize development and leave the area in a more natural green state which is one of the preliminary thoughts of what a park is. The idea that we need to landscape/build a natural space when an already beautiful landscape exists seems intuitively wrong. And part of a park is the wildlife. All the development will harm the animal population. Also, the idea of building a bunch of campsites when they already exist at Sequim bay seems expensive. One last thought, promoting any kind of campfire during our current climate crisis seems incredibly stupid. <sup>36</sup>

HI

I was able to attend the web meeting about the development of the Miller Peninsula State Park.

Just wanted to share a couple of my thoughts since I am local and have hiked it already.

Many times the designers are more urban based and not as familiar with our cooler climate.

I would love to see the design embrace our local climate and landscape.

- volleyball and horseshoes are great in a warm climate, but even at Lake Crescent Lodge meadow and Salt Creek I never see people doing that here. But I love the idea of a canopy experience. My 19 year old son was in the background while I was listening and agreed there could be more for teens. The other issue with a large lawn for volleyball etc is that water will become an issue for Sequim.

I favor the denser village approach. Camping, RV and lodging will increase in demand, especially as the Great Rail trail gets

developed (<https://www.railstotrails.org/greatamericanrailtrail/route/washington/>)

I think a lodge - **if built with character** - could be a huge draw. I would hate to see a lodge if it was just a typical motel/hotel though. I would love a place for weddings or gatherings. I love the fireplace area and sunrooms in Lake Crescent Lodge. But something distinctive or native in design.

Something distinctive for this area would be moss roofs on out buildings.



BUS STOP on Bainbridge Island

Also, restrooms close to the road/101 for travelers would be ideal. We use Kitsap Memorial park as a bathroom and walking break and notice many others do too.

Lastly, we saw a bear when we were hiking there. So I strongly support a wildlife corridor to protect their access to the beach. For Cougars. Wildlife Biologist Kim Sager Fradkin has been working with local tribes to track and monitor. She would be a great person to connect with.



Good luck, <sup>37</sup>

I'd like to commend you for the recent thoughtful on line presentation of the Miller Peninsula proposals. Here are my thoughts.

#### Miller Peninsula

There is no need for a lodge in this park as the local area has adequate facilities.

I like the concept of several smaller clusters of campsites with each site having more separate space.

I would favor RV sites with electric only no sewer & water hookups.

It seems reasonable to concentrate the development area on the SE portion of the park.

I do not like the road extended to the two day use areas near Rocky Point. Please concentrate roads & development to a smaller area in the SE corner.

The wildlife corridor extension to the south and working with adjoining properties is a big plus.

I am over 80 and the zip lines, ropes course & pump track I would not use and if they could be done safely, & would attract younger folks and be kept in the concentrated developed area in the SE corner, I have no objection.

I don't see the need for a second disc golf course on Miller Peninsula.

#### Sequim Bay

I have camped here over the years and always preferred the lower camp loop. Please keep this for camping not for vehicle and trailer parking.

Please provide hiker biker campsites as far as possible from Hwy 101 even if you have to use pit toilets. <sup>38</sup>

I have been an active member of the Washington State Backcountry Horsemen, (Peninsula Chapter) for the past 16 years. Our organization has put in countless volunteer hours over many years at the Miller Peninsula forest site and I personally ride the trails regularly. My most sincere hope is first that the park remain open to stock use, as we have such a dearth of safe trails open to us trail riders in this region.

I also agree with someone who posted about the "beach access" references being re-stated as "shore access," and also somehow let hikers/pedestrians know it's quite a long hike to that shore! I've run into people in the woods who were not prepared AT ALL for the long trek.

Otherwise, in the plans please give careful consideration to impacts on wildlife, traffic issues, and just maintaining the natural beauty of this truly idyllic network of trail systems for all of us who enjoy it. <sup>39</sup>

Please include the wildlife corridor. Please include significant lands with nature designation (no trails) as in immersed in nature plan ( could have viewing platforms of these areas). But please concentrate facilities as in village plan. I think the lower number of campsites would be good with option to expand of area can tolerate this use. Could the village plan not be pushed north so that Juan de Fuca water views could be provided (as in the klaloch and crescent lake lodge examples)? Prefer cabins to RV. But if RV must be included then limiting to sized rvs would be preferred. I've been to some parks where very large RVs dominate, they have large outdoor tvs etc that detract from the "in nature" experience of other campers. <sup>40</sup>

Hello,

First, let me say thank you for engaging us in the development project. We are actually a neighbor who is happy to see more amenities added to the property. It has the potential to bring enjoyment to many more people then it currently serves.

We live on Cat Lake Road which as you are driving north on Diamond Point Road is the left just before where Diamond Point makes the sharp 90 degree turn to the right. People drive way too fast as they take those corners before the final stretch to the 101. It is very dangerous. After several very close calls I contacted the county last year asking for some mitigation for this dangerous blind corner, but have heard nothing since. From the planning maps you shared at the last meeting it appears that same area is where you are planning to put the park entrance. We can't imagine RVs and trailers trying to enter and leave the park safely through that area unless there was something like a 4-way stop or roundabout.

The second concern is one several others have already mentioned, the intersection at HWY 101 and Diamond Point Road. We are glad a traffic study was done. Turning east on HWY 101 from Diamond Point can back up several cars deep and that is without the added park traffic. It will definitely need some mitigation, it needs it now!

Our third concern is more personal. All three designs for the park have the administrative area just across Cat Lake Road from our house. We love the view of the trees from our home and we would be so grateful if the plan included a buffer of trees between the buildings and the road.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to seeing how things progress. <sup>41</sup>
<p>Hi Miller Peninsula Planners:</p> <p>I had submitted an earlier comment and would like to add one more option as a Washintonian and a tax payer.</p> <p>I would like to submit and recommend a option of no further devlopment to Miller Peninsula State Park, leaving the trail system as is for day use, and using taxpayer funds to refurbish, further develop, and make land purchases for Sequim Bay state Park. <sup>42</sup></p>
<p>Development should be addressed on the Miller Peninsula plot, once existing Washington State Parks are maintained. I believe the current trail system are utilized well and should be kept undeveloped. The current parks at Sequim Bay State Park, Lake Sammamish State Park and others are in need of much maintenance. With the current state of Washington State Parks maintenance, we do not need a newly developed park to bring people to so it can deteriorate like the rest of the properties.</p> <p>I have walked the trails in the existing Miller Peninsula park and has some wonderful features. The development would very likely damage this uniqueness and biodiversity that exists on the property. We have a prime piece of property there that is a gem now and can be possibly enhanced at a later date.</p> <p>Summary: Take the money and have the existing developed parks to be maintained. Bring the existing developed parks to be the way they are supposed to look and be used. After that has been done and the existing parks can be continually maintained, start walking the property at Miller Peninsula and find the unique landscape to possibly develop with keeping a large amount of the special feature the property already has to offer. One other item is to look at the impact of how many sites, fire pits, people and events will have on the surrounding developed neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration. <sup>43</sup></p>
<p>I am very concerned about the impact to our neighbors on Diamond Point Road if the state decides to move forward with their enhanced plan.</p> <p>I would like to get a copy of the SEPA report that is suppose to be available for everyone to see, but I can't seem to find it anywhere.</p> <p>We as citizens of Washington state, Clallam County. Deserve to be heard, and our concerns addressed, not dismissed.</p> <p>Our environmentalist Governor should take a hard look at what will be destroyed, for what ? Take care of the parks we have already with staffing, actually maintaining the beauty of the existing parks. Build on the infrastructure, and listen to the people that your decision impact.</p> <p>It's not all about money. It's about the future for our children and their children. Trees support life. <sup>44</sup></p>
I would like to see the Miller stay the same except to improve and/or add some trails. <sup>45</sup>
I am horrified that the state has decided to develop this lovely piece of paradise. There are beautiful old trees, rhodedendrons, animals, and miles of beautiful trails and old roads which people currently enjoy. The people giving the talk say they want to bring more people to

nature, but they are going to DESTROY an awful lot of nature to do it. They want to put in roads and day use areas in every corner of this beautiful, quiet place. It is shameful when we are in the midst of climate change to cut down many more trees. There is little water already in that dry part of our state, and fire danger is high.

The impact on residents will also be tremendous. It is a curvy road not meant to handle lots of traffic, and 101 is seeing more and more traffic as it is. This will bring 400 more people per day to a place that is ill equipped to handle it. Campfires near residences in a dry area is a disaster waiting to happen. Often campers do not respect private property, and I have seen campgrounds next to neighborhoods closed down because of the problems. It will negatively affect property values in the community as no-one wants to be near traffic and noise.

And how is a state that has been hit hard by fires, Covid, and cannot yet even feed all of its people going to spend millions on this project? I would like to see us spend our money on something more useful that will not destroy something but rather enhance our lives - how about more money for schools or shoring up existing parks and trails or solar energy? Just today we were on a trail that is dangerously unmaintained. Why is this project even being considered?

I am reminded of the Joni Mitchell song, "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got til it's gone. Take paradise and put up a parking lot." <sup>46</sup>

Thank you for the recent presentation for the park alternatives for Miller Peninsula State Park. The presentation on Sequim Bay Park was interesting and informative. It appears that the planning process for Miller Peninsula is already skewed to be an alternative site for Sequim Bay Park, primarily providing and expanding camping opportunities in this area. Our preference would be to keep Sequim Bay Park as the water destination area and not allow access to the beach from Miller Peninsula Park. The cliff area is so fragile and more people traffic will only deteriorate it further. This past year with a combination of king tides and heavy storms, there was more than the usual amount of sloughing. Additionally, more people than ever visited the beach through Panorama Vista County beach access and the bare cliffs were used as graffiti sites all the way to Sequim Bay. These areas are extremely fragile and opening them up to more careless users would be a tragedy for the natural environment and all the wildlife that live in the area.

Our preferred alternative of the three presented is *Immersed in Nature*, with some changes:

- \*No day use areas or new trails near/close to the cliffs, and fewer number of trails than what you outlined
- \*Allow horse users to have their own trails- they have worked hard and diligently for many years on these trails, and in this area, and deserve to be accommodated
- \*Use the park boundary as shown in the *Village Center* alternative – most importantly the wildlife corridor – there have been many bear encounters here this year, wildlife is already being pushed to the limits due to human development, they deserve to be a large factor in this equation

Also wondering,

\*How do the Miller Peninsula Park development plans meet the goals of the new WA State climate plans?

\*Has the Parks Department adopted and/or addressed the new state climate plans?

\*As we see every day, fire and less water are critical concerns for the health of everyone in Washington State and our country, where do these issues intersect with planning of the new park? Are these issues considered individually at all?

\*When the water assessments are conducted, are estimates of future water availability part of the report?

\*When will the appraisal and decision to buy the land parcel (Jones Trust Property) for the west beach access be done and will the public be notified before any sale?

Thank you for inviting us to be part of the process, <sup>47</sup>

Thanks so much for your quick response.

I appreciate the good information about the studies - it's interesting. But having been at Diamond Point all of my life I can tell you that if access is allowed on the Discovery Bay side, folks will head toward homes, private tidelands and the old dock remains - it will be within their line of sight. Also the beach on this side is actually more gravel and cobble rock.

I would suggest no access on the Discovery Bay side, and if that gets voted down, then access at the furthest southern point only, not at the alluvial fan. This will help keep folks and pets further away from private tidelands and prevent further deterioration of the cliff face. I would also hope that WA State Parks would assist in designating the park boundary clearly to help in this effort. I can add this to my comment also.

Years ago I was part of a group working toward preserving this park land from being turned into golf courses by Mitsubishi, and from preventing fish pens being placed in the local waters. So I truly appreciate all your good information and efforts in trying to blend the needs of wildlife, people and private property owners.

If I can help in anyway, go over the animals in the area, how the natural area has changed in a lifetime, or other aspects of the community and area, please let me know. <sup>48</sup>

I'm preparing a comment for the Miller Peninsula state park website. In regard to the "Village Option" - how many people will be housed in the lodge?

Also, to avoid issues with campers and private tidelands, is there any option that would prevent access to Discovery Bay to avoid campers from hiking across private tidelands and clam beds to get from one side of the park to the other?

In the June 30 meeting you had mentioned that signage doesn't work that well, so preventing access to the Discovery Bay side would resolve that problem. <sup>49</sup>

My biggest concern, and I suspect many of us who live out on Diamond Point have the same concern, is with the increase in traffic on DP road. It is already difficult enough to make even a right hand turn off DP road, especially during the summer. Does this proposal take into account that we are going to need a traffic light at this intersection? Visibility to the west is limited because of the hill. I've waited 4 to 5 minutes just trying to make a right hand turn at this intersection. To make a left hand turn I am usually forced to make the (illegal) turn into the westbound turn lane from 101 onto Chicken Coop Road, as are others I've observed.

If you are taking suggestions, I would suggest a traffic sensitive light. There would have to be flashing yellows installed about 1/4 mile in either direction so traffic on 101 could stop. Yes, it will inconvenience drivers, but at least it would be SAFE. This system is used on the Island Highway on Vancouver Island B.C.<sup>50</sup>

I was referred to you by the person I spoke with at the general WA State Parks phone number.

I'm inquiring about a potential second access point for walking in Miller Peninsula State Park.

We are living on Diamond Point (West Street, near the airfield). We've enjoyed walking from the parking lot at the State Parks Property area, using our annual Discover Parking Pass, etc, but on our way back up Diamond Point road have noticed another potential entry point. It is a driveway giving way to a dirt road apparently meant for the employees of the State Park. on the map it seems to be called something like "Aeropark Road" or "Engineers Road" (I'm not recalling exactly) but it definitely shows it is State Park property. There is signage that says no vehicle traffic permitted along that road, and where there is one parking space or so just off Diamond Point Road near that sign it says, "No RV parking." But together those signs seemed to imply to me that a passenger car is allowed to use that parking space, if vacant, because it doesn't obstruct anything; and that walking, not driving, along the dirt road is permissible. Is that the case?

A little farther upho;; (north) there is also a State Park Property sign and a chain across a little dirt road, and it too is not signed "No trespassing." Perhaps that, too, is allowed for walking access...?

Will appreciate your instructions about all this. We don't want to do anything wrong.<sup>51</sup>

Hi Nikki - sorry I missed the meeting. I had significant issues with Microsoft teams and trying to get the thing to load and run.

Please know that BCHW - Peninsula chapter supports development of the Park and will help in any way we can.

We prefer multi-use trails, expansion of park lands to include the northwest corner to enable a rocky beach loop trail,

installation of a stock camping area, installation of stairs or something similar on the east side of Diamond Point road to access that great sandy beach.

In addition to Miller is the existing Sequim Bay SP. There we would like to see it converted to a "day use" park. Keeping boat launch capability would be nice.

The Peninsula is experiencing increased recreation and visitation. Folks need a place to recreate and camp.

We appreciate the foresight of WSP in providing these opportunities.

As you may already know - we very much appreciated the opportunity to work with a WCC crew for 2 weeks while they cleared corridors on the Miller Peninsula trail system. <sup>52</sup>

Please please please: Inhibit overuse!

Develop the park into a research and education facility

Restrict activities: bikes one or two days; then horses one or two days; hikers daily.

A better inventory is needed of the animals, insects, plants, etc.

Minimize the need for expensive infrastructure and upkeep (pipes, sewage, water, etc.)

No camping, or maybe 10 backcountry hike/bike into camping sites.

Otherwise, a day-use park — picnic tables, trash cans, and bathrooms

Promote birding and native plants and what is unique to this land

Remember a 3K-acre forested, open space is rare

Water is scarce and will get scarcer with global warming and the area's population growth

Plan for future generations that will need such a space

Name the park: Salish Sea State Park

We are globally, and locally, in another world from yesteryears when the park concepts began in the U.S.; when it was encouraged to bring people into nature to recreate. Our environments are endangered; hence, we are endangered. We must appreciate this parkland for what it holds, continues to grow, particular state and federal protections that apply to it, and pass on this information to visitors. As a comparison, thousands of persons come to the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes several islands. It is a money maker. No one can camp at this Sequim Refuge site (although next to it is a county camp park, but the traffic without it is huge, anyway). Visitors from around the world will make Miller Peninsula a destination if promoted properly.

Parks should stand back and look at the global environmental situation and plan a park to protect. Educate the public why it must be kept intact; about the wildlife rooted in the soil and the mobile wildlife that use and need this area — the bears, the big cats, the fox, and the small to the smallest. Keep the lands complexity and teach the visitors about the complexity and what that means to human lives. The next generations will appreciate this and the knowledge will be passed on.

**Thank you for your attention to the very important matter. <sup>53</sup>**

To Whom It May Concern;

though I was unable to attend the public meeting on June 30 regarding the development of the Miller Peninsula State Park I would like to provide my feedback and concerns as a tax-paying citizen of the state of Washington and a concerned community member.

I am sure that other people who make their home here on the Miller Peninsula have expressed concerns about increased traffic, fire risk, private and public property damage, ecological damage as a result of development and the already evident consequences of increased public use of these lands. In the past several years, as the trail head on Diamond Point road became developed - and walking trails marked on State Park trails - myself, and many other residents who frequent these trails year round have noticed a significant increase in litter, noise pollution, illegal harvesting of and damage (initials carved in tree trunks that have stood untouched for the entire time I have resided here) of native plants. In the area around the new parking lot on Diamond Point, the disturbance of the soil has caused an upsurge in invasive non-native species (scotch broom) that has not been effectively managed or mitigated by State Park staff.

With Sequim Bay state park, as well as several other campgrounds within 15 miles of the proposed location of the Miller Peninsula state park - it is my opinion that ONLY day use hiking trails are appropriate for this project. The development of camping areas would increase the ecological impact of the project significantly as well as the overall cost.

Though I am not formally trained in biology or ecology - I can confidently state that the forest you propose to develop for public use is home to plants that are endemic to this region (some of which are endangered - like the fairy slipper orchids I have observed in this forest) as well as wildlife that will be impacted negatively by increased use. Species who have established populations in this area because of the lack of human presence.

A thorough and multi-disciplinary survey of those populations (both flora and fauna) should be completed, made public and discussed before any further plans are proposed or acted upon. Flying a drone over an area for a short period of time, during only certain seasons of the year - is in no way a rigorous scientific survey - and to my knowledge - none has been completed that takes all species who may be effected into account.

The best use of this land - would be for dayhiking and bird watching and would also be of great appeal to those interested in the flora of the Pacific Northwest. There are old growth trees in those forests which - if for no other reason than their value as carbon-storage and as habitat - should be left as a resource for future generations who want to enjoy some of the last of the old growth trees we have left. The younger trees which you propose cutting down instead, for the purposes of developing roads, additional trails and camping/RV sites - will never have a chance to become old growth should you proceed as proposed. This is not good stewardship for future generations of Washington residents.

The Miller Peninsula is a unique and rare habitat along the Strait of Juan De Fuca. Just across Discovery Bay on the Quimper Peninsula most of the shoreline has been developed for private residences. To the East - lies the city of Sequim - also developed all the way out to the shoreline. The Miller Peninsula provides an important place for animals - both marine and terrestrial - to have access to habitat that borders both water and forest and is uninhabited and undisturbed by humans. I have seen seals come up onto the beach to birth their young, or to leave the pups in a safe and secluded place while they go to hunt. This would not happen in the presence of people recreating on the

beach. I have watched ravens, notoriously shy birds, swoop across the trails on their way to feed their young - a behavior that would not happen in close proximity to a camping site. Blue Herons, after leaving their brooding grounds - often bring their young to these secluded beaches and forests - but stay away from areas where people are frequently present.

Sequim Bay State Park - provides adequate camping and waterfront access to those who wish to utilize state park land for recreation of that nature. Species affected by the development and use of Sequim Bay State park have found refuge and appropriate habitat in the areas you now propose to develop.

As a taxpayer, a parent, a resident of the Miller Peninsula, a discover pass holder and frequent guest of many state park areas (both on the Olympic Peninsula and on mainland Washington) - I strongly object to any over-night use in the Miller Peninsula park (and it's concurrent costs of ongoing maintenance) as well as the use of funds to develop such recreational sites. It does not seem cost effective or ecologically responsible to pursue such a project instead of preserving a unique habitat for the enjoyment of our citizenry who are more than willing to use their state park pass to access lands that have been minimally developed and are being preserved for future generations.

I have spoken with several other residents of this small community who have similar concerns: if a camper starts a forest fire and it encroaches on our private land bordering the state park - will the state compensate us for damages caused by the type of recreation they allowed? With summer temperatures increasing, water tables lowering and increased demands on water due to residential development - this seems a legitimate concern to me. I know I am not the only resident who has had a hiker wander onto their private property - seemingly oblivious to the boundaries of the park. I have heard people's radios blaring from my porch - as they hike the trail closest the house - where before there was only birdsong. I have now started taking a garbage bag with me EVERY time I walk into the forest - and I never come home empty handed. Something that never occurred before the parking areas were completed on this side of the peninsula. Is it any wonder that local residents are highly opposed to further development that would lead to uses beyond hiking?

I know I am not alone in hoping that a plan for safe and sustainable use of this state park land will be proposed - and that it will prove beneficial for all residents of this state by using resources (both fiscal and natural) wisely. Day-use, again, seems the best way to achieve that objective for this particular project. There is no shortage of State Park, National Park and private recreation sites on the Olympic Peninsula.

Thank you for considering my comments and concerns. <sup>56</sup>

*Please accept my comments in support of keeping the great multi use Miller Layton trails as they are currently used. I have been a member of the Back Country Horseman of Washington State (Capitol Riders and Scatter Creek clubs in Olympia) since 1988 and have had wonderful opportunities to ride horses on trails all over the state of Washington from Vancouver to Port Angeles, Ocean Shores to Spokane over the last 30+ years.*

*I recently rode with several members of your Peninsula Back Country Club on the Miller Layton trails and was so very impressed with the trail system. The condition of the trails and design supported the multi-use enjoyed by so many people we crossed paths with. We encountered many people out enjoying the outdoors; families, young people hiking, cyclists and other horseback riders. All were friendly, polite and demonstrated trail and safety etiquette, stopping to talk and allow horses to pass safely. It was clear there has been a tremendous support, trail work, communication and training between the various user groups to ensure everyone is safely using the trails.*

*I would whole heartedly urge you to keep the west side of Diamond Lake Road as it is presently for education and recreation use. It is clear that multi use and support of that area is working well for all*

*users. Additionally, the east side of Diamond Lake Rd is perfect for campground and other amenities as recommended.*

*In closing, your trail system is a model for the state of Washington! It obviously is supported by hiking, bike and horse users working collaboratively to create and maintain outdoor activities for all. I urge you to support this effort in future policy decisions.* <sup>55</sup>

Our organizations, along with others, saved this land for a park — 1444 ac; then worked with SPRC to see it expanded to its current size.

It is a special and rare piece of land. We wish to keep it that way and we wish that Parks will want this, too. Our comments are a guide for doing this. See letter WA State Sierra Club North Olympic Group & Friends of Miller Peninsula State Park <sup>56</sup>

See Olympia Forest Coalition <sup>57</sup>



PROTECT THE PENINSULA'S FUTURE



Friends of Miller Peninsula State Park/PO Box 2664/Sequim WA/98382

## PRESERVE THE PRESERVE

*Alaska has its Denali; Washington State has its Miller Peninsula State Park to preserve (soon to hopefully be re-named Salish Sea State Park).  
It's about nature and what we have to learn from it.*

*State Parks' mission: Care for the State's most treasured lands, waters and historic places*

Washington State's Parks is considering developing its Miller State Peninsula Park. No plans were shared with the call for comments, so we cannot comment on specific design ideas. However, previous options and development proposals were shared in a June 9, 2021 meeting. They were disturbing, making the park a Disneyland-like adventure. Such a design would be a never-ending source of frustration. Besides attracting invasive species, we foresee a spiral of unexpected upkeep and costs (building maintenance and operation; broken plumbing, etc.). Consider that we have water constraints and risk of drought. Given climate change and increasing drought throughout the state, the Olympic Peninsula just experienced near 100 degree temperatures during the last week of June. Protecting this forested piece of nature is critical. Along with weather changes, there isn't the local water supply for the plans that were offered. Why saddle Parks and Recreation with such headaches. Parks has enough of these cookie-cutter parks. Your state-survey was impressive, but the responders had no history of this parkland and what it was set aside for from the start – open space to be appreciated.

### **Offer something unique.**

We must not destroy this rare site. A contiguous 3000-acre coastal forest isn't often found for those seeking outdoor recreation, with beach front to boot. Parks can offer one of its uncommon and unique recreation options. This must be a recreation-education-research park that demonstrating preservation of it's current character and focus.

**Parks should shift its paradigm** to one that offers a stand-alone experience, preferably day use only, or 10 (at most) nature campsites into which campers must hike/bike. Minimize over use of the park through reservations. Allow two days for bikers; two different days for horses; and seven days for hikers. This will give a much more satisfactory experience for the park visitors.

Visitors from both local to outside the area are *currently* attracted. If planned right, many more will be attracted to visit. The local college, that now uses it for teaching purposes, could collaborate with Parks, WDFW and others to design the educational areas in the park. This could be staffed with docents (student volunteers, park personnel, wildlife and bird experts, native plant specialists, etc.) who will inform park users of this unique land, along with a research laboratory building visitors can cycle through for additional learning experiences. It will be an exciting and spiritual time for visitors, with less land-habitat impact than experienced elsewhere. This site has so much to teach. It already has. Looking deeper into the park's natural resources will provide more understanding of land-forest-water complexity in this unique micro –environment.

Visitors will be attracted. You will make money and have left-over funds to invest here and elsewhere. The funds will be there for staff for upkeep and teaching. You won't have to be caught in the cookie-cutter-park cycle of upkeep.

We are globally, and locally, in another world from yesteryears when the park concepts began in the U.S. Our environments are endangered; hence, we are endangered. We must appreciate this parkland for what it holds, continues to grow, the particular state and federal protections that apply to it, and be able to pass on this information to visitors and next generations.

As an example, thousands of persons annually visit the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge in Sequim, which includes several islands not all accessible. It is a money maker. No one can camp at the Sequim site (although next to it is a county camp park), but the attraction to just the Refuge is there, anyway.) Educating visitors to that site's main purposes (eel grass and Black Brants) is that Refuge's bedrock purpose. Once travel guides advertised it, visitors from around the world have made it a destination.

Stand back and look at the global environmental situation and plan a park to protect. Educate the public why it must be kept intact; about the wildlife rooted in the soil and the mobile wildlife that use and need this area — the bears, the big cats, the fox, and the small to the smallest. Keep the lands complexity and teach the visitors about the complexity and what that means to human lives, and the knowledge will be passed on.. The next generations will respect you for your foresight.

We can easily bring you a table of experts to design such a paradigm. Give it a chance.

Darlene Schanfald, Chair  
WA State Chapter North Olympic Group

PO Box 714  
Carlsborg WA 98324  
& Friends of Miller Peninsula State Park Chair

Steve Koehler, Chair  
Protect the Peninsula's Future  
PO Box 421  
Sequim WA 98382



*Promoting the protection, conservation and restoration of natural forest ecosystems and their processes on the Olympic Peninsula, including fish and wildlife habitat, and surrounding ecosystems*

July 13, 2021

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
Planning Program  
PO Box 4250  
Olympia WA 98504  
Attn: Nikki Fields  
[nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov](mailto:nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov)

*Via electronic communication*

**RE: Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay State Parks Development – Written Comment**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Olympic Forest Coalition (OFCO) is a member organization working to protect and restore the environment, habitats, and threatened and endangered species of the Olympic Peninsula including its forests, watersheds, and associated marine waters. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the development at the Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay.

OFCO members and Board members view the need to develop the Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay Park as an important development for the landscape, native species, our local communities and families to use recreationally including camping and horse and hiking trails, bird and wildlife enjoyment. OFCO believes that the development should result in *affordable* recreational opportunities for families from the Peninsula and Washington state to enjoy, of a scale appropriate to the natural resources available in the area, and that does not threaten existing recreational uses, wildlife or rare plant communities. OFCO is concerned that inadequate effort to meet SEPA and other requirements has been incorporated in the planning process thus far, and the development alternatives clearly show that all recreational interests have not been fully balanced within the plans. With that in mind, OFCO offers the following comments.

**Full SEPA Review Needed for Alternatives**

OFCO believes a full SEPA review process must be undertaken for the large-scale major development planned in all three alternatives. The information presented in the June 30<sup>th</sup> public meeting was conceptual in nature, non-specific, and the hand-written maps are inadequate to meet SEPA and public consultation requirements. Without the information and analysis of a SEPA review, the public cannot fully engage and provide comments with necessary specificity to meet SEPA requirements. With the information provided thus far, we cannot know if the new roads and trails, RV sites, beach trails, will impact sensitive areas and species. While lack of financial resources and prioritization in Park planning has resulted in a phased approach, SEPA review may not be inappropriately tiered on earlier decisions with a development of this scale. In 2016, Park staff indicated that the development may not require full SEPA review:

*“Following review, staff has determined that the proposed “Candidate Park Selection” was identified as a future phased action within the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist for the “Statewide Acquisition Development Strategy”. The “Determination of Non-Significance” for that action was issued on June 21, 2016. The consideration of candidate parks proposed in this agenda item is categorically*

*exempt from further SEPA review under WAC 197-800(17). Future proposals, if any, for the selected sites will also undergo SEPA review as part of phased review under WAC 197-11-060(5). Those proposals may be categorically exempt or may require a threshold determination.”*

Andy Woo, Assistant Attorney General: October 29, 2019  
Peter Herzog, Assistant Director  
Approved for Transmittal to Commission

***OFCO requests that the Parks Department clarify if a full SEPA review will be undertaken for the alternatives presented. OFCO requests the Parks Department fulfill SEPA requirements for the Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay Park development.***

#### Endangered Species and Rare Plant Surveys Must be Made Available to the Public

The WA state park's Miller Peninsula planning group has completed a rare plant survey, but did not provide that information to the public. No information on threatened and endangered species has been provided. During the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, responding to questions, Park staff indicated they have not done a survey of birds beyond identifying some eagles' nests. The rush to develop Miller without full wildlife surveys may cause the Parks Dept. to overlook critical habitats. No information about birds or other T and E species was presented in any of the alternatives. OFCO's Board member reviewed the list of birds available on the "Ebird" website seen at Miller Peninsula. In the last month eleven Marbled Murrelets were spotted. While the most likely explanation is they were probably on the water or in transit, the Parks Dept. should work with appropriate state agencies to survey T and E species. The Miller Peninsula planning group designated on maps most of the park land between Discovery Bay and Diamond Point Road as having rare plant communities. OFCO Board member and volunteer visited the site July 9<sup>th</sup> and viewed tree species that maybe suitable trees for nesting near Discovery Bay for Marbled Murrelets, eagles, ospreys, or other species of concern. There may be areas along the cliff or shoreline that would be of concern for nesting birds. The Park is also a well regarded birding site and many on the Peninsula enjoy it for the opportunity to view birds.

The Alternatives all indicate there are trails planned to the beach, and more trails, camping sites, and development planned around wetlands and rare plant communities. Members report that there is an important stand of Madrona that is not clearly protected in the planning information.

With even meeting the minimum SEPA and wildlife review necessary, the Alternatives presented could indicate more clearly that all important public interests have been considered, and any measures needed either on the landscape or seasonally to avoid sensitive habitats will be taken.

***OFCO requests that the Parks Dept. clarify whether it will undertake wildlife and rare plant community reviews with appropriate state agencies and make that information available to the public, including recommendations for measures to protect existing sensitive areas and species. If the reviews are not planned, OFCO requests that the Parks Dept. include these reviews in the planning process to meet minimum SEPA, and possibly NEPA, requirements.***

#### Scale, Scope, Balancing all Recreational Interests, Education, Specific Concerns about all Alternatives

The Miller Peninsula Park has been the subject of studies, planning and public comment processes beginning in 2006. It has been over fifteen years since the first plans were developed and input from the public was received and tabulated. It has been eight years since the first initial stages of development began. In the interim, users of the park forged their own paths. Parking is now available for cars, trucks, and horse trailers. Restrooms have been built; a few picnic tables can be found on site. People are using the many crisscrossing trails and moms with strollers as well as families pushing elder's wheelchairs appreciate the easy half mile loop that was created. Accommodations both public and private increased considerably.

As we consider further development, we must also consider changed conditions. We can see the effects of the twenty-two-year extended drought in the western U.S. Fires have been extensive and devastating on the Olympic Peninsula in the last several years. With that in mind we need to analyze the impacts that further park

development will mean for the landscape, the people who use it and live nearby, and the wildlife that depends upon the natural resources.

The major areas of consideration for development are:

- (1) The availability of water in the Park;
- (2) The value of the Park as a carbon sink;
- (3) The desirability of a refuge for people *and* wildlife;
- (4) The importance of a living educational tool;
- (5) Affordability for families of Washington to use the Park, not using public resources for an expensive development for RVs, concessions and lodging that is inaccessible to moderate to low income families;
- (6) Financially supported and adequately scaled emergency services;
- (7) Segregate and exclude incompatible uses.

***Availability of water is a critical issue to the appropriate scale for development.*** Before any development began at Miller in 2008, Sequim area ground water was evaluated in a report by the Pacific Ground Water Group (1). It determined that groundwater recharge resources were exceeded by withdrawals as the number of wells had increased dramatically from the 1980s. While the basic study area was that of Sequim proper it noted that water withdrawals in 2007 represented more than twice that of 1980. Much development has occurred since that time with the addition of business and hotel space in Sequim Bay and residential and business areas. If climate change represents a 15% decline in ground water recharge and growth takes another percentage, it is of concern to remove more ground water to supply additional large-scale development on the Miller Peninsula or on Sequim Bay. As overall precipitation decreases, the water table lowers and temperature increases cause greater water consumption, the natural resources may suffer. Mitigation with gray water or wastewater recycling helps and should be considered in any development but will not solve the water resource shortage. Even without any additional development, water resources will need to be expanded to supply hikers, bikers, horses, and picnickers as overall temperatures rise. The one existing well USGS reports is a residential well drilled over 300 feet down, indicating that water is not easily accessible. Any development must take into consideration the need to balance protecting and conserving water resources.

***OFCO recommends that the Parks Dept. analyze fully existing water resources in the area, within and outside the Park, and scale the development to existing and future water shortages – both for the recreations users, and the landscape flora and fauna. The information should be made available to the public during SEPA review.***

***Managing the forest for carbon and climate change in the Park.*** The Miller Peninsula forest is a temperate forest that plays an important role without further change. Though once logged, this forest is significant for carbon sequestration as each tree expands and adds girth with age. A summary in a scientific paper points to this critical point: there is ‘clear evidence that natural forests are much better at storing carbon in trees and soils than in managed forests...’ (2). Without any effort other than stewardship, the forest is working for people. We have done poorly in retaining forests as carbon sinks. Research again shows that only 20% of the carbon of harvested timber is retained as long-term storage. In a 150-year period wood ends up in landfills or simply decays. Harvesting wood does not ultimately lend itself to long-term carbon storage, it is a net loss.

As climate change increases temperatures overall, it affects the frequency and intensity of heat waves. Late June 2021 is a case in point. Temperature buffering beneath a forest canopy can reduce the heat of the day by as much as ten degrees. (3) To find relief more people will seek the cooler forest, the cooling sea breeze on the beach or a take a dip into the sea itself. Even without further development, more water stations will be needed to prevent heat exhaustion for both humans, their animals and forest creatures. Retaining the forest as forest is necessary for mitigating climate change by retaining the ability of the landscape to capture carbon, to capture and store water resources, and to retain the cooling effect of forested landscapes. Development should balance this public interest.

While the Miller is not an old growth forest, the Miller forest is still an excellent representation of a low land ecosystem. Plant populations and associations specific to this site are important. Species inventories could add an educational tool to enrich users’ experience through informative signs as people enjoy the forest. Its

2800 acres provides a peace and quiet that those who visit appreciate. Wildlife, too, depend on having quiet places to raise their young and seek Miller as a refuge. Managing the Miller forest for this public interest is equally important.

***Management of the Miller Peninsula and Sequim Bay forest should include managing for carbon storage. Carbon management should be included in the planning documents and made available to the public for review in the SEPA process. The Planning information should also include recommendations for emergency cooling stations for animals and users.***

***Recreation and education for the Park experience.*** The development that is needed on the Miller Peninsula should also include the realm of education. Children and people of all ages can learn the effects of sun, water and nutrient recycling on the survival and interactions of plant, bird and animal species. Monitoring the effects of climate change over time on the Miller would be of great value to both scientists, decision makers, and the general public. Creativity is the hallmark of human endeavor. Encouraging the understanding and mitigation of climate change through examples in the park may impact us more than simply to use it as a recreational resource. Understanding the effects of climate change is critical to our survival. The investment would be small compared to the scale being considered. The Parks Dept. may take this opportunity to work with local school districts to develop the plans, and include teachers and students in the process.

***OFCO recommends that with the scale of investment planned, that the Parks Dept. take the opportunity to also include a more robust and full educational experience that will help the public learn about the important role of the environment in our lives. This information should be made available to the public in the SEPA process.***

***Affordability for all Washington families to use the Park.*** Alternatives 2 and 3 gave conceptual information that is of concern due to scale, appropriateness for public investment, and affordability. Using tax dollars for development that only those who can afford expensive RVs, lodging, and concessions is not appropriate. Low-scale camp sites for tents, small trailers and RVs, should be prioritized for public resources. Existing private facilities for large RVs are available nearby and should not be duplicated with public dollars on site. Private profiting from public investment is not an appropriate use of public resources. The Parks Dept. must include sufficient financial information on planned revenue generation, camping and concession fees, to ensure that the development will be affordable for all families, and not just upper income recreational users.

***OFCO recommends that the Parks Dept. provide full information about fees and concessions to fulfill its requirements to ensure that the Park is affordable for moderate and low income families and users.***

***Adequate emergency services should not be the burden of local government.*** No information about adequate emergency services has been provided by the Parks Dept. (fire, ambulance, police). The Parks Dept. should include information about the necessary expansion of these service, how they will be financially supported into the future, and ensure that emergency services are adequate to meet exceptional circumstances such as fire or heat domes, as well as ensure that the financial burden does not fall to taxpayers in the local municipality and county.

***OFCO recommends that the Parks Dept. include full planning for emergency services and make the information available to the public, including the financial burden and the source of revenue to support emergency services for a state-wide user base.***

***Incompatible uses should be isolated and some excluded from the development.*** Some recreational uses are incompatible. Motorized bikes and four-wheelers, and the trails and infrastructure needed to support that use, are not compatible with camping, hiking, horse-back riding, viewing and enjoying nature. There are existing areas in the vicinity for motorized vehicle recreational use. We do not include motorized accessibility equipment in this recommendation. Accessibility for all areas of the Park should be an integral part of the planning and public investment. Policing motorized bikes and four wheelers' use inside the Park so that they do not impact other recreational users would be difficult if not impossible to staff on site. Navy Seal training of combat teams is incompatible with recreational use and should also be excluded from this Park.

***OFCO recommends that the Parks Dept. clearly designate areas for camping, hiking, bird-watching, and wildlife protection away from existing high quality habitat and higher use areas. The Parks Dept. should clearly establish and publish schedules and areas for amplified sound use, limiting these areas. The Parks Dept. should exclude recreational motorized bikes and four wheelers from the Park. The Parks Dept. should exclude all Navy Seal combat training from all portions of this Park.***

After a full SEPA process, the Parks Dept. should plan further development of services that will protect all existing habitats and wildlife following adequate surveys, scaled for the Miller Peninsula water resources, develop serious educational programs to demonstrate the importance of the Miller forest in the mitigation of climate change and as an ecosystem, ensure affordability, emergency services, and exclude incompatible uses.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Rae Deane Leatham /s/  
Board Member, Olympic Forest Coalition

Connie Gallant /s/  
Board President, Olympic Forest Coalition

Patricia Jones /s/  
Executive Director

#### References:

1. 2009, City of Sequim, 2008 Hydrogeologic Monitoring Report, Pacific Groundwater Group, Seattle Wa).
2. 2020, Moomaw, W.R., Law, B.E., Goetz, S.J., : Focus on the role of forests and soils in meeting climate change mitigation goals: summary in Environmental Research Letters 15(2020)045009.
- 3.2019, De Frenne, P., Zellweger, F., Rodriguez-Sanchez,F,Schaffer's, B., Hylander, L., Luotol, M. Lenoir, J., 2019, Global Buffering of temperatures under forest canopies, Nature Ecology, Evolution, 3, 744-749.