

## **Miller Peninsula Planning Public Comments June 2021 to September 13, 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 and 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 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 father 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 tot he 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. 53**

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>

After having worked for the State for 31 years I know the Parks system has already decided on a plan. You really are placating the residents of the Miller Peninsula by having meetings and plan options. But, I do need to voice an opinion. IF, you feel compelled to move forward I would strongly recommend that 1. Plan 2 not only to keep it smaller but attend to the wildlife corridor. 2. I would rather see a bigger emphasis on trail enhancements that would lead to more education to trail users, enhance the outdoor auditorium and a bigger parking lot to hold actual classes and provide educational opportunities. It is sometimes difficult to find a hiking place that is close and easy to get to. Some people are not able to hike mountains, nor have the time to drive the distance they are at. 3. Please don't forget that Miller Peninsula residents moved here for the nature, rural life, quietness. We all love nature. 4. Very careful road planning is a must as the Diamond Point road is already busy and 101 is extremely busy most days of the week. 101 is a major thoroughfare and a stop light is not really a good idea but doing nothing to address this issue first is VERY poor planning. Test the traffic first to see if all your other plans are even feasible. 5. I'm sure you are aware that we only have a volunteer fire department. More people, more possibilities for fire. 6. Our county sheriff is spread thin, already. If there were a need it could be a few hours before help would be available(they are in Forks or Joyce)(personal experience). Thank you for the opportunity to voice only a few concerns.<sup>58</sup>

I have been a resident of Sequim since 2005 and have been hiking/biking Miller's peninsula frequently since moving here. I listened to the video on plans for developing MPSP into a "destination park". MP is a quiet, peaceful sanctuary for hikers, bikers and equestrians in its current form. The plans will definitely change the character of the park in a negative way threatening local habitat and the current quiet experience. There are other concerns for the area including lack of water and impact on traffic. Please consider maintaining this park in its current form and using funds to improve other state park facilities. Thanks for your attention <sup>59</sup>

We residents of Diamond Point are ever concerned about fire danger in our community on a daily basis. We see the development of the Miller Peninsula State Park as potential increased threat of fire danger and compromised public safety with one Diamond Point Road leading in and out of our community.

Please consider the extremely limited local fire fighting resources, very limited water resources for fire fighting, and limited public highway access in your development plans. Thank you. <sup>60</sup>

This park should not go ahead unless there is a better way of turning left on highway 101 from Diamond Point road. At present it is a DANGEROUS exercise with a great deal of traffic coming from both the left and right. Sometimes one has to wait for 5 minutes or more to enable a safe turn. It is a fatal accident waiting to happen. If this park goes ahead as planned the traffic will increase severalfold from Diamond Point road increasing the likelihood of a fatal accident.<sup>61</sup>

One of the biggest constraints to developing the Miller Peninsula area is traffic at the intersection of Diamond Point Road and Highway 101, and ingress and egress between Diamond Point Road and the Park. This constraint should be addressed before Park planning goes further. What road improvements would be needed and at what cost? Are these improvements feasible? Will the funding be available? What would be the impacts on area wildlife? On local residents?

2. A second important constraint is understanding what level of use the area can accommodate without serious adverse impacts to habitat and ecosystem values? What methodology would be used for assessing that? What impacts are acceptable? What are the sensitive species, plant communities, habitats, and ecosystems in the area? What surveys have been undertaken, and what survey protocols were followed?

3. A third critical constraint is climate change. The science says that to meet the very likely inadequate target of not more than 2 degrees Centigrade increase over pre-industrial levels, we need to reduce global emissions by 40% to 70% by 2050. Because the U.S. emits a disproportionately high level (per capita) of GHG, we need to reduce our emissions by 80%, fewer than 30 years from now. Needless to say, we are not even close to on track to achieve that. To do so will require a societal transformation, including how we recreate and travel. There is an important question as to whether we can sustain the current levels of using gas consumptive vehicles, including RVs, motorhomes, and campers, especially with large amounts of vehicle miles travelled. Climate change may also intensify drought conditions and heighten fire danger, which could also constrain how parklands are used.

4. An additional consideration is an opportunity rather than a constraint; the issue is social and environmental justice. The opportunity is to create a park that emphasizes serving underserved communities; people who typically have limited opportunities to connect with Nature and have educational, stimulating outdoor experiences.

What these constraints and considerations suggest to me is that it would be good for State Parks to consider a fourth alternative, which might be dubbed ***Plan for the Future***. I would suggest that the considerations described above would give rise to a Park Plan that:

- De-emphasizes the traditional form of camping with RV's, campers, and lots of individual vehicles and trips; and instead emphasizes bringing people from urban areas by hydrogen-powered or electric buses, and provide opportunities for people who don't normally have the chance to visit a state park facility. This could include school groups, kids' clubs, seniors, under-served families, special needs individuals, children in orphanages or foster care etc. The park would also provide day use potential (trails, etc.) for Olympic Peninsula residents. The Park could focus more on a rustic lodge, cabins, and tent-cabins to serve the groups arriving by bus rather than traditional campsites and RV hook-ups. This also de-emphasizes the need for major and expensive transportation improvements on Highway 101 and along Diamond Point Road.
- Emphasizes education and passive recreation, with an array of activities for learning, socializing, nature appreciation, and physical fitness.
- Pursues cooperation with educational and cultural institutions and organizations, including Native American, and social services to provide a rich and relaxing experience for the visitors.
- De-emphasizes significant development and emphasizes maintaining the habitat, ecosystem, and carbon sequestration values of the landscape. Focuses on experiencing Nature on her own

terms, not trying to include urban park active recreation activities such as volleyball, rock-climbing walls, etc.

**Funding**

Capital costs should be lower for this alternative, especially because far fewer transportation improvements would be required. The operating budget would lend itself to both grants and partnerships because of the innovative nature of the programs and services provided.

**Environmental Review**

The Plan for the Future alternative should be considered and analyzed in the SEPA document to ensure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values and seek to resolve potential problems. The SEPA document should be prepared as soon as possible to provide crucial information and analysis to the planning team, decision-makers, and concerned public.<sup>62</sup>

I would like to hear about future meetings and major developments in the project.<sup>63</sup>

I write to protest any further development of the Miller Peninsula State Park. Attracting more people, especially campers, would increase the forest fire risk and further clog the ONLY egress I have -- Diamond Point Road and Highway 101 -- in the event of a forest fire.

Look at an aerial photo of the Olympic Peninsula. It is more than 90% forested [some managed by the State as a renewable source of lumber and income for the State]. It wouldn't take much to set the entire Olympic Peninsula ablaze and the ONLY way out for ALL residents [and campers] would be two-lane highway 101, which is overhung with trees [forest fire tinder] in many stretches. And, making a risky situation worse is the absence of any airport capable of, and equipped for, supporting aerial firefighting in the event of a forest fire.

Heretofore, the Olympic Peninsula has enjoyed copious rains, damping the forest fire risk somewhat. But that's not been the case for the last couple of years -- we're in a drought right now. But, even when the peninsula did enjoy regular rainfall, the area from Sequim to Port Townsend, including the Miller Peninsula which lies between those two points, was/is in the so-called "Rainshadow of the Olympics" and experienced one-tenth the annual rainfall of Seattle. Now virtually the entire Olympic Peninsula, including the Rainshadow area is under "Burn Ban"/ forest fire alert status.

For a sobering view of the ever-increasing forest fire risk on the Olympic Peninsula, look at the recent, continuing and devastating forest fires in California and Oregon, and at those States' desperate, expensive and largely ineffective attempts to control them with fire bombers and other fire-fighting equipment and personnel that don't exist on the Olympic Peninsula.

For the health and safety -- the very lives -- of Olympic Peninsula residents and visitors, State moneys would be better invested in upgrading the Port Angeles Airport so it can support the operations of large fire bombing aircraft when the forest fires begin AS THEY ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL. Again, please look at California and Oregon.<sup>64</sup>

I have been a resident of Diamond Point for 21 years. I understand there is a plan to develop the Miller Peninsula State Park with up to 150 campsites, a lodge, cabins, zip lines. You apparently are proposing the park entrance and exit on Diamond Point Rd. which is the ONLY access in and out of Diamond Point. I am extremely concerned what this State Park will do by impacting traffic on a two lane, curvy road. I'm also concerned about the fire danger, wildlife habitat and the water usage. Please, please do not go through with this plan that will gravely

and adversely affect this community.<sup>65</sup>

I am writing re: the terrible plan to make Miller Peninsula State Park a "destination". Have you ever gone further up the hill to see how many people live up there? We reside in Sunshine Acres, a community of about 400 homes. Most of us worked hard our entire lives to be able to retire someplace peaceful. Many of us are senior citizens, some of who are disabled. The only way in and out of our neighborhood is via Diamond Point Road. What is your plan for keeping us safe when a careless camper starts a fire and we are stuck in our neighborhood at the top of the hill with no possible exit.? The people who will come to your "destination" do not live here, nor do they pay taxes here. Zip lines and canopy adventures? You have got to be kidding!! Where is your concern for the environment and the impact this will have when you clear all the trees to create 150 campsites? What about the wildlife that are already living there? I have already had a stranger approach me when I was working in my yard, asking how to get to the beach! This neighborhood is not for public beach access! We pay homeowners dues for that privilege.

The residents of this community deserve better. We deserve someone to care about US, our safety and the peace and quiet we have earned, not just your bottom line. We love Sequim, and Miller Peninsula, just the way it is. Please rethink this dreadful idea. Is this what you think your parents would deserve when they retire? What kind of tragedy would have to occur before you realize what a horrible mistake this is?

Very sincerely,  
Mary Arstad<sup>66</sup>

Ozias, Mark  
To:  
Fri, Aug 6 at 9:36 AM

Dear,

While I have been tracking on the state's planning process for this state park, so far it has been too early in the planning stage for the county to formally weigh in since this is a state-driven (not county-driven) process. That being the case, I do share the concerns that many Diamond Point residents have regarding traffic impacts and fire safety and when we do have our formal opportunity for input we will be sure to use it.

Sincerely,

Mark Ozias  
Clallam County Commissioner

From:  
Sent: Thursday, August 5, 2021 5:39:28 PM  
To: Ozias, Mark  
Subject: Public Anger over Miller Peninsula State Park

\*\*\* EXTERNAL EMAIL \*\*\* This message was sent from outside our County network.

Dear Mark Ozias,

I have just become aware of planned development of a Miller Peninsula State Park area in Diamond Point, near Sequim, WA. These plans being well underway before any residents of our neighborhood were informed or consulted for their public input and concerns.

There are serious concerns which have not been addressed, or overlooked, or discounted by the planning department for the State Park development. Specifically, the one road into our community from the US 101 is already a traffic problem, with our current local traffic. Having more tourist traffic will make that much worse. (We already sit at the intersection, for 15 to 20 mins. before being able to turn onto US 101 from Diamond Point Rd. Cars, trucks, campers, logging trucks, a steady stream of vehicles most days in the summer.)

A more serious concern is the Fire Hazard. Diamond Point Road is the only access road in and out of our community. If there was a forest fire, we could not get out, especially with added traffic from the "tourist destination" State Park. People burned-up in their cars is not something you want on your watch. As a community we suggest a second road be built, bringing tourists into the park. That is only one of several concerns we have as community.

Thank you for your time,

Best regards,

Sequim <sup>67</sup>

The plan to develop Miller Peninsula State Park(MPSP)into a "Destination" State Park is just plain wrong on so many different levels I find it difficult to believe it is still even being seriously considered. There is simply no justification for removing trees to accommodate 150 fossil fuel burning RV and tent campsites in a time atmospheric carbon content is increasing every year and trees are still the most efficient way to help mitigate this. Then there are all the other problems that will come along with this development,

1. There is no good way to accommodate the increase in traffic that would occur especially at the intersection of Diamond Pt Road and US 101 where there have already been too many close calls as vehicles from Diamond Pt Road or Chicken Coop Rd try to join the 55mph traffic on US 101. There would also be times like on big holiday weekends that the two-lane Diamond Pt road would be blocked with traffic trying to get into the park. This could seriously slow or even stop emergency vehicles from getting out to Sunshine Acres or Diamond Pt. at a point where time is of the essence.
2. There is no way you can develop this area without increasing the fire hazard. MPSP and all of the surrounding area are in the rain shadow of the Olympics and with climate change, we are in a cycle where the severity of our drought is continuing to increase annually. Already this year we've had a fire near Blyn and another one on Protection Island. To properly prepare to fight the inevitable fires that will occur as a result of increased human intrusion would require a water system and pressurized hydrants that will draw down an already diminished water-table aquifer.

3. As we have seen at Sequim Bay SP, when the park is full, the overflow will trespass into the neighborhoods surrounding the park searching for unoccupied and unregulated campsites.
4. There will also be more people searching the Sunshine Acres and Diamond Point area for already severely limited boating and beach access.

The inevitable deleterious impact on our already threatened wetlands, forests, streams, and native plants cannot and should not be ignored as it is in this seriously flawed proposal. Overall, this will simply further threaten already diminished critical wildlife and avian habitat.

In our lifetimes, an increasing percentage of the increasing US population views public lands & waters (PL&W) as places to “party, play loud music, discharge firearms, and leave our trash at public expense”. That attitude is causing PL&W to become “attractive nuisances” (AN). A simple attitude change from “Let’s trash this place” to “Let’s respect this place and our neighbors” would significantly reduce opposition to the AN aspects of the proposal. The unfortunate reality is that a national attitude change is highly unlikely in our current, highly charged, divisive atmosphere. The Miller Peninsula needs to be preserved as-is and not further destroyed. Please do not allow any concessions and overnight accommodations until that change is embraced.<sup>68</sup>

A pdf copy of this comment can be found here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/14v49sxvqk65mah/MillerPenPark\\_Comments.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/14v49sxvqk65mah/MillerPenPark_Comments.pdf?dl=0)

#### My Background (relating to the park property)

I have lived in Sequim, off of East Sequim Bay Rd, since 1993. When I moved to Sequim in 1993, I was already an avid mountain biker, among other outdoor activities. At that time, I immediately started riding the old roads within the park property. I believe this is around the time that the state actually acquired some or all of the property, but I am not sure. I do know that it was around this time that many land squatters on the property were removed, and after a time, the gates were installed. I have helped build trails, maintain those trails, and ridden those trails regularly these past 28 years.

My point is not that I have any special privilege to the use of the property. Only that I know the property very, very well.

#### Property Use

In my first 12 years or so using the property, beginning in 1993 until around 2006, 98% (or more) of the users of the property were mountain bikers. All of the trails were built by, and maintained by loose groups and individuals in the mountain biking community. It was extremely rare to find equestrians or pedestrians within the interior of the property, although there were some occasionally.

In late 2005 into 2006, when the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (SPRC) initiated its interest in developing the property, I started to see more equestrian use, and a little more foot traffic. There started to be occasional organized equestrian use starting around this time. And equestrian users started to help in cutting out windfall on the trails.

From then until today, use of all kind has increased, and during the Covid 19 pandemic, I have seen far, far more pedestrian use than ever before. Which is similar to many areas across the state.

The Plan: As Presented on June 30, 2021



## My Thoughts in General

Of course, I have enjoyed the mostly light use that the property gets in most of the 28 years that I have been enjoying it. But I understand the interest of the SPRC to better leverage this asset for the benefit of the people of Washington state. I do have some concerns though.

### 1. The general site itself.

I have attended all of the open-to-the-public events relating the property planning starting in 2006. I have always been surprised in how park planners over the years have described the property verses my knowledge of the property gained from 28 years of use. The planners describe this amazing primitive forest land that will certainly be a “destination spot” for state residents and beyond. The property is certainly primitive and forested. But I honestly do not understand where the idea that the property is highly exceptional in a way as to make it a “destination” for outdoor enthusiasts has come from.

Right here on the North Olympic Peninsula, there are indeed many exceptional areas that could be described as, and actually are, a destination. The property on Miller Peninsula is nice, but in my view, not a destination. I have heard, and understand the argument that by comparison to Tacoma, for example, that the property could indeed be a “destination”. But that argument does not seem to take into account the existing truly exceptional areas nearby. Could the Miller Peninsula property be used to provide “camping” at various levels for visitors to the North Olympic Peninsula? Absolutely. Will the property provide a place to stretch your legs into a primitive 2nd growth woodland? Yes. Will it be a “destination”? I don’t think so. But maybe just a nice place to camp while exploring the North Olympic Peninsula is sufficient to justify the development? If so, then great. But using the approach that, if developed, somehow it will be a destination is not a reasonable expectation for anyone besides the optimistic marketing department.

### 2. What is needed if the property is developed?

A. Access. Diamond Pt. Rd. is not ready for a substantial increase in traffic to and from Hwy 101. That is just a fact. The SPRC can spend a bunch of money to study the metrics, or they can just take the example of Sophus Rd and Hwy 101 just 3 ½ miles to the west. The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe wants to remediate the same traffic problem at the intersection near the Longhouse Market. They were hoping for a traffic circle, but engineers are mostly in agreement that an overpass is what would be needed to mitigate current and future traffic. From this layman’s view, the state should save their money and just factor in the cost of an overpass at Hwy 101 and Diamond Pt. Rd. If, after factoring in the overpass, the project is still desirable, let’s move on.

B. Fire. Wildfire is front and foremost on many of our minds right now. Today, if there were a fire inside of the Miller Peninsula Park property, it is likely that it would be uncontrollable and devastating to the forest on the property, and to surrounding homes. This is a fact. In 2003 a property owner adjacent to the park property started a fire during the dry season which got away from them and amazingly only burned 20 acres. One side of the fire was accessible to firefighting personnel and by helicopter. The Miller Peninsula was very lucky because Clallam County Fire Dist. 3 indicated that they had to import all of the water and without the helicopter, there was no way to even battle the fire once it moved away from the road.

The climate is not going to get any less dry anytime soon. If the property were developed for use by exponentially more people, the risk of fire is going to also be exponentially higher. Is the SPRC planning to improve interior roads through the property to enable fire fighting vehicles access? And will a water line of sufficient volume also bisect the property to empower those crews?

C. People. As mentioned earlier, up until about 2006, many times on my ride, I would not encounter anyone else on the trails. They were getting used, but the ratio of people to area was low. From about 2015 and especially since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, the traffic has picked up substantially. I still do not encounter crowds of people farther than a couple of miles from the trail head, but there are definitely more.

I don't know how many people the planners envision will be utilizing the property in their best-case scenario? Currently, the 2500 acres does indeed provide a relatively primitive exposure to "wilderness". When you add in the amount of planned use will it really still be that wilderness experience you are expecting? I guess if you live in an apartment in Tacoma, for example, it might seem so. But with the adjacent 1 million acres of Olympic National Park, and over 600,000 acres of the Olympic National Forest, with many, many exceptional natural beauty spots, I really don't see it myself.

A side-note on trail right-of-way.

The current right of way priority order of:

1. Equestrian
2. Pedestrian
3. Bicycle

may be politically correct for some reason. But in practice, it is flawed. How it works in practice every day on the trails is this. If I, as a bike rider (or a pedestrian), come up from behind on someone walking, on a horse, or riding a bike, I let them know I am there, and they pull over and let me pass. Similarly, I pull over if approached from behind. This appears natural for everyone because that is what happens every day without anyone saying a word.

If I'm on my bike and approach a pedestrian coming head-on, and I make eye contact with them, they always pull over and I pass them with a greeting of "thank you". This takes about 5 seconds and seems entirely natural to people as far as I can tell. If I were to pull over and let the pedestrians pass, the encounter would be no safer yet would take longer, especially if there is a group of pedestrians. If I can not confirm that the pedestrian sees me approach, I will then pull aside and wait.

Most of the equestrians I encounter are trying hard to be a good neighbor on the trails. But the fact is that their mode of transportation, the horse, can be a wild card on a tight trail. I am very familiar with horses and their personalities are many. Some are jumpy and I've witnessed them taking their human for a little bit more of a ride than they were expecting because the horse heard a snap or was flicked by an unseen salal branch. So, even when I pull aside for equestrians, they generally prefer to stand still and have me pass and then they continue. Again, if they don't see me, I pull over until they do and we communicate.

It was mentioned in the June 30th meeting that trails could be better cleared in order to give a longer

sight window toward head-on traffic, and this is true. But I want to remind you that the trails were built by mountain bikers for mountain biking. Even if they are better cleared, which is fine, they will probably not be optimal for mixed use, especially if volumes of users increase exponentially. I understand that leaving the existing trails as mixed use would be less expensive. In my view, the existing trails are not ideal for pedestrians and less ideal for equestrians when there are mountain bikes going in the opposite direction, often as fast as they can. Even if just mountain bikes were on the existing trails, and their user volume were to increase exponentially, it would probably be advisable to establish trail direction as is the norm in heavily used trail systems. Rather than widen, and straighten out the existing bike trails to make them better accommodate the other users, it would be very much preferable, to mountain bikers anyway, if adjacent equestrian and/or pedestrian trails were established. I am sure that the equestrians especially would prefer to not have mountain bikes coming from behind or from ahead if possible. Especially on the very few high-speed downhill sections on the mostly flat property that mountain bikers love. Perhaps enlist user groups to build and maintain these new trails just like the current trails were established.

D. Crime. Currently, there is little to none. No homeless encampments or squatting. All with very little official park personnel presence. If the property were to see hundreds of visitors camped out on a daily basis, I can't help but expect to start seeing some homeless on the property. It's sad for sure, but if there is no access to drugs, pan-handling, or theft, there generally is no problem with homeless encampments. Bring in the visitors and the vendors and unfortunately our societal problems will come too. The remote woodland can be an ideal location to squat. Is dealing with that in the plan?

In Summary

If the property access, fire prevention, trail utility and safety, and possible increase in crime can all be sufficiently addressed. I think a nice place to tent or RV camp as a home base on a visit to the North Olympic Peninsula is a viable plan. I don't think it will be an actual "destination" park that you planners keep marketing and hoping for. But that is my opinion and is subjective, as is yours. The issues to overcome to make the campground work are real and not inexpensive. Making the property better accessible for the use of the entire state is reasonable. But do the locals right and do not establish and build up the property without first addressing the items in my list above.

I am not commenting on the 3 layout scenarios presented as I think those kinds of planning questions are relatively minor and are for after the big questions are addressed.

Thank you for your time,

East Sequim Bay Rd., Sequim Washington

PS: Instead of using all of the budget for planning, how about purchasing a few piles of gravel to be placed in strategic places within the property for the volunteers to use fixing mud holes. Thanks! <sup>69</sup>

Miller Peninsula State Park

The Miller Peninsula is a unique environment and is very special to those of us who live here. Many of us believe that leaving the State Park as it is, is crucial to preserving this area. We are not happy about any more development occurring here.

We also believe that WSP did not make a concerted effort to inform Diamond Point residents of the proposed changes. Many of us do not get the newspaper so did not see the information published. We did not receive any notice via the mail, nor was anything posted in the park. WSP seems to be more concerned about “all Washingtonians” vs. those of us who live here and will be the most impacted.

That said, it is understandable that the WSP would want to “develop” the park. After studying the options, I prefer the **Village Center concept with a wildlife corridor**. This has the smallest footprint and would likely have the smallest impact on the environment as well as our community.

I do not think the “developed” State Park on Miller Peninsula should include RVs. The Diamond Point RV Park, which is about a mile from the proposed campground location, has over 100 sites. In addition, Sequim Bay State Park already has capacity for RVs. It seems to be waste of taxpayer dollars to removed the existing infrastructure for RVs only to move it to another nearby location.

Sequim Bay SP is a popular campground. Every summer, this campground is always full on the weekends, and is often filled during the week. It does not make sense to remove the campground and limit the park to day use only. This campground has been a favorite place for many families through the years and **should not be closed to camping**.

I noticed that wetlands are delineated on the various maps. Depending on the rainfall, this park gets extremely wet, and the “wetlands” significantly exceed the boundaries shown on the map. In fact, it can be **very muddy throughout the park**, even weeks after rain. This could be problematic for camping and other activities. Was this taken under consideration?

The beaches at Miller Peninsula SP are not easily accessible, due to eroding cliffs. During the presentation, it was implied that the beaches at Sequim Bay SP were not desirable because of the steep banks. Miller peninsula has very similar topography to the area at Sequim Bay State Park and therefore will experience the same issues. In fact, the cliffs are actually steeper and more eroded.

**The biggest concern to the residents of Diamond Point is the IMPACTS TO TRAFFIC and TRAFFIC SAFETY.** How does WSP intend to address the increased traffic at the intersection of Highway 101 and Diamond Point Road? This is already an extremely dangerous intersection and with increased traffic from the park, it will become even worse. In addition, there is a trailhead to the Olympic Discovery Trail is very close to this intersection, which is also a concern. I believe it would be best to install a traffic light to ensure the utmost safety.

**How does WSP intend to staff and maintain the park? Will there be a law enforcement component?** If the staff is moved from Sequim Bay to Miller Peninsula, how will Sequim Bay be maintained? Who will maintain the trails and whatever activities WSP decided to install at the park. Unfortunately, the Park has already attracted some questionable activities and I rarely see any State Park personnel in the area.

A SEPA checklist was mentioned. Will this be made available to the public for review? If so, how is it accessed?

I appreciate the opportunity to comment. Please include me on any future correspondences concerning development of Miller Peninsula State Park.

Sincerely,<sup>70</sup>

Plans to expand Miller peninsula state park to include RV parking and enhanced recreation are reckless and strongly opposed by the residents of Diamond Point and Miller Peninsula. Having been here for 40 years, I have seen progress and the degradation of the forests and open spaces on the peninsula. What is left is utterly precious. At a time when the state ought to be preserving as much wild space as is left, this plan to saw down trees to make way for wretched, unnecessary, environmentally irresponsible RVs is appalling. The state should be doing all it can to discourage these gas guzzling behemoths. To make a place for them in our tiny, quiet and beloved community is outrageous. This project must not be allowed to go through.<sup>71</sup>

I would like to express my opposition to further development of Miller Peninsula State Park. There are numerous obvious reasons but two that really stand out for me are:

1. The potential overuse of ground water. This natural resource is not present in unlimited quantities. I also have a concern about salt water intrusion since Miller Peninsula is a peninsula and surrounded by salt water on 3 sides.

2. Western United States has been experiencing drought more severely in recent years and we are at a higher risk for wildfires. A wildfire would be devastating to the park. There is only one road out of Miller Peninsula and a large scale evacuation of the residents and people in the park could be a potential disaster.

Another comment: I have read and heard Miller Peninsula State Park described as being "under-developed". Why does this natural area have to be developed? It seems that it will be a money making venture for the State of Washington.<sup>72</sup>

I am writing to oppose in the strongest possible terms any plan to develop Miller peninsula state park that includes the cutting of trees and RV parking. This plan would not only lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic and pollution (noise, ground water, and air), but runs in stark contrast to our collective need to preserve wild places, enhance natural ecosystems, and phase out inefficient, gas-guzzling mega vehicles like RVs. Furthermore, any such plan will further imperil the remote sanctuary of Protection Island by dramatically increasing boat traffic in the surrounding waters (frequented by harbor seals, elephant seals, minke whales, transient orcas, and porpoise). Following the fire on the island just recently, this seems a reckless and unnecessary step for the state to take.

I am a part of a large and growing contingent of Miller Peninsula home and property owners and tenants vehemently opposed to this unnecessary assault on a tranquil wooded haven. The trails already in existence are more than enough to appreciate the area and meet the needs of those interested in the quiet solitude of nature. A massive trailer park and zip line "adventure" attraction would destroy that habitat and only continue the degradation of our Washington environments for unnecessary and irresponsible human amusement.

Thank you.<sup>73</sup>

I have been a camper all of my life. I fell in love with the North Peninsula when we brought our family to the National Parks and county parks in Clallam County. Because we liked it so much we bought a second home in Diamond Point and I now live here full time. I always wanted a wilderness experience when camping and to be away from people as much as is possible in a campground. I am very concerned about the overdevelopment of Miller State Park and encourage you to keep development to a minimum. I look forward to reading the environmental impact study. I wish there was a human impact

study because if this park is developed much my life will be irreparably damaged and changed. I would like you to address these following concerns:

1. environmental impact study
2. Complete transportation study for use of Diamond Point Road and entrance and exit on 101. We already have 1-2 hour back ups on 101 when the Lavender Festival is happening. We already wait 10 or so minutes to turn left from Diamond Point Road to 101 on most days.
3. Water study showing effects on the aquifer that gives all homes in the Diamond Point our water. I'd like the study to show effects 75-100 years from now. My home will be here in a 100 years unless we lose our water.
4. A plan to protect the park and the community when fire happens. We already have seen increased home insurance rates because our closest full time fire station is 30 minutes away. I cannot imagine trying to get off Miller Peninsula if a fire starts in the park, and everyone in the park leaves.
5. A plan to protect our residential only community from campers driving on our roads and looking for beach and water access. The only public access is the road only, no parking or beach other than the 12 feet of road.

This park will be a big draw, just as Sequim Bay and Port Townsend State Parks are. Please do not ignore that there are homes all along Diamond Point Road from 101 to the water, and over 700 homes at the end of the road with private beach clubs for residents only. Thank you

We own a lot on Beach Drive on Diamond Point. We use the lot to enjoy the beach, water, and surrounding area.

We are concerned with development of Miller Peninsula for several reasons.

1. Land left natural that promotes animal and plant life are becoming rarer. As an undeveloped, or minimally developed land with day use trails, the native life on the peninsula is more likely to be healthy. The current park, with its hiking/biking/horse riding trails provides people with recreational activities while minimally impacting plant and animal life. We should strive to keep this balance.
2. Traffic is already bad for access to Diamond Point. The intersection with WA 101 can be difficult to access with current traffic – especially on holiday weekends or special events like the Lavender Festival. WA 101 is not built for more traffic; development of Miller Peninsula cannot be done without improving the highway.
3. Local infrastructure is insufficient to support more traffic. Diamond Point Road will require upgrades too to support additional traffic if the park is developed.
4. Park visitors will seek beach access. Access on the Discovery Bay side is problematic due to the cliff and/or private land along the point. Additional traffic will bring pollution and other potential problems like graffiti, crime, and vandalism.

We think the park is best left as is providing day use activities to the public while balancing the needs of conservation and ecology<sup>75</sup>

Hello Nikki,

Thanks so much for taking the time to meet with us all on Monday at SBSP & MPSP. Apparently there were not enough copies of the Mill Pen proposal map to go around & I did not receive one. Could you please email me a copy of that map & any other updated relevant info? Thanks again—take care,<sup>76</sup>

I heard there was a meeting with local folks a couple days ago on the Miller Peninsula. I intended to but was unable to join the recent zoom meeting you had on development plans.

What I see on your project website is from 2007 or before. It would be good if you have conceptual drawings and plans for you to share them with the public via the web site. Or please steer me to more current information on Miller Peninsula State Park development plans. thank you <sup>77</sup>

Dear concerned,

I am writing to express my concern for much of the current proposal for the development of Miller Peninsula State Park. I live in Sequim and frequent the park mostly for bike riding but also with my young children for hiking in the winter months. Others have spent considerable time addressing the important issues of fire danger, water, and traffic issues that are absolutely important but I would like to express my strong opinion that intense development focused on high end lodging and adventure sports is simply way out of sync with the State Parks mission and values. This level of development would, quite simply, forever alter the relatively pristine, quiet, natural ecosystem the the park currently is. Furthermore, while a small campground could potentially fit into the park's current appeal to it's current users, I question the need for more paved campgrounds, water and power hookups for RV's, bathrooms, etc. when there are already several hundred such sites within an hour of MPSP. Having stayed at most of these other parks over the years and during all times of the years, I can tell you that other than a few holiday weekends over the summer they usually have space. Any capacity issues outside of those small time periods are a product of your reservation system and not actual usage at the park (which is a whole other issue). The one potential exception to that is Sequim Bay State Park and it appears as though you want to close an entire loop of that campground. Closing an existing campground and building a brand new one nearby makes no sense to me. Finally, I would like to address the geography of the MPSP. While I love riding my bike there or taking a winter hike with my kids, other than those activities and horse back riding, there are much better opportunities nearby. The shoreline has one access point and the beach is large cobble and basically non-existent at high tide. There are no lakes, rivers or streams to visit. There are basically no old growth trees in the entire park. The second growth forest is nice and the rhododendrons in spring are beautiful, but basically anything most people would want to do there, other than ride a mountain bike or a horse, you could find a better place nearby. MPSP should be left as it is, preserved forest with limited development beyond the current multi-use trail for generations of future users. Thank you for your time. <sup>78</sup>

In my review of preliminary plans for development of Miller Peninsula State Park, I see a few issues that will require assessment and mitigations.

Camping, RVs and lodge development - while the need for public camping may be justified, a lodge and resort development is not. A lodge/resort is not consistent with or supported by the State Parks mission. The State Parks Acquisition and Development Strategy does not mention lodges, and the only justification provided for lodging facilities development are an "aging population.". The big build-out option in your preliminary alternatives may be attractive to some, but would raise big questions about spending of State funding for a luxury resort on public lands. It seems like the Earth Economics analysis mentioned in your documents would be a good basis for looking at some of these issues, including a state-owned lodge competing with local business. Has this been completed?

Traffic - access to and from Highway 101 will require significant analysis and planning. The current situation at Diamond Point Road is challenging to get onto Hwy 101 during weekend traffic. An overpass or significant expansion of turn lanes will be required for emergency response.

Shoreline access - the shores are mostly large cobble, difficult to walk on and easy to twist an ankle. The more shoreline access is encouraged, the more emergency response access will need to be enhanced. Particularly on the eastern Discovery Bay shore - bad place to sent people. Maybe an overlook could be developed but visitors should be discouraged from climbing down this steep, erosive bluff. Extraction would have to be by boat.

Trail enhancements - an excellent system of multi-purpose trails exist, serving cyclist, horse riders and pedestrians with pets. More trails and wider trails will degrade the area and lead to increased habitat and wildlife disturbance. I would discourage significant trail expansion and enhancement.<sup>79</sup>

As a property owner in Diamond Point, I have concerns about the State Parks Planning Dept's three proposed designs presented to our community. My opinion is the Planning Dept. should essentially scrap the current architectural plans as they are "over-building and over-spending" ventures that are unnecessary. Ideally I would like MPSP to stay as is. But if the State has millions of dollars to spend consider how MPSP can be the park for the future...Environmentally sound, low impact, and be representative of our changing world. I can see MPSP minimally developed attracting nature lovers, allowing the current local wildlife thrive, and also be marketed to invite Washingtonians to enjoy nature in it's natural state, a true in-the-woods experience.

Today equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers and birders use the park. Many of the trails have been built and maintained by volunteers. They could be improved and some new trails could be added to meet ADA code. Build a visitors center and day use picnic area. Add restrooms or vault toilets. Run educational programs, have ranger guided hikes and afternoon talks. Encourage visitors to respect the area, learn about it's history, it's native plants, it's wetlands and local wildlife. Add additional park employees to collect entrance fees, maintain the park, and provide a security presence. If money is to be spent, please do so intentionally with our environmental future in mind while enhancing the park visitors natural woods experience. The tens of millions not spent on MPSP can be used to repair and maintain WA state parks across the state.

Commissioners, please suggest that the State Parks Dept. Planning Dept. start over with thorough environmental and community impact studies and come up with low impact design options that will benefit us all into the future. Thank you,<sup>80</sup>

Dear Commissioner Brown,

We have serious concerns about plans to develop Miller Peninsula State Park. The area does not have an overabundance of wildlife habitat. We don't understand proposals to decrease the amount of habitat. The area also has serious infrastructure limitations with regards to water availability and vehicle traffic accommodations.

Cornell's eBird has documented 126 species of birds using Miller Peninsula State Park and Thompson Spit.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6049435?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6049505?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec>



Setting aside picnic/camping areas means less habitat, facilitates littering and habituates wildlife to human food and presence—which provides additional risks to wildlife and to people. The Park is wonderful place for folks to experience nature away from developed human infrastructure. As our state becomes more populated and developed, such areas are becoming increasingly rare and valuable to all. We have an opportunity to preserve an area for future generations of plants, critters, and humans. Let's not squander it.

Forests from Alaska to South America are being converted to other uses and biomes. As climate change threatens, we are realizing the important role forests play in carbon and water cycles. Public lands decision makers have a vital responsibility to guard us from the ravages climate change is wreaking in the form of fires and extreme weather events.

Thank you for allowing us to share our concerns, and please let us know you've read this email. Regards,<sup>81</sup>

Dear Commissioners,

Keep development of Miller Peninsula State park to a minimum. It is a unique piece of the Olympic Peninsula joining State forest with the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In a time where there is so much emphasis on habitat restoration, it makes no sense to develop such a rare piece of land.

The people of this county love the Miller Peninsula State Park. You can count on a lot of resistance if the plan for development is a hotel/restaurant model. That would be so misguided. Keep it to a minimum. Thank you.<sup>82</sup>

Sept 9 2021

I am responding to the request for public input on the plans for changes at Miller State park

I have recreated on that property for more than 20 years on a regular weekly basis.

-There has been a constant increase in use especially in the past five years

-The area is shared by many different users :Horse riders, dog walkers, walkers, hikers, Runners, and bikers are using that space with

increased use on the weekends.

This place is used by neighbors, families, older people, younger people, groups of people, and single people.

People are very attracted to and in need of this kind of natural space for exercise, enjoyment and contemplation.

We have more people living here now. This state park is especially cherished and sought out for its free access to a quiet and natural condition;

It's a low-key place.

This place represents the culture of the great outdoors that people are coming here to be a part of.

This is attracting more people as it is.

Any necessary or unnecessary enhancements will only detract from what this place offers as it is.

Most people access the property either by turning off 101 and going down diamond point Rd. or turning from 101 to East Sequim BayRoad

This access is becoming more dangerous particularly in the summer months

Due to high traffic flow on 101

The primary safety concern for the public is the access by vehicles to this state park  
From Highway 101

Safety of the public should be the first concern of the state park administration  
In their future plans.

The neighborhoods on East Sequim Bay Road and Diamond Point Rd  
Will be severely impacted by the state parks plans.  
All the public needs is a safe way in.

Thank you for considering my point of view <sup>83</sup>

I am opposed to major development in the Miller state park. There are so few truly natural areas left.  
And we are going to want more and more of them. Leave at least one low land forest alone to  
develop naturally. Please <sup>84</sup>

To Whom It May Concern

Recently in a discussion a friend shared that there are plans in discussion to develop Miller Peninsula  
State Park which would include a lodge, restaurant, and RV sites. One can only trust that this  
statement is untrue and that Washington State Parks would never consider such an action as it is  
totally contradictory and not in alignment with Washington State Parks mission and vision nor my wife  
and I's. Has anyone even conducted a feasibility study or a cost analysis. Both of which would prove  
this idea is not only absurd but ludicrous. Please note that my wife and I both highly oppose any such  
plan. <sup>85</sup>

To Whom it May Concern,

I moved up here from S California 4 years ago after falling in love with Sequim and the surrounding  
parks. California tried for decades to do "responsible growth" in and around Los Angeles recreational  
areas and within city limits. It's an unmitigated disaster.

I feel your development plans are misguided. Although well thought out and looking fancy and  
suited to provide really good amenities for visitors and a boom to businesses, will lead to further and  
excessive development in the area. Why is MORE always better?

Please let us enjoy the park the way it has been and should be, in a natural state with a little trail  
maintenance and trash collection and keeping vandals at bay is the order of the day.

Thanks for reading<sup>86</sup>

Dear Washington Parks:

I would like to give you my appreciation that you have jurisdiction over the Miller Peninsula State Park  
land. If this land were allowed to be subdivisions and hobby farms the impact would be far greater  
than your building a campground. That said many of us do have concerns over the lodge/restaurant  
concept. We understand the need for more campground facilities. However a lodge and restaurant  
seem to be in a development paradigm which is not in line with the park mission. There are plenty  
of lodges and restaurants in the Sequim area. You would also be competing with the Jamestown  
Tribe lodge and restaurant. The tribe has been a good steward of land and resources. The other  
concern is traffic management. Diamond Point Road already has a lot of traffic trying to get onto

Hwy 101. It does not seem that intersection could accommodate more traffic without some mitigation.

Thank you for considering all of these aspects. We are truly hoping you keep to the mission of maintaining habitat and natural surroundings in this project. <sup>87</sup>

Dear concerned,

I am writing to express my concern for much of the current proposal for the development of Miller Peninsula State Park. I live in Sequim and frequent the park mostly for bike riding but also with my young children for hiking in the winter months. Others have spent considerable time addressing the important issues of fire danger, water, and traffic issues that are absolutely important but I would like to express my strong opinion that intense development focused on high end lodging and adventure sports is simply way out of sync with the State Parks mission and values. This level of development would, quite simply, forever alter the relatively pristine, quiet, natural ecosystem the park currently is. Furthermore, while a small campground could potentially fit into the park's current appeal to it's current users, I question the need for more paved campgrounds, water and power hookups for RV's, bathrooms, etc. when there are already several hundred such sites within an hour of MPSP. Having stayed at most of these other parks over the years and during all times of the years, I can tell you that other than a few holiday weekends over the summer they usually have space. Any capacity issues outside of those small time periods are a product of your reservation system and not actual usage at the park (which is a whole other issue). The one potential exception to that is Sequim Bay State Park and it appears as though you want to close an entire loop of that campground. Closing an existing campground and building a brand new one nearby makes no sense to me.

Finally, I would like to address the geography of the MPSP. While I love riding my bike there or taking a winter hike with my kids, other than those activities and horse back riding, there are much better opportunities nearby. The shoreline has one access point and the beach is large cobble and basically non-existent at high tide. There are no lakes, rivers or streams to visit. There are basically no old growth trees in the entire park. The second growth forest is nice and the rhododendrons in spring are beautiful, but basically anything most people would want to do there, other than ride a mountain bike or a horse, you could find a better place nearby. MPSP should be left as it is, preserved forest with limited development beyond the current multi-use trail for generations of future users. Thank you for your time. <sup>89</sup>

Dear Commissioners -

In my review of preliminary plans for development of Miller Peninsula State Park, I see a few issues that will require careful assessment and mitigations. In general, I encourage State Parks to focus on maintenance of natural functions and features of these public lands, with a minimal development footprint.

Camping, RVs and lodge development - while the need for additional public camping in the area may be justified, a lodge and resort development is definitely not. A lodge/resort is not consistent with or supported by the State Parks mission. The State Parks Acquisition and Development Strategy does not mention lodges, and the only justification it provides for lodging facilities development are an "aging population.". The big build-out option in your preliminary alternatives may be attractive to some, but would raise big questions about spending of State funding for a luxury resort on public lands.

It seems like the Earth Economics analysis mentioned in your documents would be a good basis for looking at some of these issues, including a state-owned lodge competing with local business. We the public are not aware that such an analysis has been completed.

Traffic - access to and from Highway 101 will require significant analysis, planning and funding. The current situation at Diamond Point Road is challenging and dangerous to get onto Hwy 101 during weekend traffic. An overpass or significant expansion of turn lanes will be required for safe integration of vehicles from the State Park to Hwy 101, particularly if large RVs are encouraged through park development.

Shoreline access - the shores are mostly large cobble, difficult to walk on and easy to twist an ankle. The more shoreline access is encouraged, the more emergency response access will need to be enhanced. Particularly on the eastern Discovery Bay shore - bad place to send people. Maybe an overlook could be developed but visitors should be discouraged from climbing down this steep, erosive bluff. Extraction would have to be by boat.

Trail enhancements - an excellent system of multi-purpose trails exist, serving cyclist, horse riders and pedestrians with pets. More trails and wider trails will degrade the area and lead to increased habitat and wildlife disturbance. I would discourage significant trail expansion and enhancement.<sup>90</sup>

I have been hiking and bike-riding on the Miller Peninsula for 25 years. It is a beautiful and natural place for our community to enjoy without driving a long distance on gravel roads. Every time I am there, I see many other community members enjoying it as I do, either walking, riding a horse, or bike-riding.

I know there is talk of developing the Peninsula with a lodge and campground, plus other features. Right now, people can enjoy the park for free and the environmental impacts on the forest areas and coastline are minimal. It is my hope that your plans will keep the impacts minimal. You have a great park, enjoyed by many people in your community. Don't mess it up with costly development that close off parts of the park to the public and wreck the great wild ambience that the park provides.

Is it so hard to leave the place as it is?<sup>91</sup>

Hi Ms. Fields, I'm trying to get more information about water use for the proposed plans for Miller Peninsula. Needed is the proposed amount for each of the three options and the proposed source of each. Thank you,<sup>92</sup>

I'm a resident of Clallam County and a frequent user of the natural trails of the MPSP. The beauty of this State Park is the preserved second growth forest and winding trails that skirt a delicate high bluff over a diverse marine ecology as well as a striking display of woodland rhodies, Western Red cedar, Douglas fir, Madrone, Alder, Maple and more.

Clallam County is also home to Sequim Bay State Park and a popular Dungeness Recreation Area and Dungeness Spit National Wildlife Refuge. The State Park's proposed large campground on MPSP with RV park, lodge and restaurant will overwhelm this delicate landscape and is flatly inconsistent with the Vision and Mission of the Parks.

An example of the damage resulting from over development and a busy campground can be seen at the Dungeness Recreation Area, where erosion caused by the heavily used trails, roads and campsites is evident in the forest and along the shoreline.

MPSP in its natural condition will survive for future generations to enjoy. It provides affordable access to WA residents who are seeking peaceful interaction with nature. If the Park is considering

development of MPSP in the scale of St. Andrews State Park, it will grossly damage the setting and prove too costly for most Washingtonians to access.

Please reconsider any proposal that does not leave MPSP in it's beautiful, natural state. <sup>94</sup>

Dear WA State Parks Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the development of Miller Peninsula. Please find attached a letter expressing our hopes and vision for the project. the WA State Parks Commissioners

RE: Miller Peninsula State Park Planning- Equestrian Position Statement

Dear Commissioners:

The Peninsula Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BCHW) is a stewardship and recreation use group located on the north Olympic Peninsula that engages in the maintenance of trails and public lands in Washington State, with a focus on the greater Sequim and Port Angeles area. We have been involved significantly in every aspect of use and maintenance of the WA State Parks lands at Miller Peninsula for decades, including having had representatives on the Interim Trails Plan Advisory Committee. We have constructed many of the trails at Miller, installed all of the signage, worked regularly with the Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board to mitigate invasive weeds at Miller, and provided hundreds of trail maintenance hours there every year.

While for years, Miller Peninsula has been a significant destination for hikers, bikers, and equestrians, just as it is, we recognize that the Miller property will be developed as a major state park. We are in full support of the Miller State Park development. We recognize that to make these valuable lands a viable state park, some development must occur. There are some elements that we equestrians urgently request the planners to include. The key elements of our position are as follows: 1) Maintain existing trails as multiple-use, non-motorized trails. We would like to see these trails kept open to hikers, equestrians, and bicycles.

2) Provide an 8-unit horse camp. Equestrians do not have a public horse camp area on the northeast Olympic Peninsula. BCHW Peninsula Chapter will work enthusiastically with WA State Parks and other stakeholders in the construction of the horse camp, and we will contribute to the camp's on-going maintenance. We will continue to maintain the trails. Also, we will work to educate all types of trail users in the "Leave No Trace" (LNT) camping principles and in the proper multi-use-trail safety etiquette, having developed an instruction program called "3S - Stop, Stand, Speak". Please view it here <https://www.pbchw.org/training.php> . Our state organization, BCHW, provides similar services to users at Riverside State Park in Spokane which also has a horse camp, arena, and trails use area.

3) Include the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe parcels in the center of the Peninsula as part of operations, either by cooperative agreement or by acquisition. These parcels include trails that are key to the current use of the State Parks lands which are both east and west of the area, as well as the main park to the north. 4) Include the Manke 5-acre timberland tracts and Cat Lake for long term potential acquisitions.

5) Include the connector trail between the Miller State Park property and the Olympic Discovery Trail near Pierce Rd. This trail currently exists and is supported by the Tribe and DNR.

(The Olympic Discovery Trail and the State Parks' Palouse to Cascades Trail are part of the cross-state trail network comprising the Great American Rail Trail).

6) Improve the intersection of Diamond Point Rd, Chicken Coop Rd, and Hwy 101, for safety's sake.

7) Purchase the Jones Trust parcel to allow for another waterfront access point. WA State Parks has been a good partner to equestrians. We look forward to continuing this relationship as we move to the formalized establishment of a new state park at Miller Peninsula.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, <sup>95</sup>

I am trying to understand the SEPA process as it relates to the current planning process for development of Miller Peninsula State Park. Can you address the following for me?

1. According to the Department of Ecology website, SEPA and planning procedures are intended to be integrated and run concurrently, at the earliest possible time, so please explain how the current park planning processes have been and are being integrated with SEPA. What is the status of the SEPA process for the Miller Peninsula Park proposal? Has the SEPA Environmental Checklist been completed? If so, is a copy of the completed checklist available?
2. What issues have been identified to be addressed in the SEPA process for the park, and what is the status of the analysis for each of those issues? What baseline information has been collected? How has that information been used in shaping alternatives to be considered? What constraints have been indicated by the studies conducted to date?
3. Has a traffic study been conducted on the intersection of Highway 101 and Diamond Point Road, as well as on Diamond Point Road itself? If so, what were the results? Is the study available? If a traffic study has not yet been conducted, how can any alternatives for the Park be developed in the absence of information about what the impacts on the roadways would be and what mitigations would be necessary, and at what cost? It seems logical that the constraints should be well understood before alternatives are developed as the constraints analysis, in conjunction with the range of mitigation measure that would be required, and an analysis of their feasibility, should be integral to the development of alternatives. At least one alternative should be developed and analyzed that minimizes the necessity of significant traffic mitigation measures; i.e., which does not increase traffic to a level requiring major traffic mitigation measures.
4. I would like to propose a project alternative for analysis in the SEPA document, which I assume will be an EIS. What is the appropriate way to do that?

I appreciate your assistance. Sincerely, <sup>96</sup>

Dear Washington State Park Commissioners,

I am writing regarding the development of Miller Peninsula State Park. As a resident of Washington state and specifically Diamond Point on the Miller Peninsula I have many concerns about the planned development. Nikki Fields, lead planner for the park, said she wanted the park to be innovative, a park of the future. Unfortunately, climate change is in our future.

Trees are one of the best tools we have to combat climate change. Right now, Miller Peninsula State Park land is a beautiful, largely undisturbed, coastal forest. It is home to a variety of animals including Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Great Blue Herons, owls, cougars, bears, coyotes, foxes, and deer. It is used by hikers, bikers, and equestrians. The forest is providing habitat for all these animals and recreation for humans, all while helping to reduce global warming.

This seems like the perfect state park. But Washington State Parks wants to cut down thousands of trees on this land to accommodate motorhomes and trailers. Isn't this antithetical to a park of the future which must take climate change into account?

There are other reasons why Miller Peninsula State Park land should remain as it is rather than being cleared for a campground.

The Diamond Point community sits at the end of the Miller Peninsula and has approximately 700 homes. It is surrounded by the park land on 3 sides. There is only one two lane road with no shoulder providing access to Diamond Point and the park. It is already very difficult to get out on to Highway 101 from Diamond Point Road. Add 150 motorhomes and vehicles pulling trailers coming in and out of the campground and it is going to be a huge problem and create a dangerous situation. We

are a community of mostly elderly people. What is going to happen when an ambulance is trying to get someone out of here on a Sunday morning when the campers are leaving? What is going to happen in the event of a wildfire when we have to evacuate Diamond Point and the campground?

Wildfires are a serious risk to our community. Summer droughts are becoming more frequent with climate change. The trees, grasses, and bushes are extremely dry in the summer. Campers have campfires and barbecues. A fire would spread very quickly over the peninsula and the people in Diamond Point would be trapped at the end of the peninsula, trying to get out on the same road as all the campers. I'm sure the State Parks Department does not want to be responsible for the loss of homes and lives.

Increasing drought is not only a fire danger but is also depleting our aquifer. Our community is dependent on wells on the peninsula. A campground as planned would mean hundreds of additional people draining water from our aquifer daily. This is a real problem for the future viability of our community. Ms. Fields has not even done a study on the availability of water on the peninsula. This must be done and must take into account the probability that droughts will increase in the future.

I am asking you to do a complete SEPA, study the environmental impacts, the impacts on resident wildlife, and the impacts on human residents of Miller Peninsula before making a decision on whether to destroy this forest for a campground.

Sincerely<sup>97</sup>

Hello Nikki,

I just wanted to say that I fully support the attached letter that was sent to you from our BCHW chapter regarding the Miller Peninsula development. I am a horse rider and have often ridden around the Miller Peninsula as it is a great place for easy access and wonderful trails (that our chapter has spent 1000s of hours creating and maintaining). Please do not stop horses from being a major part of the development of the Miller Peninsula. It is one of the few places we have left to ride that isn't backcountry and for many of us at our age that isn't a good option for us. Thank you!<sup>98</sup>

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

P.O. Box 42650

Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Dear Commissioners Latimer, Brown, Perez, Danenberg, Milner, Bounds, and Connelly:

The mission of Washington State Parks is to connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives. The reality, however, is that not **all** Washingtonians have feasible access to the state parks. I am writing to you about an opportunity to make significant progress in achieving the goal of connecting **all** Washingtonians to our state parks. The opportunity is the planning currently in progress for development of the Miller Peninsula State Park on the Olympic Peninsula. The current alternatives being considered do NOT address the needs of **all** Washingtonians, but rather focus on providing additional services and facilities for the same subset of Washingtonians and out of state visitors who already use state parks. I am, therefore, suggesting another alternative that would focus squarely on the under-served in our state and pursue innovative programs and facilities to ensure that the many under-served who are not currently able to use state parks would have that experience. This new proposed alternative would also reduce impacts on the area's ecosystems and habitats, reduce fire risks, better address climate change issues, and reduce traffic impacts.

I ask that State Parks develop an alternative, which might be dubbed the **Plan for the Future** alternative, to be fully considered along with the existing alternatives and analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the project. There are several considerations that give rise to this alternative:

1. The first is the issue of social and environmental justice. Planning for the development of Miller Peninsula State Park is an enormous and timely opportunity to create a park that emphasizes

serving underserved communities, people who typically have limited opportunities to connect with Nature and to have educational and rewarding outdoor experiences.

2. This approach would also address one of the major constraints in developing the Miller Peninsula area; namely, traffic at the intersection of Diamond Point Road and Highway 101, and ingress and egress between Diamond Point Road and the Park. Development of another traditional state park would face a major challenge in dealing with access to and from Highway 101. This constraint

should be addressed before Park planning goes further. What road improvements would be needed and at what cost? Are these improvements feasible? Will the funding be available? What would be the impacts on area wildlife? On local residents? As will be described further below, the ***Plan for the Future*** alternative would require far fewer improvements to the intersection of Diamond Point Road and Highway 101, as well as fewer improvements to Diamond Point Road.

3. It is also important to consider what level of use the area can accommodate without serious adverse impacts to habitat and ecosystem values. The ***Plan for the Future*** alternative would entail less overall development and would be designed to minimize impacts to the area's ecosystems and habitats.

4. An additional critical consideration is climate change. The science says that to meet the very likely inadequate target of not more than 2 degrees Centigrade increase over pre-industrial levels, we need to reduce global emissions by 40% to 70% by 2050. Because the U.S. emits a disproportionately high level (per capita) of GHG emissions, we need to reduce our emissions by 70 - 80% by 2050, less than thirty years from now. Needless to say, we are not even close to on track to achieving that. To do so will require a societal transformation, including how we recreate and travel. There is an important question as to whether we can sustain the current levels of using gas consumptive vehicles, including RVs, motorhomes, and campers, especially with large amounts of vehicle miles travelled. Climate change may also intensify drought conditions and heighten fire danger, which could also constrain how parklands are used.

With these considerations in mind, the ***Plan for the Future*** alternative would give rise to a Park Plan that:

- De-emphasizes the traditional form of camping with RV's, campers, and lots of individual vehicles and trips; and instead emphasizes bringing people from urban areas by hydrogen-powered or electric buses, and provide opportunities for people who don't normally have the chance to visit a state park facility. This could include school groups, kids' clubs, seniors, school groups, under-served families, special needs individuals, children in orphanages or foster care etc. The park could also provide day use potential (trails, etc.) for Olympic Peninsula residents. Park infrastructure would focus on a rustic lodge or cabins and tent-cabins to serve the groups arriving by bus rather than by a large number of private vehicles requiring traditional campsites and RV hook-ups. This also de-emphasizes the need for major and expensive transportation improvements on Highway 101 and along Diamond Point Road.



- Emphasizes environmental and cultural education and passive recreation, with an array of activities for learning, socializing, nature appreciation, diversity and cultural appreciation, and physical fitness.
- Pursues cooperation with educational and cultural institutions and organizations, including Native American Tribes, school districts, colleges and universities, senior organizations and facilities, and social services to provide a rich and relaxing experience for the visitors.
- De-emphasizes significant development and emphasizes maintaining the habitat, ecosystem, and carbon sequestration values of the landscape. Focuses on experiencing Nature on her own terms, not trying to include urban park active recreation activities such as volleyball, rock-climbing walls, etc.

Noting that State Parks is in the process of creating and filling the position of Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I would suggest that the new Director could play an important role in helping to plan and implement the ***Plan for the Future*** alternative.

#### **Funding**

Capital costs should be lower for this alternative, especially because far fewer transportation improvements would be required. The operating budget would lend itself to both grants and partnerships because of the innovative nature of the programs and services provided.

#### **Environmental Review**

The Plan for the Future alternative should be considered and analyzed in the SEPA document to ensure that planning and decision-making reflect environmental values and seek to resolve potential problems.

#### **Conclusion**

I urge the Commission, the Director, and other key staff at State Parks to consider this alternative. It is an opportunity to significantly improve State Parks' capacity to serve a greater share of **all** Washingtonians, especially the people who are currently severely underserved in their ability to connect with Nature at state parks. Please consider this alternative as part of the planning and SEPA processes. Sincerely,<sup>99</sup>

My name is XX. My parents and grandparents have had property in Diamond Point since the early 60's. We have watched Sequim grow in leaps and bounds. The only thing that has not changed is the roads to get here. My neighbors and myself have learned to try not to travel on the weekends in the summer. Especially when festivals like Lavender Fest, Wooden Boat festival. Not to mention crabbing season.

After these weekends(Sunday afternoon) traffic is backed up from Discovery Bay, to the Hoods Canal bridge.

I can't imagine how the State of Washington can possibly believe 101 can support the traffic for a State Park ,campers and boats and trailers with a park that has over 100 camp sites.

Not even to mention lack of water, fire hazards, destroying tress, trails.

Please do not develop at this location . It will create total chaos. <sup>100</sup>

Dear Commissioners,

I live in Diamond Point and believe the development of Miller State Park to be unwise on multiple fronts. The impact of increased traffic for 101 and Diamond Point Rd is substantial for traffic flow, accidents and road integrity, the increased fire danger, the effects on our fragile water table aquifer, trespassers in our neighborhood looking for boating and beach access, and the negative environmental impact on the wildlife, wetlands, streams, trees and native plants to name a few.

The park is vitally important as it is as one of the few horse trails available and as a refuge from noise, a lot of vehicular traffic, and environmental safety from campfire dangers. The money set aside for the park development would be better put to use to refurbish and upgrade existing parks in Washington, most of which need a lot of work. Thank you. <sup>101</sup>

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Hi Nikki,

Thank you for coming to the Diamond Point Community meeting. I may be in the minority of residence out here but I think the development of the park would be great! I am a big fan of the Washington State Park system. I use the the parks often. I was lucky enough to get some camping sites for my small RV in state parks along the coast for this week.

Of all your proposals I like the "Village Center - max trails" the best. It has the smallest development footprint and preserves the trails/forest we all love. It has additional activities and attractions for family outings that would make memories. With the expanded restricted resource area additional concerns are met.

I think the main concerns voiced at the meeting are:

1 - Fire danger

I believe all of these concerns can be medicated through proper planning. I do not believe camp grounds have a history of elevated fire risk. I believe most camp related fires start in boondocking situations. With the burn bans this can be further controlled. In camp grounds any fire problems are more likely to be caught before they are out of control.

2 - Traffic congestion

As you heard traffic congestion is already a problem.

Option 1: The best fix would be to put an underpass at 101 with on and off ramps. This is pretty expensive. Option 2: Enhancing the middle lane for merging into the

opposite side of the highway flow of traffic. Making it so you only have to cross one lane at a time. Some of us already do this, visitors often don't. Proper lane painting and signage would encourage usage and make it safer.

Option 3: U turn pull outs not too far down the road in each direction. Same concept of only having to cross one lane at a time. Examples of these are on 101 between Sequim and Port Angeles.

Option 4: Round about. The problem is no breaks in highway traffic. So traffic slows down but still no slots to merge into the flow of traffic.

### 3 - Water usage

I think your Village Center - Max Trails plan indirectly controls this problem with the "expanded resource restricted area". With controlling the non-development of this additional large area you have in the long run capped water usage and tree removal. The campsites will use way less water than various types of development that might eventually occupy this space.

The plan does include large lawn areas. Notice all the brown lawns at Diamond Point. Hopefully you would plan something similar or an alternative to summer green lawns. Winter no problem, lawns are good for mud control.

When I think of camping at State Parks there is a level of facilities that one typically expects.

These include:

- basic camp sites
- RV sites, some with full and partial hookups
- dump stations
- running water with showers
- trash pickup
- a nature experience

These may seem basic but they are not always provided. All of your plans meet these expectations. One thing I would suggest adding is a "bike in / walk in" camp area with lanes from the Olympic Peninsula Trail. These minimalist might enjoy a separate area.

Looking forward to you as a neighbor! Very few people or organizations develop an area and then put up a "Welcome" sign.

Thanks again<sup>103</sup>

#### COMMENTS: MILLER PENINSULA STATE PARK PROPERTY PLANNING

Submitted by David Pitman, East Sequim Bay Rd, Sequim, Washington

My Background (relating to the park property)

I have lived in Sequim, off of East Sequim Bay Rd, since 1993. When I moved to Sequim in 1993, I was already an avid mountain biker, among other outdoor activities. At that time, I immediately started riding the old roads within the park property. I believe this is around the time that the state actually acquired some or all of the property, but I am not sure. I do know that it was around this time that many land squatters in the property were removed, and after a time, the gates were installed. I have helped build trails, maintain those trails, and ridden those trails regularly these past 28 years.

My point is not that I have any special privilege to the use of the property. Only that I know the property very, very well.

#### Property Use

In my first 12 years or so using the property, beginning in 1993 until around 2006, 98% (or more) of the users of the property were mountain bikers. All of the trails were built by, and maintained by loose groups and individuals in the mountain biking community. It was extremely rare to find equestrians or pedestrians within the interior of the property, although there were some occasionally.

In late 2005 into 2006, when the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (SPRC) initiated its interest in developing the property, I started to see more equestrian use, and a little more foot traffic. There started to be occasional organized equestrian use starting around this time. And equestrian users started to help in cutting out windfall on the trails.

From then until today, use of all kind has increased, and during the Covid 19 pandemic, I have seen far, far more pedestrian use than ever before. Which is similar to many areas across the state.

The Plan: As Presented on June 30, 2021

#### My Thoughts in General

Of course, I have enjoyed the mostly light use that the property gets in most of the 28 years that I have been enjoying it. But I understand the interest of the SPRC to better leverage this asset for the benefit of the people of Washington state. I do have some concerns though.

#### 1. The general site itself.

I have attended all of the open-to-the-public events relating the property planning starting in 2006. I have always been surprised in how park planners over the years have described the property verses my knowledge of the property gained from 28 years of use. The planners describe this amazing primitive forest land that will certainly be a “destination spot” for state residents and beyond. The property is certainly primitive and forested. But I honestly do not understand where the idea that the property is highly exceptional in a way as to make it a “destination” for outdoor enthusiasts has come from. Right here on the North Olympic Peninsula, there are indeed many exceptional areas that could be described as, and actually are, a destination. The property on Miller Peninsula is nice, but in my view, not a destination. I have heard, and understand the argument that by comparison to Tacoma, for example, that the property could indeed be a “destination”. But that argument does not seem to take into account the existing truly exceptional areas nearby. Could the Miller Peninsula property be used to provide “camping” at various levels for visitors to the North Olympic Peninsula? Absolutely. Will the property provide a place to stretch your legs into a primitive 2<sup>nd</sup> growth woodland? Yes. Will it be a “destination”? I don’t think so. But maybe just a nice place to camp while exploring the North Olympic peninsula is sufficient to justify the development? If so, then great. But using the approach that, if developed, somehow it will be a destination is not a reasonable expectation for anyone besides the optimistic marketing department.

#### 2. What is needed if the property is developed?

A. **Access.** Diamond Pt. Rd. is not ready for a substantial increase in traffic to and from Hwy 101. That is just a fact. The SPRC can spend a bunch of money to study the metrics, or they can just take the example of Sophus Rd and Hwy 101 just 3 ½ miles to the east.

The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe wants to remediate the same traffic problem at the intersection near the

Longhouse Market. They were hoping for a traffic circle, but engineers are mostly in agreement that an overpass is what would be needed to mitigate current and future traffic. From this layman's view, the state should save their money and just factor in the cost of an overpass at Hwy 101 and Diamond Pt. Rd. If, after factoring in the overpass, the project is still desirable, let's move on.

**B. Fire.** Wildfire is front and foremost on many of our minds right now. Today, if there were a fire inside of the Miller Peninsula Park property, it is likely that it would be uncontrollable and devastating to the forest on the property, and to surrounding homes. This is a fact. In 2003 a property owner adjacent to the park property started a fire during the dry season which got away from them and amazingly only burned 20 acres. One side of the fire was accessible to firefighting personnel and by helicopter. The Miller Peninsula was very lucky because Clallam County Fire Dist. 3 indicated that they had to import all of the water and without the helicopter, there was no way to even battle the fire once it moved away from the road.

The climate is not going to get any less dry anytime soon. If the property were developed for use by exponentially more people, the risk of fire is going to also be exponentially higher. Is the SPRC planning to improve interior roads through the property to enable fire fighting vehicles access? And will a water line of sufficient volume also bisect the property to empower those crews?

**C. People.** As mentioned earlier, up until about 2006, many times on my ride, I would not encounter anyone else on the trails. They were getting used, but the ratio of people to area was low. From about 2015 and especially since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, the traffic has picked up substantially. I still do not encounter crowds of people farther than a couple of miles from the trail head, but there are definitely more.

I don't know how many people the planners envision will be utilizing the property in their best-case scenario? Currently, the 2500 acres does indeed provide a relatively primitive exposure to "wilderness". When you add in the amount of planned use will it really still be that wilderness experience you are expecting? I guess if you live in an apartment in Tacoma, for example, it might seem so. But with the adjacent 1 million acres of Olympic National Park, and over 600,000 acres of the Olympic National Forest, with many, many exceptional natural beauty spots, I really don't see it myself.

**A side-note on trail right-of-way.**

The current right of way priority order of:

1. Equestrian
2. Pedestrian
3. Bicycle

may be politically correct for some reason. But in practice, it is flawed. How it works in practice every day on the trails is this. If I, as a bike rider (or a pedestrian), come up from behind on someone walking, on a horse, or riding a bike, I let them know I am there, and they pull over and let me pass. Similarly, I pull over if approached from behind. This

appears natural for everyone because that is what happens every day without anyone saying a word.

If I'm on my bike and approach a pedestrian coming head-on, and I make eye contact with them, they always pull over and I pass them with a greeting of "thank you". This takes about 5 seconds and seems entirely natural to people as far as I can tell. If I were to pull over and let the pedestrians pass, the encounter would be no safer yet would take longer, especially if there is a group of pedestrians. If I can not confirm that the pedestrian sees me approach, I will then pull aside and wait.

Most of the equestrians I encounter are trying hard to be a good neighbor on the trails. But the fact is that their mode of transportation, the horse, can be a wild card on a tight trail. I am very familiar with horses and their personalities are many. Some are jumpy and I've witnessed them taking their human for a little bit more of a ride than they were expecting because the horse heard a snap or was flicked by an unseen salal branch. So, even when I pull aside for equestrians, they generally prefer to stand still and have me pass and then they continue. Again, if they don't see me, I pull over until they do and we communicate.

It was mentioned in the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting that trails could be better cleared in order to give a longer sight window toward head-on traffic, and this is true. But I want to remind you that the trails were built by mountain bikers for mountain biking. Even if they are better cleared, which is fine, they will probably not be optimal for mixed use, especially if volumes of users increase exponentially. I understand that leaving the existing trails as mixed use would be less expensive. In my view, the existing trails are not ideal for pedestrians and less ideal for equestrians when there are mountain bikes going in the opposite direction, often as fast as they can. Even if just mountain bikes were on the existing trails, and their user volume were to increase exponentially, it would probably be advisable to establish trail direction as is the norm in

heavily used trail systems. Rather than widen, and straighten out the existing bike trails to make them better accommodate the other users, it would be very much preferable, to mountain bikers anyway, if adjacent equestrian and/or pedestrian trails were established. I am sure that the equestrians especially would prefer to not have mountain bikes coming from behind or from ahead if possible. Especially on the very few high-speed downhill sections on the mostly flat property that mountain bikers love. Perhaps enlist user groups to build and maintain these new trails just like the current trails were established.

D. Crime. Currently, there is little to none. No homeless encampments or squatting. All with very little official park personnel presence. If the property were to see hundreds of visitors camped out on a daily basis, I can't help but expect to start seeing some homeless on the property. It's sad for sure, but if there is no access to drugs, pan-handling, or theft, there generally is no problem with homeless encampments. Bring in the visitors and the vendors and unfortunately our societal problems will come too. The remote woodland can be an ideal location to squat. Is dealing with that in the plan?

## In Summary

If the property access, fire prevention, trail utility and safety, and possible increase in crime can all be sufficiently addressed. I think a nice place to tent or RV camp as a home base on a visit to the North Olympic Peninsula is a viable plan. I don't think it will be an actual "destination" park that you planners keep marketing and hoping for. But that is my opinion and is subjective, as is yours. The issues to overcome to make the campground work are real and not inexpensive. Making the property better accessible for the use of

the entire state is reasonable. But do the locals right and do not establish and build up the property without first addressing the items in my list above.

I am not commenting on the 3 layout scenarios presented as I think those kinds of planning questions are relatively minor and are for after the big questions are addressed.

Thank you for your time,

XX

East Sequim Bay Rd., Sequim Washington

PS: Instead of using all of the budget for planning, how about purchasing a few piles of gravel to be placed in strategic places within the property for the volunteers to use fixing mud holes. Thanks! <sup>104</sup>

August 5, 2021

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

P.O. Box 42650

Olympia, WA 98504-2650

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Sincerely, <sup>105</sup>

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
PO Box 4250  
Olympia WA 98504

Attn: Nikki Fields [nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov](mailto:nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov)

RE: Miller Peninsula Planning Phase 2 Alternatives

The Ponderosa Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Washington is aware of the planning going forth for the Miller Peninsula property. We understand that this property has been supported for several years by the Washington Back Country Horsemen Peninsula Chapter.

We support the Peninsula chapter's efforts to maintain equestrian access and camping in this area. As they have pointed out there are limited opportunities for equestrian camping in the area. The chapter has participated in maintenance of the area and proven to be good stewards of the land and a valuable partner in ensuring that recreation is offered in our state parks.

Providing equestrian trails and camping in the area will prove to be beneficial to the community, as it has in Riverside State Park near Spokane.

We encourage you to select the development alternative identified as "Immersed in Nature" and maintain as many existing trails as possible as multiple use non-motorized trails along with developing the 8-camp unit horse camp.

I believe you will find having equestrians as volunteer partners in the park will be a valuable asset. <sup>106</sup>

Dear Ms Fields,

I believe

- 1) Leave the park as is. Just maintain the trails. I feel very strongly about this.
- 2) Since when does the parks department have funds to spend on big park changes? How about using those funds to maintain what we have now.
- 3) Whose idea was this? Some developer????

Sincerely,<sup>107</sup>

Dear Nicki Fields:

As a resident of Diamond Point in Sequim living near where the proposed expansion of the Miller Peninsula state park is planned, I would be interested in seeing any traffic studies and recommendations engineers have concluded for managing the increase in traffic to Diamond Point Road. I have not seen any monitoring equipment or any indication of a study. Will that happen? Did it happen? Will the road be widened? Without some sort of change we are anticipating some serious traffic problems and dangers. The road is wonky as it is. Full of odd turns and narrow spots. I don't see any plan for another road to access the park on the work sheets. What about a road from the west side of Miller Peninsula? I am concerned that campers and trailers will block access to our neighborhood causing delays and without a traffic signal on 101 it will be near impossible to get on the highway in either direction. Many of us have jobs and school bus and doctor appointments, etc. Not everyone will have the luxury of being on vacation with unlimited time to wait to enter 101 and people will start to cut off the left turn people to make their right turn and it will be dangerous. This happens all the time as it is. Currently, we have to allow extra time to make our turn onto the highway. Summer months are especially busy on the 101. Have you personally been around the neighborhood and seen how many families live out here? We have already had a few accidents and close calls by the nearby lavender farm due to people slowing down to turn in there. We need a traffic light on the highway for certain.

A actual study would be extremely helpful.

Will there be a new fire station? If not, why not? If there is money for one thing there must be money for the other. You don't buy a car without insurance. You put a fire extinguisher in your kitchen and in the garage and in your car. You install smoke detectors in your home, etc. I am very concerned that there seems to be a cavalier attitude about the very real fear of fire to our isolated end of the peninsula where so many families live. I see nothing planned. I have lived through fire in the foothills of California and it was not to be taken lightly. The only reason it didn't reach us was the fire retardant used by helicopter drops and fire fighters doing their job from the area. Even then, over 30 homes burned to the ground. I don't imagine there is any possibility of that kind of solution here (helicopter drops of retardant). The question I previously asked in my letter on the fire danger and any plans for help and safety to the residents as well as campers was not answered. Please bring this question to those who have the power to address it. No one wants lives lost in a fire on their conscience because they didn't want to allot money for protection.

I realize the park department is determined to force this park expansion through and perhaps without our safety actually in mind and the invitation to voice our concerns and questions is probably not really taken seriously, but nonetheless I am hopeful that our concerns will be considered and some effort to reassure the residents that a genuine effort is being made to address our questions. People are worried, I can tell you that.

I hope I can attend the scheduled meet August 12th on the beach and introduce myself.

Thank you and respectfully,<sup>108</sup>

Dear Nikki:

Thank you again for the ongoing opportunity to give input regarding the Miller development project.

Attached please find our most recent comments on the latest development alternatives. Best Wishes on behalf of all the Board,

President Peninsula Chapter BCHW<sup>109</sup>

1. One of the biggest constraints to developing the Miller Peninsula area is traffic at the intersection of Diamond Point Road and Highway 101, and ingress and egress between Diamond Point Road and the Park. This constraint should be addressed before Park planning goes further. What road improvements would be needed and at what cost? Are these improvements feasible?

Will the funding be available? What would be the impacts on area wildlife? On local residents?

2. A second important constraint is understanding what level of use the area can accommodate without serious adverse impacts to habitat and ecosystem values? What methodology would be used for assessing that? What impacts are acceptable? What are the sensitive species, plant communities, habitats, and ecosystems in the area? What surveys have been undertaken, and what survey protocols were followed?

3. A third critical constraint is climate change. The science says that to meet the very likely inadequate target of not more than 2 degrees Centigrade increase over pre-industrial levels, we need to reduce global emissions by 40% to 70% by 2050. Because the U.S. emits a disproportionately high level (per capita) of GHG, we need to reduce our emissions by 80%, fewer than 30 years from now. Needless to say, we are not even close to on track to achieve that. To do so will require a societal transformation, including how we recreate and travel. There is an important question as to whether we can sustain the current levels of using gas consumptive vehicles, including RVs, motorhomes, and campers, especially with large amounts of vehicle miles travelled. Climate change may also intensify drought conditions and heighten fire danger, which could also constrain how parklands are used.

4. An additional consideration is an opportunity rather than a constraint; the issue is social and environmental justice. The opportunity is to create a park that emphasizes serving underserved communities; people who typically have limited opportunities to connect with Nature and have educational, stimulating outdoor experiences. What these constraints and considerations suggest to me is that it would be good for State Parks to consider a fourth alternative, which might be dubbed Plan for the Future. I would suggest that the considerations described above would give

rise to a Park Plan that: ➤ De-emphasizes the traditional form of camping with RV's, campers, and lots of individual vehicles and trips; and instead emphasizes bringing people from urban areas by hydrogen-powered or electric buses, and provide opportunities for people who don't normally have the chance to visit a state park facility. This could include school groups, kids' clubs, seniors, under-served families, special needs individuals, children in orphanages or foster care etc. The park would also provide day use potential (trails, etc.) for Olympic Peninsula residents. The Park could focus more on a rustic lodge, cabins, and tent-cabins to serve the groups arriving by bus rather than traditional campsites and RV hook-ups. This also de-emphasizes the need for major and expensive transportation improvements on Highway 101 and along Diamond Point Road.

➤ Emphasizes education and passive recreation, with an array of activities for learning, socializing, nature appreciation, and physical fitness.

➤ Pursues cooperation with educational and cultural institutions and organizations, including Native American, and social services to provide a rich and relaxing experience for the visitors.

➤ De-emphasizes significant development and emphasizes maintaining the habitat, ecosystem, and carbon sequestration values of the landscape. Focuses on experiencing Nature on her own terms, not trying to include urban park active recreation activities such as volleyball, rock-climbing walls, etc. Funding

Capital costs should be lower for this alternative, especially because far fewer transportation improvements would be required. The operating budget would lend itself to both grants and partnerships because of the innovative nature of the programs and services provided.

#### Environmental Review

The Plan for the Future alternative should be considered and analyzed in the SEPA document to ensure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values and seek to resolve potential problems. The SEPA document should be prepared as soon as possible to provide crucial information and analysis to the planning team, decision-makers, and concerned public.

I'm sorry these comments are getting to you later than July 18, but hopefully they are still timely. I'm attaching my comments as a pdf for your convenience in saving and/or printing them.

Can you tell me what stage you are at with respect to the SEPA process, and is it your expectation that an EIS will be prepared?

Please add me to your contact list for future meetings, presentations, and documents.

Sincerely, <sup>110</sup>

Nikki:

I think the Village Center concept makes the most sense. It provides the widest variety of overnight options by including a lodge, along with the various camping choices. It also offers the extra activities which would draw people from around the state. Perhaps cabins or yurts should be considered. We need an attractive "destination" approach.

Necessary elements to be included in any option chosen for Miller Peninsula:

1. A traffic light at Diamond Point Road and Highway 101 is absolutely necessary.

A wildlife corridor across Highway 101 should also be recognized and controlled, in any development option chosen.

2. Easy (drivable) access to both the Strait and Discovery Bay.

3. Improvement of the boat launch and more docking at Sequim Bay State Park, which would function as water access for boaters camping/staying at both parks. Miller campers should have full rights to Sequim Bay park. They should operate as a combined park, in regard to fees. RV people can camp at Miller and launch their boats at Sequim Bay.

4. Mitigation or some method to deter park visitor traffic from wandering into Diamond Point. That is the major fear of many Diamond point residents.

5. You need to find a spot for a VIEWPOINT over the Strait, from which the Strait, Protection Island, the San Juan Islands, Canada, and Mount Baker can be viewed, from a higher elevation. The viewpoint should have a drivable parking lot. Otherwise, people will have no appreciation for know where they are! Surely there is a promontory somewhere on the property which could be accessed by car, provide the appropriate view, and not require the removal of too many trees.

All of trails are important, and great for the hikers, bikers, and horse people, but access points need to also be reasonably accessible by auto for everyone else, such as disabled or elderly.

Some Diamond Point people (a minority, I think) are attempting to stop development where it is, with the current trail system. Some don't even like the trails. I doubt they will succeed. As state-owned property, it belongs to everyone, and should be developed for everyone's benefit. Their fear is strangers wandering into their neighborhood. Mitigate their fear, and opposition may lessen, or evaporate.

Please include a viewpoint.

Thank you for your e-mail.

Please consider my comments.

Sincerely, <sup>111</sup>

The park property on Miller has been an unspoiled refuge for primarily local hikers, bikers and equestrians for a long time now, perhaps decades before the park was even dreamed of. In the last few years many more non locals have discovered it by word of mouth and recreational websites. I'm pretty sure that the typical user seeks out this unique, experience because of it's pristine nature. It's a no nonsense opportunity to get into nature with just a parking spot and miles of unbusy trails. I think the park system would do well to recognize

the value of the simplicity and unspoiled beauty that has always been the main attraction for the folks who explore here. The additional benefits of super low maintenance and very minimal staffing needs is an economic windfall as well.

It seems a shame to mess with something that works so well already.

Thanks for your time and consideration,<sup>112</sup>

To whom it concerns,

I am 31 years old and have lived on the Miller Peninsula for 6 years. I have plans to live out the rest of my life here and raise a family who will recreate often on the unique and beautiful trail system that the Miller Peninsula State Park (MPSP) has, so far, thoughtfully developed in a way to preserve the natural state of the area while providing access in a way that minimizes impact.

As a biologist with a M.S. in Entomology, an avid recreator on MPSP, and a community advocate, I especially do NOT agree with the development proposal of MPSP that would include a lodge, restaurant, and various RV sites.

Not only does this project not align with the WA Park's Mission (<https://parks.state.wa.us/176/Mission-vision>), it would also displace important and unique plant and marine life on a rare undeveloped coastline. This would be heartbreaking to the larger North Olympic Peninsula community, and especially detrimental to those living on the Miller Peninsula. Please hear us when we say - we do NOT want this kind of development on the Miller Peninsula.

Regards,<sup>113</sup>

DEAR COMMISSIONERS,

I am writing to share my thoughts about your future plans for Miller Peninsula State Park. I live near the park - in Port Townsend, and use it frequently for hiking and mountain bike riding. I strongly support developing the park in a way that maintains its wildlife habitat and natural beauty. People are desperately in need of quiet time in the natural world right now.

I also believe that having low maintenance infrastructure is a wise and resilient move with State Parks. I understand there could be a draw to having RV sites available - as a source of revenue. But all that infrastructure requires maintenance - so long term repair and replacement costs need to be considered also.

Seems clear to me that a more measured, and low impact approach to park development - with the active involvement of it's users and potential users, is the way to go with this park. That approach is more aligned with the State Parks Mission statement as well. Thank you,<sup>114</sup>

RE: Miller Peninsula State Park Planning

Dear Commissioners,

I have just reviewed the planning alternatives for Miller Peninsula State Park. I urge you NOT to consider any alternatives that impact the natural resources in the park. I understand the need for greater access to the area, and potentially overnight use, but these should be as minimally impactful to the habitats and wildlife as possible. The park is a well-established forested corridor with many important species to coastal ecological habitats, which is a rarity in the Discovery Bay area. I would like to know how this park is being classified, as I believe it should fall under this classification, exempting the existing roads and parking areas:

*(3) Natural areas are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural processes and/or features of significant ecological, geological or paleontological value while providing for low intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses.*

The Village Center and Traditional Alternatives have no natural areas designated! These alternatives would completely disregard the natural resources in the park, and turn it into a "playground". The new infrastructure required for these alternatives is intensive, and would significantly disrupt the park. I imagine that the increased water use, and traffic would greatly impact the residential neighborhoods here as well. Sincerely, <sup>115</sup>

Thank you for receiving our comments and concerns.

I live in Diamond Point and share the same concerns of many neighbors - concerns about water, increased traffic, safety and fires. I am writing you to offer this thought that occurred to me the other day after walking in the Miller State Park:

when city planners build neighborhoods - they now incorporate green spaces.

I feel that Miller State Park is potentially the "green space" for this Olympic Peninsula area. By keeping this park unencumbered with campsites, ziplines, a lodge, it will retain this "free to roam" green space for people. When you consider this idea, think about how many Parks can truly offer this much land for people to roam without buildings and campgrounds.

Please, let us leave the RV parking to businesses that can develop and maintain those business endeavors. There may even be potential for an individual to develop a campsite as well. We certainly have many motels and VRBO's that can use the tourist business.

Thank you, in advance, for considering this comment. <sup>116</sup>

September 10, 2021

TO: WASHINGTON STATE PARKS COMMISSIONERS  
FROM: FRIENDS OF MILLER PENINSULA STATE PARK  
RE: PLANNING FOR MILLER PENINSULA STATE PARK

Dear Commissioners:

We intended to travel to Richland to submit our comments in person. Due to the significant elevation of COVID cases and deaths, we decided the trip was inadvisable. We are sorry that we are not allowed to make our comments virtually; hence, this email.

Members, including several naturalists of the North Olympic Peninsula met with Parks staff to learn about the condition of Sequim Bay State Park (SBSP) and where development in the Miller Peninsula State Park (MPSP) is intended. We have studied the suggested development plans and earlier submitted comments.

We find those development plans do not fit the MPSP. Herein, we take this opportunity to begin a discussion with you on the paradigm we believe best suits this land base, and offer suggestions for alleviating camping pressures at SBSP. We sincerely hope to be able to meet with you in person, and Mr. Mayer, perhaps on the MPSP, or nearer in western WA, for a deeper discussion.

**MPSP**

MPSP's use should align with the Washington State Parks' Mission Statement: *"The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. ..."*

- **MPSP is a unique tract in an exceptional geographic location.** At nearly 3,000 acres, the MPSP's coastal forest is contiguous with marine habitats - the last, large, undeveloped and readily accessible

public forest along the Strait of Juan de Fuca between Marrowstone Island to beyond Joyce, a distance of more than 60 miles.

- **The coastal area of the park must not be disturbed.** MPSP hosts unique forests, plant life and acts as a nursery for fish, seals and other animals.
- **MPSP serves as a significant migration corridor, a greenbelt for animals** (e.g., cougar, bear, bobcat, coyotes, etc.) moving between the Olympic Mountains, down the Jimmycomelately Creek valley through Miller's forests to the shoreline of the Strait.
- **MPSP is a birding haven.** Linked to the migrating bird nesting area of Protection Island and a short-flight distance from the USFWS Dungeness Refuge, our paradigm serves to protect wildlife and respects the birds and their habitats. With so many avian species dependent on adjacent marine and forest habitats suffering population declines caused by loss of quality habitat and pollution, this park offers them a needed space.
- **MPSP offers a unique outdoor educational opportunity.** Students from the local Peninsula College have for many years studied this park's environment. We believe you have a willing partner to offer the public an on-site-teaching lab with students, naturalists and local docents present to inform park users of this special coastal environment. Looking deeper into the park's natural resources will provide more understanding of land-forest-water complexity in this unique micro environment.
- **A variety of campsites exist in this area.** We estimate that there are more than 700 developed campsites within 50 miles of MPSP, many of which accommodate RVs. Additional sites are available at commercial RV parks that depend on the summer and shoulder season business. Lands adjacent to and nearby SBSP could be acquired to expand camping opportunities.
- **MPSP's contiguous forest offers shade and a cooling site to the ever-increasing hot weather, and peace and solitude.** This is what we experience and hear from other visitors of this site. A day use park, controlled for over use, will minimize infrastructure development, maintenance and operation costs, freeing up rare dollars for elsewhere.
- **Natural resources should be conserved.** Forecasting the future, water will become scarcer with development and drier weather. Growth on the Peninsula and fire prevention are going to need this resource. Forests play a crucial role in carbon and water cycles.

We want SPRC to appreciate and consider what is best for the property and, in so doing, realize it is best for park users. **Preserve this undisturbed Wilderness of Salish Sea State Park (our suggested name.)**

#### **SBSP**

This precious piece of land does need help. We have learned of its loss of acreage due to weathering and the ongoing need to reconfigure camping. We suggest that expansion of camping takes place nearer to this park; nearer to amenities campers need, such as grocery stores, gas stations, etc. There are properties in the area that could be for sale and used recreationally. Additionally, they would be closer to emergency response and medical facilities. Consideration of safe and efficient access to and from Highway 101 is also a primary siting consideration for any future development planning.

In sum, we believe that in considering development and improvement of camping facilities at SBSP and MPSP, State Parks and the local public and business community have a unique opportunity for progressive and comprehensive planning. We believe that State Parks should prioritize the consolidation of camping facilities near SBSP, close to commercial, municipal and medical facilities. MPSP would be managed for long-term habitat recovery and preservation, while allowing low-impact recreational activities (on a network of trails, accommodating pedestrians, pets, horses, and cyclists).

Again, we would be pleased to meet with you on-site, or elsewhere closer to the North Olympic Peninsula, to discuss this further. We are aware that the many in the Miller Peninsula community feels as we do.



Please let us hear back from you.

Respectfully,

*Into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul. John Muir <sup>117</sup>*

Dear Comissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on plans for the Miller Peninsula Sate Park. We appreciate the desire to “develop” the area; that discussion has been underway for some time now. However, there are a large number of folks who really appreciate and enjoy the natural beauty and solitude of the park in its unspoiled state.

Any measures or works should only be done that minimize the impact of human activity and use on the natural surroundings and unique wildlife habitat that is currently in place. Maintaining the current trail system to reduce mud bogs, erosion and discharge of silty water would be beneficial, but it would be sad and undesirable for extensive paved trails to be constructed. Some access for the disabled would be acceptable if it is kept to a minimum and does not adversely impact the valuable natural environment.

As for the idea of a “lodge”, that concept is totally antithetical to the whole nature and essence of the Miller Peninsula and has no place there.

The natural rugged beauty and tranquility of the area is a jewel in its own right, quite close and accessible to the community. Please don’t degrade what is already a valuable local natural asset with unnecessary and unwanted “development”. Sincerely, <sup>118</sup>

As a long time resident of the Miller Peninsula I would like to add my Feedback to the large group of people who are against this expansion of the parks mandate. We need to keep as much natural space as possible on this small peninsula. Thanks for giving us a chance to comment. <sup>119</sup>

My name is XX, I’m an owner of property on Miller Peninsula, Sequim WA. I’m writing in opposition of the State’s plan to sell the existing Miller Peninsula State Park land for private commercial development. The State proposed, in the late 80’s to early 90’s, a similar plan at this existing property to develop a huge resort, which, fortunately, failed over water issues. Now, this many years later, another like property development?

Clallam County WA, East of Sequim, has steadily seen an increase in population resulting in forested land being logged for home sites. Residents, like myself, depend on wells for a water source. As we have all have seen, the last 4 – 5 years has brought unusually extreme temperatures & extended lengths of drought. There is a likely probability that new development would tap into the same aquifers used by the current resident jeopardizing my own well’s water & others. Not a good scenario as climate change creates these real issues. This summer saw the highest prices for lumber. Many land owners along Hwy 104 & Hwy 101 have logged their trees depleting the sapling supply for new growth.

Removing acres of trees at Miller Peninsula State Park would definitely have an impact on regrowth. Once again, I would ask the Commission to realize the long term effect at this location to the water/tree source.

Clallam County's Olympic Discovery Bike Trail is close by Miller Peninsula State Park. This park draws many riders into its trails & has grown in popularity since its start. The park allows use to horse, dogs, bikes & walkers who are able to utilize forested trails. This trail, also, gives the public beach access, adding to its diverse use. I feel this park totally fits the State's mission statement & it would be a shame to have it gone.

Another important result to your proposal for consideration would be exiting the park. The majority of the people head east back out onto Hwy 101 & a left hand turn is needed. This would make an already extremely dangerous left turn a worrisome cause for traffic collisions.

I have read the State Parks Core Values statements & see that Miller Peninsula State Park truly falls in line with the agency adopted values.

I would hope, for the sake of current & future generations, that all Commission members take a hard look at the serious effect the change to Miller Peninsula State Park would cause.

I thank the Commission for allowing public input on this subject. Thank you for your time in this matter-<sup>120</sup>

Commissioner Danenberg,

Thank you for your public service as a Washington State Parks Commissioner. The work you are doing now can improve the quality of life for thousands of current and future citizens of our state. I have recently retired from many years of public service, receiving my professional training at the UofW in the Interpretation Program under XXX with a focus in Recreational Facility Planning and Design. You should also know that I have lived and worked on the North Olympic Peninsula since 1950.

Quite recently I was privileged to attend a tour of both Sequim Bay and Miller Peninsula State Parks conducted by Nicki Fields of your agency. The purpose for the tour was to give local insight into development plans for both sites. I found the tour quite informative, however I would like to take this opportunity to share a few concerns I have with you and possibly share some recommendations for consideration.

The tour began at Sequim Bay with a number of issues pointed out to the group. One of the primary concerns seems to be regarding the demand for more camp sites than can fit in the confined space between Hwy 101 and the bay. The group was informed that there was no where to go and that there was no additional land available nearby. In an attempt to help I see there is property for sale on the south side of the highway directly across from the existing park and adjacent to park land. I understand this property is connected to a community water system, could be served by the Sequim sewer system, and has a pedestrian tunnel under the highway for connecting to the rest of the park, and has a view of the bay below.

Nicki stated that “Miller Peninsula State Park is the obvious place to develop a large number of camping opportunities and that the disturbance to the natural environment would be minimal and that we would agree when we saw the target site. Well, when I got out of the van at that location I was confused. Yes, the area had been logged, but not recently and was now a young forest, not a clear-cut. It reminded me of where I live now, which was logged five years prior to our family’s arrival. Now there is a beautiful aging forest here that everyone including the wildlife can enjoy. You’re invited to visit.

Next the discussion turned to plans for a lodge to be constructed at Miller Peninsula State Park (MPSP), using St Edwards State Park near Bothell as the example. To construct a lodge like that at MPSP seems far from reasonable. That said, an environmental learning center like the Audubon Center on the Dungeness River at Railroad Bridge Park could be a fantastic day use facility on the edge of MPSP. Day use low impact is key at MPSP as the resource will not support the infrastructure required for the design options I’ve seen. The forest on the Miller Peninsula is very slow growing and the plant community there struggles with the low availability of accessible moisture. There is a limited amount of groundwater in that area and it is far below the reach of the native vegetation.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue of stewardship of this most sensitive area that needs to be protected and enjoyed today and in the future. Respectfully, <sup>121</sup>