



Dear Members of the King County Conservation Futures Citizens Oversight Committee:

Thank you for your work in evaluating the various proposals for park and open space acquisition funding using Conservation Futures and potential park levy funding sources. We do not envy the difficult role you have agreed to assume given many deserving proposals and limited funding sources. The work your committee has done over the years has greatly enhanced the quality of life in our region and supported an interconnected system of trails, parks and open spaces offering far more than the sum of their individual parts.

Like the supporters of all the projects before you we feel our Squak Mountain project is critically important and well deserving of funding. These are some of the key reasons we so strongly support this acquisition and ask for your support:

- The proposed acquisition has a ready made trailhead that could be expanded.
- A trailhead at this site would provide the closest trailhead to much of urban King County that would offer a true “mountain like” hiking experience on a year around basis.
- From the trailhead a great hiking trail could be constructed that would connect to the Squak trail system on both county and state land.
- A trail from the trailhead could connect to existing and future trails through very mature second growth forest.
- This property would very much compliment the Cougar-Squak Corridor for both wildlife and human use.
- There is a large diversity of wildlife species with healthy populations on Squak and Cougar mountains. Many of these species currently use this property for travel between the mountains, supporting genetic health and insuring their long term survival.
- Clearcutting would fragment and eliminate essential habitat and have detrimental impacts on the creeks and wetlands that support salmon and other animals dependent on water features and the adjoining riparian environment.
- The North Fork of May Creek is on the property and is the main source of high quality water to salmon bearing May Creek.
- Acquisition of this property could offer great view points for hikers to the west and north as well as access to the county acquired “Debbie’s View” property offering views to Mount Rainier, while a clearcut of this property would be viewed from a large area.
- An existing looped hiking trail across the base of the beautiful fern covered Fredley Cliffs could be connected to the main access trail coming up from the trailhead.
- The former camp ground area has an old road system that could be converted to trails and has the potential of providing a significant area with a variety of bicycle options that could be separate from the hiking trail system.

- Duthie Hill and Grand Ridge Park bicycle facilities are quite popular and the expanding system of bike facilities on Tiger Mountain have much needed seasonal restrictions that may have to be permanent given snow and greater rainfall than more western areas.
- Good planning that makes use of the natural topography could make management of the hiking trail system and bike trail system easier and the experience for both user groups safer and more enjoyable.
- **Existing trail heads have serious limitations:**
 - *The present “trailhead” for Squak Mountain along SR900 has two parking spots (kind of).*
 - *The Wilderness Creek Trailhead is often overcrowded with cars parking on the limited shoulders of a state highway that is a main commuting corridor, essentially shoulderless along significant sections and known for accidents resulting in fatalities.*
 - *The Wilderness Creek Trailhead does not give good or safe access to Squak Mountain.*
 - *Even in the slowed economy the Pacific Topsoils site at the base of the old quarry was quite busy and acquisition of this site for a trailhead could be many years down the road.*
 - *With an easement from PSE the 150 foot wide PSE corridor has been discussed as a potential trailhead parking area near Pacific Topsoils. Given the use of this corridor for water treatment ponds, steep slopes and wetlands combined with the cross traffic from the many trucks entering and exiting Pacific Topsoils this may not be a realistic alternative.*

This property would be worthy of purchase at this time even if the threat of clearcutting did not exist. Squak Mountain remains pretty much undiscovered by the region. Given the quality of the experience and the proximity to urban Puget Sound populations protection of the property and establishing of a trailhead would have regional benefit and avoid a loss of regional significance.

Sincerely,

David Kappler

Issaquah Alps Trails Club IssaquahAlps.org

Save Squak SaveSquak.com and Save Squak on Facebook (894 Likes)

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