

Thornton Creek Alliance
Post Office Box 25690
Seattle, Washington 98165-1190

Board of Park Commissioners
100 Dexter Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109

Dear Commissioners:

Our city will continue to grow, and pressures on all our parks will increase. Seattle Parks' policies will have to keep bending and changing to accommodate this. We do need to provide park opportunities for all ages and all people, but in the interest of equity and serving the greatest number of people, park uses need to be kept more general than specialized.

Seattle's natural area/greenbelt space is already very limited for a place that bills itself as the 'Emerald City'. These lands are already serving a host of social and eco functions. They are not empty space waiting to be put to use, and they must not be sliced up to accommodate the interests of immediate neighbors. Our parks are public land and belong to EVERYONE in the city.

Access: SE Seattle has a generous share of city park lands. Active recreational activities must be made available in groomed parks, community centers, and additional land if need be. Right activity, right place must be the rule. As we've said before: you don't play Frisbee in the library, and you don't fragment the fragile habitat in our miniscule remaining forests for specialty sports. We must keep our natural areas true to their existing functions, so that all people can enjoy nature and the emotional benefits of time in the forest, without having to use a vehicle to get out of town.

Sustainability: Trading our natural areas to groups willing to volunteer in exchange for our giving the area over to their specialized recreation is not sustainable. Show-casing our natural areas and bringing more people in to enjoy nature, join their neighbors in restoration projects, or study the terrain and biota: those are sustainable activities.

Opportunity: We already have opportunities for equitable access, sustainable uses, and the excitement of being in the wealth of the forest inside the city. Installation of good foot trails and ADA trails leaves out no one. We just need to show-case what we have, and build on it by developing children's programs and day camps, nature walks and tree walks for various community groups, and bringing in schools and universities.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further with you.

Sincerely,

Ruth Williams, President
Thornton Creek Alliance

THORNTON CREEK ALLIANCE (TCA), founded in 1993, is an all-volunteer grassroots, nonprofit organization of 100 members dedicated to preserving and restoring an ecological balance throughout the Thornton Creek watershed. Our goal is to benefit the watershed by encouraging individuals, neighborhoods, schools, groups, businesses, agencies, and government to work together in addressing the environmental restoration of the creek system including: water quality, stabilization of water flow, flood prevention, and habitat improvement through education, collaboration, and community involvement.



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