

June 30, 2015

Seattle Nature Alliance
3723 SW Elmgrove St.
Seattle, WA 98126

Seattle Park Board of Commissioners
Department of Parks and Recreation
100 Dexter Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109

Dear Seattle Board of Park Commissioners,

The Seattle Nature Alliance urges you to vote NO on the proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines for Seattle's Natural Areas and Greenspaces.

Any policy for our natural areas must be equitable, sustainable, and wise. What the Parks Department is proposing is none of these things. It favors special groups, it will lead to overuse, misuse, and degradation of habitat, and it will cause discord among neighbors, use-groups, and city agencies.

Natural areas should **not** be managed according to the demands of shifting fads or social media, or to favor whichever group has the time and resources to organize and lobby the city. The Parks Department has declared there exists a great demand for nature-based active sports (those that typically are located in larger public spaces in the mountains). But, most people have not yet realized that Natural Areas and Greenspaces are not actually protected. Most people trust that our Natural Areas and Greenspaces Policy was implemented long ago.

As people become aware of this issue, they will not be pleased. Our petition is evidence of this. In less than three weeks, it has been signed by over 550 individuals and supported by over 15 organizations. In it, we make the case for the current policy to remain with no Supplemental Uses added. Natural Areas—especially in our city park system where habitat is already stressed and fragmented—should continue as spaces *preserved* for wildlife habitat and *reserved* for passive use. The Supplemental Use Guidelines are also extremely misleading by stating that “Wildlife Sanctuaries will be protected”. This gives the impression that there *are* wildlife sanctuaries, when in fact, there is only one on dry land—Kiwaniis Ravine, a scant nine acres. And, given the very high bar for sanctuary status, there is little-to-no chance of there being any more sanctuaries designated.

We support increasing passive-use opportunities, especially in underserved neighborhoods, or in natural areas that have been long neglected by the city. Passive use is important because it is universally available to virtually everyone. Passive uses are compatible with one another, and with the other living creatures that depend on natural areas for habitat. Passive uses do not require their own specially allotted spaces, or ask people to pay fees for entrance. They do not favor organized groups who have

the time and energy to provide ecosystem restoration services in return for usage privileges. Passive use is the best way to ensure that natural areas do not become used beyond their capacity, by adding potentially unlimited “new” modes of active sports. **Passive use is why we have natural areas today.**

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Sincerely,



Seattle Nature Alliance:

Denise Dahn, Mark Ahlness and Rebecca Watson, Directors

www.seattlenaturealliance.org

cc: City Council President Burgess; Councilmembers Bagshaw, Godden, Harrell, Licata, O’Brien, Okamoto, Rasmussen, Sawant; Parks Superintendent Jesús Aguirre; Parks Deputy Superintendent Williams; Mayor Ed Murray

For more information: <http://bit.ly/1GhoycL>

Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/preserve-seattle-parks-natural-areas-and-greenspaces>

Much more on our position, including guest posts: <http://seattlenaturealliance.org/category/petition/>