

January 10, 2018

## **Pre-Schools in Seattle Park Natural Areas – Questions and Concerns about Pilot Project**

Our mission at the Seattle Nature Alliance is to preserve natural areas in Seattle Parks for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty. We are deeply committed to helping all people connect with nature—it is one of the main reasons for our existence as an organization. Pre-schools in natural area parks—while beneficial to the children enrolled—could also impact the very nature we need to preserve for everyone to enjoy. This does not necessarily mean we oppose the idea, but we do feel that these areas of concern need to be addressed if the project is to proceed.

### Passive Recreation

*Passive recreation is free-of-charge, available to virtually everyone, low-impact, and compatible with other passive users and with wildlife habitat.*

- This is not a passive use and would be a significant change in use. What precedent does this set? Will other groups also be allowed special privileges for non-passive uses in natural areas?
- How does a private organization gain special access to public property? Will the city be compensated?
- What is the nature of these private organizations' partnership with Seattle Parks?
- Will the public be allowed to weigh in on this? If so, how and when?
- How big are the areas? Will they be roped-off or fenced?
- Will other park visitors be discouraged from accessing parts of the parks?
- How will the ongoing off-leash dog problem affect the children?

### Wildlife Habitat

*Our park natural areas provide essential habitat for numerous wildlife species. Wildlife are extremely sensitive to human presence, particularly during nesting and rearing times. Having full-time human presence in any one area will be a significant impact.*

- How will noise and impacts on wildlife be mitigated?
- How will trampling on plant life be mitigated?
- How will access to the area affect wildlife habitat? Will pick-up and drop-offs be managed to minimize impact? Will the sites require vehicle access into parts of the park natural areas?
- Will critical nesting areas be identified prior to site selection and avoided? (
- What guidelines and/or training will the school staff have in regard to safety and environmental impacts, such as picking flowers or mushrooms, nesting birds, bees/wasps, etc.?

### Scenic Beauty

*Our natural areas are the 'crown jewels' of our scenic parks.*

- How will the sites be set up? Will there be signage, structures, furniture, play equipment, porta-potties, waste-bins or other things at the sites? How will these items impact the beauty of the parks?
- Why park natural areas instead of a site with active recreation areas that are already developed?
- What public properties other than parks have been considered? Are there alternative locations that are less sensitive that could be used instead?