



Kettle Range

CONSERVATION GROUP

Protecting the forests and wildlife of the Columbia Highlands since 1976
November 14, 2014

Washington Parks and Recreation Commission
1111 Israel Road S.W.
Olympia, WA 98504-2650
Via email at: commission@parks.wa.gov

Re: Mount Spokane Ski Area Expansion - PASEA

Dear Commission:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and membership of Kettle Range Conservation Group, I submit the following comments regarding management of Mt. Spokane State Park. Our membership enjoys recreating in the Park and are very concerned about conservation of its natural resources. Specifically, we are concerned about the proposed ski area expansion into irreplaceable old growth forest in the PASEA area on the west side of this mountain. We reach out to you as park custodian to insure these public lands meet the needs of all citizens who appreciate their unique attributes, especially the ancient trees in the Blanchard Creek area in the PASEA

Kettle Range Conservation Group supports Alternative Two land use classification because it preserves the PASEA, diversity of the forest ecosystem, and existing recreation uses – including muscle-powered backcountry skiing -- while protecting critical wildlife habitat. For these reasons, we oppose Alternative Four and the damage this alternative would cause when fully conducted. We share concerns raised by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife regarding threats to lynx, goshawk and other focal species if Alternative Four is implemented.

We enjoy the current winter recreation opportunities provided by the Ski Park and the backcountry non-developed areas and see no reason that improvements to the existing ski facilities would not result in increased skier usage at the lift area. However, expanding the ski area into the PASEA will leave a lasting scar not only on reputation of the Park and Recreation Commission and ski area itself.

We ask the Parks and Recreation Commission to act to protect the public good and not serve corporate greed. There is already more than enough lift capacity at Mount Spokane and surrounding ski areas to meet all the needs of the growing skier/snowboarder community. Alternative Four is unnecessary and illegitimate except in a narrowed view of that there is no greater good to the public than to serve corporate profitmaking at the expense of every other consideration.

We ask the Parks and Recreation Commission to make a common sense decision, here, supporting Alternative Two and preserving the biological heritage that will be passed on to future generations by it.

Respectfully yours,



Timothy J. Coleman
Executive Director



October 22, 2014

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission
PO Box 42650
Olympia, WA 98504

Reference: Mt. Spokane State Park Land Classification

The Riverside State Park Foundation takes the position to support Alternative # 4, Recreation, Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area.

We feel that, after a great deal of study by everyone involved, that Alternative # 4 best meets the needs and desires of the recreational community and the environmental groups. With the Environmental Impact Statement and the requirements being put on any expansion into the PASEA all the forest health and land conservation concerns are being met.

Through our activities as a Friends Group we are very aware of the financial concerns of State Parks as a whole. We also have worked hard to develop recreational opportunities in support of financial stability for the park system. We feel that this land classification and support of the addition of another chairlift on Mt. Spokane supports this effort.

State Parks has a dual mission of providing recreational opportunities and protecting the historical, cultural and natural aspects of our parks. The best way to do this is to provide a managed, balanced approach. Knowing the terrain, management of the alpine ski area and the economic impact of state parks we feel it is important that the Commission support Alternative # 4.

Riverside State Park Foundation is the outgrowth of the land classification of Riverside State Park. We were formed in 2002, with a diverse membership, and have worked closely with State Parks in support of its mission. Our members are well versed in park management, land classifications, Parks financial position and the economic impact of the parks in the Spokane market. Our support of Alternative # 4 was unanimous.

Sincerely,

Ken Carmichael
Riverside State Park Foundation
Treasurer

This is what is at stake (see attached photo). Please don't allow the ski area to further alter a pristine area of OUR State Park.

We are skiers and hikers. We enjoy the State Park in all seasons of the year. The ski area could make so many other improvements to increase user days if that is what is at stake. If this expansion goes forward we will take our winter ski business elsewhere. Many other skiers feel the same way. 49N may end up benefiting more from this expansion than Mt Spokane - at quite a cost!
Please protect the State Park for all users for all seasons.
Thank you!



The attached photo shows the area that would essentially be clear-cut to put in the proposed chair lift. The lovely creek and surrounding old growth forest would be destroyed.

Cutting old growth timber for skiing would be a travesty. Back country and nordic skiers need their area too. The loss of forestry and wild life habitat would not equal in monetary value.

11/14/14

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

We support the Alternative (2) in the land use classification. The park belongs to the citizens of the state of Washington. If The Parks Commission chooses Alternative Four, the west side will be fragmented by seven ski runs and a chairlift whose base would sit at the headwaters- currently a stand of 200 year old trees of Blanchard Creek.

Alternative 2 would protect as a Natural Forest Area, limit development and promote use in the PASEA for preservation, interpretation and enjoyment of natural processes.

Thank you for accepting my comments and please protect the west side of Mt Spokane for the future generations

Dear Commissioners:

It is important to me that you choose Alternate Two as the land use classification for Mt Spokane. This is our largest park and belongs to all citizens of Washington State. It should be left in its natural condition for all the obvious reasons, and should not be fragmented by ski runs.

Sincerely,

Please consider the "once it's gone it's gone forever" rule of parks and forests when deciding the Mt. Spokane land use. The north face of the mountain is a mix of forest, talus, and huckleberry brush supporting many species of wildlife. The trail system would be pretty much ruined by a ski lift and runs as well. Go look up there behind the Vista House at the difference between the trail system and the ski area. One looks like a State Park...natural; the other looks like a ski place (for rich people only as skiing is a rich man's sport). Alternative number two is the only conscientious choice for State Parks. The other is choosing greed and development over parks.

~

Thank you for your letter and another chance to comment. I have been skiing Mt Spokane since 1962 so I've seen many changes. I have two reasons for NO on expansion.

1. Every year I see more and more clear cuts on surrounding mountains. Looks like hell . Every year the owners take more and more trees out of existing runs. Last year a run next to Exterminator called maybe Lou's Lane was heavily logged. This year they logged more out of the bottom of Chair 4. It just never stops. The mountain has plenty of room for all skiers as is. When you look up from Spokane to the mountain you see a bald face on the south side. Looks like hell. East side of the mountain is all cut up with runs for Chairs 1 and 2. It is really pleasant to drive Hwy 2 to Riverside and see nothing but green on the mountain. It will be sad to see runs cut into that side of the mountain.

2. Mt. Spokane 2000 has lost their vision when they took it over from Sowder in the late '90's. They said they wanted to keep skiing affordable for all by being non-profit. I don't think \$47 lift tickets is affordable. I have friends who say they can no longer afford for their family to ski. It becomes a \$175 day for 3 people. The more they expand the higher the lift tickets become. More chairs, more groomers, more employees makes for higher lift tickets. We all know the Cowles family wants to make it a destination hill, but if you want destination then go to Schweitzer and pay \$75 for you ticket. (Up until last year, I would send Brad an email about putting some padding on the seats of chair 4. He would answer that it was just not in the budget.) It would be terrible if they did the expansion and ended up going bust like Tamarack and many other ski area in the last ten years.

Thanks for listening. (Oh yea- they finally put padding on chair 4. Probably the padding that came with the Red Chair).

To be read into the official minutes of the WSP&RC, on Mt.Spokane

Mt. Spokane

This article is in response to the September 27th Roundtable submitted by Leslie R. Weatherhead.

For anyone to endorse the proposed expansion by saying "I support whichever alternative under consideration....." is sad for me to believe. A true "environmentalist" let alone an attorney, would never accept such a vague stance. Neither would an anti environmentalist for that fact. I have been involved in environmental issues for over 40 years, and no one has ever been that vague in their beliefs. Quite to the contrary, they are specific to a point of extremism, on both sides.

We all love the outdoors, its where we came from.

I started skiing on Mt. Spokane on December 4th, 1950. Since that time of small lifts and runs, the mountain has expanded to a jewel that it is today. Unfortunately, the past concessionaires, let the

mountain and its facilities deteriorate to a point where the people of Spokane demanded a change. That change came in the form of the Mt. Spokane 2000 group. They brought the ski area out of a shambled mess, to an area that serves "all kinds of people."

They truly have saved the mountain. But they have gone too far in thinking that an expansion will enhance the mountain more than a redesign of existing terrain and lifts.

I sat on the Washington State Parks Citizen's Advisory Committee for Mt. Spokane for 8.5 years, and watched the mountain evolve into what it is today. I respect the work that has been, and is being done today. But to think that the expansion will improve the attendance much is ridiculous. The mountain's lifts stifle the attendance because of long lift lines. It certainly will increase the acreage, but will it enhance the mountain? During those days on the committee, a professor from U of Idaho, Dr. Art Partridge, would come up to Mt. Spokane and lead us on tours of the same area that the expansion is proposed. Dr. Partridge would show us the uniqueness of the forest in the area on the back side. He told us once while eating lunch, that this area was so unique, that we should fight with whatever means possible, to preserve this forest. He went on to say that there is not a forest within 150 miles of us that has the quality of terrain and diversity of plants and animals like this special place.

Back then, the Washington State Parks Commission, had vast areas of Mt. Spokane closed off because of its unique value. Now these areas are accessible, but still preserved in a natural state.

I have skied (backcountry skied) this proposed area when I was 40, a long past memory in my mind. It is simply too valuable of a resource to fragment into ski runs. I wasn't in my 20's but rather in my 40's and 50's when I saw a huge need to preserve, not to fragment this area. Access to this land is and will not be cut off from us to enjoy. This area has great potential for hiking. It is natural. No one has been kept out. The land will be accessible for all to enjoy, not just a few. I see hikers, skiers, mushroomers, etc of all ages, enjoying this area. It is in my 60's that I see even a greater need to preserve. Our lands are constantly being abused and fragmented by those who don't see the beauty in keeping an area natural. I'm talking a relatively small area, as opposed to the huge tracks of land that are being abused elsewhere. We will not ever close an area off from people, unless the circumstances require such actions for safety. This is not the case for the proposed ski expansion area. We don't want to close the area, but rather keep it in its natural state for all to enjoy.

At one time in Mt. Spokane's history, the WSPC wanted to specify the entire 13,000+ acres as winter recreation. This didn't happen because it was a bad idea. 700 to 900 acres was set aside for winter recreation. The rest was kept in a natural state to accommodate uses of all kinds, not just winter recreation.

The original donors of the land were not necessarily ski enthusiasts, but rather naturalists wishing to provide the people of Spokane a unique and special place to play high above their city. Francis Cook built a toll road to within 3 miles of the summit in 1909, not to accommodate one user group, but to allow better access to Spokane's mountain.

In 1929 H. Cowles Jr. Donated 640 acres to Mt. Spokane State Parks. Not just for skiing, but for all to enjoy.

In 1939, a group of people formed to "Save the Timber on Mt. Spokane." They raised \$3000 to fight for the mountain.

From 1949 to 1951, the main lodge (not the current two lodges) was built with "much volunteer work." This lodge was used for more than just skiing.

Leslie's statement that "there was no environmental movement as we know it" is simply false. The "Save the Timber on Mt. Spokane" was a huge environmental movement of the day. And even now there has never been and never will be a movement "that a state park should be closed to the people whose park it is." And how about the "environmental movement" to save the Salmo-Priest area which is now a wilderness. Or how about the concerted effort by dozens of outdoor clubs to preserve what is

now known as the North Cascades National Park. To say there was no environmental movement as we know it, is ridiculous and short sighted.

Leslie states that the "importance of wildlife has not been ignored", shocks me to hear such a statement from a professed "I am an environmentalist."

Lets imagine for a moment, that people are deers and moose and elk. How would those "people" react to having their living space invaded by bulldozers, construction workers, and noisy skiers?

Leslie also states that human impact must be considered in environmental decisions. So I am fearing that we can consider humans as part of the problem, and hopefully part of the solution.

"I respectfully submit that both nature and people are best served by letting people use the park to ski in." I agree 100% with Leslie on this point. But shall it be only for skiing? Is not nature hikes, picnics, serenity, quiet, etc as important?

I do not believe in criticizing others beliefs and ideas, without providing a reasonable solution.

The Mt. Spokane 2000 group of course wants to keep Mt. Spokane a vibrant, fun ski area, no doubt. But there are better ways to achieve this than adding lifts at the expense of the natural forest around those lifts. Since starting skiing 64 years ago on Mt. Spokane, I have realized how poorly the ski area was constructed. If the Mt. Spokane 2000 group would just examine the re-construction of the current ski runs (chair 4 disaster for example), the upgrade to the lift systems, as apposed to buying an old antiquated lift from Bridger Bowl, they would have a ski hill worthy of pride and quality.

In towns, old buildings don't get additions without being upgraded to accommodate for the future needs of the buildings occupants. They get a face lift, a beautification, to make the building more suitable for the occupant.

This can be achieved at Mt. Spokane also, by getting rid of old lifts, modernizing the lodges, improving the parking, and making the ski area a jewel once again.

I do not want to stop or end Mt. Spokane's capabilities of being all it can be, but rather make proper use of it's terrain, it's lodges, it's beauty to accommodate all user groups.

Once an area has been logged, modernized with ski lifts, it can never be natural again in many generations of life.

Please, everyone, consider all aspects wisely on Mt. Spokane, so it can continue to be our jewel.

This article is in response to the September 27th Roundtable submitted by .

For anyone to endorse the proposed expansion by saying "I support whichever alternative under consideration....." is sad for me to comprehend. A true "environmentalist" let alone an attorney, would never accept such a vague stance. Neither would an anti environmentalist for that fact.

I started skiing on Mt. Spokane on December 4th, 1950. The concessionaires back then let the mountain and it's facilities deteriorate to a point that a change was demanded. That change came when Mt. Spokane 2000 took over. They have saved the concessionaire business. But they have gone too far in thinking that an expansion will enhance the mountain more than a redesign of existing terrain and lifts. I sat on the Washington State Parks Citizen's Advisory Committee for Mt. Spokane for 8.5 years, and watched the mountain evolve into what it is today. But to think that the expansion will improve the attendance much is ridiculous. The mountain's lifts stifle the attendance because of long lift lines. During those days on the committee, a professor from U of Idaho, Dr. Art Partridge, would come up to Mt. Spokane and lead us on tours of the same area that the expansion is proposed. Dr. Partridge would show us the uniqueness of the forest in the area on the back side. He told us once while eating lunch, that this area was so unique, that we should fight with whatever means possible, to preserve this forest. Its simply too valuable of a resource to fragment into ski runs.

It is in my 60's that I see even a greater need for preservation. Our lands are constantly been abused and fragmented by those who don't see the beauty in keeping an area natural.

At one time in Mt. Spokane's history, the WSPC wanted to specify the entire 13,000+ acres as winter recreation. This didn't happen because it was a bad idea. 709 acres were set aside for winter recreation. The rest was kept in a natural state to accommodate uses of all kinds of recreation.

Francis Cook built a toll road to within 3 miles of the summit in 1909, not to accommodate one user group, but to allow better access to Spokane's mountain.

In 1929 H. Cowles Jr. Donated 640 acres to Mt. Spokane State Parks. Not for just for skiing, but for all to enjoy.

In 1939, a group of people formed to "Save the Timber on Mt. Spokane." They raised \$3000 to fight for the mountain.

And how about the "environmental movement" to save the Salmo-Priest area which is now a Wilderness. Or how about the concerted effort by dozens of outdoor clubs to preserve what is now known as the North Cascades National Park. To say there was no environmental movement as we know it, is ridiculous and short sighted.

I do not believe in criticizing others beliefs and ideas, without providing a reasonable solution.

The Mt. Spokane 2000 group of course wants to keep Mt. Spokane a vibrant, fun ski area, no doubt. But there are better ways to achieve this than adding lifts at the expense of the natural forest around those lifts. Since starting skiing 64 years ago on Mt. Spokane, I have realized how poorly the ski area was constructed. If the Mt. Spokane 2000 group would just examine the re-construction of the current ski runs (chair 4 disaster for example), the upgrade to the lift systems, as apposed to buying an old antiquated lift from Bridger Bowl, they would have a ski hill worthy of pride and quality. This can be achieved at Mt. Spokane also, by getting rid of old lifts, modernizing the lodges, improving the parking, and making the ski area a jewel once again.

I personally endorse Alternative #2, with the correction that would allow backcountry skiers access that is currently not allowed. To limit backcountry skiing, but no other sport seams to go against the directions from WSPRC.

Respectfully Submitted,

To be read into the official minutes of the WSP&RC meeting on Mt. Spokane Ski Expansion

In the September 27th Spokesman Round Table, attorney Leslie Weatherhead stated that he "supported whatever alternative under consideration." I can't believe an attorney, let alone a self proclaimed "environmentalist," can take such a vague stance on any issue.

I started skiing on Mt. Spokane on December 4th, 1950. I also sat on the Mt Spokane Citizen's Advisory Committee for 8.5 years. I have witnessed Mt. Spokane's evolution first hand and am disappointed in its current challenge. Mt Spokane doesn't need another lift, especially one placed in the unique forest that will be fragment. Mt Spokane 2000 was a pleasant relief from the previous concessionaire, who let the mountain and it's facilities deteriorate poorly.

However, their proposal goes way to far.

DR. Art Partridge from U. Of Idaho would come up to the mountain and take us on walks to show us the unique value the forest on the northwest side. He told us to protect the forest with what ever means possible.

Our lands are constantly been abused and fragmented by those who don't see the beauty in keeping an area natural.

Back then, the WSP&RC had vast areas of Mt. Spokane closed off because of its unique value. Now these areas are accessible, but still preserved in a natural state. If a used, antiquated lift they bought from Bridger-Bowl, is allowed to be erected, the forest forever will be changed. At one time in Mt. Spokane's history, the WSP&RC wanted to specify the entire 13,000+ acres as winter recreation. This didn't happen because it was a bad idea. 709 acres was set aside for winter recreation. Weatherhead's statement that "there was no environmental movement as we know it" is simply false. Francis Cook built a toll road to within 3 miles of the summit in 1909, not to accommodate one user group, but to allow better access to Spokane's mountain. In 1929 H. Cowles Jr. Donated 640 acres to Mt. Spokane State Parks. Not for just for skiing, but for all to enjoy.

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And how about the "environmental movements" to save the Salmo-Priest area which is now a wilderness. Or how about the concerted effort by dozens of outdoor clubs to preserve what is now known as the North Cascades National Park. To say there was "no environmental movement as we know it", is ridiculous and short sighted.

I do not believe in criticizing others beliefs and ideas, without providing a reasonable solution.

The Mt. Spokane 2000 group of course wants to keep Mt. Spokane a vibrant, fun ski area, no doubt. But there are better ways to achieve this than adding lifts at the expense of the natural forest and it's inhabitants, around those lifts. Since starting skiing 64 years ago on Mt. Spokane, I have realized how poorly the ski area was constructed. If the Mt. Spokane 2000 group would just examine the re-construction of the current ski runs (chair 4 disaster for example), an upgrade to the lift systems, as apposed to buying an old antiquated lift from Bridger Bowl, they would have a ski hill worthy of pride and quality.

In towns, old buildings don't get additions without being upgraded to accommodate for the future needs of the buildings occupants. They get a face lift, a beautification, to make the building more suitable for the occupant.

This can be achieved at Mt. Spokane also, by getting rid of old lifts, modernizing the lodges, improving the parking, and making the ski area a jewel once again.

I do not want to stop or end Mt. Spokane's capabilities of being all it can be, but rather make proper use of it's terrain, it's lodges, it's beauty to accommodate all user groups.

Please, everyone, consider all aspects wisely on Mt. Spokane.

I personally endorse Alternative #2, with the correction that would allow backcountry skiers access that is currently prohibited.. This exclusion seams to go against the directives from WSPRC.

Respectfully,

Please choose Alternate #3 for the Mt. Spokane Ski Area expansion. We need to keep as much of our land open to the public and without clear-cutting, roads for motorized vehicles or other changes to the natural area. Trees that are over 200 years old will not come back in the lifetime of many people. Wildlife need to keep their natural habitat available. Already we are taking away natural habitats and wild areas around the state. Keep this one area wild and as it is now.

To whom it may concern,

I have skied for more than 45 years; a 26-year resident of Spokane and member of the Spokane

Mountaineers for the same duration; and Coordinator of the Inland Northwest Backcountry Alliance. The Inland Northwest Backcountry Alliance is a grassroots organization whose goals include advocacy for preservation specific non-motorized areas with reasonable access for human-powered winter recreationists and the education of others about the value of and opportunities for human-powered winter recreation.

I strongly encourage State Parks to classify the PASEA as a Resource and Recreation Area as follows:

Alternative 3: Classify PASEA Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area

This alternative would classify the area within the PASEA above Chair 4 Road as Resource Recreation and the area below the road as Natural Forest Area. Within the Resource Recreation area classification, alpine skiing is allowed as a conditional use, but no lift or formal runs could be constructed. Snowmobiling, mountain bike and equestrian trails are allowed within the Resource Recreation classification. This alternative preserves the current use of the PASEA for undeveloped alpine skiing, while affording natural resource protection by classifying the area as Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area.

Rationale for Alternative 3:

- Provides considerable protection to natural resources, a high-quality natural experience and opportunity to research and interpret montane and sub-alpine ecosystems that have had minimal human disturbance.
- Undeveloped alpine skiing that currently takes place above Chair 4 Road would be allowed to continue.
- Some clearing of downed, tipped or damaged trees could be allowed to reduce hazards for backcountry skiers and to improve access for search and rescue
- Mountain biking, equestrian and snowmobile trails would be conditionally permitted in areas designated Resource Recreation.

I oppose Mt Spokane 2000's proposal for a lift-serviced ski area expansion on the West areas of Mt Spokane.

As you know, this area is already used in the winter by resort skiers as well as non-resort skiers such as myself, who climb the mountain without the use of lifts.

Selective thinning in the PASEA as well as minimal grading of Trail 130 on the west side of the mountain to the base of Chair 4 will improve access to skiing in the area without the disruptions involved in formal trail clearing and construction/maintenance of a ski lift. Lift using skiers can access Chair 4 via Trail 130. This type of 'side-country' skiing is increasingly very popular and would only add to the draw for this resort as well as enhance and preserve the quality of Mt. Spokane State Park year-around.

My understanding is that Mt Spokane has already purchased this lift and understandably would like to install it. Perhaps a better use of the money would have been to improve existing facilities or lowering ticket prices, the latter of which options would improve access to this great sport for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Mt Spokane 2000's misguided proposal to clear

trails and build a lift in this irreplaceable and important undeveloped area.
Sincerely,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

With support for wildlife and old-growth forest, I write in opposition to the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA) at Mount Spokane State Park. I have hiked in the area and know its value for birding, snow-shoeing, back-country skiing, habitat for endangered wildlife, and ever-diminishing old-growth forests.

New alpine ski runs and associated "improvements" would mean clear-cutting much of the last old-growth forest on the east side of the state of Washington--an action that could not be reversed or remedied in the future.

Improving current alpine ski resources would be a better investment for the vendor, encouraging more people to use lodge and restaurant facilities in all seasons.

With the PASEA on the south and west--the warm and sunny--side of Mt Spokane State Park, alpine skiing would be adversely affected by melting snow which would be more likely to turn icy, especially for spring skiing, and reduce the season for that set of ski runs. A reduced season would reduce revenues for the vendor and make it a less-attractive investment.

Other nearby ski areas (49, Silver, Schweitzer) are considered better by many skiers. In order to justify a new ski area at Mt Spokane, usage would have to increase by an unrealistic figure. Driving to Mt Spokane on an icy, winding mountain road is less safe than more direct highways to the other areas, and increased traffic would make it even more dangerous.

For all of the above reasons, I strongly oppose allowing the PASEA to go forward.

Please turn down this expansion. It would be a serious wound to one of the last natural areas easily accessible to park visitors.

Thank you for considering my comments.

I may have already commented to you. Just making it clear the expansion at Mt Spokane is a bad idea. I ski there at least 50 days a year. I back country ski all over the mountain. I have found that there is not enough room for the people already using the ski area. Not enough parking, not enough room in the lodges, and frequently snowmobiles in pedestrian areas. I can only imagine the water problems and electrical problems. The chair lifts they use currently are braking down a number of times a season already. Many days they don't have all the chairs in use. I can see no reason to cut down more areas of the mountain now or ever.

Thanks for your time

Mt Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park expansion is short sighted and backward thinking. The expansion poses a great threat to the unique sub-alpine ecosystem that lies there. This rare old growth forest serves as a home to a variety of wildlife who depend on an unfragmented habitat- including birds, amphibians and large mammalian species such as the lynx and wolverine. Mt Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park has other options to expand that would not cut down the only old growth forest on our beautiful Mt Spokane!

Use the other options and expand Mt Spokane Ski & Snowboard Park but not on the ONLY old growth forest on Mt Spokane!!!

I strongly oppose the plans to expand the downhill ski area on Mount Spokane.

The plan would sacrifice irreplaceable natural habitat for a company that is "non-profit" in name only. And with a warming climate, the expansion might not even be useable many years. Already Mount Spokane has become a marginal climate to support a downhill ski area.

Please do not allow this pillaging of our public lands to move forward.

Regarding Mt Spokane and the hearing on Nov 19. I will not be able to attend the meeting but would like to comment on the proposals on the agenda. I believe that the existing ski area should be able to expand into the west side of the mountain, BUT not the way they would like it to happen. My background is as a backcountry skier who uses the state park frequently to ski the areas that are in question. My observation is that this proposed area already is used extensively by the downhill ski clientele. While backcountry touring into this area, I see downhill skiers from the resort and their tracks every time I am out there, as well as snowmobile tracks on occasion. (I can assure you this is not a wilderness area, it receives heavy use both summer and winter) They ski to the snowmobile road then traverse back to chair 4 to get back into the ski area boundary. I think that is fine and should continue just like that, that is, without a ski lift built into the west side. I believe a more environmental approach to the problem is to thin brush and trees into a safer skiing gladed environment, and improve the access road to chair 4 so that return to the ski hill is made easier. Small trees and brush could be removed in a way that would improve glade skiing but not insult the landscape like a big ski lift would. Less environmental impact for sure. This seems to me to be a good compromise that would give the ski hill the extra area that it needs and deserves and still preserve the mountain in a more environmentally friendly way.

Thank you very much for allowing me to comment,

Dear Washington State Parks

I am writing about the potential alpine ski area expansion at Mount Spokane State Park. As an author, historian, and teacher who has taken students of all ages to the affected area, I strongly believe that Mount Spokane is more valuable to the public exactly the way it is. I feel this will hold even more true in the near and far future. You have a great multi-use park on the mountain, and it would be a shame to tip the balance toward a few people.

Please consider voting against the expansion of the ski area.

Please do not allow the destruction of old growth in order to expand the Mt Spokane ski area. This is not a good trade off!

Thank you,

To the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission -

Conservationists and winter sports enthusiasts alike want to see the natural beauty of Mount Spokane preserved. This area has long been earmarked for ski area expansion, skiers are already making extensive use of it, and it's continued use and improvement by the ski area will ensure that it remains a natural setting. Managing underbrush and growth improves fire safety; open areas like ski runs provide good habitat for animals like elk. Providing dedicated ski runs will actually funnel human activity into known paths rather than essentially blessing them to have free-reign as happens now, thereby preserving more of the natural area. Skiers are there because of the natural beauty and enjoyment of the area and opening up the PASEA to further use puts the well-being of the area in the hands of people who are incentivized to care for it.

Mount Spokane is a treasure for winter sport enthusiasts. My family comes to the mountain multiple times each year from Walla Walla because of its setting and uniquely family-friendly environment. Maximizing the public benefit of this area, while continuing to conserve the greater park area, is in the best interest of Washingtonians.

Best wishes,

To whom it may concern,

I am strongly opposed to Mt Spokane 2000's proposal for a lift-serviced ski area expansion into the North and West areas of Mt Spokane.

This area is already used in the Winter by resort skiers as well as non-resort skiers who climb the mountain without the use of lifts.

Selective thinning in the area as well as minimal grading of the forest service road at the base of the runs will improve access to skiing in the area without the disruptions involved in formal trail clearing and construction/maintenance of a ski lift. Lift using skiers can access lift 4 via the forest service road. This type of 'side-country' skiing is very popular and would only increase the draw for this resort.

My understanding is that Mt Spokane has already purchased this lift and understandably would like to install it. Perhaps a better use of the money would have been to improve existing facilities or lowering ticket prices, the latter of which options would improve access to this great sport for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Mt Spokane 2000's misguided proposal to clear trails and build a lift in this terrific area.

Sincerely,

To Whom It May Concern: I am writing to strongly urge you to permit ski lift and ski run development at the proposed Mount Spokane ski area expansion. I believe, officially, this means I support your “Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area” option. I have spent a great deal of time in this proposed expansion area over the years, not only on skis, but also on mountain bike, and on foot. My guess is that I’ve spent hundreds of hours more time in that area than 99% of the people who oppose this expansion. Mount Spokane Park is a vast area, about 90% of which is relatively pristine and empty of people. The Park is one of the state’s largest, and my guess is it is probably one of the most lucrative (relatively speaking) for the state. And yet, the vast, vast majority of people in this area simply do not even bother to visit the Park, and the vast majority of those who do don’t get more than a few hundred yards from their cars. I also understand that the Park was given to the State of Washington long ago by the Cowles family, with the specific wish or direction that it be a ski area, and that it be used and enjoyed by the people.

Allowing an additional lift and a few additional ski runs to be developed at an already developed ski area simply will not impact negatively the other 95% of the Park. There is no good reason to not expand the ski area, especially given that it’s already a popular out of bounds ski area. Yes, I see the occasional bear and other critters and game there in the offseason. I also see those same animals at my house (within the Spokane city limits), and at other ski areas. Those animals and their habitat, by any rational application of the criteria, are NOT endangered. Those animals and their habitat are NOT going to be affected by a small chair and a few hundred skiers. I also know from riding and hiking in that proposed area, that, because it’s stuck in enviro-lawsuit-bureaucratic limbo, it is a tinderbox of an unmanaged forest, and one way or another, something's going to change that area!

Allowing a chairlift and ski run development — a mere 279 acres out of thousands and thousands of acres — will allow more people to enjoy Mt. Spokane, which is its original and, I hope, continued purpose. It would drive development of a nicer lodge and amenities, which are the very things which currently keep people away from the ski area. It also would draw revenue away from privately owned nearby ski areas and into the state’s coffers. And as an independent business owner and B&O taxpayer, I KNOW that this state is addicted to ever more and more revenue. So the people who actually use and enjoy the Park and the ski area, will enjoy them in greater numbers, and the state will benefit.

Sincerely,

Just a quick note to say that I am in favor of the expansion of a ski area on Mt. Spokane. The non-profit that manages Mt. Spokane ski area does a great job of stewardship and deserves to expand this recreational area for the benefit of ski enthusiasts and tourist that will come to our area to see what great recreational opportunities this area offers. If you have any questions about my opinion or concerns please call me at
Sincerely,

I am a long time skier at Mt. Spokane (45 years) and love to ski the tougher slopes. However I do not like risking the out of bounds areas. Chair 6 would allow access to some new terrain that would greatly enhance the experience of skiing at Mt. Spokane. It would also put that entire area under the watchful eye of Ski Patrol.

It seems that a few elitist who oppose this expansion, do so for the own rewards. They want to save this area for their exclusive use as they will take the risk of skiing out of bounds and therefore enjoy the rewards. However Mt. Spokane is a public entity.

We also need to consider that skiers have choices, lots of good choices in the Inland Empire. We can send those dollars away form our ski area and into Idaho or we can offer a wonderful experience just outside our city and keep those dollar here to support our non-profit Mt. Spokane Ski hill.

This decision seems like an easy one-please vote YES in adding Chair 6 to Mt. Spokane's ski area.

Dear Parks Commission,

I want you to know as a long time skier at Mt. Spokane, I support the expansion of the backside (Northwest) part of the mountain. I am 40 year skier at this wonderful ski area and it would be greatly improved by more access to the new intermediate slopes for this 78 year old.

Thank you,

My family of four and I, all skiers, oppose the expansion of the alpine ski area on Mt. Spokane. Such an expansion will strip a valuable wildlife migration corridor of key habit. The prime movers of this bad initiative are special interests.

With Spokane County already running counter to Growth Management Act mandates from Olympia, such an expansion is not only counterintuitive and counterproductive, but it is very likely to incur legal reprisals if it is approved.

In addition to the costs of defending against potential lawsuits by environmental groups, this park expansion will end by costing ratepayers more to maintain, at a time when our other county parks are often going begging for funding.

Thanks for this opportunity to give input.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks for this opportunity to comment on the ski area expansion. Since it is my experience that public meetings are frequently hi-jacked by extreme opinions on both sides of an issue, I'll comment by e-mail and save myself the aggravation of listening to people who refuse to see the merits of both arguments .

My extended family and I enjoy both hiking and skiing and have used the park for both. We do not view them as mutually exclusive, so no axe to grind there. To us, the bigger issue is access to our public lands. In reality, many thousands more people use Mt Spokane for skiing than use it for hiking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing etc combined. Additional thousands travel to Schweitzer, Silver Mtn, Chewelah, and Canada to use their ski areas because of the substandard facilities at Mt Spokane. I myself am guilty of that on occasion.

We have a wonderful opportunity right in our own back yard to make more of our park land available to local residents. Upgrading not only the backside ski runs, but also the lodge facilities (which are, let's face it, pathetic), would keep many more of us in-state where we belong. Not only that, but tax revenues would improve as more people spent money on the mountain.

As a lifelong backcountry enthusiast, I believe the environmental issues are very important, but my sense is those concerns have been addressed and satisfied. Blocking land usage merely on principle disregards the public's right to access their own property. I endorse the expansion plan. Thank you again for your consideration.

Hi Guys,

I am worried about the ability of Deer, Moose, etc to be able to move freely from Mt. Spokane to Brown's Mt to the game reserve near Cheney. Expanding the ski area will scare all animals away from their natural habitat just so we can make a few bucks. How can we be near nature when we destroy their habitat?

Dear Members of the Commission,

My husband and I are unable to attend the meeting on Nov. 20th, but want to register our strong support for those who would work to NOT expand the ski area at Mt. Spokane. Even though we can fully appreciate how some may want the economic advantage of a bigger/better ski area, the beauty and importance of nature undefiled is a treasure worth holding onto at all costs.

Thank you,

I would like to see the current balance on Mt. Spokane maintained. I am a member of the Hobnailer Hiking Club in Spokane and am finding less and less places in the area where we can hike and enjoy nature. The trails on Mt. Spokane are some of the nicest in Eastern Washington. As a past skier, I can also understand the value of maintaining a good ski area close to Spokane. However, if we continue to rape the land for more development, there will be nothing left of nature for future generations to enjoy. As it is, when we are out in the woods we are finding less and less birds and animals. Please consider carefully before you make a decision that cannot be undone.

November 9, 2014

Washington State Parks Commission
Beeki Ellison
PO Box 42650
Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Dear Ms. Ellison,

Expansion of the down-hill ski area will be good both for area skiers, and also for people who work at the facilities. As the regional population increases, it would be beneficial if Mount Spokane could add more runs, as other local ski hills have done. Mount Spokane is a great asset for local skiers. Spokane is fortunate to have a nearby recreation area as nice as Mt. Spokane. There will be no significant impact to the wild lands of N.E. Washington if the expansion takes place. There are many other areas in the region that are more significant for their wilderness character. Mt. Spokane is already a highly utilized and enjoyed recreational site. The Commission should support Alternative 4 to permit expansion of the down-hill ski area.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dear Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission,

As a former Spokane resident and regular visitor to Mount Spokane State Park, I am extremely concerned about the Commission's plan to reclassify the land use of the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA) to accommodate the Mount Spokane Ski Area expansion plan.

The park belongs to the citizens of Washington State. If The Parks Commission chooses Alternative Four, the west side will be fragmented by seven ski runs and a chairlift whose base would sit at the headwaters- currently a stand of 200 year old trees- of Blanchard Creek.

Alternative 2 on the other hand would protect the area as a Natural Forest Area, limit development and promote use in the PASEA for preservation, interpretation and enjoyment of natural processes.

Protecting this area as a Natural Forest Area will continue to provide essential habitat for wildlife species that depend on old-growth or late-successional forests. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife see Alternative 4 as a threat to lynx, goshawk and other rare species. The West side of Mount Spokane is home to 21 focal species.

This is perfect opportunity for scientists, educators, and citizens to observe a wonderful old forest changing. We CAN'T replace it once parts of it are clear-cut. In preserving this forest, we are keeping it unfragmented for current and future generations, providing opportunities for all types of recreation, not just lift-assisted skiing, and for scientific study and education.

What we have now is a common sense balance of ski area and natural forest area. Part of the Commission's job is to help preserve biodiversity. Lift assisted skiing is only one type of recreation. The continual preserved existence of this forest and it's biodiversity, is also a type of year-round recreation. The Commission should take into consideration the whole park and they can do that by choosing Alternative Two.

For the reasons mentioned above I urge you to support and adopt Alternative Two in the land use classification.

Thank you,

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing to support you in choosing Alternative Two for the Mt. Spokane land use classification. Protection of forested areas with old growth trees & natural habitats is of great value to us. Mt Spokane is a unique local recreational area in that it allows for so many diverse recreational opportunities. How fortunate this makes all of us in the greater Spokane area! We are regular visitors to the mountain & enjoy a number of different outdoor activities (lift-accessed downhill skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, back country skiing, trail running & cross country skiing) as do many friends & acquaintances. Please consider this decision with the greatest care. Alternative Two preserves important natural areas & maintains access to diverse recreational activities.

With Sincere Thanks,

I am strongly in favor of preserving the old growth forest environment on Mt. Spokane. I have bought my permit and had the privilege of hiking in that area. Have you seen the creeks, the unique diversity of beautiful trees, the mosses, the ferns, the waterfalls, the flowers, the mushrooms and the rainforest like environment? All if this will be destroyed and never shared by our children and families if this is changed to a commercial operation to benefit the few who have money. Once it's gone, it's gone. Please do not destroy this island of peace, tranquility and sanity so badly needed in our time and culture. Our soul, health and even economy depend upon rare examples of near nature, near perfect such as this area on Mt. Spokane. The developers wanting this project have enough money and property. Please preserve this land for the rest of us, we the people.

Sincerely,

Date: 11/14/2014

Comment: Please leave the PASEA area alone. We have expanded our cities and chopped down enough trees and destroyed enough land for those cities or recreation without needing to do more damage to our mountain for another ski area. The wildlife is part of why we claim to be "Near nature, near perfect" and we must protect it if we are to continue to claim that slogan. Mt. Spokane is a smaller mountain and using more of it for recreation is not in the best interest for the health of the mountain.

Date: 11/13/2014

Comment: Please allow The concessionaire, Mt Spokane 2000 to move forward with the new chairlift and change the land classification to Recreational Use so that we can insure Mount Spokane will be able to compete with privately owned ski resorts and preserve the incredibly affordable skiing we enjoy at Mount Spokane. It also would be much safer for skiers that already venture in that proposed area to allow the chair so that injured and lost skiers have a much quicker rescue out of that area.

Comment*

The Northwest aspect of Mt. Spokane is the most unique tract of land in Spokane County. A development of this area would forever change it, causing the loss of it's unique nature. To truly serve the public interest, rather than a few supporters who want to exploit it for immediate gain, Parks must protect and maintain this public land for current and future generations. Do the right thing; not what caters to a few influential individuals for business purposes. If Parks succumbs to such pressure, it will be thereafter tainted with the talisman of corruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Seven years ago, I wrote my first letter (copied below) in support of expanding the ski area on Mt. Spokane. This minor land use change comports entirely with the Park founders' mission: to provide a superior opportunity for recreationists to enjoy extraordinary natural surroundings in a safe and responsible way. I urge you to approve Alternative Four, classifying the expansion area as Recreation, Resource Recreation and Natural Forest Area, and to approve Mt. Spokane 2000's revised expansion plan. There has been no material change in circumstance and no new information introduced that I can detect since this deliberation was launched. The land concerned still involves 3% of the Park's land area. Studies have not substantiated that the area at issue is uniquely remarkable from an environmental standpoint. Nor is there evidence to suggest significant degradation of water or air would result from adding 80 acres of new ski runs. This area is uniquely suited to Alpine skiing; much of the rest of the park could be designated Natural Forest Area. The expansion would not materially alter the ability of non-skiers to enjoy the mountain in the winter or summer. The concession holder, Mt. Spokane 2000, remains committed to safe, environmentally responsible operation of the region's signature ski area. The expansion would considerably enhance the attraction to skiers and improve the viability of the concession which contributes significant revenue for upkeep and maintenance across the Park system. In short, expansion meets the mission of Mt. Spokane State Park and the demonstrated interests of the people who live here. The benefits of expansion outweigh the costs. Approval of the expansion represents positive public policy that is consistent with the Commission's core values that include "dedication to outdoor recreation and public enjoyment." Thank you for your dedication and for the opportunity to comment on this important improvement to Mt. Spokane. Sincerely, W. Stacey Cowles Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission P.O. Box 42650 Olympia, WA 98504-2650 Ladies and Gentlemen: I am writing to urge your strong support for the expansion of the Mt. Spokane ski area to the backside of the mountain. The expansion: * fits the history and mission of the Park as an "outdoor playground" and major attraction for the region * strengthens the Alpine ski area's financial viability * supports the Mountain's catalytic role in the ski industry regionally, and * is

supported by dozens of non-skiers engaged in the Parks Master Plan process who use the Park in other ways throughout the year. The development of Mt. Spokane State Park, in fact its very existence, has involved local citizens from across our community for more than 100 years. My great grandfather, grandfather, great uncle, uncle, mother, sister, brother-in-law and I have all played key roles from raising money for road construction (starting in 1909), to donating 640 acres of land to expand the park in 1929, to the founding of the Spokane Ski Club in 1931, to the formation and operation of Mt. Spokane 2000, the non-profit that now operates the ski area. Through Inland Empire Paper Company, a subsidiary of our family's company, we have worked for decades with the Parks Department and Spokane County to accommodate the recreational interests of Nordic skiers and snowmobilers on our logging roads adjacent to the Park. The driving and uniting interest for us and hundreds of others through the years has been to create a uniquely accessible and spectacular outdoor attraction for local residents and tourists. Early motorists enjoyed the challenge of testing the limits of their cars and driving abilities on the original primitive roads. The first double chairlift in the world was constructed for the Spokane Ski Club on the Mountain in 1947. Thousands of area residents and guests now enjoy sports including hiking, horseback riding, camping, mountain biking, Nordic skiing and inner tubing in addition to motoring and Alpine skiing in what is the State system's largest Park. Adding to the Alpine ski area is clearly consistent with the idea that the Park is intended for active recreation. It is also very consistent with our region's lifestyle. According to Standard Rate and Data Service, a national market data firm, the Spokane market is ranked 18th highest in the nation in concentration of households that define "snow skiing frequently" as key lifestyle element. Second, the expansion would strengthen the financial viability of the Alpine ski area which will help attract funding for needed upgrading of the lodge and parking facilities. Expansion into 400 more of the Park's 13,900 acres adds financial viability to the Alpine ski area because it increases access to North facing slopes where there is more snow. One of the big challenges in the ski business is coping with the variability of Mother Nature. In 2005, the ski area was forced to close on January 10 for lack of snow on the South-facing slopes. Better access to North facing slopes would allow more predictability in the early parts of the season and in years when snow is scarce, making costs and revenues more predictable. Moreover, the area has become crowded in recent years as skier days have risen to record levels. More skiable acres are now required to better accommodate the growing volume of skiers and snowboarders. The promise of expanded skiing and improved viability will help secure commitment from private funders required for the expansion and facilities improvement. Improving the ski area's viability and attraction is good not just for Mt. Spokane skiers and boarders, but for all of the region's ski area operators and the retailers who serve skiers and snowboarders. As the closest ski area to the urban center of the region, Mt. Spokane has historically been an important feeder for other areas. Thousands of Spokane residents learn to ski or board on Mt. Spokane and then go on to try other mountains. Since Mt. Spokane 2000 began operating the area, the number of ski and snowboard lessons has risen exponentially from 1,100 in 1997 to more than 20,000 in 2006. Skier days hit 90,000 in 2006. Skier days at all area resorts have risen steadily since Mt. Spokane 2000 revived the ski school and high quality trail grooming at the Mountain. Finally, the State Parks Department has facilitated a public process to define the future direction of development and amenities at the Park and the consensus that has emerged from the hundreds of Park users involved is that the Alpine area should be allowed to expand. This is important because participants do not see a conflict between their uses and Alpine skiing, provided the area continues to be operated in a way that is responsive to environmental concerns and respectful of other users' interests.

Importantly all users agree that the Park must be conscious of the balance between human use and maintaining a spectacular natural environment. In the interest of maintaining integrity in the public process and recognizing the dedication and hard work of these volunteers, it seems appropriate that the Parks staff and Commission respect this finding and grant approval for the next step in allowing expansion of the Alpine skiing area. In the interest of full disclosure, please know that my family and I usually ski twice a weekend at Mt. Spokane where we are active in the Spokane Ski Racing Association. I have hiked and camped on Mt. Spokane as well as cross country skied there. I have also put money where my mouth is and have both corporately and personally contributed money to Mt. Spokane 2000 and personally guarantee a small portion of their bank debt. I hope that since the Commission no longer includes a member from Eastern Washington you will take every opportunity to hear from those who enjoy and care for Mt. Spokane most directly. Please know there are hundreds of volunteers who would drop everything and come to a Parks Commission meeting should you desire more background on the Alpine ski area expansion or on the century-old community vision behind Mt. Spokane State Park! Please call me at 509-459-5217 should you have questions. Thank you for your dedication to our State's great parks and your support for Alpine ski area expansion at Mt. Spokane. Sincerely,

I am for developing the new ski area in the existing land that has been set aside. I hope Mt. Spokane can get high speed chair lifts. I hope more downhill bike trails can be built by volunteers. I favor keeping the rest of the mountain as wilderness.

It's important to me that the Parks Commission choose Alternative Two (2) in the land use classification. The park belongs to the citizens of the state of Washington, all of us. If The Parks Commission chooses Alternative Four, the west side will be fragmented by seven ski runs and a chairlift whose base would sit at the headwaters- currently a stand of 200 year old trees- of Blanchard Creek.

Alternative 2 would protect as a Natural Forest Area, limit development and promote use in the PASEA for preservation, interpretation and enjoyment of natural processes.

Protecting this area as a Natural Forest Area will continue to provide essential habitat for wildlife species that depend on old-growth or late-successional forests. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife see Alternative 4 as a threat to lynx, goshawk and other rare species.

This is perfect opportunity for scientists, educators, and citizens to observe a wonderful old forest changing. We CAN'T replace it once parts of it are clear-cut. In preserving this forest, we are keeping it unfragmented for current and future generations, providing opportunities for all types of recreation, not just lift-assisted skiing, and for scientific study and education.

The west side of Mt. Spokane is the home of 21 focal species.

What we have now is a common sense balance of ski area and natural forest area. Part of the Commission's job is to help preserve biodiversity. Lift assisted skiing is only one type of recreation. The continual preserved existence of this forest and its biodiversity, is also a type of

year-round recreation. The Commission should take into consideration the whole park and they can do that by choosing Alternative Two.

Thank you for your consideration,

Please allow the ski area at Mt. Spokane to expand and add the necessary additional runs/lift to the Mt. It seems that the will of a few is superceding the will of the many in this argument. There is no 'old growth' forest being ruined and for the minority to make this the perception is wrong. The community of Spokane loves Mt. Spokane and many people use it year round, not just in the winter. It needs to be allowed to be used by the community, with good stewardship and Mt. Spokane has always been a good steward of the Mt. Thank you for your time.

Dear Sir: I have been a skier at Mt. Spokane all of my childhood, adolescence and adult life. I have seen good management and bad management of the ski area. Since Mt. Spokane 2000 has taken it over both grooming and services have vastly improved. Brad McQuarrie has provided excellent leadership and management during this time. For over 10 years, at least, Mt. Spokane 2000 has been trying in increase the ski area. After years of intense and extensive costly studies, Mt. Spokane is over ready for expansion as ski visits have steadily improved. Lets get the Red Chair up and running now. I am in favor of #4 classifying the back side "recreation" now and proceeding with this proposed expansion. Sincerely,

Approval of the Mt. Spokane revision proposal for expansion is a smart decision. The approval will bring additional revenue to the state, and the managed area will bring better utilization of existing facilities. Please allow Mt. Spokane to expand, this will benefit not only the State but also the areas around that utilize the Park for recreational activities.

Please don't let the minority and falsifications that represent PASEA dictate our ability to utilize what is already in use. Mt. Spokane is and always should be a Recreation Area.

I like the phase 4 option. I think it would bring in revenue ,bring in skiers, and keep things as natural as possible. You are not going to keep everyone happy but we have to do things to keep things going for the next generation.

Mt. Spokane provides a wonderful environment, as well as family entertainment to our region. If the resort does not grow and keep current, people will go elsewhere. What a loss this would be to Spokane. Please allow this new area.

Hello,

I previously commented on the Mt . Spokane expansion issue.

What I would like to know is how this process has become so cumbersome and time-consuming?

With a 70+ year body of evidence that the ski area does no environmental damage, that it is an enduring business that contributes to the State directly, and through the employment of seasonal and year-round workers, and an enterprise that provides convenient and affordable outdoor recreation to the entire region...why does a simple expansion of a known and well understood entity turn into this kind of process?

Is there even a pathway through the requirements for this kind of business?

Would another business operating in another State Park, requesting an expansion, be faced with the exact same hurdles? Or is the process completely ad-hoc, driven by whichever personalities choose to become involved?

These are not rhetorical questions, nor are they intended to be critical of the Mt. Spokane process in particular.

It just seems that even the most reasonable and necessary projects have become almost impossible to do. Can you imagine the process to build Interstate-90 if it began today?

So, in conclusion, I'm seeking an understanding of how this process is supposed to work, yet became so confusing and time (and money) consuming.

Educated professionals involved in business, government, legal, and ski area management put together a plan, and spent money based upon reading the applicable laws, and certainly held consultations with the concerned State officials, fully expecting to have this project done two or more years ago.

I would really be dismayed to see that the folks we citizens pay to administer the lands for us allowed this process to stretch out and become abusive to business, using taxpayer money to do so, when it was within their purview to simply approve it, as everyone involved honestly expected.

Is there a set process, or is it simply up to the whim of those involved how far they go or don't go and how much they demand or choose not to demand of an applicant to the parks commission?

Regards,

We are completely opposed to the development of additional downhill ski area on the undeveloped side of Mt Spokane. The park is for the enjoyment of all Washington citizens and should not overly cater to just one segment of park users. And, downhill skiing already occupies and environmentally impacts two-thirds of the mountain. The PASEA should be and should have long ago been classified as "Natural Forest Area" because of its pristine nature and outstanding natural integrity. It would be crime to see the largest intact old growth subalpine forest in Spokane County desecrated for the benefit of a few skiers who already have a large area to ski in. Spokane citizens have at least half a dozen privately run ski areas nearby to ski in without destroying the rest of Mt. Spokane. And, according to several surveys, the project would

negatively impact the home to numerous wildlife and plant communities. We urge you to vote "NO" on any changes to land classification or expansion of the Mt Spokane downhill ski area. ---
-----Sincerely,

The expansion doesn't make much sense to me. The area back there is great side country skiing as well as winter hiking and snow machining. The increase in traffic back there would take an area away that many people use as a transition area for backcountry skiing. The area back there is where I learned a lot of skills I use in the backcountry. It also helped me gain confidence in my own tools and decision making. I'd like to see Mt.Spokane ski area use that money for better lodges and improved areas like the terrain park and lift maintenance. If they want a new lift, put in a 3 or 4 pax lift on #2 or #3. The area far left of #1 should be left as is or at most a uphill trail should be put in.

I support proposal 4 for the further use of Mount Spokane as a Recreational use area to include the riding of mountain bikes. I know the area has been seen for some as a wildlife area but this has never been true. This area has been used for recreation since it's inception and to change that for the whim of a small group of residents that live close to the area is selfish. Wildlife areas have no human access what so ever. Since the area has been use for hiking and other recreational pleasures for greater than a hundred years to change that now is impossible. Yes I feel that all trails should use modern trail maintenance measures so that erosion is minimalized, but to remove cyclists is not ok. Thank you for your time, sincerely,

As a faculty member, and now emeritus faculty member, at Whitworth University I have always enjoyed skiing with the students taking the January skiing class. The recent decision to ski at 49 degrees North saddens me. The improvement of Mt. Spokane, and the availability of better snow in expanded runs in January, would bring Whitworth back to Mt. Spokane. It sure would be great for us old guys.

I am for exploring and supporting the additional ski area expansion proposal.

I have skied Mt. Spokane every year since 1970. I have often skied the terrain that is proposed for expansion. The area is currently used for alpine skiing in winter and hiking in the summer. Many more people could enjoy the area if a new lift is allowed. I believe that sensitive development such proposed would provide more diverse habitat than currently exists.

I am in full support for the Terrain Expansion. Individuals ski this area as "out of bounds" and those select individuals have developed a group to try and stop the expansion for their own benefit. A select few lshould not be able to stop an expansion that was already approved by most of the state and federal agencies. Thank you,

Washington State Parks- I am not sure what the issues seem to be with allowing the ski park to expand beyond the confines it currently has, I do feel however that allowing for the expansion will create many advantages. These are both fiscal and with regard to viewing the nature around us. 1) Having a larger area available for winter recreation will attract more customers and

therefore creating higher tax revenue in Washington state, which seems to be needed at the moment. This tax revenue would be from not just the ski area, but also the gas stations nearby, tire stores, ski shops, restaurants, etc. that are inevitably used in the process. 2) Having a larger area available for winter recreation will allow more people to enjoy the natural areas available to them in this state. I probably spend more time admiring nature (both living and inanimate) while on the ski slopes than anywhere else. I don't feel that having a lift and ski trails will negatively impact nature, but will allow for increased opportunities to view it. As an example, the best huckleberry bushes to be found in this state are directly under a ski trail (coincidence? I think not!) So, aside from having the opportunities to enjoy nature the natural areas of the state in the winter, I think the expansion would really make people more aware that the rest of the mountain has neat features as well. Thanks for reading this, I look forward to hearing what the decision is in the future!

The ski expansion on Mt. Spokane would be a very valuable endeavor for more people to enjoy the supreme beauty of the Pacific Northwest. Mt. Spokane is a very popular ski resort for people of all ages -- busloads of kids are brought up every week. The ski expansion would also provide additional trails through this marvelous wilderness for hikers and equestrian riders. The American Endurance Riders Association hosted an endurance ride on Mt. Spokane over labor day weekend and hopes to make this an annual event. Over 200 people and horses participated. Wildlife can still thrive alongside hiking / equestrian trails as hikers and horses do not create much noise disturbance.

Dear Sirs,

I urge you to choose alternative #2 for the PASEA area on the west side of Mt. Spokane State Park which would not allow the expansion of the ski area and would preserve the forest in its current state. I understand the desire of the ski community to have additional skiing areas closer to the Spokane area. However, the 800 acres of land that would be affected by additional ski runs is valuable in many ways to more than just the ski community. I believe there are other alternatives that will help provide better and additional skiing access without the need to permanently alter the contiguous forest that currently exists and is important to many animal and plant species for their continued survival. It is simply not possible to clear cut parts of this forest to install additional ski runs without destroying it from an ecological standpoint. Please protect it in its current form and choose alternative #2 so future generations can experience the unique forest that we currently enjoy ourselves.

Sincerely,

November 14, 2014

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to submit my comments on the land classification and proposed ski area expansion at Mt. Spokane State Park (MSSP). I have been following the MSSP master plan development and the PASAE since it began in 2006. Through my roles as Backcountry Ski Chair and Leadership Chair for the

Spokane Mountaineers, and member of the Inland Northwest Backcountry Alliance, I felt it was very important to participate in this process. It has certainly taken more time than expected, and has occasionally been contentious. I hope in the end we can come to a decision that will insure MSSP can be enjoyed by a wide variety of users for generations to come.

One of my biggest concerns with the land classification decision, and potential ski area expansion, is that it seems to shift an inordinate amount of park land and resources to a single recreational user group. I think this decision needs to be more focused on overall needs of the park environment and all user groups involved. The alpine skiing activities while popular in the winter, only last a short time of the entire year. However, the impact on the park land from the ski area is very large and lasts year round. I think that impact is just going to be more than the park can handle.

I am also very concerned about a couple of user groups that are not well understood, and not as widely represented. Those groups are the backcountry skiers and snowshoers. These two user groups have grown tremendously over the last few years. They are also the user groups who stand to lose the most if the decision is made to expand the ski area. In my work with the Spokane Mountaineers and Inland Northwest Backcountry Alliance, we have been trying to advocate for these groups and help preserve opportunities to enjoy these activities. I really urge you to get a better understanding of these users, the experience they desire, and what they stand to lose.

I have outlined below some additional thoughts and concerns relating to the specific alternatives for the land classification and proposed ski area expansion.

Land Classification

Mt. Spokane State Park is a limited size. We can't make it any bigger, increase its elevation, or increase the snowfall each winter. There are many different recreation activities that must be supported in this limited space. It is vitally important to preserve the natural environment of the mountain, for that is what draws us all there in the first place. I think that Alternative 3 provides the most balanced approach for how to manage this invaluable resource.

When looking at Alternative 4, I can see that a good effort has been made to preserve some of the natural forest features and reduce the impact other recreational users. However, it still eliminates existing backcountry ski and snowshoe areas. An additional detraction is that the areas remaining open to backcountry skiers and snowshoers are further away from designated trail heads. This is an inconvenience for some, but a complete obstacle for others. These users will also have to travel through the ski area to reach those areas. This may require a designated route to be maintained, and I am not sure anyone has considered that. While this alternative has been a good attempt, I still think Alternative 3 is a better approach.

Ski Area Expansion

The alternative options for the ski area expansion are tied to the land classification decision. As a result, the Alternative 3 land classification would require the Alternative 1, no action, option for the ski area. Again, this is the approach I would support.

In evaluating Alternatives 2 and 3, in the event that the Alternative 4 land classification is chosen, I would prefer Alternative 3 for the ski area expansion. This option seems to take a few extra steps in protecting the wetland stream areas.

I have one other concern with both of these alternatives. There are no mitigation measures proposed for the loss of recreational opportunities that backcountry skiers and snowshoers will experience. I think this again shows how these groups are not well understood by the park staff and ski area management. I would like to see further consideration given to these groups no matter what alternative is chosen.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to know more about backcountry skiing, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

We need to leave this 800 a. In a natural forest state. This is certainly more important for the general public in the long run than another ski area. This is choosing Alternate 2. Thank you.

To the Washington State Parks and Recreation commission,

As a resident of Spokane, I am against the expansion of the Alpine Ski area in Mt Spokane.

I believe that protecting this area a a Natural Forest Area will continue to provide essential habitat for wildlife species that depend on old-growth or late-successional forests. This is perfect opportunity for scientists, educators, and citizens to observe a wonderful old forest changing. We CAN'T replace it once parts of it are clear-cut. In preserving this forest, we are keeping it unfragmented for current and future generations, providing opportunities for all types of recreation, not just lift-assisted skiing, and for scientific study and education.

For the reason above, I don't see the need to expand the ski area. What we have now is a common sense balance of ski area and natural forest area. Skiing is only one type of recreation. The continual preserved existence of this forest and it's biodiversity, is also a type of year-round recreation. One all citizens should be able to enjoy.

The Commission should take into consideration the whole park and they can do that by choosing Alternative Two.

Sincerely,

I am writing to ask that you chose Alternative 2 in the land use classification. WA. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife sees Alternative 4 as a threat to lynx, goshawk and other rare species. Preservation of biodiversity is crucial and must be given utmost priority. Protect the 800 acres on the west side of Mt. Spokane as Natural Forest.

Mt. Spokane needs to spend money on updating existing facilities such as the lodge. This in turn would attract younger skiers.

Dear Parks Commission,

Thank you very much for taking on the task of evaluating our goals and objectives for these highly valued public lands. I know that bringing everyone to agreement is not an easy task.

As a photographer that spends many hours recording bird and insect life in natural habitats, I am always concerned when a project calls for major alterations to the landscape without a thorough understanding of the impact.

If we would establish a regular pattern of data collection over a decade, we might have the information we need on hand to make truly responsible decisions on Mt Spokane. For all I know, doing nothing on Mt Spokane could have caused a decline in the number of insect species and birds that inhabit the mountain. We do not know that, however, because we have not been

compiling records. Without the data, we do not know if we need more open space or more protected forest space.

Any decision made on Mt Spokane should be made with the overall health of the park in mind. If this site is the last old growth forest in Spokane county, I cannot imagine removing it first and asking questions later. I am afraid that all of us, whether supporters of expanded ski areas or against such a development, are operating in the dark.

Please step back and then take the next step of organizing teams of professionals and volunteers to take on the task of assessing the habitat needs on the mountain. This should be done on all of our state parks.

Thank you,

Comments on Mount Spokane Review The planning committee broke our comments into five separate sections under vegetation and wildlife. For the majority of the comments, the committee referred us back to the original DEIS document. The remainder of the responses concluded that the comment was noted, but no change in the document was required. We did not find reasonable evidence for the committee to do this. Our vegetation critique included rare habitat that was undervalued in the DEIS. When we commented on the lack of recognition of old growth forest, the committee simply responded that there was no change in the document required. We do not feel like this is a sufficient response and would like the EIS to further address the ecosystem that contains old growth. This old growth forest could be key to certain species of plants and animals. If there were a ski lift expansion it would split up the ecosystem and take away from its current continuous natural state. In our vegetation analysis, they also failed to comment on the importance of the globally rare Sitka-Alder habitat. Diminishing this area would decrease biodiversity on a global scale. They also did not detail out a plan to combat the risk of invasive species. Their response was to direct us back to the DEIS that listed current invasive species, but did not adequately quantify the risk. For our comments regarding lynx, wolverine, northern goshawk, and shrew, they stressed the point that the DEIS focused on twenty-one species and believed it adequate to mention the species, but not go into details on the impacts. We also advised updated research for multiple species including lynx and wolves and the committee replied as "comment noted". They also claimed to be using the best available science when evaluating the current status on lynx and wolves instead of intending to research current population trends. Their comment stated that the data "...represents the best available science related to the existing condition and potential impacts" which is hard to believe that this information is relevant to the current condition when the data is from 1999. A new study should be run in order to fully understand the CURRENT impacts as opposed to the outdated impacts of 1999. It seems foolish to use data over ten years old, especially when it pertains to endangered and threatened species. Another issue that we would like to discuss in these comments that we feel were not properly addressed in the FEIS was the out of date research. We wanted new research to make sure things have not changed or are differently effected than they previously were. They said that they used the best available research, but more current research should be completed before they make such a large ecosystem changing decision. Overall, we feel that the committee has gone into this process with a decision already in mind and has worked to maintain that position. Although all comments were responded to, the responses were far from adequate

and do not represent the public's concerns. We would appreciate it if more time was taken to thoroughly work through the concerns as opposed to rushing to respond to all of them out of obligation but not with true attention.

Please adopt alternative 2 in regards to [Mount-Spokane-PASEA-Land-Classification](#). It's the only one that benefits all the citizens of Washington. Don't cave into MS 2000- they're only thinking of themselves and a few friends, and their track of less than accurate statements and claims of what have done in the past, and will do should set off alarm bells within the commission. They have tried to claim there's no old growth there, PASEA is on the north side, etc.

Don't ruin a rare and irreplaceable resource for the benefit of a very few.

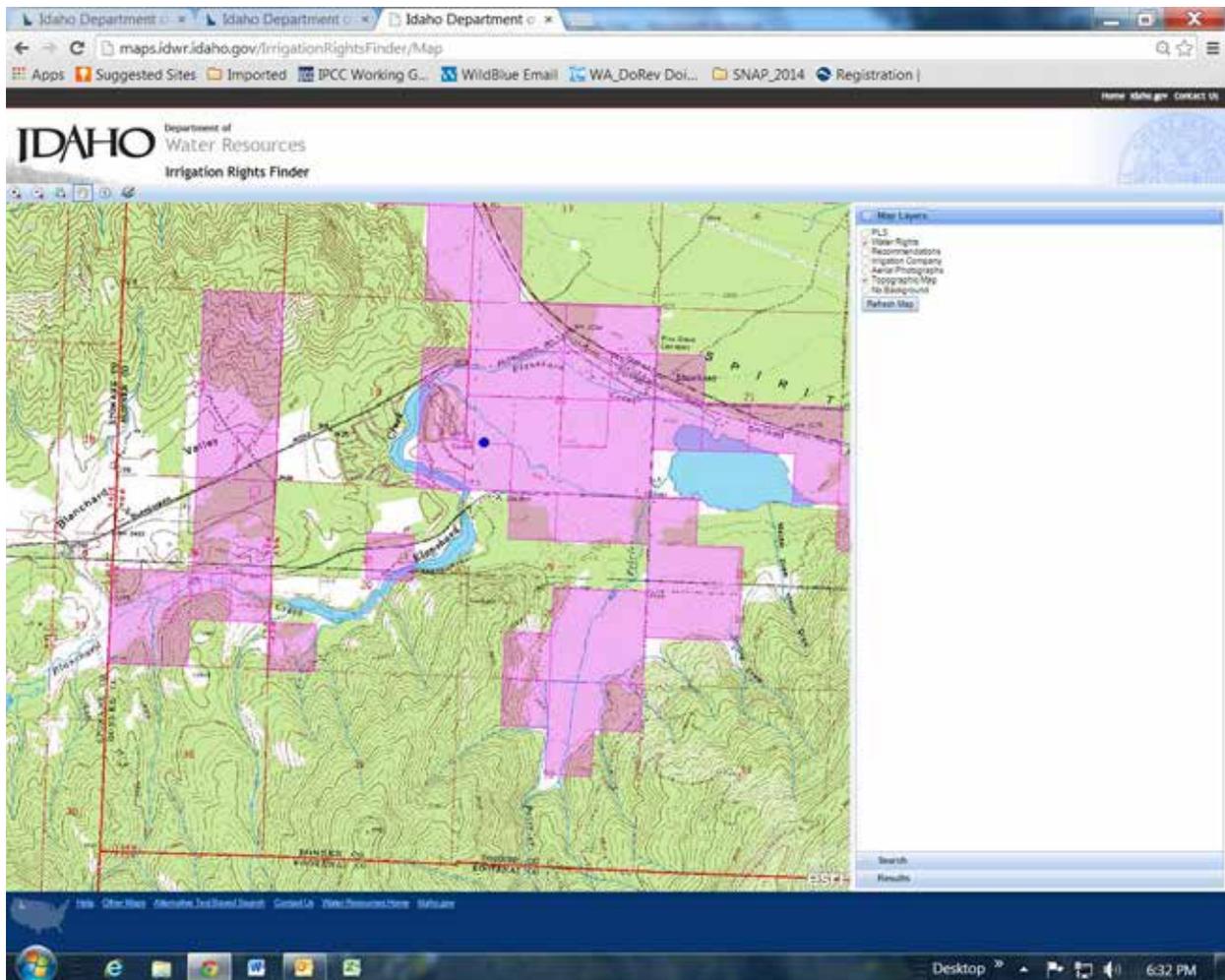
Thanks,

Dear Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission:

In your final decision regarding the Mount Spokane PASEA Land Classification, please take into account the potential impact(s) to the local groundwaters/ water rights and aquifer in adjacent Idaho. I realize that this may be somewhat of an ironic request, given the historic relationship between Idaho and Washington, but putting that aside, I think it important to consider the impacts of the project to the Blanchard Creek watershed, which does not recognize state lines, and its hydrological function recharging Blanchard Lake and the local aquifer and their importance to the Stoneridge Resort/ Blanchard, Idaho area.

In short, ALTERNATIVE 2 – NATURAL FOREST AREA would be the most appropriate alternative to allow for such a consideration.

Thank you for pausing to consider my concern.
Sincerely,



Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to recommend Land Classification Alternative 4--Recreation, Resource Recreation, and Natural Forest Area, and to support Mt. Spokane 2000's proposal to improve the potential expansion area with installation of one chair lift and the clearing of seven trails.

I am in the second generation of four generations of family skiers who have enjoyed alpine skiing at Mt. Spokane, and began to ski there myself in the mid-1940's on rope tows on both Mt. Kit Carson and Mt. Spokane, with occasional hikes to the top to enjoy skiing on slopes that were not lift served at the time. My reasons in support of Alternative 4 and the proposed development are:

1. The concluding phrase in the 1927 Mt. Spokane State Park Dedication (copy attached) was, "All this area has now been deeded to the State for park purposes for the public use for all time." I certainly support the proposition of preserving appropriate and representative wilderness, roadless, and other unimproved lands in our state, however believe that Mt. Spokane State Park as originally dedicated, and considering its convenient access to population centers,

should be available for historical public uses including development of additional alpine skiing and snowboard opportunities in areas that include no qualified old growth forests, while at the same time incorporating environmental mitigation measures recommended by respected independent consultants.

2. I am 74. The day will come, or maybe has come, when I no longer will have the physical capability of hiking into and out of the proposed development area for skiing. Use of chair lifts may be the only means available to me and others similarly situated for having access to those slopes. Use of these slopes should not be reserved or set aside for only those younger and stronger skiers and snowboarders who have the physical strength and agility to use the areas without lifts. There are many other non-lift served areas in Northeastern Washington and Northern Idaho available for back-country skiing.

3. I was a former board member and president of Mt. Spokane 2000 during the time that the group first organized itself in 1989, and later presented its observations to State Parks in 1990 that led to State Parks obtaining the Ski Area Study from Sno-Engineering in 1992. I also led the Mt. Spokane 2000 team during its negotiations in 1995 that ultimately (following two lawsuits and an arbitration) resulted in State Parks and Mt. Spokane 2000 signing the current Concession Agreement in 1997. With respect to the classification issue, I can say that State Parks during the negotiations did not raise the proposition that it was reserving its right to reclassify the Expansion Area in a category that would prohibit development of lifts and runs; the applicable requirements and restrictions in the Agreement require approval from State Parks of construction of improvements, and compliance with applicable permits including environmental reviews; there is no suggestion in the Agreement that State Parks could reclassify the Area to prevent development of improvements under circumstances when Mt. Spokane 2000 complies with all of the Agreement development approval and environmental review requirements.

Thank you for considering my comments and recommendations.

- The west side of Mt. Spokane is the home of 21 focal species.
 - What we have now is a common sense balance of ski area and natural forest area. Part of the Commission's job is to help preserve biodiversity. Lift assisted skiing is only one type of recreation. The continual preserved existence of this forest and its biodiversity, is also a type of year-round recreation. The Commission should take into consideration the whole park and they can do that by choosing Alternative Two.
-

To the Washington State Parks Commission,

I strongly encourage you to choose Alternative 2 in the land use classification for the future stewardship of Mt. Spokane, and to limit further development on the mountain to the minimum possible. In particular, I am opposed to expansion of the ski area on the ecologically delicate north side of the mountain. I have lived in Spokane since 2003, and I treasure the area's outdoor recreation opportunities. Mt. Spokane is particularly valuable because of its proximity to Spokane. I am an expert skier, and I held a season pass at Mt. Spokane for eight years in a row, UNTIL the proposal to create new ski slopes on the north side of the mountain was proposed. I did not want my money contributing to such harmful development, so from that time forward I have not skied at Mt. Spokane. I still go to the mountain frequently for hiking. When I bring visitors from out of town, they are amazed by the beauty of the mountain, and by the wildness of it, especially the north side. On the mountain I have seen bears, turkeys, deer, moose, hawks, large gatherings of ravens, and lots of other wildlife. The OLD GROWTH FOREST is particularly impressive on the north side of the mountain, surviving so close to an urban area. Those trees are huge, twisted and proud.

It is true that other ski areas also propose expansion into their surrounding forested lands, including 49 Degrees North, but Mt. Spokane is different. Because it is such an isolated piece of wild land in a very developed area, it provides an important haven and corridor for wildlife. It also provides a very important recreational resource for people in the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene area. Over the years I have corresponded with Brad McQuarrie, General Manager of the Mt. Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park, about this issue and while I appreciate the time he has taken to discuss this issue with me, I have not been convinced by his justifications for the expansion plan. The plan will not extend the ski season as claimed. Having slopes on the north side will not make it snow any earlier, and since the mountain often closes in the spring when there is still much snow on the slopes, if the ski area wanted to extend the season, they could just stay open longer into April and May. Of course that is not what is really motivating the expansion plan. The plan is to attract more skiers during the critical but short mid-winter period. The main justification for this plan seems to be marketing—Mt. Spokane wants to be able to advertise more slope acreage in order to compete with nearby ski areas during the most popular and profitable part of the ski season. That is just not a good enough reason to harm delicate old growth forest. Mt. Spokane should be marketed as a small, fun, family-oriented ski area with great views and a stone warming hut on top. We have enough slopes and lifts already. Let's keep it simple, keep it beautiful, and keep it wild.

Sincerely,

To whom it may concern,

My name is Matt Jones, I am a Washington resident and am currently earning my PhD in Entomology at Washington State University. I wish to express my concern for the proposed development of Mt. Spokane. As an insect ecologist, I would like to urge you to consider setting apart this old growth forest as a resource for future scientific inquiry. It is completely vital to have large tracts of undeveloped land with which to better understand the consequences of our land-use/land-management decisions. When there are no large tracts of old growth forests left, it is impossible to understand the consequences of our decisions; there is simply nothing to measure them against. For example: in order to understand how and to what degree forests regenerate after logging operations, and to understand why tree-feeding insect outbreaks occur in managed forest lands, it is vital to have baseline old growth forests in close proximity with which to compare our forest management practices. Another example: in order to understand how snow-park recreation (snowmaking, forest modifications, etc.) impact local water quality and stream ecology, we must have adjacent watersheds, in immediate proximity with which to compare the modified environments to. I have attached several links below that provide examples of why protecting old growth forests for scientific inquiry is so valuable. I am an insect conservationist and a backcountry skier and feel in my gut these lands should be set apart for philosophical reasons... HOWEVER, that is not the argument I make today. Having a large tract of minimally managed, unlogged, old growth forest in Spokane County is absolutely vital for scientific inquiry. We simply cannot throw out this resource. In Spokane County, this piece of land is priceless, but only if it is left alone. For this reason I'm asking for Alternative two, Natural Forest Area Designation for land use designation.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear my concerns.

Links below are examples of the scientific importance of old growth forests:

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources importance of Old Growth Publication

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forests_types/oldgrowth/importance.html

McDonald-Dunn Research Forest- Oregon

<http://cf.forestry.oregonstate.edu/mcdonald-dunn-forest>

Importance to stream ecology research

<http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/exforests/hjandrews/>

Old Growth trees for Carbon-Sequestration comparisons

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v507/n7490/full/nature12914.html>

My family strongly recommends Alternative 2 in the land use classification for the west side of Mt. Spokane. This park belongs to the all of us, not just skiers. Please do not fragment the west side with seven ski runs and a chairlift. Keep the development out of the headwaters of Blanchard Creek and the stand of 200 year old-growth trees.

Let's protect the west side as a Natural Forest Area that will provide critical habitat for wildlife species that depend on old-growth forests. Even the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife see Alternative 4 as a threat to lynx, goshawk, and other rare, native species.

Don't you know it's true what they say that you don't know what you have till it's gone. No one can replace a forest once parts of it are clear-cut. Let's save it for future generations to enjoy.

Let's keep a common sense balance of ski area and natural forest area and preserve biodiversity. We urge the Commission to take into consideration the future of the entire park and by choosing Alternative 2.

Attention:

To Washington State Parks Commission,

Hello. I am writing to recommend that you choose Alternative 2 for Mt. Spokane.

I am a fairly recent resident of Washington State and I feel very fortunate to call this area my home. I recently made a visit to Mt. Spokane this fall with my boyfriend, he lives in Spokane. The area is beautiful, this is a very special natural resource and it should be protected. On this particular day I witnessed a lot of wild life, the beautiful old growth forest and breathtaking views throughout my hike. I was so impressed that this paradise was so close to a bigger city. While on my hike in mid October we came across families, couples, single hikers and even a couple groups of teens that were out enjoying the majestic beauty of this very special place. I have heard plans to cut areas of this forest to make room for more skiing and possibly other types of development. I think this would be such a detriment to the people of Spokane, the surrounding area and tourists. You should consider that MOST IMPORTANTLY the devastation this will be to the wildlife in the area.

I encourage you to fight for and save this wonderful forest. You have the power to be the voice for the wildlife and residents of the surrounding community. Please do everything you can to protect Mt. Spokane.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

I can think of very little that could matter more than preserving what is left of a natural world bequeathed to an increasingly incognizant humanity. Please consider future generations who will cherish the real world much more than they will a ski park. Long range perspective, please. I consider it your charge.

One more voice stating loud and clear: do not destroy the old growth mt. Spokane forest. Spare this irreplaceable treasure. Joy fradinjoy@yahoo.com

To the Park Commissioners:

The Spokane Mountaineers recommend the Land Use for the land classification for the PASEA be Natural Forest Area and No Chairlift as described in Alternative 2. The Board has voted unanimously to oppose the Ski Area Expansion.

The Spokane Mountaineers operated one of the first rope tows on Mt Spokane on private property that had been clearcut. The damage to the westside forest if a lift and ski runs are constructed can't be mitigated. The recreation needs for nature education, wildlife viewing, bird watching and passive recreation such as cross-country skiing are well-served by leaving the entire PASEA in it's natural condition.

We note that the Dept of Natural Resources and the Dept of Fish and Wildlife both recommend the NFA designation. Moreover, the State Parks staff recommended NFA designation in 1999. All experts firmly state the westside forest is undisturbed and unique. Degradation of the state-owned old-growth forest does not make sense given the State's desire to protect old growth and rare ecosystems such as the Mt Spokane forest.

We request the PASEA be designated as Natural Forest Area for generations of Washingtonians to enjoy.

Comment: As the current president of the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park and the former chair of the MSSP Advisory Committee, I would like to explain my personal reasons for endorsing the current proposal (Alternative 3) for the alpine ski area expansion. Prior to 2012 I was opposed to the expansion plan, but now that the EIS has been completed, I am in favor of expansion for process and safety reasons.

My primary reason for originally being opposed to the expansion was that the PASEA is largely a pristine, mature forest of great value in its natural state. I felt, and still feel, that we will incur a substantial loss on many levels if that intact forest is fragmented by ski runs. Unfortunately, back in 1999, when the issue was initially debated in preparation for classifying the state park lands, the Commission did not agree with those who expressed the desire to simply stop the expansion from going further. Instead, they decided not to oppose the idea, but to study it further, having previously identified the PASEA in 1991 as particularly suitable for downhill skiing. It should also be noted that in 1952, a master plan was proposed which designated all of Mount Spokane proper for downhill skiing. While the 1952 plan was never implemented, it is clear that people have been looking at expanding to the west side for a long time.

So in the 1999 MSSP Management Plan, it states: "Prior to making a final classification decision, or upon a specific proposal for development in this area, a plan must be developed and approved by the Commission that identifies the proposed uses and facilities for the area and is accompanied with appropriate environmental documentation." The plan then specified a list of five required, very time consuming and expensive components of the proposal, and noted that "nothing in the above decision to defer classification should be interpreted as establishing Commission direction for final land classification of the area." So while the language claimed not to be giving any direction, the implication was obvious that if the proponents took the risk and successfully fulfilled all of the requirements and no glaring reasons were uncovered to reject the proposal, that the proposal had a very strong likelihood of approval. If the Commission didn't think the expansion idea had merit, they would not have asked for more studies, and they would not have asked for more studies if they were not prepared to make their final decision based on the results of those studies. We are now in a situation where apparently the studies indicate that there are no glaring reasons to reject the proposed expansion, so therefore, it should be approved as requested.

Opponents are now largely in a position of asking the Commission to reject the proposal based on the idea that we will incur a substantial loss to the environment if the expansion proceeds. I would contend that it is now too late for that argument, as it makes a mockery of the process chosen for making this difficult decision. Whether or not one agrees with the Commission's decision to defer classification in 1999, it is a decision that needs to be respected as one made through an appropriately public and democratic process. Additionally in 2007, the Commission approved a requested action to direct its staff to include study of the PASEA within its scope of work for the Mt. Spokane Master Facilities Plan and the associated environmental review. In part, the Commission did this to encourage the proponents to move forward with what was expected to amount to about \$500,000 in study expenses with a minimum

of fear that the money could all be wasted. Of course the Commission now consists of different people than in 1999, and they have fresh eyes from which to look at the situation differently, but if they don't at least act consistently with those who came before, they run the risk of seriously degrading the credibility of Commission decisions, particularly those extending through the long time frames that decisions frequently must travel.

Secondly, the Advisory Committee expressed opposition to the original two chair proposal back in 2007 and I am pleased that the proponents have greatly scaled back to a single chair and seven run proposal. I see this as a substantial compromise which respects the desires of the wider community. Now that there are a mere 60 or so acres of trees needing to be cut, with only 7 over 150 years old, I don't feel the need to push for further compromises. I think proponents have successfully made the case that this proposal is of the minimum size and composition that is needed to make it worthwhile. To push for additional concessions would only increase the risk of failure which is not in anyone's best interest. I am also pleased to read in the FEIS comment summary that "State Parks will explore opportunities to reclassify portions of the park to increase protective land classifications" as this was another one of my ideas. Old growth trees can be found throughout the park and existing NFAs could be made larger if existing trail corridors are maintained with existing uses according to the Advisory Committee's trail plan.

Thirdly, I am convinced that the status quo is completely inadequate and that classifying the PASEA as NFA will accomplish very little with regard to solving the safety concerns faced by alpine skiers. The entire mountain top is already being used for alpine skiing. It will continue to be used regardless of any change to regulations, and State Parks has the responsibility to do what it can to make it safer. I believe the addition of Chair 6 will definitely make it safer, while not eliminating the attractive option for side country alpine skiing. If Chair 6 is not approved, a new plan to address the safety issues will need to be devised.

And finally, I am supportive of a Resource Recreation classification for the northern PASEA because it will allow for the possible construction of a 5000' elevation 'Round the Mountain Trail that the Advisory Committee included in its amended trail plan that was submitted to the Commission almost 2 years ago and is still awaiting final approval. While the 5000' trail was not a specific recommendation, it deserves further study and should not be pre-empted by a land classification action.

It is my sincere hope that the decision made on November 20 will put an end to the fighting over what has become a very divisive issue for the Spokane community. Regardless of the outcome, it will be time for a healing process to begin. Thank you for your dedication to State Parks and your persistence in bringing this issue to a resolution.