

119 N. 39th Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

March 19, 2009

Skagit County Planning Commission

RE: Open Space Component of Comprehensive Plan

From the survey information in the introductory section of the open space plan, it is clear that a significant majority of Skagit County residents strongly support open space and recreational trails. One of the things that makes this place we all live truly special is the open spaces for wildlife, scenic vistas and rural landscapes. We need to protect those resources for our future and our children's futures. This open space plan is a very good first step in those efforts. In fact I am quite impressed with the final product as a component for the comprehensive plan. There is little in the plan I would find fault with.

I would like to urge you to include open space designation just south of Big Rock Park to buffer it from future development. Such development hemming in this park with its rough trail to the summit would ruin the experience of its scenic views and the feeling of an isolated tower amidst beautiful natural and rural landscapes.

I understand there are people concerned about trails being developed near their homes. However, as we crowd more people in the future into designated UGAs, Skagit citizens will increasingly clamor for trails on which to get out and enjoy the very reason that many live here—the beauty of this valley. This proposal recognizes that need and plans for it. Ignoring this pressure and holding it off will only make it more difficult and more expensive to implement in the future. I think you will find, as studies elsewhere have, that most people living near trails consider them an addition to their quality of life.

I urge you to consider accepting this open space and trails plan largely as it has been proposed, with significant protection for open space and recreational trails designation.

Sincerely,


Scott Andrews