



Kevin COOK <kevin.c.cook@multco.us>

Case No. PA-2017-7014

Catherine Thompson <thompsoca@gmail.com>
To: kevin.c.cook@multco.us

Mon, Nov 6, 2017 at 8:14 PM



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Dear Mr. Cook,

I would like to submit personal testimony concerning Case No. PA-2017-7014, in opposition to the adoption of Metro's proposed amendment to the County Comprehensive plan. I will attach my letter as a PDF, as it includes pictures. I will also mail it as a paper document.

Please let me know if you have any questions or any difficulty with the document format.

thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thompson, M.D.



letter Multnomah County.pdf
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Exhibit D.1

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Catherine Thompson, I am a retired pediatrician. Currently I volunteer at Outside In doing tattoo removal for low income patients. My husband and I are members of the Oregon mycological society and consider ourselves to be amateur naturalists. We enjoy hiking throughout Oregon and take pleasure in the diversity of trees, native species, mosses, lichens and mushrooms as well as the wildlife we encounter, birds, marmots, deer, coyotes, foxes. We also do advocacy work for Forest Park.

In this capacity I have taken an interest in the Metro North Tualatin Mountain Properties that were purchased with the natural areas bond money explicitly to restore wildlife habitat and improve water quality. The North Tualatin properties have been identified as the wildlife corridor for Forest Park. Because species can travel in and out of Forest Park all the way to the coast range, the genetic diversity and health of wildlife in Forest Park is sustained. The idea of a wildlife corridor is widely appreciated. Even for a park as large as Yellowstone steps have been taken to establish a wildlife corridor to maintain genetic diversity of the species in that park.

Forest Park was set aside by the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan with the highest priority to preserve natural resources. In order to do this effectively the Plan requires baseline wild life studies as well as six point wildlife monitoring :

1. To begin regular monitoring of natural resources, including wildlife, to determine if resources are being sustained, improved, or degraded over time.
2. To coordinate wildlife monitoring with recreation monitoring.
3. To establish permanent wildlife monitoring stations.
4. To develop a monitoring protocol.
5. To monitor stations on an annual basis.
6. To conduct periodic nighttime wildlife censuses.

As the Tualatin Mountain properties are adjacent Forest Park and form the life spring for genetic diversity in Forest Park, management of these properties determines the health of Forest Park wildlife. If baseline studies and monitoring procedures are not established for these source properties, robust management in Forest Park is worthless.

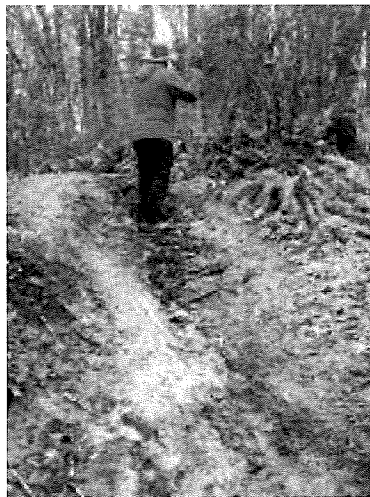
I gave testimony with these themes at the Metro hearing for the North Tualatin Mountain recreation plan. I was alarmed that the biologists from Metro said he did not see a need for a wildlife corridor and that baseline studies were too expensive and unnecessary. Metro Councilor Bob Stacey recommended monitoring of the impact of the proposed recreational facilities but no such stipulation was adopted in the Metro plan.

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This raises serious concerns in my mind. Our experience with recreational trails in Forest Park has illustrated the need for ongoing repair and maintenance of trails. This has been done effectively for hiking trails but sadly not for bike trails.

In 2006 the Forest Park Conservancy (FPC), Portland Parks and the Northwest Trail Alliance, (formerly PUMP) completed a Single Track Cycling Pilot Project in Forest Park. Quoting from the 2009 FPC White Paper on Single Track Cycling in Forest Park "The trail was completed in the fall of 2006. Since that time, Northwest Trail Alliance volunteers, in cooperation with members of the Conservancy and PP&R, have been instrumental in maintaining and improving this coveted .3 mile section of singletrack, along with other trails." However, this is what the trail looks like today.



This is what some of the firelanes look like. All trails show the impact of v-grooving which occurs when bicycles travel on trails when they are wet. After the original damage subsequent rain continues to erode the trail.

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The idea that new recreational trails would be built in a wildlife corridor without baseline wildlife studies and without planned monitoring sounds like a recipe for serious damage to our natural area. Given the impact of cycling on the loose soil of the Tualatin Mountains and the history of unsanctioned bike trails being built in Forest Park and Riverview Natural area, opening the door for new bike trails in a natural area that is currently relatively protected could spell disaster.

I commend the Multnomah County Commissioners for recognizing that preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitat is a higher value than new recreational opportunities. This stand is well supported by the scientifically collected data that forms the basis of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).¹This plan is meant to serve as the basis for all recreational decisions in our state, on federal, state and local lands. The newest 10 year Statewide Recreational Trails Plan covers 2016-2025.² The state asked an important question of Oregonians in their survey, "Please share your priorities for the next ten years, keeping in mind limited funding and land" The answer that the majority of Oregonians endorsed supports the stance that Multnomah County has taken. Statewide 77 % of respondents want repair of existing trails , 68% what preservation of natural features and 65 % want maintenance of existing trails. At the county level the support for preservation of natural features is even higher at 77%. New trails for hiking, ADA Access, running and paved bike trails ranged from 26-39%, with new mountain biking trails at 24%, 6th from the bottom of a 24 item list.

It is unclear why the Metro plans do not comply with this value and the SCORP guidelines. With most of the publicly owned lands in Multnomah county being held in trust for the public by Metro, to make an exception to the Multnomah County plan in favor of recreational development is to discard the values that the County Commissioners have established which are corroborated by the State SCORP data and SCORP trail guidelines.

Please conserve our public lands for habitat and wildlife in accordance with the wishes of the citizens of our county and the state.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thompson, M.D.

¹http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/PLANS/Pages/SCORP_overview.aspx

²http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/Trail_Programs_Services/Documents/2016OregonStatewideTrailsPlan.pdf

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