

## Schroader, Kathy

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**From:** Wisner, Sonja  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 2:47 PM  
**To:** Bill Wright; Eileen Quiring; John Blom-Hasson; Karl Johnson; Richard Bender; Ron Barca-Boeing; Ron Barca-MSN; Steve Morasch (stevem@landerholm.com)  
**Cc:** Lebowsky, Laurie; Schroader, Kathy  
**Subject:** FW: Washington Trails Association Comments - Clark County Parks Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Public Testimony for the August 20<sup>th</sup> PC Hearing. Copies will be made. Thanks



**From:** Ryan Ojerio [<mailto:ryan@wta.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 12, 2015 12:43 PM  
**To:** Cnty Parks  
**Cc:** Bjerke, Bill  
**Subject:** Washington Trails Association Comments - Clark County Parks Plan

Dear Planning Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Clark County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. WTA's mission is to preserve, enhance, and promote hiking opportunities in Washington state through collaboration, education, advocacy and volunteer trail maintenance. With the support of over 600 members in Southwest Washington we speak for hikers and welcome the chance to further our mission through the planning process.

Survey data and public comments summarized in the draft plan reflect what we hear from our constituents. Hiking and walking are very popular activities and that pedestrians prefer trails in a natural setting. In addition to the high percentage of participants engaging in hiking and walking, your survey respondents also ranked trails as their highest priority to address in the plan. We echo their support for more hiking opportunities in Clark County.

We also support trail construction and maintenance through our volunteer programs. Last year we completed more than 2,400 hours working on the new trail at Vancouver Lake and restoring trails at both Whipple Creek and Lacamas Parks. Thus far in 2015 we've done over 1,200 hours with much more planned.

We support many of the goals and objectives laid out in the draft plan. In particular we support the goal of connecting neighborhoods to parks with pedestrian and bicycling trails to reduce reliance on cars to access hiking trails (concurrently reducing parking lot congestion at trailheads). We also strongly support the addition of new staff resources to enable efforts on collaborating, planning and revenue generation. Without recreation staff like Karen Llewellyn, Roger Anderson and Terry Riggs we could not complete the work that we do.

To improve the plan we would like to see more emphasis placed on serving the demand for trails in a natural setting that provide a high quality hiking experience. The proliferation of user-created paths at Whipple Creek Park, Lacamas Park and many other facilities is strong evidence of an unmet demand for soft-surface trails in a natural setting that form loop options. The concept of connectivity is prominent throughout the draft plan; we would like to see equal emphasis placed on the "pearls" connected by the "string" of regional trails. Although one could argue that individual Park's Master Plans are the place to highlight such local and primitive trails, we

believe these trails deserve a prominent place in a comprehensive plan given the overwhelming support for them and so that the plan offers a truly comprehensive overview of what the park system should become.

While it is tempting to simply adopt user-created trails into the system these paths are rarely designed and built to modern standards for user safety and sustainability, often leading to greater problems in the long term. Similarly, using old road corridors for trails often creates erosion problems and doesn't provide the same experience of single track that is heavily favored by hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians alike. It would be a tragic mistake to ignore the serious design pitfalls of road corridors and user created trails in developing trail systems at Green Mountain, Camp Bonneville and other Clark County parks.

Thank you again for the opportunity to engage in this important planning process. We look forward to working together to make Clark County a great place to hike.

- Sincerely, Ryan

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Ryan Ojerio  
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