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RE; Public response to: WDFW DNS 13-083 Land Exchange Wenas Wildlife Area/Conversion of land protected under Section 6(f)3 of the LWCF Act; Public Law 108-198

Let me share with you some information about our background. Dennis grew up in Ellensburg and for several decades to present, he has enjoyed outdoor recreation activities on WDFW public lands in Region 3 (Quilomene, L.T. Murray, Whiskey Dick, Skookumchuck and Colockum). He has fond memories of accessing this landscape by vehicle on traditional, primitive roads to complete the adventures. At times the goal would be hunting or wildlife viewing, but most often it is/was to access the rugged and appealing landscape to simply enjoy the adventure and environment. He has passed this activity on to his family and friends of this generation and hopefully for future generations as well.

My professional career centered around public parks and recreation on a local, regional, state and national level. As a Board of Trustee member of the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA), I served as Legislative Advocacy Chairman and worked with the U.S. Congress to retain federal funding for the Land and Water Conservation state-side funding. I am very familiar with the background, spirit intended and purpose for the funding.

This planned conversion of WDFW lands that are presently out-of-compliance, will protect all traditional outdoor recreation use intended by the federal act.

Dennis and I have a broad knowledge of the public lands within the Skookumchuck and the value that this public land provides for outdoor recreation. We want to express our support for the completion of this WDFW/LWCF conversion. The 1,265 acres identified for the 6(f) 3 protection, compliments the adjoining and adjacent state deed-protected lands. There are nearly 18,000 acres of land that WDFW purchased in the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick under the LWCF state-side federal funding in the 1060's and 1970's.

In the 1990's I was honored to serve on the WDFW Director's Land Management Advisory Council and had the opportunity to work for the completion of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW land exchange that was completed in 2012. The intent of the DNR/WDFW land exchange was to consolidate WDFW and DNR lands to make a contiguous ownership of lands within the landscape to provide the greatest benefit for outdoor recreational use.

We concur with the Environmental Screening of the Environmental Reviewers with regard to the statement that replacement land is superior to the converted land when WDFW stated that the replacement property "presents a wider diversity of recreational opportunities, such as hunting and horseback riding, in a remote undeveloped landscape" and that the property "is accessed by primitive roads" which is critical to the fulfillment of the LWCF protection of the ability to enjoy "outdoor recreation" on the land.

This theme follows the Governor's proclamation supporting multiple recreational access on Washington Public lands and the most recent action by WDFW Director Anderson guiding the Department towards full membership in the Washington Tourism Alliance highlighting outdoor recreational access.

Here are some examples of outdoor recreation that the public will enjoy not only on the converted 221 acres of land but also in all of the other LWCF lands in Region 3:

- Hikers can walk primitive roads and trails if they choose to or they can head out cross-country or along the cliffs above the Columbia River.
- For birders, they can see a variety of species including Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles and other hawks including the Gyrfalcon within the interior lands of this area.
- In the area of basalt cliffs and hillsides near the Columbia River, visitors can view a variety of wildlife including wild sheep.
- Throughout the year you can view Mule deer, Cougar, Black Bear, Elk, Coyotes, Quail, Chukar and even an occasional Badger within the entire landscape.
- WDFW provides hunting seasons in this shrub-steppe habitat for species such as Mule deer, Elk, Cougar, Sheep, Chukar, Bear, Quail and Coyotes.
- Simply viewing the diversity of the landscape by way of pleasure driving through it on existing "Green Dot" roads is an adventure in itself.

Thank you for identifying and adhering to the requirement for this conversion as you accept your responsibility in partnership with the National Park Service to promulgate outdoor recreation access.

Arvilla Ohlde and Dennis Ohlde