



evergreen
MOUNTAIN BIKE ALLIANCE

Eastern Washington Chapter
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6/15/2018

Spokane County Planning Department
Tammy Jones, Principle Planner and John Pederson, Planning Director
1026 W Broadway Ave
Spokane, WA 99206

RE: Valley Springs South Preliminary Plat Environmental Checklist
(Parcel #: 36364.9052, 36364.9064, 36364.9065, & 36364.9066)

Tammy and John,

Evergreen East strongly believes that the submitted SEPA checklist does not adequately acknowledge the recreational importance of this property nor does it acknowledge the benefit that the existing parcels play in the overall connectivity of the Beacon Hill Trail System.

The Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and is a local chapter of the statewide Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance which advocates for mountain biking opportunities in the State of Washington. Evergreen East currently holds a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with City of Spokane Parks Dept. for the ongoing maintenance and development of the Beacon Hill Trail System located within Camp Sekani. Evergreen East also maintains the Beacon Hill Trail System located outside of Camp Sekani while working with land managers and property owners to ensure that multi-use recreational opportunities are maintained throughout the Beacon Hill Trail System.

In 2014, the Spokane County Regional Trail Plan formally recognized the Beacon Hill Trail System. In July, 2016 Evergreen East authored the Beacon Trail System Preservation Plan in order to establish a vision for the overall preservation of the greater Beacon Hill Trail System. The Plan was developed with input from City Parks, County Parks, local landowners, and developers. In July, 2016 the City of Spokane Parks Board passed a resolution supporting and recognizing the Plan.

In 2016, Evergreen East led an effort to identify private landowners within the Beacon Hill area who were receptive to nominating their land for Conservation Futures. At the time of the open nomination round Evergreen East was able to work with private landowners in order to nominate over 140 acres of private land. Several acres within the submitted plat were nominated with support from the land owner. The submitted plat map does not consider any of the land which was nominated during the 2016 Conservation Futures nomination round.

Sections of the parcels under review for this environmental review received over 600 letters of support during the 2016 Conservation Futures nomination process, copies of which may be obtained upon request.

Due to strong public support as well as City and County support of the Beacon Hill Trail System preservation effort, sections of the property under review for this environmental record are currently ranked #4 on the County's prioritized acquisition list for Conservation Futures.

In reviewing the submitted SEPA checklist, Evergreen East takes exception with the following:

Question 8(a) – What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

The applicant states that parcels are currently designated as vacant land. This is true north of the summit. South of the summit the property contains several trails which are integral to the connectivity and quality of the Beacon Hill Trail System including the Downhill Race Course and the main access trail.

Question 12(a) – What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

The applicant does not acknowledge the trails which are located on the southern end of the parcels. As previously stated, over 600 letters were submitted to Conservation Futures in support of the Beacon Hill trail system property preservation.

Question 12(b) – Would the proposed project displace any existing recreation uses?

The applicant states that the proposed measures will not displace any existing recreational use. This statement is incorrect. If access to these trails is lost, then recreational use will be clearly diminished at Beacon Hill. The removal of these trails will seriously impact recreation use, events, and open spaces in the Spokane region.

The importance of the parcels in this application cannot be overstated considering that they represent the highest elevation points which are critical to the overall recreational value of the trail system. Much of the Beacon Hill Trail System's appeal near Camp Sekani is due to the number of high quality downhill mountain bike trails and climbing trails located on the properties under consideration. These recreational features were key elements in the Conservation Futures ranking for the property.

Evergreen's concerns are solely with the southernmost portion of these parcels. We are very supportive of the development on the northern land. We feel that the existing Beacon Hill trail system is an asset to the City's of Spokane, Spokane Valley, Millwood, and Spokane County and that the development of the southernmost portion of these parcels will forever diminish recreational opportunities in our area.

Due to the recreational importance of the properties which have been proposed for development Evergreen East would like to propose a public meeting to discuss the findings of the SEPA checklist.

Thank you for your consideration,



Nathan Hutchens

Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance, President

Attachments: Map of Affected Area, 2016 Conservation Futures Prioritized Acquisition List, 2016 Preservation Plan City of Spokane Resolution, 2016 Beacon Hill Trail System Preservation Plan,