



March 11, 2022

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
PO Box 4250
Olympia, WA 98504

Attn: Nikki Fields nikki.fields@parks.wa.gov
RE: Miller Peninsula Planning

As the equestrian group whose members are the Volunteer Maintenance Crew and frequent users of the trails at the Miller Peninsula State Park Property, we, Peninsula Chapter Back Country Horsemen of Washington, are very interested in what happens with further development of the property and are working to keep ourselves informed. Our chapter, along with Buckhorn Range chapter, built the ADA trail and parking lot with volunteer labor and grant funding in 2015. We have installed all the trail signs and continue to keep the trails open. We have logged 4,950 volunteer hours and 149 stock days at Miller since October of 2014, valued at \$184,498, and an additional 142 hours and 18 stock days since October 1, 2021. Having horses is crucial to our monitoring the vast area.

A representative of Peninsula Chapter attended the recent Commission meeting at Fort Worden on January 27, 2022, via phone, to listen to the proposals and plans that were explained. We equestrians were disappointed that there was no specific mention of the proposal that all current trails were to be maintained as "multi-use" trails and that any trails damaged or moved by development would be replaced. There was also no mention of "horse camping" in the "Village Center" proposal. During the July 2021 "Planning Phase 2 Alternatives" campaign, you asked for interested citizens to choose and recommend favored portions of each alternative, yet your presentation on January 27 seemed to include only features from the "Village Center" alternative; features from "Immersed in Nature" and "Traditional" were missing. We would like some assurance that "multi-use" trails and horse camping will be maintained in the plan as it goes forward.

The effort and energy that we have invested in the development, maintenance, and use of this property, for decades, is proof of our dedication. We expect that the State Parks Commission will continue to consider our ideas and keep us informed as the development moves forward. If an Advisory Committee is formed, we would like to have a member from BCHW as a representative among the planners, as we have in the past.

We appreciate the information received from the State Parks Commission that they recognize the traffic hazards and environmental concerns (water supply and unique plants) that have been brought up by local residents, and that these obstacles must be overcome or mitigated in the development of

a more populated park plan.

Peninsula Chapter BCHW looks forward to continuing our relationship of cooperation with WA State Parks as Miller Peninsula State Park is further developed. We would like to further discuss with you how the equestrian community can assist in making this new Park one highly prized by visitors and still cherished by the local communities and trail users as a very special place.

Sincerely,

Theresa Percy
Director & President

Donna Hollatz
Publicity Chair & Miller Trail Crew Leader

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