

I very much appreciate the careful consideration the WMSWCD staff and Board have taken in reviewing the proposed North Tualatin Mountain Master Plan

The identification of the red-legged frog as a species of concern and the careful recommendations concerning baseline and monitoring studies are excellent recommendations, and clearly necessary to evaluate the impact of recreation in this wildlife habitat.

I would like to ask the WMSWCD to consider an expanded request that a baseline survey of all wildlife, plants and habitat be undertaken prior to recreational development.

As METRO states in their documents, the North Tualatin properties acquired property in the North Tualatin Mountains pursuant to the 2007 Bond measure in order to keep important wildlife and riparian corridors intact. This specified purpose for these properties would naturally bring them under the designation of natural areas as per state planning law 5 rather than their prior land use function of Forestry. State planning goal 5 sensibly recommends that wildlife inventory be the first step in management of a natural area. METRO has indicated that such a process would be too expensive and consequently they have not undertaken a complete wildlife survey that includes surveys during breeding season. As with the red legged frog, without such baseline information how is it possible to determine whether the recreational practices impact the wildlife and watershed? and whether METRO is meeting the goals of the 2007 Metro Bond.

In response to the this application, the County indicated (in the document Ex. C.1 Incomplete Letter 10.27.17) that METRO was mistaken in assuming that trails are exempt from SEC(Significant Environment Concern) regulations. The SEC map identifies all of the METRO Tualatin Mountain Properties as significant environmental concern for wildlife habitat and streams

It is important to return to the original 1992 Metropolitan Greenspaces Plan which defines a wildlife corridor in the following fashion

Wildlife corridors: Linear natural areas and habitats primarily reserved for wildlife needs. They vary in width and composition but enable movement of wildlife between habitats and food sources. Human access will be discouraged in these corridors p31

and again

Regional wildlife corridors:

3. Provide a link between habitats beneficial to wildlife and assists maintaining biological diversity. Opportunities for limited human interaction will be encouraged only when it is possible that it will not detract from wildlife values. p35

Without baseline studies how will we know what impact recreational use is having on our Wildlife Corridor?

I would also like to bring to the attention of the Board and the staff that the semi-judicial exception to the Comprehensive Plan requests an exception not only for the specific developments on the Burlington Creek property but for adoption of the entire North Tualatin Master Plan. This plan includes development at McCarthy and Ennis Creek. IF the WMSWCD review is limited to the Burlington Property I encourage you to include a comment to that effect in your letter. As a citizen I find your careful review of potential impacts on wildlife and watershed invaluable and would hope that such input would be part of subsequent proposed recreational development on the additional sites.

Expanding recreational activities to 3 of the 4 properties will create additional fragmentation of the wildlife corridor. Without baseline wildlife studies on each property the impact of recreation on wildlife and watersheds will not require additional review from the WMSWCD.

Thank you again for the important work that you do and the careful consideration that you have undertaken concerning this proposal.

Sincerely,

Catherine Thompson, M.D.