

Evergreen Park Plat

Howard Carlin
802 E 3rd St
Cle Elum, WA 98922

Representing Kittitas County Park and Recreation District #1

The sale of most of the Plum Creek property in Kittitas County for development has closed the traditional open access to Forest Service recreation land. Former permissive-use trails have been fenced and gated by new landowners. The Kittitas County Park & Recreation District was created to address this need for preserving public access. The District's goal is to create an "organized, sustainable system of trails to preserve and enhance public access to outdoor recreation" with the "capacity to meet the needs of the maximum projected population and usage." The population of Kittitas County is expected to triple in the next 20 years. It is already a major destination for Puget Sound residents seeking a backcountry experience, summer and winter. Such opportunities will be severely affected if permanent, publicly-owned trails and trailheads are not constructed in the next few years.

The Evergreen Park trailhead is the first project in which a developer has offered to donate land to the District for public access, and is being viewed by other landowners, and the public, as a "test case" of the county's new density bonus subdivision process. If successfully completed, it will be the first dedicated public access point from the former Plum Creek acreage to an existing Forest Service trail.

The five acres offered by the developer have a current value in excess of \$250,000.00. It would be unrealistic for the District, or any other government agency or nonprofit group, to expect to be able to purchase comparable sites, if not donated as part of the county density bonus incentives. The county commissioners enacted the density bonus ordinance with the expectation that projects like this would directly result.

The Park and Recreation District is currently in negotiations with the major landowners who control the Cle Elum Ridge corridor from Cle Elum to the Forest Service boundary. A memorandum of understanding is currently being circulated among those landowners for approval of a fourteen and one half mile easement over that route, which will be given to Kittitas County Park and Recreation District #1 at no cost. Sapphire Skies, the developer of the Evergreen Park project before you, is one of the major landowners on that Cle Elum Ridge route. They will be sorely challenged to act favorably upon that Ridge trail if they are denied approval today.

As a Park and Recreation District, we are highly concerned that Kittitas County fulfill its obligation to the landowners who are currently working with our Board to provide trails for the public. The land owners are working in good faith to meet the terms laid down by the County under the Performance Based Cluster Development zoning.

Exhibit No.: C
Hearing: EVERGREEN
Date: 7-25-06
Submitted by: HOWARD CARLIN

Without that zoning, our Board will be hard pressed to fulfill its mandate to provide a meaningful trail system for the public.

Our Board of Commissioners strongly supports the Sapphire Skies Evergreen Park project and voted that support unanimously in our May 15th meeting. We have already submitted a grant request for the design and construction of the sno-park, which will also be a summer trailhead. This is our first project to come to fruition and we are anxious to get it underway.

Thank you

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