



**Tribal Chairman  
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October 27, 2020

To: The Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers and the Snohomish County Council

CC. Washington State Board of Natural Resources, Washington State Forest Practices Board,  
Commissioner of Public Lands Hillary Franz, Sen. Keith Wagner, Department of Natural  
Resources Director of Tribal Relations Joenne McGerr

Re: Wild Wallace County Park Reconveyance

Dear Snohomish County Council Members and County Executive,

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe is a signatory to the Point Elliott Treaty. Our homelands are located in eastern Snohomish County and Skagit County. We have tribal businesses, housing, and government buildings in Snohomish County, and our 13-acre reservation is located across the border in Skagit County where we also have businesses, housing, and government offices.

Since Time Immemorial our Sauk-Suiattle people have hunted, gathered, fished and lived on lands and waters that are now part of your county. The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe has historic and contemporary ties to these and other lands in eastern Snohomish and Skagit counties all the way into the Cascade Mountains. Our history relates that our ancestors hunted, fished and gathered in the areas of Wallace Falls. These are some of the lands ceded in the Point Elliott Treaty, but Sauk-Suiattle's claim to these lands is further made via our oral history of traditional lifeway and treaty protected activities occurring in this geography.

The Tribe has a close working relationship with DNR, primarily because of the State's Centennial Accord and RCW 43.376 concerning the state's government to government relations with tribes. But our relationship with Snohomish County has not ever fully developed. We think there is now an opportunity to develop a relationship between the Snohomish County Council and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribal Council.

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe is notifying Snohomish County of its conditional support for the proposed reconveyance of 5,300 acres for the Wild Wallace "park."

Our Tribe's Cultural Resource Department inspected the site with representatives of the Department of Natural Resources on Oct. 5. Despite the decades of intensive logging of parts of this acreage and the massive wild fire that burned this land in the 1920s, the Sauk-Suiattle team

identified an unusually large number of culturally modified trees, which is a primary archaeological identifier for tribes in the region. DNR's archaeologist confirmed those finds that we shared with DNR.

Additionally, there are multiple waterfalls on this site. Waterfalls are key to the Sauk-Suiattle's spirituality. The site also has an unusual quantity of culturally important plants, including rare native berry shrubs such as the native black raspberry. The site would have been a short one to two day walk from Sauk-Suiattle's home area in historic times.

Some of these culturally modified trees were located in the area of the proposed Middle May timber sale. If the timber sale occurs, Sauk-Suiattle must be permitted to conduct a cultural resource survey of the area, as DNR knows. But Sauk-Suiattle prefers that the timber sale not occur, and that instead the focus be on remediating problems on the landscape including invasive plants in the lower elevations, and areas of historic overplanting of forest areas that need to be thinned to allow for the restoration of a natural forest.

Our Tribal Council has met with the consultants for Wild Wallace and discussed our concerns that a public park which brings large numbers of the general public to the land would be destructive to the natural environment, perhaps even more destructive than the planned logging of some of these lands.

Our council has expressed conditional support for this "park" reconveyance if the land was managed for preserving wild life, for promoting biodiversity, cultivating culturally important plants, for preservation of salmon spawning areas, and for tribal use and public education. Understanding that a reconveyance to Snohomish County would be transferred via deed under RCW 79.22.320 it would be the goal of the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe to ensure that the rights and interests of the Tribe are included on the deed.

To this end, the Sauk-Suiattle Tribal Council requests that Snohomish County meet with the Sauk-Suiattle Tribal Council to further discuss this matter. The Sauk-Suiattle Tribal Council would offer the following starting points for initial discussions.

- Sauk-Suiattle as one of the three tribes located in Snohomish County must be consulted before a reconveyance can occur.
- Sauk-Suiattle seeks a role in co-management of the lands for purpose of restoration and preservation of salmon-bearing streams, protection of game animal habitat and restoration of culturally important plants.
- Sauk-Suiattle advises that our involvement is not an offer for Snohomish County to pass the costs of management entirely to our tribe, but rather means that we work together and find solutions cooperatively.
- Sauk-Suiattle specifically seeks that the "park" be managed not for public recreation but for preservation, restoration, tribal lifeways, and education.
- Sauk-Suiattle further seeks a cooperative agreement with Snohomish County to carryout subsistence hunting, gathering and fishing during time frames when the park area would be closed to the public: There are

- models for these types of agreement between tribes and the U.S. Forest Service and also tribes and the Washington State Parks Department.
- Sauk-Suiattle seeks a seat at the table as Snohomish County considers this proposal.

While the Tribe appreciates the need for residents of Washington State and Snohomish County in particular to have the opportunity to enjoy communal outdoor spaces, we have serious concerns about opening these lands as a public park and with the trails as outlined in the DNR's management plan. Instead, we are giving our conditional support to this reconveyance because we believe that there is a better way to co-manage these lands in our ceded area for protecting the traditional lifeways of our Tribe and other tribes, and protecting these lands and waters for all our future generations. This is an opportunity for productive use of these lands as a place for public education about the natural environment and the Tribes that are in Snohomish County.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norma A. Joseph". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Norma" being the most prominent part.

Chairman Norma A. Joseph  
Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe