

Raw Public Comment from Rockport State Park CAMP meeting  
Monday, April 7, 2008  
Concrete High School

**Natural Resource Issues**

Cascade Island Property – Since it is a highly valued riparian areas – and at the whim of the river – it should be considered for wild and scenic river protection.

Hold and advance old growth protection.

Other sensitive resources include blue heron rookery and pileated woodpeckers – both obviously nesting.

Eliminate non-native plant species from Rockport State Park (Stinky Bob).

Weeds in Park – Stinky Bob (*Geranium robertianum*) is taking over the forest floor in Rockport State Park. It even climbs the old growth trees. We need to schedule weeding parties on a regular basis to control it.

Old growth should be preserved and the educational opportunities should be explored and exploited. This park should be a jewel in the crown of the State Park system.

Keep park development limited to trail maintenance and good little wood bridge construction to keep hikers out of streams (right now trails seem o.k. in this regard).

Work with groups to preserve wildlife and enhance areas for wildlife protection.

Weeds in Rockport State Park – Stinky Bob (*Geranium robertianum*) is taking over the forest floor of the park and even climbs up stumps and old growth trees! It is rife around the campgrounds and trail heads. I even noticed some as far as the old tree near the summit of the EVERGREEN TRAIL! WE NEED TO ARRANGE WEEDING PARTIES!

These trees in question are a renewable resource and enough will remain after safety concerns are met.

Cascade Island – Just leave as is or walking trails.

Avoid falling any old growth trees – clear the camp if necessary.

600 of the 670 acres in the park is “old growth” therefore the trees in question in the campground are few in number compared to the total. Remove the problem trees and reopen the park campground.

If you take some big trees out of the camping area – it seems like some wood could be used for punchin - trail repair and improvement – and if no room to become nurse logs – bid out to local loggers????!??

Cut 30% of the old growth down and another 20% will be lost to blow down. Below the park there is a slough and above the park there is a large area without roads. There is a large culvert under highway 20. Animals do migrate between this upper area and slough. Enhance the corridor through the park and across highway 20.

When trees are 300 ft tall where do you stop when considering what is a “hazard” tree?

If the eagles are nesting at the Sauk (across from Rockport State Park) site, lets protect the area from development.

None of the old growth should be cut. There is so little left and it is the prime reason the park was created. We would be taking away exactly what people are coming to enjoy.

Old growth should never be cut. It is a natural wonder that can never be replaced. To even cut 1 down should be a crime. How many areas can you go to in north Washington and drive right into an old growth forest Not Many If Any Please cut no old growth.

What a shame. The park was created because of the old growth and now you want to remove 1/3 of it? Where have the park's priorities gone? Keep the trees, celebrate the trees.

### **Recreation Issues**

May mushroom hunters park outside the gate at the entrance when the park is closed? I worry about getting a ticket or fine.

I would like to see the park remain pretty much as is. Certainly no new development for parking or camping. These areas have never been full (as far as I know).

Bring camping back to Rockport State Park. Prefer tent camping over RV camping.

Find a way to have camping yet preserve safe but access to area.

Great job on the new wheelchair accessible trail. Keep the trail open (and walkable) and leave the trees.

Take down the 1/3 of danger trees in the overnight camping area and reopen it.

Move the overnight camping area north into the younger old-growth area.

Have an annual community work party to maintain trail in the park – (has been done in the past) could include service hours for children.

Convert the overnight camping area to day-use only, and develop O'Brien-Riggs into an overnight facility.

Be less risk averse – let people take their chances – Waivers?

How many legal problems have occurred here? How many injuries have there been? Perhaps we are overreacting?

The Rockport campground is fully developed and should be opened where it exists and not moved at further expense. Sell the problem trees.

Rockport State Park is a valuable camping resource and should be re-opened as soon as possible. If it takes removing the trees to do this, then by all means, remove enough trees tot make the park safe and useable.

Trails – Please keep them open – organize volunteers to help clear, repair and improve.

All areas need to have safe access. Some may only be by boat.

Keep the park as a day-use area and relocate the camping to another place.

O'Brien-Riggs – Develop area for boat launch

Camping – I like the idea of purchasing “safe” camping areas from nearby landowners

Alternative camping at Rockport State Park – clear the most dangerous trees

If camping can't be allowed will that jeopardize the future access/maintenance/survival of the park?

Day use group area – what a wonderful place – please keep this available and open.

Develop some trail bike opportunities

I regularly use the park for hiking especially in the off season. I'd like to see funds spent to maintain the trails and facilities. This park is an asset to residents and visitors of the upper Skagit. It should get more attention from State Park \$.

Develop connecting trail from Howard Miller County Park to Sauk trail system – Eventually connect trail to Sauk Mountain trail east of the Sauk property

An overall approach should be little to no “development”. I am disabled and would rather see the land left for the flora and fauna despite the fact that I am unable to walk through it!

Rockport State Park – Top and/or remove danger trees in the developed area. Day use only does not open enough opportunities for people to enjoy the park.

Increase the recreational area by linking Howard Miller trails with Rockport State Park trails – not by logging the trees that people are coming to enjoy.

Marketing day use and developing better facilities.

Wise decision to close for camping. Consider purchase of adjacent second growth forest for property and develop camping there.

No mountain bike use on trails → soils too wet and fragile. Potential hiker conflict too great.

People like to camp near water – consider overnight camping at O'Brien-Riggs, with boat in access.

Lights at park entrance too bright and incongruous with area – if park stays closed – please reduce or remove.

Rockport State Park should be marketed as a world class old growth forest with trails and info.

Rockport – find some way to open the existing camp area even if it means cutting all trees in that area. But just take out danger trees in rest of park.

O'Brien-Riggs – Biking trail development i.e. mountain biking. Give opportunities to cyclists for overnight Adirondack camping in picnic area.

Outstanding trail network – great diversity. Consider adding spur trail from Sauk Springs Trail → Railroad grade trail along river so folks can access the underused railroad grade trail. Topography is steep but believe trail is accessible.

## Cultural Resource Issues

As a small business owner in Rockport the overnight camping offers a helping hand in keeping my business afloat. Businesses in my area are suffering. Rockport is a hub for eagle watchers, fishermen, hunters, etc. We need this park back for our own economic stimulus or we will lose all or our tourists.

Provide informational signs throughout all areas

Parks department should buy the 640 acres next to Rockport State Park to make camping? But mostly to educate people about the logging process.

Not enough lodging in east Skagit County, would be a shame to lose this unique camping experience (Rockport).

Create system so people can sign off on lawsuit rights and camp at their own risk.

Swap the Everett and Cascade Island properties, or designate them as permanent habitat and let em run their way. Better yet, sell em and buy more property west and north of Rockport SP and develop camping there, maintaining the park as is as much as possible.

There are too many valuable, built in resources/facilities already in place at Rockport to let them go. To put the water/electric/sewer/buildings as the “sacrifice” for allowing the trees’ age/liabilities to leave the facilities unused is a waste. Cut the trees as best you can and get the camping areas open.

O’Brien Riggs – good development opportunity for group camps – bunkhouses, cooking facilities, non-utility campsites, trails, replacement of buildings (replicas) to keep some of the historical touch. Good “jumping off” spot for school groups to visit Sauk Mountain, Diablo, Ross, Rockport, etc.

Nowhere in the dozens of parks I’ve camping in (over the 40+ years) do we have that particular environment. Kids learn more about age, permanence, “old people” when we talk about how the trees support each other and how they are affected as they are lost one by one (or 30% at a time!).

Pay the money, mitigate Rockport’s dangerous trees, preserving as much infrastructure (campsites and associated services as possible).