I attended the community meeting last night held in Eatonville. Thank you for taking the time to present the planning information. My comments are as follows:

We are equestrians that have ridden these trails for over 20 years. Between the two trail improvement options, option A is far better for equestrians than option B.

My reason for this choice is that option A includes trails specific for equestrian and hiker use, giving horseback riders the option to either ride on trails with bike riders or to not. It is my experience (both personal and through discussions with other riders) that horses and bikes on co-use trails can create unsafe situations for the horseback rider as bikes can be scary for horses. The most experienced trail horse that has been desensitized to bikes can still spook and bolt. It is impossible to train this trait out of them as they are ultimately a reactive prey animal whose goal is to save themselves when they feel threatened. In these situations it is usually the horse or rider that gets hurt, not the bike rider.

I appreciate that the planning group has taken this co-use risk into account with design specs such as wider trails and open sight lines. However I feel that you are missing one key item for risk reduction which is signage and education. Many hikers and bike riders do not know what it means to "yield" to horses under basic trail etiquette. Signage depicting trail etiquette for all users including horseback riders is needed at all of the trail access points. I believe that this signage needs to be right next to the trail entrance, not at a kiosk that many users could miss. The Olympic Discovery Trail's webpage has an excellent section on trail etiquette (under the explore tab) that could be used as the basis of this type of educational signage. There is information for all users including horseback riders.

I also believe that the entire trail system needs a speed limit for all users as speed is often a contributing factor in trail accidents. There are some horseback riders that gallop on sections of the trail. As trail use increases with park development, this can create dangerous situations for all users. A speed limit of perhaps 10 mph when combined with the extended lines of sight would increase safety for all users.

Please specify that dogs need to be kept on leashes in the park and on the trails. Too many people believe that their dogs have perfect manners and will come when called and are therefore safe to let run free. Unleashed dogs present a risk factor for all park users from the horseback rider whose horse is scared by a dog running up and barking to the small child who is scared by the same behavior. Many horseback riders feel that it is their right to take their dogs on trail rides and to let them run loose. I have never believed that this is safe for other trail users.

There was some discussion last night about making sure the trail system is open and inclusive for all users. I support making trails accessible and inclusive as long as they provide a safe (as
reasonably possible) experience for all users. We ride our horses because we are not physically capable of hiking long distances. We commune with nature via our horses. We want to be able to continue to enjoy riding the trails in this area, whether they are bike/horse/hiker or horse/hiker trails.

Sincerely,

Roy 98580

I forgot one more important comment:
Please continue to work with the Nisqually Tribe to convince them to allow trail access on their property. The main trail on their property is an old logging road that creates a wonderful loop opportunity for all users.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Eatonville, WA 98328

Nicki, Brian,

First, thank you again for putting the meeting together last week.

I don’t think I ever gave my preferences for the Day Use Village Center or the Trail Plan.

For the Village, I prefer alternative A. My reasons are; 1. I’m not sure having a 300 person amphitheater would be fully utilized. Maybe leave room for expansion? 2. Having something memorizing the massacre there is overdue. People need to know the areas history, even the bad parts.

For trails, I like option A as it has more trail miles. It too bad it can't go on through the tribal property as it has the best views.

Finally, some thoughts I have.
1. In the areas close to the ridge edge, how will it be made safe from people wandering to it? It’s all steep, most too steep to get yourself back up w/o help. We only propose one trail that gets near the ridge edge and that trail will be controlled with fencing. Other trails near the ridge edge are proposed to be abandoned.
2. I spoke with Alicia(?) about accessing the state property across the river. I get that a bridge would be expensive, but as of now the only way to get there is via Weyerhauser roads, which require a permit, and are both costly and very limited. (This also includes Fossil Rock) Alicia told me there is no state easement on those roads.
So, why have the property if the public can't reasonably access it? It will be considered for public access in future stages of the park’s development. Is it worth trying to get an easement from Weyerhauser, or can a property swap be made with them for property the public could access?

3. The pump track. Is there someone in the mtn bike community involved with its design? The pump track is conceptual at this point. The biking community will be consulted during the design phase.

Thanks,