

## **Westport Light State Park – Westport Golf LLC Proposal Comments**

*January 4, 2023 – January 30, 2023*

Thank you for offering this to our community. We are in need of additional activities for locals and guests other than the fishing, clam digging, or crabbing. We need something for all age group and all family members. A bike hiking trail around the boundaries would be fantastic we are not a bike friendly area and have little diversity to walking areas other than the lighthouse trail. Looking at the newest plans I didn't remember seeing the long course reaching to the Lighthouse swamp or there being a long and short course. The short course I see reaching into the larger healthier stance of trees vs the already disturbed unhealthy areas. This is a concern of mine and hope little development would happen in this area. Not sure about the trail being demolished and rebuilt as a hard packed surface, this is the only huge deal breaker for me. This is used by numerous generations needing cement or asphalt not loose base crushed rock. All elderly, wheelchairs, scooters, rollerblading, skateboards. What would this be like in our hard rainy seasons. I feel divots will start to show in a short time. I feel the city could partner with the developers for families to enjoy while others are on the Links course. A community center, pool, children climbing wall, miniature golf course, small exercise room. The additional tax revenue could be used for general maintenance and repairs. I feel many elderly might work a day to get out of the house & or small supplemental income. We need additional jobs for the young in this area this could also be a summer job in the community center. Again thank you and good luck.<sup>1</sup>

I am concerned about the direction Washington State Parks is headed. I read in The Daily World newspaper and in an article on Channel 5 News out of Seattle that the Washington State Parks bought an area close to 600 acres with a \$1.9M grant from the Department of Recreation and Conservation so they can lease the property to Westport Links LLC to put in a Scottish Links course and Resort with a hotel and restaurant.

Does the Westport Links proposal:

- Meet the requirements of Washington State Department of Ecology's conservation of Wetlands?
- Have the approval of the WA State Department of Ecology?
- Follow the application boundaries of the \$1.9M grant provided by WA state office of Recreation and Conservation used to purchase the land?
- Meet the core values of the WA State Parks department.
- Meet ADA requirements for access to the 1.3m pathway?
- Meet Diversity goals for access?

More specifically:

Two of the core values of the WA State Parks Department that may not be met are:

1. Commitment to stewardship that transmits high quality park assets to future generations:
  - a. Much of the 600 acres is assessed as wetlands
  - b. "Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs. An immense variety of species of microbes, plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals can be part of a wetland ecosystem."
  - c. In an area that has a propensity to flood, this Wetland helps

reduce flooding by acting like a giant sponge that soaks up water and releases it slowly.

d. Will this area be available to future generations if we repurpose this area of land?

2. Dedication to outdoor recreation and public enjoyment that welcomes all our citizens to public parks

a. The National Golf Foundation says 75 % of the people who play golf are men.

b. Benchcraft company says

i. 90% of Fortune 500 CEO's are golfers

ii. Annual household income of golfers is \$125,000

iii. 83% own securities

iv. 86% own life insurance

v. 44% invest so they can retire early

vi. Golfers are middle to high income people

vii. 56% of golfers spent more than \$30,000 on their last car

viii. 28% spent over \$40,000 for their last car

c. These are not Westport WA resident demographics

d. Will this be a public course, affordable to everyone?

It also seems to deviate from Washington state Park's diversity goals:

Washington State parks vision wants all Washingtonians to enjoy their parks

- 75% of golfers are men
- 67% of golfers are white

This data is from <https://www.zippia.com/golf-professionaljobs/demographics/> Sept. 2022

#### ADA RECREATION

The state of Washington has long been a leader in providing accessible outdoor recreation. From ADA-compliant campsites, to restrooms, trails and docks, Washington State Parks is committed to making outdoor recreation accessible to all people?

>If the trail is going to be removed, how will this help people with disabilities?

For your reference, the \$1.9M grant was awarded by the office of Recreation and Conservation. Their mission statement is:

>Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's mission is to be an exemplary partner that provides statewide leadership and funding to protect and improve the best of Washington's natural resources, now and for future generations.

I am hoping Washington State Parks will review The Westport lighthouse project and withdraw the proposal to develop a golf course. Instead, look at using natural trails that Washington State residents can use when they come with their families to enjoy the natural beauty of Westport. <sup>2</sup>

Dear Planners,

Thank you for recording the 2022 November Westport Light State Park/Golf Links work session with the parks commission, staff, and applicant. Although I was not able to attend any of the public meetings, I have viewed the video and read through many of the project studies/presentations.

Also, thanks for the opportunity to ask some pertinent questions:

1. The golf course is part of the RCA program, and would be under a lease agreement to the private applicants/investors. Why is the lease agreement not a competitive bidding process like many other concessions in your parks? Why were the Seattle golfers/contractors the only persons/"investors" allowed to forward a proposal? Wouldn't your own equity and diversity programs reach out to minority/POC interested parties?
  
2. The legal covenant encumbering certain wetlands on the property deed should have been disclosed on the title search, at least, and how it was filed would not affect that omission. (Your powerpoint has a copy of the front page.) Every buyer real estate agent asks 2-3 questions 1<sup>st</sup> thing: A. is the seller the owner B. what are the CCR's on the property? Your staff "talked around" this covenant in the Youtube and frankly, moving forward on this project with a "might not be valid" seems reckless.
  
3. Are the citizen taxpayers, fee payers, permit payers, Discovery Pass payers of this state paying for the preliminary studies on this RCA proposal? I understand the developer will be bulldogging/paying for many of the post-approval permits, but are we on the \$\$\$\$ hook for those initial studies?
  
4. "Appearance of fairness": Many of us love Westport and its parks no less than the golfers and contractors sitting at the table with your staff. The previous golf course developer problems, the appeals, the public comments are all obvious not everyone wants another golf course on that state park/public property. Several of your own commissioners expressed deep concerns about this proposal. At the next work session or commissioner meeting, please schedule in some opponents or permitting agencies equal time to temper the rapturous justifications from Seattle golfers.
  
5. Equity and diversity: destination recreational "resorts" like golf courses, ski resorts, SCUBA tours, and mountaineering schools have no record of note for attracting people of color, marginalized citizens, at-risk kids, or people in poverty. A bus ride for 4 to Westport to stay in a fancy lodge, eat at Bennetts, rent clubs and a cart, hire a caddy, play 18 holes of golf, then relax at the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole cannot be part of your marketing/permitting process.

Thanks for your time. Any comments or concerns to the above would be more than welcome, and I look forward to providing e-mail public comment for the upcoming commissioner meetings. <sup>3</sup>

I have never been to Westport in my life, however is this course is built I'll be there several times a year and Im sure Im not the only person who feels that way. I think local community members are right to demand that this project does not takeaway from existing walking access, however to those concerned I would encourage you to visit Chamber's Bay to see how a golf course can provide improved recreation for non-golfers as the paths there wind through the entire course. <sup>4</sup>

Dear Commissioners:

I am sure several commissioners and many in audience today remember the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt by Half Moon Bay/Mox-Chehalis to build a golf course in Westport. The scars are still evident on the drive into Westhaven, and I am sure the contention has continued in town.

Please be sure, many of the same people who donated to FOGH, Surfriders, and the other appellants are watching closely again:

1. This is a privatization of the public park. It is all semantics. The wealthy golfers at your November meeting are private citizens who will be signing a lease to build and run the golf course.
2. At this meeting you will hear of a Diversity and Equity Program. Please do not delude yourselves into thinking a destination golf course in Westport will be a diversity and equity opportunity. Destination recreation such as mountaineering courses, adventure cruises, whitewater rafting, and tony golf resorts have an abysmal record of attracting BIPOC, marginalized, and underserved citizens.
3. I am deeply upset that public funds have already been spent on reports, consultants, and the park staff. Please stand down any non-essential staff and let the private developers bull-dog permits from now on.
4. The covenant signed on the Mox-Chehalis/Half Moon Bay deed prohibiting fill of some wetlands should have been disclosed in the Buyers Agreement. What are the CCR's on a property is ALWAYS one of the 1<sup>st</sup> questions in a legitimate real estate transaction. The fact WA State Parks did not catch this covenant should be a huge red flag about the rest of this project; just as the city should have been more careful with Mox-Chehalis and his difficulties balancing a check book.
5. The ocean is rising, the tides are higher, and the erosion persists.

Many of us love the ocean, the beach, the town as much as the wealthy golfers proposing this project, but Westport Light SP is not the place for a golf course.

Thanks,<sup>5</sup>

I am against commercial development within a state park. A golf course within the Westport Lighthouse state park would restrict my movement and enjoyment in this area. The area should remain open for all, not just golfers. Golf courses require excessive water and maintenance, including pesticides. I prefer state parks to be in natural states. And I don't want to worry about pesticides when I walk or hike in the area.<sup>6</sup>

Please save the current Westport Light State Park as is for public use.

**PLEASE DO NOT PERMIT COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT for the proposed golf course or any private business interest<sup>7</sup>**

As I fellow Washingtonian I strongly urge you to save this beautiful and important state park.

**PLEASE do not allow this wonderful site to be developed!!**

There are so many reasons not to allow development- most importantly, to me, is the environmental impact of any type of

<p>construction, let alone destroying one of our states important park treasures. Concerned citizen <sup>8</sup></p>
<p>I have visited Westport Light State Park for many years and feel this is a wonderful area to enjoy nature as there are many birds and wildlife living here. I urge you to stop the destruction of this park for the sake of golfers. Removing trees, disturbing the tall grasses would be another natural disaster contributing to climate change. <sup>9</sup></p>
<p>Natural habitat areas are disappearing at an alarming rate. The proposed golf course not only will destroy a natural habitat impacting wildlife but will restrict the land use to a smaller segment of the population that currently have access. The small benefit of this development is outweighed by the negative impact of losing another segment of WA state's character. This is not wise land management. <sup>10</sup></p>
<p>There is so little wild space left. A natural style golf course is better than a manicured golf course, but golf has fallen out of favor with all but the old who will not be with us long (I'm one of them), so after a short period, it will not be profitable. After they die off, the land will still have been disturbed and the wildlife gone. Also the wind in Westport would make golf frustrating. Bad idea all around. <sup>11</sup></p>
<p>I think the public purchase of the land between the two parks was a good move. The 600+ contiguous acres of public access to a natural waterfront is wonderful. I am not in favor of creating a golf course on this natural land. As head of the Bee Campus at Clark College in Vancouver I am acutely aware of how the loss of native vegetation unravels the web of life. The beneficiaries to natural habitat are innumerable. The beneficiaries to a golf course are very numerable: some golfers and finance obsessed municipal leaders. The natural park is a gorgeous piece of land sculpted by nature for thousands of years. I want it to be visited not "improved". <sup>12</sup></p>
<p>A golf here would not be in the best interest of the public. Our land is being ruined everywhere I look and I ask that we leave this area alone. Golf courses use too much of our natural resources....especially water...and destroy what is there naturally. Let's look out for our natural areas <sup>13</sup></p>
<p>I learned today about planning stage for a Scottish style golf course. I hope it will not happen. I have visited there twice in the last eight years. the second time we took bicycles and rode from the lighthouse out to the beach trail and on into westport. I love the wilderness feel of being there and hope it remains like this. It was summer. Many people were walking along the paved trail there. To me, it seems a golf course would transform the area to just one more place for the affluent. <sup>14</sup></p>
<p>Public parks; whether they be city, county, or state; belong to the people and should be accessible to all the people. Building or allowing a builder to develop a golf course might not limit accessibility but would certainly limit the useability of many citizens to serve a very few. A good model for this project would be Chambers Bay in University Place. Prior to being built the project was touted as being a stable revenue source for University Place and Pierce County. This has not been the case. Most of the visitors to Chambers Bay are individuals who are they to do their daily</p>

<p>exercise by walking the paths and trails. Most of the trails were there prior to the golf course being built.</p> <p>As of last week, the promised hotel which was to be part of the "destination" of Chamber Bay is no longer planned. The inability to acquire funding (even by a loan) is unobtainable.</p> <p>If a developer wants to build a golf course in West Port, so be it, but let them acquire their own land through purchase or and donation and do so rather than using lands "In Trust" for the use and enjoyment of all the citizens of Washington State. <sup>15</sup></p>
<p>Replacing a publicly available natural space with a private golf course is damaging to the environment and our human need to go out into our environment. Golf courses are an especially damaging and frivolous way to turn public land private <sup>16</sup></p>
<p>The proposal for commercial development of Westport Light State Park must not be approved. Many reasons have already been pointed out by others. In addition I will add that access to this beautiful unspoiled land is currently available to everyone to enjoy. However, after commercial development of the golf course and associated facilities, access will be drastically limited to only paying clientele. Additionally the unspoiled quality of the park as now enjoyed will be destroyed by comparatively unsightly artificial buildings, roads, traffic, parking lots, noise, and the ever present trash that inevitably follows. Please consider keeping this gem of a state park in its natural condition for all Washingtonians and other visitors to enjoy. <sup>17</sup></p>
<p>The golf course and lodge project on State Parks land should not go forward for several reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This project will serve only a limited group of visitors i.e. golfers and the wealthy, those who can afford fees to golf and those who can afford upscale lodging. This will come at the expense of the majority of park users who are there to enjoy scenery, nature and activities with no high cost barrier (walking, hiking, bird watching and similar).</li> <li>2. This is a commercial project that should be built on private land because it serves to benefit private businesses and the general business community in the surrounding area (Westport) which should NOT be the mission of State Parks.</li> <li>3. Building a lodge and golf course in this setting will destroy scenery and natural habitat that supports the activities of the majority of visitors including walking and hiking in scenic areas and watching wildlife.</li> </ol> <p>Bottom line, State Parks should not be in the business of giving over precious park lands to serve the few wealthy visitors! <sup>18</sup></p>
<p>Westport Light House State Park is a beautiful natural area with tall dune grasses waving in the wind and trails snaking along the low bluffs down to sandy stretches of shore with birds and wildlife. This park area should not be developed into a golf course or anything else. <sup>19</sup></p>
<p>Please keep this special area as is: a park for all to enjoy--NOT a golf course open to a few. <sup>20</sup></p>
<p><b>SAVE WESTPORT LIGHT STATE PARK</b></p> <p>My husband and I are <b>OPPOSED</b> to the proposal to commercially develop the <b>WESTPORT LIGHT STATE PARK</b>. Leave this park in its natural state for present and future generations to enjoy. <sup>21</sup></p>
<p>You are destroying nature and the home of many creatures, no matter how strongly you claim to be destroying only a little. How much you are destroying and killing isn't the point; the point is</p>

<p>that you are destroying nature and killing its inhabitants simply for the recreation of the humans that have been killing our planet. Stop the development of this land into a golf course and return it to its original natural state. Stop chipping away little by little at our natural resources, killing off our non-human creatures one by one.<sup>22</sup></p>
<p>I am opposed to the golf course being considered for development near the Westport Lighthouse.<sup>23</sup></p>
<p>I have a vacation house in Westport. Fell in love with the area and it's been our go to spot when we went to escape Seattle. I'm not a golfer but I definitely support the golf course for many different reasons. Meeting people in the area, I know there's not a lot of job opportunities. This will definitely help with it. As gorgeous as Westport is, there's something missing. I believe a Golf Course or anything else recreational will help attract more tourists to this deserving area.<sup>24</sup></p>
<p>Although I've only been to Westport Lighthouse SP once, my family loved it as much as we love all state parks. We donate, clean up, enjoy, camp, and picnic all over the state. The possibility of the golf course being planned at Westport is outrageous, and we absolutely oppose it. We believe the parks should be left alone and 100% left for the public at all times for all time. There is no place or reason to so-called develop Westport - it's perfect as is. Go golf somewhere else that already exists and love the park as it already exists.<sup>25</sup></p>
<p>No Golf course. Westport lighthouse park is a unique landscape and should be preserved for all to enjoy<sup>26</sup></p>
<p>PLEASE NO GOLF COURSE AT THE WESTPORT LIGHTHOUSE PARK!! my family and I have been coming there for generations- are you kidding me? A golf course?? NO, a thousand times no!!!<sup>27</sup></p>
<p>I am against allowing a golf course to be built on these public spaces. Don't allow any more nature to be destroyed.<sup>28</sup></p>
<p>Good day, After reviewing the documents on your website I am stating unequivocally that I am opposed to any development at the Westport Light State Park of any golf course and associated amenities. It is my belief that any development of this type should be on privately owned property and financed entirely with private funds. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this matter.<sup>29</sup></p>
<p>I am appalled with the proposed plan to develop State Parks lands at the Westport Light House State Park with a golf course for commercial exploitation. This land is uniquely special for its natural forest abutting coastal shorelines in an undisturbed setting, free from commercial development that is ubiquitous in much of our coastal areas. This is a place where people can experience natural forest connection to the sea, and enjoy a functional ecology protected from logging, commercial and residential development, and other exploitative uses. Selling this land for commercial purposes is counter to the objectives we are trusting State Parks with, which will result in logging off our public forest here and excluding the majority of the public that does not golf. There are no shortages of golf courses in this State, but a contiguous 600 acre forest abutting up to the ocean is a rare treasure that should be protected. Please do not allow this development of our public lands.</p>

Sincerely, <sup>30</sup>
Wild spaces are disappearing at an alarming rate, and there are plenty of golf courses. Please deny the application for a golf course at Westport Light State Park. Thank you. <sup>31</sup>
I am opposed to the development of a Scottish-style golf course at Westport Light State Park. The park is a jewel of mostly undeveloped coastline. It is home to many animals and plants that would disappear with development of a golf course. We citizens of Washington treasure the relatively few areas of natural public lands. I'm offended, quite frankly, by the proposal of a golf course. What percentage of our population are golfers? I object to taking this beautiful public resource which we can all walk and turning it into a golfers' course. I also object to the chemical and water maintenance requirements to maintain a golf course. On so many levels, this proposal to take a beautiful coastal state park and make it a golf course is just wrong. It defies common sense in this time of excessive development of our coastlines. <sup>32</sup>
I do not believe a golf course should be built at Westport Light State Park. An expensive sport for the over privileged would destroy the beauty and accessibility of this park for the masses. In a world faced with drought the last thing we need to do is create a golf course. <sup>33</sup>
I have enjoyed visiting the park for many years. I am heartsick to think a commercial golf course is being considered on park land. There are multiple recreational opportunities in the area for citizens and tourists. Please do not allow this change of use. The history and environment of this site should outweigh and thought of a commercial activity. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. <sup>34</sup>
Please, please do not put a golf course at the Westport State Park. The coast has too few un-developed areas as it is. Do not put a golf course at this park. <sup>35</sup>
As a state resident and grateful visitor to our Washington beaches I'd like to submit my request that the Westport Lighthouse State Park be protected in as wild a state as possible for all to benefit from its natural wonders. It's a unique site where commercialization doesn't belong. Thanks for your consideration. Sincerely, <sup>36</sup>
I'm am writing to you to express that I DO NOT support developing a "Scottish style" or any other style of golf course on the Westport Lighthouse State Park property. This Park is unique and should be preserved in it's natural state for all Washingtonians to explore and enjoy. Building a golf course would serve a wealthy few, and is against the purpose of establishing a park for all to use in it's entirety. If it is revenue that you are looking for, please consider another method of procuring it. Thank you, <sup>37</sup>
There should NOT be a golf course at this park. Keep it as it is, an unspoiled piece of nature. <sup>38</sup>
No golf course at Westport. Keep it natural. No golf course. <sup>39</sup>
I am against development of a golf course and motel on State Park lands at Westport (or any other state park). State park lands should be primarily for preservation of wildlife and native plant habitat, neither of which would be accomplished by converting lands to golf courses or hotels. Private lands can be used for those activities. <sup>40</sup>



