

3/30/2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to offer a letter of support for improving the beach conditions at Meadowdale Beach County Park. I am an anthropology instructor at Edmonds Community College and have been using the park as an outdoor and service learning space for my students for the past ten years. We have witnessed first-hand the impediments that the current structure poses for human safety, fish, and wildlife habitat.

I am the founder and lead instructor for the Learn and Serve Environmental Anthropology Field (LEAF) School at Edmonds CC. The LEAF School connects students with our surrounding tribes, municipalities, businesses, and non-profit agencies through community-based service and learning activities. Our students work with partners to build ethnobotanical gardens and traditional knowledge trails, restore and monitor fish and wildlife habitat, conduct archaeological surveys and excavation, and host cultural events such as first food ceremonies, powwows, salmon festivals, and Tribal Canoe Journey.

Our projects in Meadowdale County Park, in partnership with Snohomish County Parks and Recreation, Adopt-A-Stream Foundation, and NOAA, have given us an intimate view of the failure of the current infrastructure to meet human, fish, and wildlife needs. Our students have been part of the first crews to clean up after multiple flood events in the park. We have helped rebuild trails into the park after they were washed out and helped maintain them under regular usage. We have removed invasive species and restored riparian habitat along the creek and nearshore habitat along the beach. We have monitored water quality and assisted NOAA with a forensics analysis of Coho pre-spawn mortality in Lund's Gulch. We have tracked wildlife in the watershed and helped organize and train a team of Lund's Gulch Streamkeepers. These various activities have exposed us to the failures of the current infrastructure as well as the possibilities for future improvements.

The opportunity to study while providing service in Meadowdale Beach County Park provides an important learning component for students studying human ecology. The park is a conduit from their homes in the Lund's Gulch watershed through the riparian habitat of an urban stream to an estuary and beach on the shores of the Salish Sea. The diverse habitats and the myriad of human impacts is a rare gem in our communities. Currently it is an example of eco-blind engineering but I would gladly welcome the opportunity to involve students in the process of assisting with and learning about the latest green infrastructure in our very own community park. I offer enthusiastic support for the proposed improvements under consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas W Murphy, PhD

Chair, Department of Anthropology