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Form submission from: North Tualatin Master Plan

Webform via Multnomah County <webmaster@multco.us>

Mon, Feb 6, 2023 at 2:21 PM

Reply-To: Webform <webmaster@multco.us>

To: kevin.c.cook@multco.us

Submitted on Monday, February 6, 2023 - 2:21pm

Submitted values are:

Name: Hans Koch

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Testimony:

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Hans Koch and I work as a Lieutenant with Portland Fire & Rescue. Previously, I worked as a research scientist at OHSU. I am also a resident of McNamee Road.

There are numerous reasons why allowing Metro to alter the Multnomah County Land Use Master Plan in order to build mountain bike trails is a seriously misguided idea. Here are just a few:

- Metro used money from voter-approved bond and levy measures to purchase their McCarthy Creek and Burlington Creek land parcels with the intention of protecting wildlife habitat. Any change to the use of that money necessitates a new vote by the public. The public did not vote in favor of Metro purchasing and protecting wildlife habitat in order to have a portion of that habitat compromised.
- Metro has a unique opportunity to protect flourishing wildlife habitat in the Tualatin Mountains – habitat that is frequented by Roosevelt elk, bobcat, coyote, mountain lion, owls, raptors, blacktail deer, and red-legged frogs. This opportunity should not be compromised by a special interest group – mountain bikers.
- As studies show, mountain bicycling negatively impacts wildlife habitat, much more so than hiking. Mountain bikers travel silently and quickly. This startles animals, creates a fear response, and causes them to abandon their habitat.
- Developing mountain bike trails creates single-use trails because they will no longer be safe for hikers. Mountain bikers speeding around corners and along straight-aways is dangerous for runners and hikers even on wide trails, such as Leif Erikson in Forest Park. Again, taxpayer money would be used to develop trails that can only safely be used by a special interest group.
- As a local resident with wildlife cameras on my property that border the edge of Metro's McCarthy Creek land, I have captured images of bobcat, Roosevelt Elk, black-tailed deer, coyote, mountain lion, great horned owl, and black bear. These animals extensively use McCarthy Creek land as their primary habitat.
- The neighborhoods around the Metro Tualatin Hills properties are quiet, rural neighborhoods. Creating parking lots, bathrooms, viewpoints, and trailheads will create unwelcome traffic, litter and theft. One does not have to look far for evidence of this – Forest Park trailheads regularly experience this type of adverse use.
- Metro is not effectively managing the land they currently are responsible for. Refuse dumping, vandalism, and trespassing happen often on both McCarthy Creek and Burlington Creek land. Metro themselves polluted their McCarthy Creek land parcel by planting trees and surrounding these young trees in plastic sheaths. The sheaths blew off in the wind and are now littering the McCarthy Creek land as well as neighboring land. Metro is not actively managing their forests. They are not removing invasive species or replanting natives. If Metro is unsuccessful at basic forest/land management, how will they manage high-traffic facilities and trails in addition to managing the land?
- If Metro is allowed to change the zoning of their land, then local residents should also be permitted to do so.
- Metro has broken the trust of voters by allowing special interest groups to influence the use of land they purchased with taxpayer money. Again, the clearly articulated goal of these purchases was to protect wildlife habitat.
- A recent Washington State University study revealed that during the year-long Covid-19 shutdown there was

Exhibit H.2

dramatically increased animal activity on national park land. The same can be said of wildlife habitat in the Tualatin Hills. Without human presence, the wildlife flourish. With regular human presence, such as in Forest Park, the wildlife abandon habitat.

- Metro does not allow dogs and horses on their land yet they want to allow mountain bicycles. They say that dogs and horses disturb wildlife and that mountain bicycles do not. This is blatant hypocrisy and is untrue.
- As an avid mountain bicyclist, I have surprised wildlife (and people) on trails multiple times. I have never surprised wildlife while hiking, nor have I surprised wildlife while walking my dog. Metro is inaccurately claiming that mountain bicyclists will not scare or startle wildlife.
- Bonneville Power Administration is actively working on the development of a wildlife corridor that will run beneath HWY 30. This corridor will safely allow red-legged frogs to cross the highway, moving from one safe Burlington Bottoms and Tualatin Hills habitat. Metro should be following their example – actively protecting wildlife habitat instead of intentionally trying to destroy it.

Overall, Metro has not proven they have a track record for respecting the wishes of tri-county voters and they should not be given carte blanche ability to change county land use laws.

Sincerely,

Hans Koch PhD.