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[Samish Islanders],

I want to bring you up to date briefly regarding the Samish Island Day Use Area.

As I have shared with many of you, active management of this particular upland site for ongoing public use (recreation) is not something DNR can provide for the foreseeable future. While the site has provided public access from upland to nearby tidelands for local residents for decades, it is not connected to other DNR lands or activities in the area and does not fit into DNR's recreation/land management niche. The condition of the site amenities, coupled with this biennium's budget decisions, resulted in the difficult decision to remove the amenities, including wooden stairs in need of repair, toilets that no longer contained fluids, and closure of the trail. Barring unforeseen changes in DNR's role and budget, we do not expect that decision to change.

While DNR's future role in actively managing the upland site will be very limited or nonexistent, we believe that service may fit more closely within the scope of other public agencies, particularly Skagit County Parks. We have begun to explore options with Skagit County Parks, and with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and State Parks. Skagit County Parks is considering options, DFW has indicated that it would be difficult or impossible for them to assume ownership and or management of the recreation site, and State Parks has not yet indicated if they can participate in further discussion of options.

The range of options for the upland parcel that we have discussed includes an agency other than DNR either acquiring the parcel or managing it for public use (park) purposes or management of the facilities with continued DNR ownership. In any case, if recreation amenities are provided, safe access to the beach is the first and highest priority. Without that safe access which likely will require repair and reconstruction of the stairs, other amenities may not make sense.

I hope this information is helpful. Should anything further develop as we explore options, I will keep you posted. Please feel free to share this information with others.

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