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First name: Catherine

Last name: Kelley

Organization: Island County Public Works

Title: Project Manager II, Paths and Trails

Comments: am writing In response to the letter sent to the Island County Board of Commissioners on March 13, 2023 and received on March 20, 2023 in regards to the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail that is partially located on Whidbey Island, Washington running from the Deception Pass Bridge through Deception Pass State Park and along Island County roads to Joseph Whidbey State Park and follows the shoreline all the way to the Keystone Ferry Landing in Coupeville as shown in Appendix A of Island County's Non-Motorized Trail Plan, Pages A-18 Figure 70, and A-19 Figure 71 attached with your letter.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Draft Comprehensive Plan is a large undertaking and covers a great deal of background, planning, and networking to gather and manage all of the information needed for the plan. Everyone who was a part of getting the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail Draft Comprehensive Plan drafted has done a wonderful job of including the value of trails, future outlook of resources to be preserved, conservation of nature, scenic routes, natural resources, and impacts to cultural resources as well as including safety measures, monitoring, and action plans.

The Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail compliments Whidbey Island and the historical value and beauty that surrounds the Island. Island County's Non-Motorized Trail Plan (2018) incorporates Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNT) and states on Page A-18 of Appendix A, that it is considered to be one of the most scenic and challenging trails in the National Scenic Trail system and is growing in popularity. As stated in Island County's Non-Motorized Trail Plan, the current PNT primary and alternate routes need to be vetted for property ownership conflicts. For example, the alternate route is shown following the West Beach shoreline, which appears to be private property. At this location, the PNT may need to be rerouted along Surfcrest Drive. The PNT on Whidbey should be a high priority trail and be clearly defined to avoid trespass issues. While a majority of the PNT on Whidbey Island offers outstanding scenery and is off-road, some segments follow roads because off-street connections do not exist. Where the PNT follows roads, signage and safety improvements should be considered.

The Pacific Northwest Trail on Whidbey Island benefits recreationists and communities in Island County where the PNT travels along Island County roads and public Island County Park shorelines, Washington State Parks and connections to a bicycle route on north Whidbey Island. These connections add to the value of existing Island County trail systems and possible future trails.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on this amazing project!

Sincere Regards,

Catherine Kelley

Project Manager II | Paths & Trails

Island County Public Works