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Lee Walton
Interim City Manager
City of Bainbridge Island
280 Madison Avenue North
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-1812

Dear Mr. Walton,

I am writing on behalf of the Elliott Bay Trustee Council (Trustees). The Trustees want to express our strong, continued support for the Strawberry Plant Park Shoreline Restoration Project. The revisions that were needed due to property issues will result in less marsh restoration along the stream than the previous design, but the revised project will still include significant amounts of restored marsh habitat. The marsh and other habitat types that will be restored under the new design will provide significant ecological benefits that will help address the injuries caused by the Wyckoff operations, help in salmon recovery efforts, as well as help the overall recovery of Puget Sound. The Trustees were consulted during the development of the revised design and our comments are incorporated in it. The design should facilitate the possibility of future restoration at the stream mouth, should the property issues be resolved after the project is built.

The Trustees also wish to clarify our position regarding public use, including shoreline access, of that portion of the Strawberry Plant Park property for which NRDA settlement funds will be used for habitat restoration. The Trustees' main objective in providing funding for this project is to restore habitat at the site and ensure that its ecological functions are maintained into the future. This objective is compatible with public use of the shoreline as can be seen in the design drawings for the proposed project. The current design includes both a kayak launch access point as well as a future planned overwater viewing structure.

The Trustees recognize the importance of and fully support passive recreational use consistent with the definition in the City of Bainbridge Island's Shoreline Management Master Program, "...such as swimming, picnicking, hiking, canoeing, and fishing." Incorporation of the kayak launch was specifically designed to meet the needs for public access to the shoreline and water and will provide improved direct access to the water compared to the existing condition at the site.

Following planting of the marsh vegetation, temporary goose exclusion fencing will be needed to protect marsh vegetation, but this fencing is designed to minimally restrict views and can be removed once the plants are established. Access to the water need not be restricted, although it would be desirable to provide signage asking the public to avoid walking in the marsh to access the water. The Trustees would be willing to provide funding for appropriate signage, including signage to educate the public about the importance of nearshore habitat to salmon recovery.

We recognize that there may be impacts to habitat resulting from the installation and future maintenance of the overwater viewing structure. To minimize these impacts we would require that

the footprint of the structure be limited to that necessary for easy access to the viewing area, and that the use of grating to allow light to pass through the structure be incorporated into the design. Any habitat that may be damaged from construction and maintenance activities should be quickly restored following project completion.

Feel free to contact me at 206-526-6029 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



John Kern
NOAA Restoration Center

Cc: Libby Hudson, Long-term Planning Manager
Elliott Bay Trustee Council