

Regarding: Thimble Creek Concept Plan, May 20 2018 Oregon City Commission Meeting  
Comments: Doug Neeley speaking on behalf of Nancy Broshot,  
Chair, Ore  
Residence: 11614 Parrish Road, Oregon City

Nancy Broshot, Chair of the Oregon City Natural Resource Committee (NRC), at the last NRC meeting requested that I present to the City Commission on her behalf a letter dated February 12 which was presented at the Planning Commission's February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was presented as an individual and not as the Chair of the NRC. She later presented the letter at that last March 11<sup>th</sup> NRC meeting, and it was agreed to re-present the letter at the next March 18<sup>th</sup> City Commission meeting as a letter from the NRC. She asked me to make the presentation at that meeting because she could not attend. The City Commission postponed the topic until this current meeting, and there has been no subsequent NRC meeting because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The letter follows with gray-shaded text omitted:

To: Planning Commission

From: Nancy Broshot, Ph.D. Natural Resources Committee Chair

RE: Beaver Creek Road Concept Plan Implementation Upland Habitat – Draft Planning Commission Recommendations

Date: February 12, 2020

In November 2019, the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) recommended additional protection for upland habitat in the Beaver Creek Road Concept Plan. In particular, Areas 3 and 4 were of concern to the NRC because they are part of and contiguous with a much larger forested area. I was somewhat dismayed by the Planning Commission's recommendation that no additional land be protected during the development of this property. Allowing development and tree removal in these two areas will contribute to forest fragmentation. I am submitting these comments personally and not on behalf of the Natural Resources Committee.

Forest fragmentation is one of the major documented negative impacts of urbanization and is an insidious threat to natural areas. Large intact areas of forest contribute to species diversity (both plant and animal), help remove pollutants from the air, mitigate climate change, and protect water quality. Development chips away at forests edges, reducing interior habitat until the land no longer functions ecologically as forest habitat. The increased edge, while attractive to many species, is not suitable habitat to many important species such as woodpeckers, owls and other raptors, and many migratory songbirds. As edge habitat increases, the remaining forest has a different climate, increased invasive species, and increased predators and nest parasites, all of which leads to a decline in abundance of forest interior species of plants and animals. Large intact forested areas serve as a refuges for specialized species; the loss of large forests due to fragmentation leads to localized extinction of species.

I recognize the importance of additional housing in our area, but I feel we need to balance development with protection of important natural resources, that once gone cannot be replaced. Areas 3 and 4 are important natural resources. Houses adjacent to forested areas have higher

property values. Setting aside Areas 3 and 4 would have tremendous economic value to the future property owners. An idea that would allow these areas to be preserved while development occurs would be to have the houses adjacent to these areas have yards with conservation easements that would protect the intact forest. This type of development has occurred in many areas of Portland adjacent to Forest Park; those parcels have exceptionally high values now as many people want to live in the forest. I realize that this would require the need for general density transfers so the development could produce the level of housing required. I believe the ecologically valuable intact forest habitat in Areas 3 and 4 are well worth preserving for future Oregon City residents.

I appreciate your returning to this topic and implore you to protect the valuable large intact forested area in Areas 3 and 4 that is now rare in Oregon City.