

"As a professor of environmental science and the director of the University of Washington Restoration Ecology Network, I would like to lend my strong endorsement to your group's efforts to preserve the North Creek Forest.

Considerable time and resources are expended daily throughout the Puget Sound region to maintain and upgrade salmon habitat. Furthermore, many resources are being devoted to improving the water quality of streams feeding into the Puget Sound as a large-scale regional effort to improve the health of Puget Sound as a major ecological system. Studies have shown that maintaining the fragments of intact ecological systems that remain in the Puget Sound basin is a vital strategy to fostering salmon habitat and a clean Puget Sound. Even though, restoring degraded ecological sites, is what I and my students focus on, it is clear that more often, saving what we have is a more cost effective solution than restoration (though both are necessary in concert). The importance of this forest stand to the ecological health of the North Creek corridor is very significant.

Beyond its ecological value, the educational value of this forest stand is profound. It sits in direct proximity to many schools, from my university all the way down through the K-12 system. In times of dwindling budgets for taking children out to natural sites, having an intact forest stand nearby for such activities becomes all the more crucial. I and my students have already been using this site as a great resource for learning about forest plants, ecology, hydrology, and restoration.

There are precious few upland forest stands like this one left in our region. I have spent over 20 years teaching ecology and ecological restoration in Washington. We are now fortunate to have a nice network of wetland and stream sites available for study but upland forest stands with mature forest elements in the urban matrix are rare. It would be a tragedy to lose this site, as it represents an ecological system important in its present function and important as a representative of upland intact forests for generations to come."

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