

From: Joe and Nancy Merhar
To: Kittitas County Commissioners

Subj: Hidden Point LLC (CU-20-00005)

Dear Commissioners,

We are Kittitas County residents living at 1711 Emerick Road, Cle Elum, WA 98922. Our home is half of a mile from the end of the county-maintained portion of Emerick. We have lived here since 2006.

Our concerns regarding Hidden Point include:

- **Road Maintenance.** Emerick Road is a light duty, all-weather road maintained by residents. It can accommodate occasional heavy trucks for building projects. However, already the additional usage has caused significant road deterioration, which has fallen to existing community members to repair. And there has been no evidence that Hidden Point is taking responsibility for this road deterioration or reaching out to the community to address the growing problem.
- **Wildfire Danger.** After the 2012 Taylor Bridge Fire, the Hidden Valley Community and Lookout Mountain were left with lost structures and burned-over forest land; we still live with the consequences of that fire. Community members take great care during fire season to protect and preserve our environment. The approval of Hidden Point's project would bring a large influx of people into this environment without the needed understanding of the environments' fire vulnerabilities, and without supervision. Our own efforts to douse unattended fires on Hidden Point property last summer attest to this issue. In addition, we already have some challenges with emergency egress to our area. Additional traffic will be a concern getting residents safely in or out during an emergency.
- **Water.** Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain residents are challenged by the quality and uncertain longevity of their wells. Over the past several years flow rates have gone down, and some wells go dry in summer. These water issues are concerning, particularly in light of continual drought concerns and water resource control measures enacted over the past decade. Hidden Point's development of many guest cabins, a commercial kitchen and swimming pool would put new demands on water resources available to the community.
- **Trespassing.** Our Community is made up of private landholdings, generally of ten acres or more. Recreation users often see this open land and the private roads that run through it as free for their use – from motor sports to hunting. Residents stopping trespassers to inform them they are on private land or roads are often met with scorn and arguments. Hidden Point will bring more recreational users into a rural community of privately owned land, increasing these interactions and subsequent burden of “policing” on landowners.

Above are the immediate concerns and questions regarding the proposed Hidden Point project. Of longer-term concern, we emphasize the nature of our carefully preserved community fabric

and the effort – both cooperatively and financially – of full-time and part-time residents who voluntarily work together in the Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain community to create a safe, secure family environment, while respecting the privacy and rights of individual property owners. It is unique to find such a community that does so without covenants or HOAs.

While part of the attraction of the Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain community is doing with your land as you wish in accordance with Kittitas County regulations, the failure of Hidden Point landowners to communicate with their neighbors and consider the impacts on the community is profoundly disappointing. Many neighbors undoubtedly feel misled and taken advantage of, especially considering the “out of the blue” way the Hidden Point proposal came to light in the Hidden Valley community. The social fabric of Hidden Valley and Lookout Mountain is based on respect and honesty with neighbors, even though at times we may disagree. I hope regardless of the decision regarding this project, that the Commissioners may facilitate the mending of our community’s fabric.

Respectfully,

Joe and Nancy Merhar