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To: [Jamey Ayling](#)
Subject: Fowler Creek Guest Ranch
Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 9:00:57 PM

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Dear Jamey,

Thank you so much for the timeline extension and opportunity to give comment on the proposed project of the Fowler Creek Guest Ranch. As a local resident, this spurs extremely deep concern for me for ample reasons. For the sake of simplifying this letter, I would like to refer to Fowler Creek Guest Ranch as FCGR through out the entirety of this email.

WATER

First and foremost, water. As many local residents up here are aware, water up here can be very difficult to find as well as come and go with the seasons. I myself, just this early September, was forced to drill a new well as the existing well that I have been running on for the last 11 yrs, was no longer producing enough water to maintain the demand of a 3 person household. My original well log states that the well produced 5gpm at the time of installation in in July of 2005. As of late, max output for well had dwindled down to 3/4gpm as max output without causing the well to pump itself dry and shutting the pump off. Anyone should be able to understand why one household would not be able to sustain on that type of water output nor would one be able to sell a home under these conditions. My new well is now 463' deep and producing 3gpm. The funds I used to cover the extensive costs of this matter, came directly and solely from my life savings account that is also the money I have saved to help pay for my daughters college when her time comes. I am **DEEPLY** concerned about the intent of more drilling just across the road from my home, with the intent to supply public water to an RV park/resort. Through reading all the proposals in the Land Use Proposal, under Section 15 Exhibit 8 DOMESTIC WATER PLAN, it clearly states, **“Recreation Vehicles will not be provided with water connections but will be required to provide their own water in vehicle storage tanks.”** But then read along in Section 14 Exhibit 7 BUILDINGS AND RECREATION FACILITIES, under the description of the RV sites construction, it also clearly states, **“Water may be provided to site if legally available.”** So which is it? Will RV's be supplied water or not? Take another read for yourself, and you will see the blatant contradiction. One can only interpret this as a potential loophole to actually provided the 30 RV's that will be coming and

going on a weekly basis with fresh water. Whether that is a local connection at each individual site, or a spigot within the park for the use of filling ones RV has not been clearly determined. Just for a loose number, if an RV holds 65 gal of fresh water as the average standard 28' RV does, that's 1,950 gallons of water right there being consumed by the transient public. That's JUST in RV's.

Moving along to amount of bathrooms that are being proposed, starting with the "cabins". The cabins are being proposed to have 1-3 bathrooms. What cabin has THREE bathrooms? Lets at least call them what they are actually going to be, a full on guest house. Not a quaint little cabin. There is a total of 10 cabins being proposed. Now to be fair, If the proposal is 1-3 bathrooms per cabin, and we say 5 cabins have one bathroom and 5 cabins 3 bathrooms, that's a total of 20 bathrooms. Sinks, toilets, showers, all being used and consuming water that is being acquired out of the same ground that many local residents are fighting to get water from for their own residential and domestic use. The cabins are also being proposed to have 2-4 bedrooms. So again, to be fair, 5 of the 10 cabins have 2 bedrooms. And 5 of the 10 cabins have 4 bedrooms. If you base those number on 2 people per bedroom, that alone is 60 people consuming the water. Those are minimally based numbers that are sure to increase if any bedroom in fact sleeps more than two people. Which I feel it is very safe to assume some of them will indeed. As rental cabins and houses historically have bunk beds and hide a beds to accommodate as many bodies as possible. The same applies to the Bed and Breakfast that also is proposed at 5 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms. And again, the Ranch House at 7 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Just based on very conservative estimations of 2 people per bedroom though all the buildings proposed to be constructed, that is 64 guests using all water sources on a daily basis. These numbers one could expect to fluctuate but ultimately far surpassing my estimations on a very frequent basis. Especially during peak season which is also summer when water is in its highest demand. The estimated guest numbers set forth in this proposal by FCGR when pertaining to domestic water usage and the on site sewage system, are extremely underestimated to benefit the false narrative attempting to be portrayed by FCGR. They are using numbers based on an absolute minimum basis. Such as "**one person per bedroom**" in the guest cabins. And "**2 people per RV**". Those estimated numbers provided by FCGR for average guests using these facilities are simply a false assumption. It would be absolutely reckless and irresponsible to gauge domestic water consumption and waste water produced on such minimal numbers that I believe are being very much misrepresented in order to skew the narrative in favor of FCGR. Since I was 19yrs old, I've made a living in the drilling industry. In my 18yrs of experience, much of my work has been in the installation and development of wells for the purpose of dewatering the ground beneath construction sites. I do have a vast understanding and knowledge of what goes on below the surface. At the end of the description in Section 15 Exhibit 8 Domestic Water Plan, that their OSS would be adding water to the Fowler Creek Water Basin, may be true. But the idea that it could actually be beneficial to other local doesmestic water sources is nothing more

than a facade. Just as many of the other descriptions and claims are in Section 8 Exhibit 1 Narrative put forth by FCGR. Many of the domestic wells in the surrounding areas were forced to penetrate deep into rock in search of suitable water volume to support the home in which it is tied to. The well casing used in these installations when properly installed, is penetrated and sealed into the bed rock. Which in this area is typically sandstone or phyllite. Surface water does not penetrate into these water sources. Rendering the extra water added to the ground from the OSS at FCGR, useless for other nearby domestic wells that run deeper than surface water sources and into solid rock. In short, zero benefit in the scope of actually adding to the near by water sources needed to produce water for local homes. Now I may be viewing this matter in slightly extreme or worse case scenarios, but as one who has run dry of water and needed to drill a replacement well, I feel it is imperative that all deciding parties involved in this matter put themselves in the shoes of local residents who's domestic wells and life savings are at stake here. The potential and realistic demand that FCGR could put on the local aquifer, is far too much of a gamble for ANY of the local and surrounding residents. Please ask yourself, as the development and occupation of this facility comes to fruition, and more and more residents potentially begin loosing their well water, who is to be held accountable and financially liable for their misfortune? I'll tell you who, no one but the home owner themselves who benefitted absolutely nothing from the rezoning and allowance of this massive commercial occupation of FCGR. Home owners will be hung out to dry and suffer the financial hardship as well as the many other hardships that come with running out of water while FCGR rakes in the profits.

Lastly, the Events Barn that is to be constructed for weddings and other large events with a design occupancy of 200 people. Where are the bathrooms to accommodate these folks? How much water will be consumed by these added 200 guests that potentially aren't even FCGR over night guests but rather just there for the wedding or event as an added mass of bodies consuming water from toilets and sinks? And the swimming pool. It has also clearly been stated in Section 14 Exhibit 7 Buildings and Recreation that it is the desire and intention to construct a swimming pool. How many gallons? Will the water source to fill the pool be the well affiliated with the property or will they have this water hauled in via water truck to fill the pool? Our winters here are extreme and will require the pool to be drained in the fall and filled again every spring, year after year. All this is will amount to a massive purge of water consumption and it is imperative to be considered.

FIRE DANGER

Not to be taken too lightly as we all know wild fire danger is a real threat here. We all remember the recent fires of Ruby Mountain that threatened our local residents, structures and towns of Ronald and Roslyn. As well as a more dated fire on the south side of South Cle Elum ridge that thankfully was contained by cooperating weather and the barrier and fire break of FSR 4510. It has been stated in Section 14

Exhibit 7 Buildings and Recreation that there are going to be numerous fire pits spread though out the park. It states that **“selected fire pits will have propane gas to power the flames during burn bans and periods of extreme fire danger.”**

There is absolutely no city water services out there. Meaning, there are no fire hydrants. Extinguishing a fire in this area without hydrants, would be next to impossible without strong air support. So pertaining to all the non-propane powered fire pits and in the event of negligence, we are severely increasing the risk of fire danger from fellow guests and children who may not fully grasp how imperative our local fire danger really is as we approach our fire season and everyone is attempting to get that last camp fire in. Small or big, the risk is there. Especially with a fire pit being included for each RV site. That alone creates the potential for 30 fires simultaneously. Our winds typically come from the west and are a regular occurrence from April to September adding to the danger. Is this catastrophic risk really worth rezoning land that is zoned residential in order to allow a resort to be put in amongst everyone else living in the already residentially zoned area?

Absolutely not in my opinion. Especially with my family residing very closely down wind from this proposed resort location.

WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE

In the best regards for our local wildlife and wetlands, I have zero idea how we are NOT imposing and preserving by simply building right up against the buffer zones. And in some cases for the proposed tree houses and boardwalks, beyond the buffer zones and atop the wet lands. Human impact has never been positive in these areas and certainly provides zero benefit to the local ecosystem of the area and life within it. The proposal suggests that there will be wildlife viewing areas to observe bear, elk, deer, foxes, coyotes, etc. If this resort is built, the only wildlife left to observe will be birds, squirrels, and the occasional naive deer. The elk will certainly reroute to travel the area as they have continuously had to due so over the last 15 yrs as development continues to sprawl further out. At what point do we draw a line for our wildlife? We are not talking about local or a new resident building a full time residence. Access roads, RV sites, multiple parking lots for each structure and its guests, a sprawling parking lot for the 200 people occupying the Event Barn, a designated road created for ORV access, pathways and trails. These are all the things that will take up all the ground used baby our local wildlife and disperse any that remain. Platforms built for wildlife to be **“viewed in their natural habitat”** from the many **“viewing platforms”** that are to be constructed, is more like a false advertisement being used to once again, sugar coat and blindfold you from the truth of what is really being constructed here. One could assume there will be ample fire wising applied to the area during development to protect the investment and perhaps for insurance purposes. So how much wildlife do we REALLY anticipate sticking around when they have nowhere to hide and nothing left to eat? This is a resort designed for transients. Again, not worth the price that our local forests, wet lands, and wildlife will pay. It is a delicate dance of balance and this development

of FCGR simply tips the scales too far in the wrong direction. Throughout the description of this resort, I keep reading about sustainability yet there is no definitive outlined step by step plan as to how this resort is going to be “sustainable”. There is absolutely nothing sustainable about encroaching on delicate wetlands and developing forest ground for sake of personal gain and financial profit. All the vehicle and foot traffic coming and going through and around the area is simply the OPPOSITE of sustainability.

NOISE POLLUTION

In Section 18 Exhibit 11 Impact Of Noise On Surrounding Properties , in the opening sentence of this exhibit, it states **“the transmission of noise in a mountainous forest landscape is a complex phenomenon”** . A phenomenon is something unique, questionable, all the while exquisitely fascinating. Such as, the Egyptian pyramids and how they were built with almost no technology. The Wind, or a snowflake, how each and every one is completely unique to the rest just like a fingerprint. Or the fact that a baby horse can walk all within minutes of being born. These are “phenomenons”. Not the noise traveling from FCGR disturbing the peace of all local residents. This entire section is simply a word salad generated to distract and over shadow the simple truth. That noise travels, and its going to be an annoyance to anyone living near by. Simple examples of this would be the train traveling parallel to I-90 that can be heard at the very top of the Granite Creek neighborhood. Or the I-90 freeway for that matter that can be heard equally as far, however, faint. Or the side by side ORV’s that travel up and down westside road and can be heard over a mille away. Loyds Lands who owns a large section of property adjacent to the proposed site of FCGR, donates their land every year for a week long youth camp. The music from that camp can be heard for quite some distance. How far, I am not for sure as I live in relatively close proximity to it. However, its rather tolerated by neighbors as it is for a great cause and we all know it is short lived. The noise from a wedding event at FCGR would surely be heard far beyond the property lines of FCGR and into the hours of the night that would be considered unacceptable. Imagine being a local resident, where all your peace and quiet has been sent out the window for the sole benefit and financial gain of one individual (or group) with a business that did not occur in that RESIDENTIAL area when you moved in or built your home. And now the peace and serenity of that home is forever tainted and gone. The proposed ground of the FCGR has no connecting lot lines to the gravel section of FSR 4517 meaning that all ORV’s brought to the park would need to travel through approximately a half mile or residential homes before they could even hit the connecting ORV path to FSR 4510. Thus, way more added noise and traffic from Side by sides, dirt bikes, quads, etc. for all neighbors living beyond the proposed property and have been residing there long before FCGR has even been submitted for consideration by our county officials. Theres no way to sugar coat this although the effort is clear by whoever typed up this entire proposal.

LIGHT POLLUTION

Regardless if the bulbs used are LED and/or are directed down at the ground, the light pollution from the multiple building exterior lights, walking path lights, entrance lights, parking lot lights, 30 RV lights, traffic lights coming and going at night, all this combined is certain to have a noticeable impact. One of the priceless beauties of living in this area that my family has always appreciated, is the amount of stars we can see on clear nights. Heck, our own patio lights need to be shut off so we can see them better. As for all the homes living higher up on the hill looking out into the dark abyss and appreciating the beauty of the stars, moon, and darkness, will now be looking down upon a cloud of light protruding out of the trees below. The same as you can see when you look to the west at Snoqualmie pass on a winter night. And for what? Again, to benefit and profit Pat Deneen and Co. At the expense of EVERYONE else surrounding the property as a resident and paying the applicable property taxes.

TRAFFIC

The evaluated numbers of daily traffic used in Section 19 Exhibit 12 Traffic have been grossly misrepresented and manipulated to the benefit of FCGR. I live not but 1/8 mile from Fowler Creek Road on Westside road. I can assure you that by 1PM on Sunday from May 31st to AT LEAST Labor Day weekend, traffic at this end of Westside Road will come to intermittent dead stops though out the entire afternoon and into the evening. In the last 5 years, it has become so bad, that many of us folks don't even bother leaving on Sundays due to how long it will take to return home as I-90 is at a dead stop and everyone is using their traffic apps now to navigate them on a detoured route. The traffic on westside road on Sundays is unbearable for local residents. I would estimate 3,000+ vehicles travel west on Westside road during these peak travel months in the summer. Fowler Creek is located on an extremely blind corner of westside road that is on hairpin turn as well as very decent decline and incline. The added traffic is not needed. A solution for all the traffic and for residents to travel on the road they live on is what is needed. Having 30 RV's trying pull out on Sunday afternoon will only compound an already festering situation. As well as present a large hazard at the corner of Westside Road and Fowler Creek Road, and cause a back up for the Fowler Creek Road, Pasco Road, and Granite Creek residents, hindering them from exiting the road to carry out their business or leisure whether traveling east or west. And to "estimate" that only X amount of guests will leave one time per day is absurd. No one comes to the upper county to stay in a RV park or cabin or bed and breakfast all day. They come here for the mountain trails, the clear and deep lakes, the rivers, the towns, etc. All these guests are sure to add ample traffic and wear and tear the local roads supporting Fowler Creek.

CLOSING ARGUMENT

The narrative discussed in Section 8 Exhibit 1 is the representation and opinion of

only ONE party. And that is Pat Deneen. The one person(s) to benefit from this. The statement found in this exhibit stating, **“the ranch would be a welcomed addition to the area.”** To this I ask, “By who?!” Because I am yet to speak to a single one neighbor that wants this to be brought to the area or sees any positive benefit to be had by anyone other than Pat Deneen. All the while local residents and neighbors see it as an atrocity on every level. Its not right to adjust the zoning of an area and allow the construction of a resort that would be so detrimental and damning to all those that lived there before it. It would be one thing if everyone out here in this end of town bought or built houses next to commercial property, but in fact we did not. We did not make that choice. We chose to live where there is peace, quiet, space and serenity. In life, I weigh my choices on a good vs bad scale. I always want the good to outweigh the bad in the outcome of my decisions. I’m asking that the county and all those responsible for the approval or disapproval truly weigh the good vs the bad in regards to the proposal of Fowler Creek Guest Ranch. It is nothing more than an exploitation of a beautiful area by Pat Deneen with the full intension of filling his bank account. Kittitas county is a beautiful place that needs to be delicately managed by those appointed and voted into the responsible roles. This land needs to be embraced and protected. Not exploited. And that is exactly what Pat Deneen wants to do once again. Exploit the land for personal gain. There is absolutely no **“RURAL CHARACTER”** about this resort he wants to build. A guest ranch consists of horses or cows. Some type of agricultural activity for guests to take part in and experience. This is a resort with every kind of building and lodging accommodation from a treehouse to a 4 bedroom “cabin” to a Bed and Breakfast as well as RV’s. This is a resort built to maximize occupancy and profitably for Pat Deneen and to build generational wealth. If a resort is what he wants to build for Kittitas County, the Silver Ridge Ranch is for sale in Easton and already set up with some of the amenities he needs as well as being zoned COMMERCIAL. In this same narrative, it is said that, **“As the vacationing population grows, the upper Kittitas county currently has a need for more recreation areas and recreation lodging facilities.”** Again, the views of ONE MAN. The one man seeking to grow his wealth even farther only at the expense of everyone else living in the area. Upper Kittitas county does not need another place to lodge vacationers. We have Suncadia, Whispering Pines RV park, The Easton Lake State park, along with many hotels, motels and AMPLE vacation and short term rentals for every budget. What this area needs right now are traffic solutions, a second grocery store, a long term and sustainable domestic water plan as well as a thought out long term waste water plan for all the growth we will continue to see. Before we know it, we will need another school. These are the necessities of the upper county and our entire county as a whole. With regards to the legal battle example of East Lake Sammamish Trail vs King County, that is a completely bogus and irrelevant comparison. An argument to turn an existing but abandoned railway into a trail has absolutely zero comparison with turning the private and quite community of the greater Fowler Creek area into a tourist destination to the benefit

of one man. In closing, I would very much like to thank you the time you took to read my thoughts and concerns on this matter as they are dear to not only my heart, but the hearts of my neighbors and community. I hope you make the right decision for not only the residents in the surrounding Fowler Creek Area, but of the greater Kittitas County.

Best Regards,
Austin Pracht