

From: [Lacie H](#)
To: [Chace Pedersen](#)
Subject: Fw: Project File #CU-23-00002 The Outpost
Date: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:59:43 PM

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From: Lacie H <laciedoodah@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:56 PM
To: chase.pedersen@co.kittitas.wa.us <chase.pedersen@co.kittitas.wa.us>
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Project File #CU-23-00002
The Outpost

Hi!

I wanted to reach out in response to the proposed land use action in Sunshine Estates, Ronald, Wa. I ask that you please stop this from moving forward.

Upon learning that a recent out-of-state buyer intends to turn our neighborhood into a campground with 30 cabins and a lodge, several of us long-time owners and residents are very concerned, to say the least. My grandparents bought into Sunshine Estates in the 1970s, and my parents bought the lot from my grandparents in 1980, we have been here for a very long time. The lot next door was owned by another relative from the same family for many years as well. After my parents bought our lot, we made many trips up to camp from the property over the years before making it our permanent residence over 25 years ago. We have plans to stay here for the foreseeable future and are fully vested in the results of this situation.

There is a lot of fear surrounding the idea that a so-far unused piece of land will be turned into a campground or resort, rather than used as a private residence. There are a lot of potentials with negative effects, and I will write about just a few of them here. In discussing the situation, with my family, it feels like money is more important than the welfare of the community here. The recent buyer of the land doesn't live here, and likely bought in with the intention of an investment, a way to make money only. If the buyer was able to buy a vacant almost ten acres at about a million dollars, this buyer has more money and power than we do, and could choose a place more suited to their goals of building a campground/resort.

With an influx of temporary campers, we worry about traffic. Extra people. Crime rates. Safety. Snow removal. Additional draw on our already thin emergency services, and more. But especially excessive stress on our natural resources, namely: water.

A major point of concern for me is the water. It is well known that Upper Kittitas County has had water issues over the last many years, getting so bad that county officials placed a moratorium on new wells, which lasted quite a while. We have a good, strong well on our property. It was installed by a very experienced, knowledgeable-about-the-area well driller, and the well has served us well over the years.

When the neighboring home is rented out to large groups of vacationers, we get sand in our toilets, bathtubs, and sinks, and that impacts our ability to use our water as needed, for fear of causing damage to our well. When the neighboring rental home is hosting a group of about ten or more, the number of showers, toilet flushes, loads of dishes and laundry increase beyond what our aquifer appears to be able to handle. We get to adapt our water usage to compensate for vacationers who use more water than we have to give. Many, many times, the renters have totaled many more than ten people at a time. I cannot see an additional draw on the aquifer from this proposed project to have zero negative effect on existing residents' available water. According to Doug Weis, another long-term residence, our aquifer is shared by the community, including this property in question. If our well is negatively impacted by overbuilding for the resources available, it will be us left dealing with the consequences. There are many communities in California who are forced to truck in water

because the population's need is greater than the resources available locally. This is not an unfounded fear. You can watch the documentary by National Geographic titled "Water and Power: A California Heist" to see real communities currently dealing with this. It's scary!

I realize you won't know that our well is affected by the renters next door unless we tell you. So, I'm telling you. Our well is affected by renters using more than their fair share of water next door. I'm sure the permits to build the house did not include a septic to manage 30 people crammed into a few bedrooms. My mom has witnessed ten cars in their driveway during a rental, while we were getting sand in our plumbing. Increased draw means less water to be shared by all. This matters to us. Just maintaining shrubberies and lawns to make the landscaping look nice will likely be more than our aquifer can adequately handle. What happens when the wells dry up? There will be no water for anyone! Repairing or replacing damaged wells aren't cheap, either.

I feel it is a bare minimum consideration to do a thorough study on the aquifer up here, before granting permits for a project of this size. We rely on our county officials to protect our interest in resources like water. Is there enough water to support an additional hundred visitors per day to draw off of our water? I can't tell for sure, but based on my personal experience, I'm going to guess not.

As Lake Cle Elum is a reservoir, it is not a typical destination lake, and I'm not sure that everyone knows that. The water level rises in the spring from snowmelt, which makes it incredibly cold to swim in, even in the summer months. The water level drops quickly in the summer by means of the dam. It is a rare day at Lake Cle Elum in the warm months that isn't windy. The wind picks up, the whitecaps roll, and the water becomes more dangerous for water sports. Most windy days, the boat launch parking lot at Wish Poosh empties early, but the sunbathers on Speeli beach don't seem to care about the wind. A Jetski can handle the rough water. A paddle board would be dangerous for those not up for the waves. It shouldn't be seen as a destination lake for water sports, because it just isn't like other lakes. The window for water skiing is tiny, on most mornings. Lake Kachess is the kind of lake this campground should be built on. The water doesn't drop as early in the summer, the water isn't as cold, and rumor has it that the wind doesn't pick up at Kachees as it does at Cle Elum, making the skiing great.

I can't help but wonder if the new buyer even knows this about the lake.

There is lots of camping at designated campgrounds further up the road towards Salmon la Sac that one, provides adequate places for recreation, and two, makes our road very busy as it is. Many passing through disregard the speed limit, making it unsafe for us to walk our leashed dogs along the road anymore. I used to take runs on that stretch, from our driveway to the turnout overlooking the lake, and from our driveway up to the Last Resort. I don't feel safe doing so anymore because of the amount of traffic, and the frequency of drivers driving above the speed limit. Adding additional traffic won't help at all. As we slow to turn into our driveway, we are often passed by speeding vehicles impatient to slow for us. If there is a large influx of additional vehicles entering the roadway there, it seems reasonable to expect an increase in accidents there. Before my Dad passed away, he would get very upset by all of the people speeding by, way over the speed limit. It has been a huge problem for decades.

Much of the same reasons that residents of the area are opposing the 47 Degrees North apply here, too. Traffic from I-90 all the way up to the lake. When comparing 47 Degrees North to a 30 cabin plus lodge campground, an increase of this little may not seem like much, but the cumulative impact will be significant, especially for those of us directly affected. One significant difference between this and 47 Degrees North is that there is a huge community fighting that one. We are a very small community. And I'm afraid our meager voices won't add up to enough.

I feel this will only benefit one: the new buyer, who doesn't even live here. Will the new buyer even keep the campground, or will he sell out to a larger corporation who really won't care about the impact to us little neighbors? Long term residents have faced an immense amount of change already, and this is literally in my front yard.

I realize change is a part of life. But I don't see how this change is in the best interest of anyone except the new buyer who stands to make money off of our little slice of paradise. Do the wants for profits of one outweigh the thoughts and feelings of the rest of us? Not all change is progress.

In all honestly, this feels really heavy, trying to defend our little community and a future we dreamed of, from someone whose interest here appears purely financial. Raping our community resources and turning our neighborhood into a big campground and lodge destination just to make a buck.

In conclusion, I would not be writing this letter if I learned that the new buyer was seeking permits to build a small Bed and Breakfast. This is not that.

I thank you for considering how this will affect us, as owners and residents with hopes to stay in our homes, safe, for decades to come. I do understand that many of us will have high emotions regarding the potential changes, and I hope you will have an extra bit of compassion as you read of our concerns. When emotions are high, we often struggle to communicate well. Again, thank you for reading all of our words. With such short notice, I'm not sure I was able to convey my thoughts well, but I wanted to try.

Please, stop this from going forward.

Thank you,
-Lacie Hartman
lacedoodah@hotmail.com

Sent from [Outlook](#)