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Patricia Decker, Director  
Waterfront Futures Group  
1801 Roeder Ave.  
Bellingham, WA 98225

September 23, 2004

Dear Ms. Decker and Waterfront Futures Group Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Waterfront Framework Plan and Waterfront Action Plan prepared by the Waterfront Futures Group (WFG). The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (WCMRC) appreciates the effort that the WFG has taken to create a vision and framework for redevelopment of the City of Bellingham waterfront. We know that there are many competing interests in the waterfront, and we sincerely commend you for making habitat restoration one of your priorities.

The WCMRC acknowledges that not every habitat project can be called out and identified. We also recognize that some specific projects have been identified as priorities and we would like to specifically thank you for recognizing them as important habitat actions.

- Removal of creosote pilings from the City Center and Boulevard areas. Note that the WCMRC has been involved in extensive creosote removal in the past and we appreciate the fact that the WFG recognizes its importance.
- Removal of carbon material along the beach at Little Squalicum. The WCMRC also has discussed this specific project before and considers it a high priority.
- Relocation of the Squalicum Creek mouth to create a new estuary west of and separate from the Squalicum Creek Waterway.
- Protection of enhancements at the Log Pond site and extend habitat and beach enhancement into upland areas.
- Enhancement of habitat along Boulevard Park, including the provision of a more natural buffer between the land and water and the recreation of eelgrass beds along and near the shore.
- Enhancement of Padden Lagoon (estuary lagoon at Padden Creek), including naturalizing the area along its east side.
- Protection and enhancement of eelgrass beds near Padden Lagoon and Marine Park.
- Protection of natural areas in the Fairhaven section through enhancing or reintroducing native vegetation.

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- Protection of the heron rookery at Post Point, in part, by adding substantially to the acreage of the wetland/marsh system below the wooded slope of the rookery.
- Improvement of water circulation and reducing siltation in Chuckanut Bay. The WCMRC believes that restoration of Chuckanut Bay would greatly enhance the shellfish resource and restore high quality rearing habitat for salmon in Chuckanut Bay. The WCMRC believes that the method to increase water circulation and reducing siltation needs to be further evaluated, as perforation of the causeway may not necessarily accomplish the circulation pattern needed.

In our reading of the Framework Plans, one concern that all of the committee members shared was the potential that stormwater might be used as a "resource". It is our opinion that stormwater must be cleaned to a high degree before it can be used as a freshwater resource. It may not be feasible at this time to treat stormwater to the degree needed, such that its input into habitat areas would not degrade them.

As the Waterfront Futures Group planning process continues, undoubtedly there will be more opportunities for habitat enhancement and more discussion of priorities and concerns. Please consider the WCMRC a resource and feel free to call on us about these matters.

Sincerely,



Michelle Evans, Chair  
Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee

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