

Public Comments Regarding Ward Lake Park Received before Draft Master Plan Concepts Released (7/5/11 - 10/10/11)

- I spent many a middle and high school day, swimming in Ward Lake during the summer...exploring early independence and meeting friends from other parts of the lake... “in the middle” with air mattresses and inner tubes to “play.” My comments are probably influenced by those carefree times...
 - 1) No concession stand
 - 2) No lifeguard
 - 3) Easy access to waterfront without having to walk a long waysparents with kids & strollers, coolers, handicapped, floating devices. Wheelchair access near waterfront so “grandmas and grandpas” can watch their grandkids enjoy this wonderful community asset.
 - 4) Docks to jump into from and layout in the sun as room
 - 5) Grassy area, combination of sun and shade, to lay out and sun relax with light breeze from lake
 - 6) Possibly some Picnic tables
 - 7) Keep it simple
 - 8) No restricted, designated swimming areas so kids entering at public access can meet kids entering from private beaches
- I live within walking distance of the new park and am very excited to watch it develop. I have great memories of taking my small children to swim in Capitol Lake and hope to enjoy taking my grand-children to swim in this new park. I hope the city will be able to afford a life-guard as well as swings and other climbing toys for small children to experience. In addition, it might be nice to have places for bicycles to be locked. I love the idea of the wheelchair accessible trail and maybe a running track and/or ball fields. A place to picnic would also be nice but I am not sure a concession stand is where I would want to spend my money. My hope is that the park will be a place for families.
- I am writing in response to the editorial in the July 5th issue of the Olympian which solicited possible uses for the newly acquired property at Ward Lake. I am a resident of Thurston County and live in West Olympia off of Cooper Point Road. I moved to this residence in 2006 from Ohio and was disappointed to discover that Thurston County, in spite of numerous lakes, offers recreational fisherman very little, if any, bank fishing opportunities for trout. Hence, I would like to request that a portion of the land on Ward Lake be devoted to bank fishing. If it is impossible to have a dedicated area for fishing, then perhaps some of the shoreline can be shared by swimmers and fishermen. Thank you for giving this suggestion your thoughtful consideration.
- I cannot come to the meeting but my input would be:
 - Place to park and lock bikes
 - Swim beach, no lifeguards
 - No dogs in water
 - solar toilets.
 - Thanks

- I'm hoping Parks will have a plan for keeping geese out of the public swimming area. It's so gross when you take your kids to swim at a lake and there is geese droppings everywhere on the land. This also makes you question how clean the water is. Also, I've heard from someone that lives on Ward Lake that there is a family of swans that occupy the lake. Around the time the baby swan eggs are laid, the father swan get's very territorial and can get really aggressive with people (the swan flies towards people and flaps his wings to try to look bigger and intimidating). I'm no bird expert by any means, but I just wanted to pass along some stuff I've been thinking about because I will definitely use this park facility. Olympia really needs a public swimming area - and I'm so excited about it!
- The pretty consistent thread in the comments I've forwarded from Holiday Hills residents is:
 - a) we support a public park, with appropriate oversight and b) we would like the city to ban motorboats from the lake. Possible compromises include electric motors allowed, and/or no power boats from June to September (swimming season)
- I want to say, before addressing the specifics of the proposed park, that I am very alarmed by the tenor of the notice I received in the mail. First, that the park already has a name when I was told it was only a tentative idea makes me think there are already plans in motion. Secondly, the wording of the notice, and reading the information on the website, substantiates that notion and causes me to think that indeed planning has already been in process if you are already at the point of developing a master plan. At the time of the purchase, when I contacted city officials, they assured me that the land was more of an investment than a serious intended park. I hope that is indeed true - I did not like the secretive manner in which the land was acquired, nor the disregard for codes and proper protocol. I asked to be kept advised of any developments and trusted that no more agenda would be pursued in secret. I offered to be involved. I have heard nothing until your notice. I am speaking below from an understanding that a decision has not yet been made as to whether a park will be developed. I seriously hope that this is indeed the case. As a citizen I have always been in favor of projects that are for the common good of the people. That being said, I have grave concerns with the projection of a city swim park on Ward Lake. My concerns, and ultimately, objections are three fold, in order of importance: environmental impact; financial accountability; and, responsibility to current residents.
 1. **Environmental impact:** Has there been an impact study performed of this delicate ecosystem?
 - a. Lake type = spring-fed with no inlet or outlet
With no flushing out of water, all debris, human byproducts (oils, hair products, lotions, feces, urine, etc.), garbage, etc. remain behind to accumulate, contaminate and pollute.
 - b. Wildlife = fish, eagles, ducks, geese, deer, raccoons, rabbits, etc.
There is an abundance of wonderful wildlife existing in/on the lake and its environs. Activity level, pollution, noise are all bound to destroy this special and delicate ecosystem.
 - c. Size = small - potential of excess use
The lake is very small, thus prompting the question of how many people can it sustain without becoming damaged.
 2. **Financial Accountability:**

a. Adequate funds for monitoring, maintaining and preserving

Beyond the financial outlay for developing the park, what are the financial projections for monitoring, maintaining and preserving the park and the lake? What is the source of these funds and are they guaranteed, no matter the future financial climate, to be available forever?

b. Funds better spent to provide year round swimming facility

With the financial crisis that we common folk are experiencing, the cut backs to existing programs and facilities, and the personnel layoffs, how can we, in good faith, propose spending funds on developing a swim park that can be used only a small window of time in the summer? Wouldn't the funds be better spent on a year-round facility?

3. Responsibility to current residents:

a. Guarantee to preserve quality of water, environment and property

The current residents on the lake enjoy a pristine environment - quiet, clean, secure, natural, and most of all, respectful! We care about and watch out for the lake and its creatures! Will you guarantee that all users will do likewise? Will you guarantee that the quality of the lake and its wildlife will not be affected?

b. Guaranteed compensation for loss of property value due to almost certain demise of lake

I am confident that the lake ecosystem will not survive a city swim park. So then, will you guarantee to compensate us for our drop in property values?

On a personal level I would like to ask, if it were in the least realistic, for personal pain and suffering compensation as the grief of witnessing such useless destruction to a precious resource that I so cherish is heart wrenchingly traumatic . . .

Thank you so much for the opportunity to voice my concerns and objections. I have been waiting since the month the land was purchased for this opportunity.

Finally, I am sorry I will not be able to attend the meeting this week. A previous engagement puts me out of town. I hope that it will be well attended and I offer, my time, attention, energy . . . my services to bringing about a satisfactory resolution to this matter.

Again, thank you.

- We need dog parks. There are many dog owners in Thurston county and we would all love a safe and legal place to take our pets to exercise and play. Though we do have some parks that just opened, more would be greatly appreciated as they can become overcrowded - a great sign of how well used and appreciated the parks are! Please think of the pet owners who travel far outside of the county in order to use dog parks, lets keep our residents local and vehicle emissions down by creating more dog parks in Thurston county. A happy dog is one who gets to play and a happy dog makes happy neighbors!
- I would love a dog park at Ward Lake Park. My dog, Cody, is elderly and doesn't ride well in the car anymore. The other dog parks are too far from my home to take Cody, but this park would be within a couple of miles. It is so important, whatever a dog's age, to be socialized with other dogs; it makes the dogs more socialable and safer to be around at all times.

Thanks for considering Ward Lake as a leash-free dog park.

- My name is Chester and I am a Chesapeake Bay Retriever. I weigh 95 pounds and am 9 years old. I love to retrieve and I live to retrieve. Retrieving is something that cannot be done tied to a leash with my people on the other end. When my people and I were in Lake Havasu City last January, we went to a dog park every single day. It was soooooo much fun. There were 3 dog parks in that city and each one was a blast. I looked forward to it every day and left with my tongue hanging out of my mouth. I love a good workout!!!! I met lots of nice dogs and I never saw a dog fight. I was so disappointed when I came back to Olympia. We did go out to the new dog park by the dump, but it was very muddy. I was a mess, and my people didn't take me back very often. It rains a lot in Olympia, so mud can be around a lot. I don't mind the rain, but I desperately want to run hard, and run fast and chase a frisbee, a stick or a ball. I appreciate all the work you are doing to make a new dog park closer to our home. I can't wait until it is ready!!!!

- Hello - A off-leash dog area is needed at Ward Lake Park to support the primary recreation needs of the residents in the neighborhood. Thanks :-)

- I think we are all aware that the potential for a swim area at Ward Lake Park is quite limited for a number of reasons, including at least the following:

- very limited beach area
- shade
- very steep approach
- variability of water levels during the swim season
- limited area of wading-depth water
- lack of naturally sandy bottom

While any limitations can be overcome with enough money, I think it is important that one of the options brought to the second meeting be a "Minimal" option. By this I mean a simple stairway directly to the shoreline and a dock for serious swimmers to access deeper water for workouts. No beach, no wading area, no serpentine trail, no wheelchair access. This would be the lowest cost option and also the lowest benefit option. In addition to being a serious option that should be considered, it would provide a "baseline" to which additional features/costs could be added incrementally to develop other options. Thank you for considering this suggestion.

- This is to formalize my suggestion of last nite that more than one tour of the Ward Lake Park land be scheduled. A single tour would be awkward for the large number of people who expressed interest, and would also prevent some people from participating due to conflicts. I suggest at least two tours at very different times, e.g., Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon. I also suggest that the tour include the boundaries as well as the shoreline area, e.g., walk the east boundary on the way to the waterfront and the west boundary on the return. Thanks
- Thank you for the July 14, 2011 meeting which was helpful in establishing the facts underlying the effort to develop a master plan for Ward Lake Park. I have four comments: 1) Many thanks to the Jay Emry family for selling the park property to the City of Olympia; 2) You made my day when you held up the Olympia 2010 Parks Plan update with all the yellow tabs about the planned Ward Lake Park; 3) If the swimming beach is established and has floats around it, I support the idea of having a couple of lanes for lap swimmers (it would reduce the risk of swimmer-fisherman collisions,

although I have never witnessed any such collisions in the 50 plus years I have been swimming in Ward Lake; 4) While many good ideas for Ward Lake Park were proposed last night, **the most important one is to give the children of Olympia a place to swim in fresh water.** Many of the other ideas could be implemented at other parks, but no other Olympia parks offer the possibility of fresh water swimming and this was the main reason for acquiring the property in the first place. I'm attaching an article written by me and a life long friend about Ward Lake that was published locally. Other children should have swimming fun we had.

[Attached Article]:

Recently, the writers had a reunion on Ward Lake, which led to the following childhood memories from the early 1960's. We lived near Boulevard Road, a block from Footes Store (now The Pit Stop). In the summertime, the neighborhood kids picked strawberries at the farms located on Boulevard Road between Log Cabin Road and the Yelm Highway. We'd get up at sunrise, take the lunches our Moms had packed the night before, and catch an old school bus at Footes Store that took us to the farms. We ate at least as many strawberries as we picked and had periodic strawberry fights while we worked our way slowly down row after endless row of berry plants. We day-dreamed of diving into cool, clear, heavenly Ward Lake. The air was hot, our mouths were gritty with dust, and our hands were red stained from pinching stems, when the whistle finally blew and we were loaded back on the bus to return home. We couldn't wait to put on our swimming suits and fling beach towels over our shoulders. We were going swimming at Ward Lake!

- Our bicycles had big, wide tires with sit up style handle bars and hard triangular seats. On them, we pedaled to Ward Lake. With the wind in our faces, freedom was ours along Boulevard Road. When we arrived at the public access area, we dropped our bikes next to others, never bothering to lock them. There was always a crowd of moms and kids, black inner tubes and beach towels everywhere. The older teenagers had their territory and didn't bother with younger kids as long as we stayed away from them. The boat launch was not like it is today, and swimmers had to be asked to move aside to back a boat trailer, or carry a canoe, down the gravel ramp into the water. There was a small store to the left of the launch with a big grassy lawn and a dock. We'd buy penny candy and Shasta pop there. No one owned goggles, but we'd dive so deep to see the bottom that our ears would hurt. The lake was so clear and clean that we'd suck its water into our mouths and shower each other with fountains of spray. We always knew when it was time to go home for dinner because the sun would be just so low in the western sky. The ride home was much slower and the air cooler while our swimming suits dried on our tired young bodies. We fell asleep on those hot summer nights, dreaming about being weightless and free floating in Ward Lake.
- I live at near the proposed park and would like to be put on your e-mail list for Ward Lake park planning. I'm someone who would walk to use the park every day and would like to see improvements there that I and others in the neighborhood would use such as:
 - children's play structure
 - tennis courts
 - basketball court
 - field for unstructured play
 - all weather walking/jogging path around the perimeter like at LBA park

waterfront amenities - sitting areas at water level and at the top of the bank, all-weather path to the water, pier to walk out over the water, water entry area (to avoid muddy bottom)

I would also rather not have formal baseball or soccer field or having lights for night sports. Those activities would use a lot of parking that should be available for people wanting to use the water amenity.

Thanks very much

- Thank you for hosting the first meeting of the Ward Lake plan. I am sure you were surprised by the passion of some of the people who don't want to lose the beautiful, peaceful and clean lake that we currently have. Just so you know, some of us were told that before a park would be planned we would be allowed to express our concerns. When we heard you say it was a done deal, it came as a surprise. There had been no public meeting regarding this.

In listening to all the groups report what they discussed, I found that most are concerned about pollution, noise, safety and the environmental impact on wildlife, fish and birds such a park and swimming area will have on Ward Lake. The fact that there is no inlet or outlet is also of great concern. I am sure you have reached those same conclusions.

I have a few questions:

1. I believe that the new shoreline guidelines say that there will be a 200 feet setback from the water. How can you build restrooms or changing stations down by the water?
2. The new shoreline plan also says something about not being able to remove vegetation from the lake. How can you remove trees, lily pads and other vegetation to build the swimming area
3. I understand that Ward Lake is in FEMA's new flood plain. What effect does that have on the use of the property?
4. Is the property still in the county and when will there be a public meeting about annexing it to the city?

I hope you and your committee will be able to address the concerns of the people who attended the meeting. We would like Ward Lake to remain a clean, beautiful and peaceful lake.

- ****NO DOGS!!!** Dogs have other parks to run in. The owners of the dogs who visit the DNR site do not pick up after their dogs and the dogs POOP right by the shoreline. Another issue is that people with homes right on the lake have dogs. Do they scoop their dogs' poop or not? I suspect they don't do it 100% of the time. If not, how much of a problem is this for the health of the lake? (And what about homeowners with dogs whose homes do not directly front the lakeshore? Are their animals' poop affecting the health of the lake?)

****Coordinate criteria with DNR.** I have no evidence that DNR monitors the boat launch site at Ward Lake. The DNR boat launch does not provide garbage cans and, after July 4, the beach was littered with spent firecrackers, beer cans, dog poop, etc. (Someone probably closes the gate at night, but so far as I can tell, that's it.)

****I'm concerned that homeowners use pesticides that are entering the lake. How to find out more about which homeowners are using what chemicals and what effect they have on the lake? Maybe have a list of approved lawn-care products?**

****I'm concerned about homeowners with septic systems, the contents of which may be entering the lake. How can City of Olympia determine if this is happening?**

**Water testing must be done regularly - maybe twice a week in summer.

**Changing rooms and SHOWERS for swimmers.

**Garbage cans at the upper area and the swim area.

**No gas-powered boats on the lake! This would have to be coordinated with DNR, which runs the boat launch site. I swam yesterday and it seemed the motorized boats were quiet and non-polluting. This made me happy.

(Truthfully, I think the money would have been better spent on building an outdoor swim facility which could have accommodated the needs of children and adults.)

- I think we can all agree that Ward Lake is a very special close clean deep water lake. My comments are:
Thank you for creating a place where the Ward Lake distance swimmers can legally swim.
Please do not limit us to a roped in area or if you do so, make it large for lap swimmers.
Please do not change the requirements of no large boat motors. The boats on Black Lake are loud, polluting and dangerous to swimmers.
Please create a no lease area like Magnuson Park in Seattle where water dogs can retrieve in the lake.
- Please keep me in the loop for all information concerning Ward Lake park planning. I am trying to figure out how the city hopes to afford the extensive engineering modifications required to turn a steep forested hillside into accesible beach area for public use?
- I've been swimming in Ward Lake since moving to Olympia in 1990. My two teenage sons learned open water swimming there, and have been enjoying the lake their entire lives. I support Ward Lake accessibility for swimmers and general recreators at the new park. Equally important is to protect and preserve as much as the natural environment as possible, including the beautiful stand of trees. A simple wood chip trail through the forest to the swimming beach, or, if the trail needs to meet ADA requirements, use of a permeable surface. No boat ramp, as there is already one on the lake. Keep the 5 knots per hour speed limit. Limit parking space to encourage biking and public transit. Any development of ballfields, concession stand, etc. should be away from the lake and not impact the existing forest.
- Hi: I live 2 blocks from the boat ramp to Ward Lake, not the side for the proposed park.
My BIG concern is that power boats and other watercraft that is noisy and powered NOT be allowed on the Lake.
We can hear the band practicing at Olympia High School outside so any noisy watercraft would certainly NOT be music to our ears.
We weren't advised of this park being considered and had to read about it in the Fall 2011 Olympia Parks & Rec brochure.
It would be a good idea to include ALL stakeholders around the lake in future.
- Hello, I am a resident of Ward Lake Heights. My family and I are so appreciative for the access we have to Ward Lake. We take our two daughters there almost every day in summer. While I appreciate the need to create more lake access to the public, I am very concerned about the water quality from this happening. Ward Lake is currently

clean & clear. You can see the bottom from out on the swim dock. Having hundreds of people in a beach area will disturb the water quality greatly, affecting not only the residents, but also all of the wildlife. I encourage you to reconsider creating Ward Lake Park. Thank you for your consideration,