

May 11, 2018

Save DeLeo Wall – Prevent Clearcut Logging on Cougar Mountain - Press Release

Clearcut logging may soon happen on the steep south side of Cougar Mountain. **Clearcut logging leaving a scar and environmental damage on the flank can start as early as Monday, May 21, 2018.**

The “De Leo Wall” is an almost vertical cliff on the south side of Cougar Mountain; located just north of the Newcastle/Renton city border at May Valley Road and 148th Ave SE. Hiking trails that have been used since the 1970s cross the DeLeo Wall and connect to trails within Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park.

The owner of the property on which the Deleo Wall is located has applied for a logging permit (FPA/N #2420111) with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). These plans call for a clearcut on a 38 acre parcel – from May Valley Road to above the crest of the mountain. **The upper part of the property is designated as an erosion hazard zone, and the lower part is a vulnerable wetlands area, with fish bearing streams running through and draining into May Creek.**

Clearcut logging the hillside below and above DeLeo Wall will likely cause erosion and other environmental damage. Runoffs into the May Creek Basin impact fish bearing streams, wetlands, and riparian land. The loss of trees means elimination of known forest habitat for bald eagles, black bears, bobcats, and many other animals. Slash debris left behind from logging could pose a significant fire hazard, threatening homes in both Newcastle and Renton. The DeLeo Wall hiking trails and lookout points will be destroyed.

The clearcut would be visible from miles away. This is what a clearcut could look like for many eastside residents:



Current view of Cougar Mountain hillside to the south



Expected view of hillside after clearcut logging has occurred

Concerned citizens have started a campaign to prevent logging of the DeLeo Wall property, with the ultimate goal of acquiring the property for inclusion into Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park in collaboration with the City of Newcastle, City of Renton, and King County. Since our first meeting two weeks ago, we have established a website, www.savedeleowall.org, a Facebook page, and an email address (savedeleowall@gmail.com). We put up 80 road signs and more than 100 posters within a 4 mile radius of the DeLeo Wall to raise awareness and encourage people to protest and file comments on the logging application. We have more than 2300 unique visits to our website and very strong support in the community. More than 75 citizens wrote objection letters to DNR, before their May 3rd deadline. The Bellevue Reporter covered the DeLeo Wall logging issue on May 8, 2018, see:

<http://www.bellevuereporter.com/news/newcastle-renton-push-back-against-logging-near-cougar-mountain/>

The Save DeLeo Wall Campaign has reached out to officials at the City, County, and State levels and asked decision-makers to help stop the logging application from moving forward. We have support from the City of Renton Council and the City of Newcastle Manager. Both cities wrote objection letters to DNR but based on the initial feedback from DNR, we are increasingly concerned the City's letters may not be sufficient to stop the clearcut logging of the Deleo Wall. **We have therefore reached out to King County Council Member Reagan Dunn, King County Executive Dow Constantine, and Governor Jay Inslee, who has the authority to stop the DNR's approval of the logging permit.** Hand signed letters were delivered to the offices on April 30, and May 8, respectively. We are very concerned as the DNR Permit approval could be granted at any time between now and May 19, 2018.

It is our understanding that the logging company, Erickson Logging, approached the property owner to initiate the logging permit application to DNR. The DeLeo Wall property owner, Dalpay Properties, LLC may be willing to sell the property instead. It will, however, take time to raise the necessary funds to execute a purchase, and **clearcut logging could start as early as May 21, 2018.** We need County and State leaders to take immediate action to prevent this from happening. **Local news outlets can help us bring the issue to the forefront of the King County Council, Executive Constantine, and Governor Inslee's agenda. We urge your station to support the voice of the people and to run this story immediately.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Contact for interview or comment:

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