

**TALKING POINTS WHEN WRITING LETTERS IN SUPPORT OF OUR PARKS**  
(Please don't quote this verbatim—pick and choose and individualize your letters)

**We feel that Kopachuck and all the other current state parks should remain in the state park system for the following reasons:**

- ALL of our state parks have their individual beauty and provide diverse recreational (and re-creational) opportunities.
- With increasing population and development, green space is becoming rarer and more fragmented.
- Washington State residents generate 48% of our state's visitor days and 43% of all visitor spending. Our parks have high attendance rates, especially in the summertime thus enhancing both state and local economies wherever they exist.
- The economy is forcing residents to trend toward shorter, more local trips. Maximizing their options can only help both state and local economies.
- State government claims the targeted parks are not consistent with Centennial Vision 2013, which states that " in 2013 Washington's state parks will be premier destinations of uncommon quality, including state and regionally significant natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources that are outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment, and learning of all people." What they don't tell you is that Vision 2013 further states 3 priorities: 1. Care for the parks and recreation services enjoyed by the public today.... 2. Expand existing parks, trails, and services. 3. Add new parks, trails, and services.
- What fits into this vision and what doesn't was arbitrarily decided at best.
- 6 of the 13 parks slated for closure are on Puget Sound—how is this not within the parameters of the above criteria?
- 4 of the 13 parks (Joemma, Kopachuck, Fay Bainbridge, and Fort Ward) are designated as integral stops on the Cascadia Marine Trail. A 5<sup>th</sup> park (Old Port Townsend) was slated to be added to the trail system.
- The Cascadia Marine Trail is a National Recreation Trail and designated as one of only 16 National Millennium Trails by the White House. If the White House designates this as one of America's special places why doesn't it stand up to WA State's centennial vision?
- The educational offerings provided by the rangers in state parks create science and environmental learning experiences for both children and adults and help to teach us ways to respect, appreciate, and maintain the natural resources of our planet. Without park rangers, these programs are likely to disappear.
- Once the state forfeits control, there is no guarantee that current usage will be retained/preserved because other entities are faced with similar budgetary cutbacks.
- Decisions made in haste cannot be reversed.
- The closure of these parks is predicated on budgetary restraints. It is feasible that they could be reincorporated into the state system in the future. How would it be possible to ensure that they are maintained in their present state should that eventually become a viable option?

**Specific Reasons for Retaining Kopachuck:**

- Kopachuck is 100% full on weekends in the summertime.
- Independent businesses near the parks and in greater Gig Harbor depend on our park visitors as part of their sustainability.
- Many Gig Harbor residents decided to live here solely because of the proximity of Kopachuck State Park.
- Transference of Kopachuck State Park to a local authority would change its character to that of a local, rather than a regional park.
- Maintenance by a local authority would be more costly in the long run—there is the economy of scale to consider (contractual labor, shared programming, etc).
- Kopachuck State Park lies in close proximity to Tacoma and as such serves a large metropolitan area. It is a regional park. The new Tacoma Narrows Bridge has provided greater access.
- Kopachuck is the only west-facing waterfront park in our area where visitors can enjoy breathtaking views of the Olympics as well as the beach.
- If Kopachuck were to close permanently it would become a magnet for transients and drug-users. With out a Park Ranger (a police enforcement agent) on site this forces oversight to the Pierce County Sheriffs department, an agency is already slow to respond to area needs.