

# Westport Light – Public Comments

April 2024 – January 27, 2025

Dear Washington State Parks,

My name is [redacted] and I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed golf course development at Westport Light State Park. The recent lawsuit filed by environmental groups rightly highlights the significant environmental concerns associated with this project. While I am not a resident of the State of Washington, I cannot sit idly by as a critical wetland faces potential environmental destruction and public land threatens to be converted into a private club.

Allowing the construction of a golf course in this park would not only violate previous settlements meant to protect the area's wetlands, but it would also contradict the intended use of park lands as established by state laws. The destruction of the interdunal wetlands, as mentioned by Arthur Grunbaum of the Friends of Grays Harbor, would be a severe loss for our environment and the public.

The historical context of the Links at Half Moon Bay dispute underscores the importance of preserving this land. Legal precedent from the previous settlement should guide the decision-making process. This park, forming a part of the 600-acre Westport Light State Park, is a precious public asset that should remain untouched by private development.

I urge the State Parks Commission to carefully consider the environmental impacts and the public interest before granting approval for this project. Our natural spaces are invaluable, and once lost, they cannot be easily replaced. Please stop the development of the golf course and ensure the protection of Westport Light State Park for current and future generations.<sup>1</sup>

Good morning,

I am looking for avenues to share my OPPOSITION to the development of the Westport, WA lighthouse park development into a golf course.

I am a WA resident with a home in Westport, and an active user of the publicly accessible jetty beach and Westhaven Park. After following and reviewing the proposed plans, they seem woefully inadequate in upholding the state commitment to public lands, providing safe habitat and unrestricted access for residents. This proposal is not in alignment with the community values or character of Westport in Grays Harbor. I do NOT support its development.

If there are other appropriate avenues to share my perspective and opposition I would appreciate the direction.

Thank you<sup>2</sup>

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I just don't understand why you would want a links golf course. Who is going to come here in the winter to golf in the pouring down rain with winds 30-69mph. I believe they will not cater to the locals in any way. Just my opinion.<sup>4</sup>

PLEASE consider a different location like over the bridge in Ocosta or Markham, the natural beauty and charm that attracts people to Westport should not change. Everything is being developed for profit and human consumption can we please just keep our natural spaces wild? Why here? Why when there's erosion no one seems to have a solution for. Why why there's golfing in OS? Why? The people, water consumption, garbage, sewage, noise, and affordability for golf?! Get your priorities straight city council.<sup>5</sup>

When presenting at a council meeting , you proposed to build housing for the employees. Is this still the plan? I have it on good authority we are losing teachers who apply here because they aren't able to find a place to live. It would be of great importance that people making minimum wage are able to find "affordable" housing.<sup>6</sup>

I wrote this last year and submitted it to Mr. Goodrich; I even confirmed that it had arrived on time, and they received it and I do not see it in the SEPA comments not sure why but I am giving it to you again.

May 10, 2023  
Kevin Goodrich, City Administrator  
City of Westport  
P.O. Box 505 / 604 N. Montesano St  
Westport, WA 98595

Re: SEPA #202301857

Dear Mr. Goodrich,

I am writing to express my concerns about a links style golf course put into Westport Light State Park. My educational background is watershed analysis, with special education in wetland delineation. I was born and raised in Grays Harbor.

Looking at the national wetland inventory maps it is apparent that the wetlands are much larger than have been mapped. When looking at the Washington Natural Heritage Program Data Explorer you see that there are rare plants in this area and that there are high quality and/or rare ecosystem here.

"We use the term "Wetland of High Conservation Value" (WHCV) to describe a wetland that supports rare species or a rare or high-quality ecosystem type. These are known and historical locations of:

Any plant, nonvascular species, or ecosystem considered endangered, threatened, or sensitive;  
or

Ecosystems prioritized by the Washington Department of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) based on a combination of the plant community type's rarity or risk of extinction and its ecological integrity.

We consider all wetlands that have overlap occurrences of rare species or rare ecosystem types, regardless of their condition, to be WHCV. Occurrences of wetlands with common ecosystem types are WHCV only if they're in good-to-excellent condition, as determined by the WNHP (e.g.,

high-quality ecosystems).

The WNHP Data Explorer shows known and historical locations of rare plants, as well as rare and high-quality ecosystems.

Historical data are records where species haven't been observed in over 40 years, but the area may not have been surveyed during that time. Historical data indicate the potential for rare plants to occur in the area, and they're considered when applying a wetland rating.

If a "known or historical rare plants and rare and high-quality ecosystems" polygon overlaps the wetland that you're rating, you'll need to look at the Element Occurrence Precision field in the pop-up box for the polygon to determine if its precision level is general, minute, or second.

If any part of a wetland overlaps data from any known or historical polygon with second-level accuracy, regardless of the plants' wetland indicator status rating, the wetland meets the criteria for WHCV in the Washington Wetland Rating Systems, and that wetland is a Category I.

When assessing for the presence of rare plants or plant communities, consider known and historical data with minute-level accuracy. These larger polygons do give uncertainty in location and will require follow-up to determine the presence of these elements.

Treat known and historical data with a general-level accuracy, like mapped Priority Habitats, where the mapped location is an indicator to look for presence in the field.

If the data are for a polygon of a lichen or other nonvascular species at the general or minute level of accuracy, we currently don't have the resources or availability of skilled lichenologists to support determinations of the species presence, and we don't expect these to be considered when scoring wetland ratings at this time.

By categorizing these wetlands as Category I, we're trying to provide an important and high level of protection to these vital and rare wetlands. These natural systems and species will survive in Washington only if we give them special attention and protection.”

This park belongs to the people of this state and just because someone has wanted to put a golf course here does not mean it is a good idea. This isn't the first time this has been tried. I am sorry but the dollar signs just do not outweigh the loss of this area to development. Truly, how much more water use down in these areas along the coast do you think are sustainable? Where is the line before you have saltwater intrusion into these public wells?

Just doing a little research gives me more information than I can believe, so please tell me how you can think this is a good fit in this area? I just read our Strategy for State Recreation and Conservation Land Acquisition and Development 2017 which shows this land should be in the hands of DNR and preserved for its unique plants and rare ecosystem. Or is that just another study, we taxpayers paid for and it sets on a shelf collecting dust.

Not many of these types of ecosystems of high quality and value exist in public hands anymore. This ecosystem is irreplaceable and its loss cannot be mitigated. There is state park land south of this area that has already been desecrated, if you have to have a golf course in this area, then maybe you should be looking elsewhere and not where rare and endangered ecosystems and rare plants are located. We also need to quit putting public infrastructure in harm's way.

Continuing to run utilities along the ocean areas that we will not be able to protect in a few years is ludicrous. This is an issue for all of Grays Harbor since we all bear the cost of the PUD and the various water and wastewater districts the county runs.

Alternative 3 is the only option we should be considering for this public land. We don't need walking trails into this area, you already have a great walking path there, maintain it. I get a kick out of all the unforgettable Grays Harbor ads I see these days and believe me we won't be unforgettable, if you continue in this fashion, we will be just like the sound. It is much easier to leave it be than to try to fix it later because humanity is not that good at it and the price tag just

isn't worth it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,<sup>7</sup>

We are hoping the golf course in Westport happens. There are golf courses along the Oregon coast that help their local economies. Every course we've been on have several species of wild life.<sup>8</sup>

[When will the lawsuit be heard in Thurston County?](#)<sup>9</sup>

My concern about the proposal is how it will affect traffic: not only coming into Aberdeen but more so Aberdeen to Westport. I feel it will create a problem that can't be solved.<sup>10</sup>

Golf Course gives best plan. It's environmentally friendly and helps pay for the whole park. A really good deal.<sup>11</sup>

Hello-

I'd like to enter my voice against developing public lands into a golf course. Golf courses are in every way in opposition to wild national places. Natural habitat turned into large fields of sprayed grass, requiring large amounts of water, and only accessible to people who pay large amounts of money to play one specific sport. Please, please, please stop this development.

Thank you,<sup>12</sup>

I like the idea of having a Link style Golf Course in Westport. I think that it will attract golfers to the area and promote other business in Westport and Grayland.<sup>13</sup>

PLEASE consider a different location like over the bridge in Ocosta or Markham, the natural beauty and charm that attracts people to Westport should not change. Everything is being developed for profit and human consumption can we please just keep our natural spaces wild? Why here? Why when there's erosion no one seems to have a solution for. Why why there's golfing in OS? Why? The people, water consumption, garbage, sewage, noise, and affordability for golf?! Get your priorities straight city council.<sup>14</sup>

I've only lived in Westport full time for the last three years, but grew up in a similarly small town on the Carolina Coast. It was definitely Golf Course Country out there! Fans of the sport will recognize the names of certain Southern courses, like Hilton Head or Augusta. How many have heard of Wild Dunes? Or Crowfield?

Courses like those latter two opened to great fanfare and attracted golfers in their early years, but before long, faded to obscurity. Today, Wild Dunes and Crowfield are tax sinks. Public money pays the high costs of upkeep these enormous tracts of largely unused land require, though they're both long past their days of generating revenue. Rural Washingtonians are no fans of tax sinks, so it surprises me how many locals are willing to support this incredibly risky venture, given the scarcity of information its planners have provided so far.

I agree when people say Westport needs something to revitalize its economy, but that does not mean we should desperately grasp at shiny objects. I've heard the planners make outlandish claims, while dodging highly relevant questions. For example, they say young people will make money as caddies and some may even attain golf scholarships or become PGA/LPGA athletes. How are local youth supposed to engage with the sport when this private course demands prohibitively high fees? Even after discounts the planners suggest \*may\* be made available, fees of any amount, plus the cost of equipment, will be a significant barrier of entry to many families. Basketball and football are comparatively more inclusive, enjoy broad public appeal, cost significantly less, and also generate scholarship opportunities and athletic careers.

Furthermore, the developers have yet to address questions of revenue. The Pacific Northwest is famously rainy and overcast - our corner of the coast, even more so. Add in gale-force winds, you've got a bad day of golf. Compare this to my home town in the Carolinas, which enjoys sunny weather and

70-90 degree days most days of the year. Yet as I've mentioned already, most of their golf courses struggle to sustain revenue and do little to engender local economic growth. How does Westport stand a chance?

When I've asked the planners about their contingency for "What happens if the course stops making money?", their response has been, "It will always make money." Which suggests they don't have a Plan B. I expect they have no incentive to devise a Plan B. After all, once this thing is built, they'll take their Music Man song-and-dance to another small town and the game continues. If the links course fails, that's the cost of doing business. It's a tax write-off for them, a tax burden for us. The operators will still operate elsewhere, while Washington's taxpayers pay for the maintenance of a vacuous expanse, as well as the burden of any environmental impacts in the years that follow. I'm thinking here of what will result from wetland fills, rising tides, erosion, and so on.

To be clear, I'm not 100% anti-golf. Done well, this development could well be the economic boon so many Westport residents and business owners are hoping for. Case in point, I have friends in Bandon, Oregon, where the same developers built a Scottish links course. And it is gorgeous! My friends report that the course did provide Bandon notable economic growth. One reports that she does quite well working at the resort. She earns more money in her home town today than she could've ever imagined 20 years ago. At the same time, she's abandoned hope of ever affording her own home. Her improved income cannot compete with skyrocketing real-estate prices, fueled by outside investments in holiday homes and VRBO rentals. It's not the idyllic Bandon she remembers and in many ways, she feels the town sold its soul.

My hope is that government leaders, developers, and other planners and stakeholders find sustainable solutions to restore Westport to its glory days. A links course may well be one such solution, but at this stage, I feel there remain too many unanswered questions to support this project as a Westport resident. In order for this to be a sustainable development, planners must consider the less-shiny facets of the project, which include the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the construction, operation, and end-of-life.<sup>15</sup>

We visit Westport for camping in summers. I am against building a golf course and/ or hotel there! The clientele of those facilities do not fit into the wonderful world of Westport as it is today. There are so many other places golfers can go.....let them go there!! Keep Westport in it's true style.<sup>16</sup>

Go for it-golf course-great idea and hurry up as taking too long<sup>17</sup>

When looking at the proposed golf course there are course holes that are very close to the walking path or in the direct path of the trail that is used by many locals and tourists year around, I have concerns about being hit with a ball while trying to enjoy the public walking trail. What safety plans are in place to protect those walking the trail from golf balls? Please take the safety of all into consideration and change the course plans as necessary.<sup>18</sup>

I am sending a comment about the proposed Westport Links Golf course . As a resident of Westport , I use the Westport Lighthouse trail often. The scenery is majestic and picturesque, sounds of the ocean , whales swimming by , fishing boats and the migration of numerous bird species can be seen . This trail is heavily used by locals as wells visitors, handicap available for wheelchairs, strollers, bicycles , walkers. Everyone enjoys the trail .

I am opposed to the development of the golf course:

- 1) Westport cannot be compared to Bandon , Oregon 's golf course , few facts the elevation at Bandon is 200 feet compared to Westport's elevation is 20 feet! Westport experiences erosion every winter season, we witness the loss of land since 2015 have lost at least 40 feet of erosion.
- 2) to disturb the wetlands is against the agreement made from an earlier settlement with the government to not disturb or build on any wetlands. Not to mention future erosion and disturbance of wildlife and natural habitat.
- 3) to use the perimeter of the trail is using the whole trail for the golf course.

- 4) the golf course pays no taxes while all land and home owners pay taxes .
- 5) there needs to be more public comments and discussions about how the proposed golf course.
- 6) Reality check how many days would person actually use the golf course with wind, rain as a dominate factor ?

Plenty of places to play golf Cosomopolis has a nice golf course The Highlands, Ocean Shores , Even up in Elma Washington.

sincerely yours <sup>19</sup>

Hello,

I am trying to get an update on this project.

It is my understanding that Laura Moxham is no longer on the project. I clicked on the link that Laura gave me below, and it didn't work.

Who can I contact to get more information on the Westport Light State Park proposed golf course?

Thanks, <sup>20</sup>

Hi, I was wondering if there is a status update on the Westport Light State Park Planning. The website does not have any additional new updates.

Thank you <sup>21</sup>

I am writing to oppose the LLC Golfcourse proposal using the Westport Lighthouse St.ate Park Property, in Westport, WA.

I have been reading newspaper articles about the proposal of using 200 acres of the park.(but those 200 acres are the whole perimeter of the trail) not allowing anyone else access to the viewing trail that already exists, only golfers will be allowed on the course!

Opposed:

To compare this proposed golf course with the one In Brandon,Oregon ? There Is an elevation difference which is huge Bandon elevation is 200• , Westport elevation is 20'. With the current winter storms we have seen an erosion of at least 10' of embankment.

Disrupting the fragile coastline is asking for more problems.

Adding chemicals ( yes we heard not a danger to the water source) the run off will impact the water and the local marine life as well as other species.

Adding structures : Lodging, snack kiosks, golf driving range, takes away the magical serenity of why so many use that trail and visit Westport, they also have access to the beach.

There are other local golf courses available . Cosmopolis has the Highlands , there is one in Ocean shores, One in Elma.

This proposal only benefits a small number of users. Plus I am suspicious that this great idea is only a money grab for the property. Cause once it is completed and I is not profit.able then Oh, my guess what the property can be sold and become PRIVATE!

Keep the wetland/ the park as agreed in a settlement by the courts.

Sincerely Yours, <sup>22</sup>
