



**Becca Neumann** (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair

**Joshua Morris** (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair

**Julia Michalak** (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Joe Sisneros** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist - ISA)

**Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)

**Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • **David Moehring** (Position # 8 – Development)

**Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor) • **Laura Keil** (Position #10 – Get Engaged)

**Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)

**Lia Hall** (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

November 30, 2022

Seattle Public Utilities  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 4900  
Seattle, WA 98104

**RE: Urban Forestry Commission response to Taylor Creek Restoration Project process update**

Dear friends at Seattle Public Utilities,

Duwamish Lands (Seattle, WA) – The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) thanks Cody Nelson, Betsy Lyons, and Katherine Lynch for their October 19, 2022 presentation on the Taylor Creek and Dead Horse Canyon Restoration Project.

The UFC recognizes that thorough and inclusive project planning does not occur overnight and commends Cody, Betsy, Katherine, and the rest of the team at SPU for the time and effort put into developing stream improvement concepts since 2010.

The UFC appreciates that the project design has been paused to evaluate additional, less impactful creek restoration and sediment management options and allow space for community engagement and transparency, and we appreciate that Option 1 (Machine-Placed large woody material with temporary access road) has been removed from consideration due to community feedback. This work towards reestablishing trust with the community is vital to the success of the project.

The UFC recognizes that creek restoration is needed here and is the focus of the project. The UFC nonetheless recommends that SPU:

- Prioritize the management of stormwater before it flows into Dead Horse Canyon through Best Management Practices such as constructed wetlands, detention basins, or swales. Taylor Creek is one part of a larger watershed, and a holistic outlook towards hydrology will lead to the most successful restoration of the site.
- In addition to what is planned for trapping in-stream sediment, consider approaches targeting the sediment source and that involve upstream sediment trapping. Sediment accumulated within placed large woody material will eventually surpass the storage capabilities of the structures, leading to stream bank erosion within Dead Horse Canyon and destabilization of the surrounding ecosystem and neighborhood.

- Consider prioritizing the planting of climate adapted and evergreen trees throughout proposed disturbed areas of the project site. Dead Horse Canyon is a thriving ecosystem within a dense urban setting. The trees in this space provide important habitat value, erosion control measures, and other ecological functions. This project is an opportunity restore the creek to a more sustainable and thriving natural drainage system that provides habitat to aquatic and terrestrial species; both the creek health and the forest health should be prioritized in the renewal of the canyon ecosystem.
- Consider breaking up the project into smaller pilot projects or phases to reduce the overall impact. Explore options for alternate sediment capturing materials and methods that can be assembled by human hands in place and not require removal of trees, but could still withstand large rain events.

The UFC remains curious to know:

- We understand that some basic outreach as part of the permitting process occurred with indigenous tribes. We are curious if public documents are available from these meetings so we can better understand the level of engagement. Have direct communications occurred that allow Tribes to have direct input on the project designs?
- What long term maintenance strategies does SPU foresee engaging in Taylor Creek, specifically if a road is built (Option 3), will it need to be kept in place permanently for maintenance? There seems to be conflicting information in documents about the permanence of a potential road.
- We would like to know if SPU's plan for maintaining the sewer line that runs through the canyon involves removing trees and building a road.
- When additional options are identified and evaluated, we would like more information on the trees that would be removed with each considered project option.

Thanks again to Cody, Betsy, Katherine, and the many others working to manage creek restoration, erosion control, and sediment deposition and to protect salmon recovery in Taylor Creek and Lake Washington. We look forward to an ongoing and interactive relationship with your team and the Dead Horse Canyon community as this project develops.

Sincerely,



Josh Morris, Co-Chair



Becca Neumann, Co-Chair

CC: Jana Dilley, Ellen Stewart

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