

## **Why Disc Golf Course in Rhododendron Forest is Inconsistent with the Island County Parks and Habitat Plan**

(Island County Comp Plan, Chapter 7: Parks and Recreation Element)

An action to permit a disc golf course, an intensive recreational facility and use, in Rhododendron Forest is contrary to the recently approved Island County Parks and Recreation Plan, approved by the Island County Commissioners on December 12, 2011, including:

1. The Park Plan identifies the niche for Island County as, ***“Island County will position itself as a habitat and outdoor recreation provider, reflecting a desire to protect habitat and meet the community’s outdoor, low-impact recreation needs.”***

Disc Golf is not a low-impact recreational use; it is an organized and active recreational use that will cause damage to Rhododendron Forest – a rare, old-growth forest.

2. Further defining the County’s niche, the Parks Plan states that ***“Island County will focus its resources on providing outdoor recreation opportunities that are compatible with habitat conservation goals. This means it will phase out its investment in traditional recreation opportunities.”***

Traditional recreation activities are defined in the plan to be active, organized recreational activities, which is what disc golf is. Providing for disc golf is not compatible with the County’s newly defined niche. Further, in no case should disc golf courses or other high-impact recreational uses be placed in ecologically important areas.

3. The niche for the County was determined after the findings that ***“Residents expressed the need to continue to protect and steward habitat areas.”*** Further, ***“Most respondents (91%) felt that conserving habitat and natural areas is important or very important.”***

The County Plan identifies that, given its limited resources, Island County cannot meet all the different needs of County residents. Therefore, the County has decided to focus its efforts on conserving habitat and providing low-impact outdoor recreation while moving away from organized and active recreation. Again, allowing a disc golf course in Rhododendron Forest is inappropriate given the County’s proposed new niche.