



## Seattle Nature Alliance

November 3, 2017

Attention: Mayor of Seattle, Seattle City Council, and Seattle Parks and Recreation Department

**RE: We oppose the Arts Center proposal for Discovery Park. Please keep Discovery natural.**

*The Seattle Nature Alliance is opposed to the Fort Lawton Center for Music and Arts—a proposal to develop an arts campus in Discovery Park. A developed campus doesn't belong in a natural park.*

Discovery Park is a designated natural area park, and should be preserved for passive recreation, scenic beauty, and wildlife habitat. Access to nature is essential for human health and happiness, especially in cities where life is increasingly stressful. Discovery Park provides a truly unique nature experience for Seattleites, and must be preserved for future generations who will likely have fewer opportunities to enjoy nature. Seattle must not become a city where only the privileged get to experience nature because they can afford mountain vacations or beach getaways. We need nature in the city, close to where people live and recreate.

An arts campus is incompatible with the natural qualities that make Discovery Park so special—and so beloved. A campus would mean increased vehicle access, crowds, noise, lighting, paved areas, and other amenities, and would have significant impact on the park. An Arts Center could be built anywhere, but natural areas are irreplaceable.

Preservation of nature is particularly important as Seattle faces unprecedented growth. Organized groups wanting land for specialized activities see natural areas as unused space. But, actually, these spaces are already being used quite heavily—for passive recreation and wildlife habitat. Although so-called *passive* recreation is too easily overlooked by planners because it tends to be quiet, dispersed, and non-specialized, it is the most popular form of recreation. Passive recreation is low-impact, inclusive to virtually everyone, free-of-charge, and is compatible with other users and with wildlife. An arts center is a specialized use that would benefit the artists and their audiences, but it would exclude many, and have a significant impact on other park users. Because we have so little natural landscape left and such a great need for nature, passive recreation is the highest and best use of our few remaining natural areas. It serves more people with less impact on nature itself.

City officials should recommit to the vision articulated in Discovery Park's Master Plan and reject development proposals such as the Fort Lawton Center for Music and Arts.

Signed,

Denise Dahn, Mark Ahlness, Rebecca Watson

Directors, Seattle Nature Alliance