



King County

Road Services Division

Department of Transportation

KSC-TR-0313

201 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-3856

May 28, 2004

Dr. Charles Bagley Jr.
1235 – 8th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98119-3411

Dear Mr. Bagley:

I apologize for the delay in responding to your inquiry forwarded to me by King County Council Chair Larry Phillips regarding the current public access to the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River by way of the undeveloped road right-of-way off Tanner Road.

While this specific road right-of-way is not being used for road purposes, it does connect directly to the river and so has special protection to ensure continued public access to the river. Washington State law, RCW 36.87.130, expressly prohibits the vacation of public right-of-way abutting a body of water unless the right-of-way vacation is for public purposes (i.e. State owned boat launch ramps, public parks, public view points) or for industrial use where the road right-of-way is located within an area zoned for industrial use. The RCW is intended to preserve public access to bodies of water across the State - the access may be physical where the road right-of-way affords safe public use to water's edge, or it may be visual access to the water where steep terrain or other factors make physical access to the body of water unsafe or impossible.

Please be assured King County and the Road Services Division have no plans to close off public access to the Mid-Fork of the Snoqualmie River via this undeveloped road right-of-way. The location is well known as a valuable and much used river access point for canoeists and kayakers, and we intend to allow that use into the foreseeable future. While there have occasionally been conflicts between the adjacent property owners and irresponsible persons using the road right-of-way river access, the Road Services Division has worked very hard with recreational kayakers and canoeists to make sure our road right-of-way and its users are good neighbors. To my knowledge, there have been no significant problems of littering or inappropriate behaviors by the public that have been called to our attention by the adjacent property owners in the last couple of years. From that I surmise those intent more on partying and other less responsible activities are no longer regularly using this specific location. Good news for everyone!

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Charles Bagley
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Thank you for inquiry and again, my apology for the delay in getting back to you. If in the future you have any concerns about this issue, please feel free to contact me by email at: linda.dougherty@metrokc.gov or by telephone at: 206-296-6590. Have a wonderful Memorial Day weekend!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda Dougherty", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda Dougherty, Division Director
King County Road Services Division

cc: Larry Phillips, Chair, King County Council