

Todd Pearson

I attended the Maury Island Open Space meeting at Vashon Island High School last week. A lot of gray-headed Islanders attended, most of them fervently advocating for as little change to the site as possible. Those people showed up, and spoke up, because they love the park just as it is. Most of their objections seemed to be over proposed changes to the existing trails. Though my concerns about changes to the park have little to do with the trail system, I support the general tone of those who commented. We understand the Department of Ecology is charged with reducing toxic levels of arsenic in the park. We just ask that, to the extent it's possible, leave this beautiful place alone.

My concern is not about what might be taken away from park users, it is about what might be added. There are trails all over Vashon, but few that are used as much as those in the Maury Island Natural Area. The reason seems clear to me. There simply aren't any comparable properties on Vashon/Maury Island that offer the openness of country and views available there. Many years ago, it was possible to look out, all over Maury and Vashon Islands, to see the local terrain, Puget Sound and the mountains on all sides. Those views are now largely gone, as trees, especially fir trees, have grown up and blocked those views. People instinctively are drawn to the places where views are open, where they can see into the distance. The Maury Island Natural Area delivers this ability like no other place on Vashon. Yet there are plans to install plants that will, in the near future, but more worryingly, in the long term, seriously erode those views. Please, please re-consider plans that will harm these views in any way. Specifically, don't plant any fir, or large coniferous trees. Don't impede the magical views that are pretty close to perfect right now.