

Letter: City picking wrong spot for kayak launch

Kim Ashbaugh (aka Walkabout)

The city has been working on plans for an accessible kayak launch at the base of Tubbs Hill at East Tubbs Hill Park. This plan will turn half of the park into a loading and unloading zone consisting of pavement. Green space and access to a family friendly beach will be lost. I asked the city twice why the beach at Independence point was not a more logical choice but I was not give a credible answer. Here is the last information on why the kayak launch was not suitable for Independence Point:

“There was previous work to review opportunity at Independence Point for an accessible kayak launch, however it became clear pretty quickly that work there would be far more complex, we likely would lose parking (if not substantial parking) and additional parking that may have needed to go in just behind the museum likely would have required moving trees that we weren't supportive of removing.” Sam Taylor Deputy City Administrator

The reasons for Independence Point are obvious as the access is already there with a well established parking lot. Vehicles are able to drive up to the beach where a wheelchair access ramp has already been installed. Much of East Tubbs Hill green space will be destroyed for a use that will be at most three months of the year. As this area of the lake is fairly shallow it will only be usable when the lake is at summer levels

This is a fairly new park created with help from the Tubbs Hill Foundation; construction began in July of 1999. Members of the public were asked to donate to this park and when the land was acquired by the city in the 1970's, its use was designated for a park. According to the Spokesman-Review of July 31, 1999 the city had allocated \$10,000 to the park with all other funds being raised by the Tubbs Hill Foundation. The total cost of construction being \$70,000. This summer a plaque honoring Art Manley, a great supporter of Tubbs Hill and a member of the Tubbs Hill Foundation at the time of the East Tubbs Hill Park inception, was placed at the park. I hope we can pay respect to Art Manley and those that donated to the park not just in words but deeds by saving East Tubbs Hill Park for future generations.

It was reported recently in the local news as if this was a done deal. An article dated September 13, 2016 on the Krem 2 News website stated, “The city plans to have the ramp completed by fall of next year.” The city council has yet to vote on it, the meeting is Tuesday at 6:00. Please help to save our park by telling the city council to vote “NO” to an accessible kayak launch at East Tubbs Hill Park.

<http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/hbo/2016/sep/12/sam-no-plans-remove-trees/>

<http://www.krem.com/news/local/kootenai-county/an-idaho-local-inspired-the-city-to-build-an-accessible-boat-launch/318012539>

https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19990731&id=92NWAAAIBAJ&sjid=G_IDAAAIBAJ&pg=6195,7984620&hl=en