

Talking points: My name is _____. I am a Latah Valley resident and strongly support the transfer of the Dept. of Natural Resources Thorpe Property to the City of Spokane or Tribal interest.

1. The Spokane Parks and Natural Lands Master Plan shows high priority for natural lands with 95% showing support for natural lands and wildlife habitat and the Spokane Parks Dept. has a resolution to complete a Natural Land Management Plan. Spokane Parks would build a park on the disturbed north end and provide access that is currently lacking to the pristine shrub steppe habitat on the south part.
2. The Spokane Sustainability Action Plan has goals to preserve and provide access to natural lands for recreation, nature education, scenic views and wildlife habitat.
3. The Latah Valley is deficient in parks and conservation land with only one park in the Grandview-Thorpe area. Thorpe will provide the land for a park and an extensive conservation area.
4. There are 3500 housing lots recently permitted in the Latah Valley according to the Dept. of Transportation with the large 1300-unit Victory Heights development west & north of the Property.
5. The Thorpe Property is within one of two high priority conservation areas in the 2022 Parks and Natural Lands Master Plan.
6. The Dept of Natural Resources holds the Thorpe Property in trust for funding K-12 Education and the property underperforms in generating income for the beneficiary.
7. The Dept of Natural Resources has a Trustland Transfer program to transfer ownership of underperforming trust land to local governments at no cost to be used for parks and conservation land by a Washington State Legislature Capital Budget buyout.
8. There is significant community benefit for the Thorpe Property to be a park and natural land. The Latah Valley has a need for additional parks with playgrounds, water features, picnic shelters, nature education facilities, and an undisturbed biodiverse natural area with great views and wildlife viewing.
9. The transfer is important to the community and currently we have support letters from the Grandview/Thorpe Neighborhood Council, Latah/Hangman Neighborhood Council, Citizen Action for Latah Valley, Friends of the Bluff, Friends of Westwood Natural Area, Spokane Mountaineers, Evergreen Mountain Bike, Spokane Urban Nature, Spokane 350, Spokane Conservation District and the Lands Council.
10. There is significant economic benefit to Spokane as people and businesses choose to live close to parks and natural areas for health and well-being.
11. There is an education benefit for students to access to undisturbed natural lands for learning about nature and science. The current limited access and parking will be improved to facilitate nature walks.
12. There is a proven mental health and fitness benefit to having access to natural areas.
13. There many community organizations are willing to provide stewardship of the Property including Spokane Mountaineers, Evergreen Mountain Bike Club and the Washington Trails Association.
14. Acquiring the Thorpe Property will protect the viewshed of the bluff west of Hangman Creek. The view of Thorpe from the High Drive Park is the last area that has not been developed.
15. A moratorium on development in the Latah Valley is currently in place due to infrastructure deficiencies and risks to public safety. The threat of a Thorpe Property sale to a developer would add an estimated 1000-units to exacerbate transportation and fire risk while destroying the rare shrub-steppe bog ecology.