



Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition

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Why Save a Mountain?

Working to preserve and protect the biological integrity and historic nature of the northeast side of Mt. Hood

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by William Collins, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Throughout time and across cultures mountains have inspired deep feelings for those who take the time to behold them. They tower stalwart and resolute; speaking silently in subtle ways nature profoundly informs us about the landscape of our true selves.

Great mountains are symbolic and need to be preserved undeveloped. Otherwise they lose their ability to inspire, to awaken, and to remind us that there are challenges in life that, like mountains, appear formidable and overwhelming but can nonetheless contain the sources of our greatest realizations and accomplishments.



Mt. Hood's north side: Cooper Spur is on the left edge of this picture. Photo by Dave Waag.



The historic Tilly Jane ski trail and Cloud Cap Inn are threatened by the proposed development, adjacent to the Tilly Jane Historic District. Photo by Dave Waag.

Where do we draw the line in what lands we commercialize? It is a question similar to what is the right number of hours a week to work? 120? 80? 65? 40? 30? 10? We each solve this equation personally by seeking a balance, recognizing that at some point no amount of dedication to commercial activity is worth incremental financial gain.

Collectively we must do the same with our natural resources. Do we allocate 1% of our land as beyond the reach of commercial development? 2%? 5%? 20%? If we have but one Mt. Hood, what is lost if we cover it with hotels and golf courses, ski lifts and restaurants?

When we encroach upon and deform our greatest natural wonders we shrink our souls and we diminish our ability to feel the expanse of our potential and the grandeur of our highest ambitions.

When we eliminate alpine wilderness to create golf courses we rob future generations of the inspiration they deserve to ascend their highest peaks. In turn, as we lessen nature's potential to magically arouse wonder, our world closes in and our hopes wither.