

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
Approved, August 28, 2005

SEATTLE SHOULD HONOR ITS COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE
FUNDS TO PURCHASE CAPEHART HOUSING IN DISCOVERY PARK

Discovery Park is a tract of 540 acres of semi-wild parkland along a bluff overlooking Puget Sound in the heart of Seattle. It was created from the Ft. Lawton military base, regarded as surplus lands that the U.S. government returned to the city of Seattle. Discovery Park's natural landscape provides habitat for wildlife, an outdoor classroom for environmental education, and a tranquil respite for urban dwellers.

A master plan for the park was written in 1972 warns that:

"In the years to come, there will be almost irresistible pressure to carve out areas of the park for structures or activities because it would provide 'an ideal site at no cost.' There must be a deep commitment to the belief that there is no more valuable use of this site than as open space."

Of immediate concern and urgency is a 23-acre parcel lying within the heart of the park, known as Capehart housing which had been retained by the military. A new law directed the military to privatize management of its housing. A joint privatization venture was formed between the Navy and a private developer, allowing for the possible sale, lease or redevelopment of these Navy owned properties that lie within Discovery Park. The largest of these properties is to be sold by the Navy. The possibility of mega-houses being built directly in the middle of the park would not only be in violation of the master plan but result in an unfathomable loss of precious open space.

The Friends of Discovery Park rallied the community behind a campaign to prevent the possible sale of this property to private entities. In response to public pressure, elected officials and the city of Seattle entered into an agreement with the developer to commit to purchasing the Capehart housing property for \$9 million. The city of Seattle agreed to secure the money to purchase the property.

Of the total \$9 million purchase price, Friends, and other community and environmental groups, agreed to contribute \$2 million, the Washington state legislature has budgeted \$1 million, and King county will allocate another \$2 million. The

source of the remaining \$4 million has not been secured, and the city of Seattle has failed to honor its prior commitment to secure funding for the purchase.

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs supports the urgent need for the city of Seattle to live up to its commitment to secure funding for the remaining purchase price of the Capehart housing located within Discovery Park. The Federation believes there is no more valuable use for this parcel than its inclusion in the park as open space. Private developers must not be allowed to capitalize on this unspoiled beauty for private gain.