

Last week we saw an amazing level of participation in the first of what I hope will be an ongoing series of Mt. Hood summits. It certainly exceeded my expectation. I was heartened to see the diversity of ideas exchanged by 300 people at Timberline Lodge whose most common point of agreement is their passion for our regional treasure.

The discussion from the two sets of panelists and our audience members was thoughtful, civil, and remained in focus despite the tremendous scope and range of ideas. Even the rough edges that surfaced were a credible reflection of the tension, the passion, and the opportunity for meeting our challenges.

Over the course of the afternoon we heard about a range of issues including transportation, recreation, environmental protection, Tribal trust obligations, tourism, and community development. As we reviewed Mt. Hood’s past, present and future, we discovered a strong interest in “recreating” the soul of the mountain. This was, I think, indicative of a broader concern and illustrates ways that we can build on the momentum.

I appreciate Congressman Greg Walden’s determination to steer the event towards the big picture. He helped us move from the discussion phase and identified some areas where we can unify our efforts. I valued his insight on our success with the preservation of the Steens and the Little Sandy. These examples represent a blueprint for projects that will encompass the future of Mt. Hood.

I am looking forward to continuing the conversation about Mt. Hood and to others joining our discussion. This is a conversation that must continue and I am committed to seeing that we never abandon the landmark that has never abandoned us.

Copy 2003 East County News