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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Camp Fire Endangers Waldo Woods Preservation

(SEATTLE, WA) – Camp Fire Puget Sound is the sole party refusing to sign paperwork necessary to permanently preserve Waldo Woods.

In early March, the City of Seattle passed Ordinance 123248, the next-to-last step in the process where the Seattle Parks Department takes possession of a conservation easement for Waldo Woods. The effect of the conservation easement is the permanent preservation of Waldo Woods, an urban grove of mature, native Douglas firs located in the Maple Leaf neighborhood of north Seattle.

The last step is to obtain the signatures of all those with interest in the property. Camp Fire, which has an interest as the smallest lien holder on the property, is the sole party to refuse. All other parties, including the largest lien holders, have agreed to sign. The easement cannot close until Camp Fire signs, and their continued delay endangers the hard work people across Seattle put into preserving Waldo Woods.

“Maple Leaf worked with King County, Seattle City Council, Seattle Parks Department, MMSC, and many others to preserve Waldo Woods,” noted Waldo Woods Working Group head David Miller. “During our multi-year effort to save Waldo Woods, we received support from the Seattle Chapter of the Sierra Club, Seattle Audubon, and hundreds of individuals from around the city. Saving Waldo Woods was truly a community effort and it is disappointing one group is standing in the community’s way of preserving these trees.”

The Maple Leaf Community Council applied for a King County Conservation Futures grant three years ago in the hopes of saving Waldo Woods, an intact and healthy 80-tree grove on the eastern 1/3 of the Waldo Hospital property at 15th Avenue NE and NE 85th Street in the north Seattle Maple Leaf neighborhood. The council succeeded in its pitch, and secured a \$300,000 grant from King County to preserve Waldo Woods.

In 2009, the Menachem Mendal Seattle Cheder (MMSC) Day School bought the property and is currently remodeling historic Waldo Hospital into a new school. As part of the purchase, Camp Fire Puget Sound holds a \$425,000 note on the property, the smallest of the lien holders. MMSC easily secured agreement with the other lien holders to sign the conservation easement. The other lien holders

believe preserving Waldo Woods increases the value of the property, much like a nice front yard increases the value of a home. Camp Fire Puget Sound has refused to sign the easement agreement even though MMSC offered to share a portion of the \$300,000 conservation easement.

“I find it ironic that as Camp Fire celebrates its 100th birthday with a video packed with scenes of kids enjoying the environment and stating its focus on the environment that Camp Fire Puget Sound continues to block the community’s efforts at preserving Waldo Woods,” stated Mr. Miller. “I would hope those parents and kids who love both Camp Fire **and** the environment would contact Camp Fire Puget Sound’s executive leadership and tell them the continued blocking of the preservation of Waldo Woods is unacceptable.”

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