

## **OUR VIEW: Valuable lessons on Moscow Mountain**

**By Virginia Henderson, for the editorial board**

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People who say you can't fight city hall ought to take a lesson from the story of Moscow Mountain.

There's a spectacular 300-acre parcel that includes an ancient cedar grove on the mountain. For years people have been worried it would be devoured by private interests.

Stop-gap measures, from leasing the land to the nonprofit Nature Conservancy to efforts to get the area set aside as a state park, failed.

The challenge moved into the realm of crisis as a 10-year lease through the conservancy entered its final year, leaving the grove to an uncertain future.

A few months ago, local advocates approached city and county officials, legislators and fellow mountain lovers, once again hoping for a state park designation. The effort, powered by passion and petition, gained support but the designation proved elusive.

Most stories of this sort would end there. Not the tale of Moscow Mountain.

Instead of tucking tail and retreating into resigned bitterness, people kept on pushing for a resolution that would preserve this local treasure. Now Moscow Mountain is just an inch away from county stewardship since Latah County stepped up to take on the responsibility with some guidance from the state.

Forget fighting city hall. These folks embraced the monster maze of bureaucracy. They insisted on a solution everyone could live with. They got creative.

That cedar grove is about to officially land in the hands of local control, where it belongs.

Sometimes things work just the way they are supposed to. It makes one wonder what could be accomplished if more causes were carried through with this kind of diplomacy as well as creativity.

Residents and visitors to the Palouse can enjoy the many recreational treats growing wild on Moscow Mountain for generations to come. A lot of people can give themselves a hearty pat on the back for this one.

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