

I have been frequenting the Teanaway during winter for the past 17 years. Initially, I was a backcountry skier who bought a mountain sled to access the fantastic skiing in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, but as my snowmobiling skills progressed, also as a sledder who loves to ride the south facing alpine zones between Longs Pass and Lake Ann. A typical day in the Teanaway will include riding from the sno-park to the ridge above Lake Ann, along with exploring some of the north facing terrain on the Esmeralda side. In the afternoon, we will usually do some human powered ski laps wherever the snow is best. When my friends and I first started accessing this area in winter, there were very few skiers. Almost all of the users were sledders. This has evolved recently, with more skiers showing up on sleds every year. The point being that the area is already being used by both skiers and sledders and the numbers are increasing every year, without the addition of a commercial hut operation. I believe that there is still plenty of room to share in the Teanaway, but it is far from unlimited, especially the sled-legal alpine zones. My biggest concern with this operation is that if it is successful (which I believe it has a high potential), it will inundate the area with its clients and essentially force out all pre-existing users.

I am also concerned about the potential for user conflicts, especially between sledders that have been using this area legally for the past 40+ years and skiers who are unfamiliar with the realities of mountain sledding. The alpine zones nearest to these huts, e.g., Longs Pass, Fortune Peak and Lake Ann, will be the most inviting to the clients of this operation, but they are also the areas that are most sought after by expert sledders. And these user groups often have very different practices and tolerances when it comes to snow safety. For example, sledders will likely not modify their choices just because there are some skiers skinning up the zone they want to high mark and play in. I have personally experienced this many times as a human powered backcountry skier in the Teanaway and Salmon la Sac alpine zones. Most skiers who will be staying at these huts will be totally unfamiliar with these differences and will mistake sledders' indifference for aggression.

In order to mitigate these concerns, I ask that you require that all guests of this operation be provided with an orientation to the unique situation they are going to be encountering, i.e., **a new backcountry ski hut situated in an already popular alpine snowmobiling area**. They need to be informed that sledders were there first and will be legally riding the same terrain that the skiers are in (outside the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, of course). If they choose to go to the popular sledding zones, such as Longs Pass, Fortune Peak and Lake Ann, they will likely encounter sledders, who will not be deterred by the presence of skiers. The ski guiding outfits that support this operation should further be required to avoid those zones, other than to pass through to access the Alpine Lakes Wilderness (i.e., no lapping Longs Pass, etc.). There is a lot of good skiing up there apart from where the sledders like to go (e.g. Iron Peak, Koppen Mountain, Esmeraldas, etc.). The hut operation should direct its customers to those zones, to optimize everyone's enjoyment.