



April 29, 2024

Mount-Baker Snoqualmie National Forest
Mt. Baker Ranger District
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Wooley, WA 98284

Submitted to:
<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=65559>

Subject: Temporary Winter Shelters

Cascade Backcountry Alliance (CBA) has reviewed the scoping letter on the proposed Temporary Winter Shelters developed recreation project. Our winter community is out all winter in the Mount Baker backcountry and cares deeply about this area. We appreciate that infrastructure like overnight huts and warming shelters can help make remote areas more accessible and provide unique experiences for recreationalists. However, we want to make sure that these huts minimize impact on the land and that they can be utilized by the public, not only guided outings.

Unfortunately, the scoping letter for the proposed overnight huts (North Twin, Anderson-Watson, and Heliotrope) has limited details about public access to the huts and their ecological impacts.

We would like to see more detail in the proposal around anticipated public use, management considerations for mitigating user group conflict, environmental impacts and due diligence on whether proposed locations make sense for their intended users. Specifically we'd like to see the following questions answered in the project's future environmental analysis and development.

- **Public Use:** Will any of the huts be available for unguided use or self-access by the public? If so, what portion of time/space will be allotted for public use? Are there cost estimates for users?
- **User Group Conflicts:** What measures will be put in place to prevent conflicts between user groups? Two of the huts will be placed next to snowmobile trails and accessed from sno-parks with limited parking. Snowmobilers are the primary funding source to groom and maintain these roads in winter. Will the hut operators contribute to the maintenance or improvement of these access points?
- **Environmental Impacts:** What will the environmental impact of these huts be? Will the Twin Sisters hut require cutting old-growth? How will human waste and water be managed?
- **Usability:** The Heliotrope hut has limited terrain for safe storm-day skiing, which may lead it to be underutilized during our typically stormy winters.

Thank you for considering our comments and we look forward to learning more.

Tess Wendel
Cascade Backcountry Alliance