

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/26/2023 9:50:22 PM
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Organization: Juneau Nordic Ski Club
Title: Chair, Trails Subcommittee; Board Member
Comments: Date: May 26, 2023
To: Review officer, MGRA EIS
From: Roman Motyka, Chair JNSC Trails Committee
Re: Dredge Lakes Nordic Ski Trail

Dear review officer,

The Juneau Nordic Ski Club wishes to file an "Objection" regarding one aspect included in the MGRA Final EIS.

We read through the Final EIS Record of Decision and were quite surprised to read the following:

"A Nordic ski loop within the Dredge Lakes Unit was not included in the proposed trail improvements because trail widening to accommodate grooming equipment would disrupt the intent for the trails to be walking interpretive trails."

This decision was surprising as this trail is highlighted in Alternative 6 and we believed it had broad USFS support. We are now hoping that we can still salvage at least a narrower classic track (~ 8 ft wide) for such a loop. All the elements would be present for such a loop with one exception. As stated in the Final EIS, the Lakeshore and Moose Lake connector trails would be 12 ft in width. There are existing roads that can then connect to the Crystal Lake trail. The Bus Lot and Lakeshore connector trails are designated as 8 ft wide and 12 ft wide, respectively. These widths would easily allow grooming a classic track. The one potential obstacle is the current Crystal Lake trail (circled on the accompanying image).

We inspected the Crystal Lake trail: it is about 0.8 km (1/2 mi) in length from the Glacier Spur Road parking to the juncture of the other trails on the west end of the lake. Most of the trail is currently about 6 ft in width with a few narrower spots. A moderate amount of trail maintenance would make this section suitable to groom a classic Nordic ski track: including brushing out the sides, opening up the canopy in spots, and increasing the trail width from 5 - 6 ft to 8 ft.

All the connector trails, both those proposed in the plan and the Dredge Lakes roads that already exist would make this a very desirable classic track ski loop for our winter sports community. Can a moderate rehabilitation of the Crystal Lake portion be included in the plan to help make this ski loop happen?

These trail improvements (brushing, opening tree canopy, some widening in spots, drainage improvements, etc.) that serve Nordic skiers for wintertime use would also serve other users throughout the year, and help in developing an interpretive trail. We note that it would be great if the interpretive signs also highlighted winter habitats to help acknowledge the "4th" season. We have seen that groomed trails facilitate access to many other users including snow-shoers, dog-walkers, hikers, birders, and for anyone wishing to explore the Dredge Lake trails in the winter season. We could therefore consider grooming this trail in the winter as part of our overall trail maintenance program.

Sincerely,

Roman Motyka, Chair, JNSC Nordic ski trails development committee
On behalf of the JNSC Board and its nearly 1,000-person membership.