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First name: Michael

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: January 16, 2024

District Ranger Ted Neff

810 State Route 20

Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

RE: Bagley Dam Decommissioning Project

Washington Trails Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the dam decommissioning project near scenic Heather Meadows.

Washington Trails Association has a more than 50-year legacy of engaging the hiking community. WTA enhances hiking experiences in Washington by empowering a diverse and growing community of hikers to explore, steward and protect trails and public lands. WTA is the nation's largest state-based trail maintenance and hiking advocacy nonprofit organization, with more than 26,000 member households. In 2023, WTA crews largely composed of volunteers performed over 150,000 hours of trail maintenance across the state including 45 trail maintenance projects on the Mt. Baker Ranger District. WTA volunteers contributed 4,534 hours of their time to the stewardship of the district last year.

WTA understands the purpose and need for this project. We appreciate the Forest Service's efforts to address the risk of dam failure identified by the Washington State Department of Ecology. We support the removal of this dam and the restoration of the area. Thank you for including the installation of a recreational trail bridge at the current dam site into the proposed action. The Bagley Lakes Loop Trail is a popular trail that allows visitors to enjoy the scenic quality of the surrounding area. Please keep Washington Trails Association staff informed on the plans and timeline for this project. We are interested to potential changes to the Chain Lakes Trail #682 and any impacts to how hikers access trails and trailheads during the project. Thank you for considering our comments and for your continued partnership with WTA.

Sincerely,

Michael DeCramer