

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/25/2024 10:58:02 PM

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Comments: My comments relate primarily to the winter-time recreation portion of the Granite Goose Project. With regards to the Bear Basin Nordic Ski Area closure, it seems appropriate to have a motorized closure in this area to eliminate any potential conflict between user groups. This area was chosen due to its proximity to the community of McCall and the support available from the Little Ski Hill. Up to this point, the elimination of motorized use has been voluntary which creates a situation that the skiing group cannot legally sign the area for closure to motorized use. Hence, early season and low snow years, when the snowmobile trails are not groomed, there is confusion as to where areas and trails for snowmobiles are allowed. This permanent closure will allow signage to be installed and maintained by the skiing group. It would be advantageous to identify who is responsible for the signage and identification of the proposed boundaries. It would be appropriate that the ski community take the lead on that.

The buffer area of access for motorized use on the west and south edge of USFS property should be allowed to accommodate neighboring property owners access to the nearby snowmobile trails. This was the verbal agreement and condition of use at the introduction of the cross-country skiing area and parking lot. The buffer area consists of an area along Highway 55 from the current privately owned rock pit northward up to West Face Parking Lot and from Bear Basin Road westerly to the existing cross-country skiing parking lot. Unfortunately, the buffer area from Bear Basin Road to the parking lot discriminates and isolates several property owners that should be allowed access. It would be preferable to extend this buffer further west to the Adams/Valley County line to eliminate this situation.

In general, this closure seems to be definable and manageable. It has 3 edges and a portion of the 4th that are definable by private property lines and existing roads. The remaining boundary is of a size that it can be signed or barricaded. The issue of manageable will be determined by who is determined as the managing party.

Also, in this proposed closure it appears that one of the roads to be closed to motorized use is actually the approved road that has been previously approved to be the groomed snowmobile trail going north out of West Face Parking Lot to connect with the rest of the snowmobile trail system. Verification would be appreciated.

With regards to the proposed full-winter OSV (over snow vehicle) closure on Granite Mountain, it seems inappropriate to create a winter-long closure. Prior to mid-January, snow levels do not warrant the ability to have large snow-cats create the access roads/trails needed for cat-skiing and the accepted "Boulevard" that is to be created for snowmobiles to access the portion of the mountain that is open for OSV use. Yet, early and low snow levels will allow snowmobiles to ascend the mountain and traverse the adjacent terrain. After the ski season ends there is plenty of snow, and time, for the OSV community to enjoy and explore the area.

We are experiencing more and more recreationists that prefer to back-country ski off of their snowmobile but cannot utilize this area due to the current and proposed OSV restrictions. They have even commented on how unfair it is for a private entity to control the area.

The current restricted area came about mainly in part to an agreement made through the McCall Winter Recreation Forum some 12 to 14 years ago. This group was formed some 20 plus years ago to bring together the McCall area winter recreationists. Out of respect for that organization, and for the 2 or 3 individuals that are still a part of it, many of the OSV community have supported the current closure. With this new proposal, I believe it is time to look at this in a new light.

I feel that it is time to look at this closure for what it really is and I feel it is a closure for a private entity and not the general public. To state that the current and proposed closure is to assure an area for the general public to enjoy back-country skiing is a misnomer. It is not for the general public but for a private entity to charge the public and have exclusive right to it. Without paying this private entity to access this area, the general public does not have access. There are those that claim the true skiing traditionalist will access the area by themselves and under their own power, but in reality this is a very, very small number of individuals. So now, we have a closure for a private entity and the very, very elitist individual. This definitely is not a scenario that accommodates all users.

To create an OSV closure, basically in the middle of an area that has no restriction, it would be best to have it

definable and manageable. Until snow depths are such that a snow-cat can make roads/trails to try and define an area, it is not definable. When the roads/trails are established and only a small portion of the them are what define the closure area, other than the western edge of Goose Lake, it is not definable. If the closure area is not definable than it is not manageable.

At this point in time, I would recommend doing away with the Granite Mountain closure and open this area to all users.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and views on the current winter recreation proposals of the Granite Goose Project.