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Comments: I am concerned about public safety related to filling Heli's Pond: protection from wildfire.

Ski Tur Valley is a populated area of Gold Creek Valley with a limited community water supply to fight fire, substantial fuel on the valley floor and a single one-lane road to leave the valley. The nearest water source is miles away.

Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue (Fire District 51) provides emergency services to the Ski Tur community for the preservation of life and property.

In 2015, Fire District 51 designated Heli's Pond as an important nearby source of water for fighting wildfire. In 2021, in their response to the USFS scoping process for the Gold Creek restoration project, the Commissioners of Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue reiterated the importance of Heli's Pond as a water source, stating that:

"Both (Heli's and Gold Creek) ponds act as critical reservoirs for fighting fires either by firefighting equipment from Fire District 51 or as a source of water for aerial drops from helicopters."

According to the draft EA, when restoration is completed, the pond is expected to be "completely dry in the late summer," the peak of fire season.

Filling Heli's Pond would reduce established safeguards and remove a critical asset for protecting lives and property from wildfire. By collaborating with Fire District 51 and local landowners, the Forest Service can reach an outcome that meets ecological goals without compromising safety of citizens.