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Comments: ## Public Comment in ass

****Introduction:****

I am writing to express my strong support for continued access to winter recreational opportunities in and around Snoqualmie pass during the upcoming Gold Creek restoration project. While I understand the project's importance, I urge the Forest Service to prioritize solutions that minimize disruptions for winter users like myself.

The current parking situation at Snoqualmie Pass is already challenging. Therefore, I highly recommend the Forest Service investigate the following additional solutions:

- Creating parking at the PCT North (Kendall Katwalk) lot would greatly improve access to the Commonwealth Basin for snowshoeing and backcountry skiing.
- Maintaining F.S. Road 4832-144 Access: This road offers valuable snowshoeing and backcountry skiing opportunities in the Gold Creek Valley and lies outside the project area. Please allow continued access for winter recreation.
- While closures within the project area are necessary, clear signage and temporary trail markers could guide recreationalists to the Upper Gold Creek Valley via trail 1314, minimizing disruption.
- Expanding parking on Lake Mardee Road and exploring opportunities to acquire adjacent land would provide additional snow play areas and access to F.S. road 9090 for snowshoers.

The Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest should collaborate with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and private landowners to address the overall winter parking shortage at Snoqualmie Pass. This collaboration becomes especially crucial due to the added strain caused by the upcoming project.

Partnering with WSDOT to allow parking on the north side of I-90 at Exit 62, with signage and a trail connector, would provide much-needed access for cross-country skiers and snowshoers to the Cabin Creek and Mount Amabalis trail system

The draft environmental assessment predicts a significant impact on Gold Creek Pond for 5-7 years, potentially extending up to 10 years. I urge the Forest Service to:

- Actively explore all options to limit the closure period on Gold Creek Pond for winter recreation to the absolute minimum.
- Developing a clear project map outlining temporary impacts and planned road closures would greatly benefit the recreational community by allowing for informed trip planning.

Winter recreation is vital to the Snoqualmie Pass area, and I urge the Forest Service to prioritize solutions that minimize disruptions. Collaborative efforts for additional parking options and a transparent approach with project timelines will ensure a continued thriving winter recreation scene.