

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/30/2024 1:55:57 AM

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Comments: I'm writing to voice my support for the proposed Gold Creek restoration project. However, the current assessment of temporary recreation impacts (Recreation and Scenic Resources Report - Page 48) entirely overlooks the potential disruptions to a sizable and growing user group - backcountry skiers and snowboarders.

Of particular concern is the substantial reduction in existing winter recreation opportunities as a result of the closure, and the impacts of that reduction on existing facilities. The Gold Creek vicinity offers terrain that is well suited to beginning backcountry travelers (skiers and snowshoers alike) where, for example, the risk of avalanche involvement is comparatively much lower than in adjacent areas. The loss of these opportunities will further exacerbate the already high pressure on other nearby facilities, such as the PCT and Alpental Valley.

Forest officials should consider alternatives to a full closure of the project region, including: maintaining winter recreation access via F.S. Road 4832-144; safely enabling access to Gold Creek recreation opportunities via Trail 1314 via signage and other trail markers; and considering ways to expand snow-play parking

A formal evaluation by the Forest Service regarding the project's impact on this group is crucial before proceeding. This will ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the project's potential consequences and will enable the Forest to develop a plan to mitigate these impacts for the coming decade.