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First name: Joseph

Last name: Manning

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Subject: Recommendations for Mitigating Recreational Impact Due to Gold Creek Valley Restoration Project

Dear Forest Service,

I am writing to express my concerns and provide support for recommendations regarding the Gold Creek Valley Restoration project's significant impact on winter recreation due to the proposed multi-year closure of Gold Creek Pond and adjacent facilities.

While I support the ecological objectives of the restoration, including the recovery of the bull trout population and other native species, it is vital to address the project's impact on recreational access. The closure will affect many winter recreationalists who depend on Gold Creek Sno-Park and nearby areas for snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, and enjoying the scenic beauty of the region.

To mitigate the impact on winter recreation, the Forest Service should investigate the feasibility of the following solutions noted by Cascade Backcountry Alliance:

- Provide additional parking at the PCT North (Kendall Katwalk) parking lot to improve access to the Commonwealth Basin for snowshoeing and backcountry skiing, ensuring that these popular activities continue to thrive during the project period.
- Allow continued access to F.S Road 4832-144 in the Gold Creek Valley, which is outside the project area. This road provides essential access for snowshoeing and backcountry skiing and its continued availability would significantly alleviate the loss of access due to the restoration efforts.
- Enable access to the upper Gold Creek Valley via trail 1314, with clear signage or temporary trail markers as necessary. This would help maintain closure of the project area while still allowing recreational use in adjacent areas not directly affected by the restoration.
- Expand parking on Lake Mardee Road and explore opportunities to acquire adjacent private land. This expansion would provide alternative parking spaces and access points for snowshoers to F.S road 9090, fostering additional snow play opportunities in a suitable area.
- Collaborate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to allow parking on the north side of I-90 at Exit 62. Adding signage and a trail connector for cross-country skiers and snowshoers to access the Cabin Creek and Mount Amabalis trail systems would effectively distribute the recreational load caused by the closure of the primary areas.

I believe that these measures will help maintain the region's attractiveness for winter sports enthusiasts and mitigate the project's impact on the local recreational community. I appreciate your consideration of these suggestions and look forward to seeing a balanced approach to ecological restoration and recreational access.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Joseph Manning