

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/1/2024 6:47:12 AM

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Comments:

While this proposed ecological restoration work has important value, I am deeply concerned that the proposed project would result in a multi-year closure of Gold Creek Pond and its recreation facilities, including the popular snowshoe loop and back country access further up the valley. Beyond being an important winter access point for snow play, snowshoers, and backcountry skiers, during snow-free months the Gold Creek area provides ADA access to the incredible views of the Gold Creek Valley.

The draft environmental assessment has determined no significant environmental impacts and no significant recreational impacts, citing that the 100-300 cars who recreate at the Gold Creek Sno-Park can visit other areas during the closure. Since there currently is not enough parking in the Snoqualmie Pass area and other I-90 snow-parks on most weekends there clearly is not the capacity to absorb the hundreds of vehicles that currently enjoy the Gold Creek Valley during the winter months. Based on the current lack of parking the determination of "no significant recreation impacts" is fundamentally wrong and needs further review.

I strongly believe the proposed project needs to include a more substantive plan for offsetting the significant loss of Gold Creek Valley as a winter recreation access point. In particular, I recommend the Forest Service investigate the feasibility of the following additional solutions to help address the already difficult parking issues in the Snoqualmie Pass vicinity:

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- * Allow winter recreationalists to continue to access F.S Road 4832-144 in the Gold Creek Valley, which is outside the project area and provides snowshoeing opportunities and backcountry skiing access
- * Allow recreationalists to access the upper Gold Creek Valley via trail 1314 by including clear signage and/or temporary trail markers as necessary to maintain closure of project area
- * Expand parking on Lake Mardee Road and pursue opportunities to acquire the adjacent private land, where snowshoers can access F.S road 9090 and provide additional snow play opportunities in the flat open area.
- * Work with WSDOT to allow parking on the north side of I-90 at Exit 62 to help absorb reduced parking at Gold Creek and add signage and trail connector for cross country skiers and snowshoers to access Cabin Creek and Mount Amabilis trail system.

I understand that the Gold Creek Sno-park (F.S 4832) will still be open with significantly reduced parking, even though the trail and pond and recreational area will be closed. It would be helpful for the closure map to direct users towards alternate recreation options in the area.

Thank-you for consideration of these concerns and possible mitigations.