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Comments: 1. I am the area 5 representative to the non-motorized winter recreation committee (WRAC) for Washington State SnoParks, past chair of that group for the years 2018-2024.
2. In your list of agencies consulted on p11 of the EA, I do not see Washington State parks, and in particular Washington State SnoParks listed as one of these agencies, yet we are a significant winter user of both the lower gold creek valley and the areas that access Lake Keechulus.
3. While I am certainly in favor of the remediation work being proposed, I am at a loss to understand the lack of explanation in how the winter recreational users of this area are to be accommodated over the next potential 10 years of closures.
4. Per the EA..."The Project would comply with relevant standards by replacing existing recreational facilities in-kind, incorporating minor adjustments to rearrange surface recreational facilities in order to restore the landscape to more natural conditions." So I look forward to 10 years in the future when the project will have replaced recreational facilities lost during construction...but no comment for the interim other than the vague ones outlined in my #3 & #5.
5. Lest we forget the coronavirus year, winter 2021 was a disaster on the pass area for winter recreation; there was nowhere to have people recreate that came up on the pass. SnoParks reacted by opening up temporary SnoParks at Denny Creek and now Annette lake. Likewise at the 29 Pines area of the Teanaway and at Easton Reload...All but the Teanaway are still in existence, yet those later two are too far from the west-side population centers to have any significant effects...and again, this lack of planning for the next 10 years is summed up on p34 "The presence of other recreational facilities in the general area and within a similar driving distance from the Seattle area WOULD reduce the intensity of impact" It WOULD reduce the impact, IF SUCH FACILITIES EXISTED. If such facilities existed we wouldn't have had the problems in 2021 that we did. Our committee explored virtually every possibility of expanded opportunities for sites in the Snoqualamie corridor, but beyond those four mentioned, we were unable to develop any others. We are certainly open to suggestions as to where to redirect past and future Gold Creek Pond winter recreation users for the next potential 10 years; yes they can still park there, but their only recreational use would be to cross the crumbling bridge on NF9090, and proceed up the Kendal Peak Lakes Access.
6. Last year we were approached by Snoqualmie Nordic for funding to groom part of FS road 9070; this was not funded due to that group not meeting a permit application deadline. In the EA, it is stated unequivocally "There would continue to be no winter plowing or grooming on Forest Service Road 9070-219 below the access road to the Washington State Parks Hyak trailhead/sno-park" I don't see a note of explanation on why this has to be so for winter recreation, and would seem to be a way to compensate the program for the interim loss of winter recreation activities at Gold Creek Pond.