

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/20/2024 2:35:07 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Service Staff -

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my comments (and for striving to make the most meaning of them even if they should fall short of a technical comment process guideline).

I, as a member of the Powder Pass Nordic Club, appreciate the Forest Service's modifications to the project following the initial scoping period! The ski trails have received substantial investment (both money and time) from many individuals, businesses, and public entities in our community, and it would be a shame to see them damaged or lost when a few relatively manageable changes to the plan could reasonably prevent it. These trails are a big reason for me to make multiple trips to this area from Sheridan each winter (often including a stop over in Buffalo for a meal).

In the context of this project, my - and, as far as I understand it, PPNC's - highest priority for the ski trails in the project area (Pole Creek Nordic area and the Powder Pass 449 area) is maintaining or enhancing snow accumulation on the trails, and not jeopardizing it. I and many others specifically commented on this, but do not feel it was adequately addressed in the EA. As such, I request removing some or all treatments, including TH units 011, 012, 020, 053, 064, 065, 068, 072, and 078 from the Pole Creek and Powder Pass ski areas. In particular, the complete removal of units 011, 012, and the northeast portion of unit 20 from the project seem the most essential. If removal of the units in the Pole Creek Area is not feasible, a more substantial buffer of at least 500-1000 feet around the ski trail at all points is preferred to the current buffer design.

I also request that WUI treatments in the Pole Creek Nordic Area be minimized, with as little tree removal and impact to the ski trails as possible. WUI buffers, particularly around the WYDOT Camp, Cow Camp Cabin, and Pole Creek Cabin should be reduced from the default 1/3 mile to protect the integrity and economic value of both these structures and the ski trails.

In addition, I request that all design features relevant to the ski areas are laid out specifically in the EA and/or its appendices, and that the decision to ensure that these features are carried forward as treatments are implemented. I also see that maps provided to PPNC by the Forest Service do not accurately reflect the ski trails at Pole Creek, and are not consistent with what is approved and groomed, present on the landscape, and used in scoping documents. Particularly, the A1 and Kessler's Crook trails are missing. I request that you update your documentation to accurately reflect the ski trails.

Finally, I echo PPNC's requests for the following as the Pole Creek Vegetation Management Project is implemented:

- 1) Notification and coordination with PPNC during planning, advertisement, and implementation of projects in order to ensure USFS follows its stated plans and stipulations.
- 2) Partner with PPNC on the unit layout and cutting prescriptions in treatments overlapping the ski areas.
- 3) Designate Pole Creek Nordic and the Powder Pass 449 areas as winter sports areas.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider my comments, the comments of PPNC, and the comments of other PPNC members. I appreciate it very much,
Jordan Aibel