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Comments: While I'm very excited for the restoration project, some of the recreation groups who use the Gold Creek area in the winter are concerned about access and possible crowding of other areas with the closure.

Personally, I think that our recreation as backcountry skiers and snowshoers is a luxury and that environmental/restoration projects are far more important. The health of the land comes first.

However, I do think some of the ideas put forward by groups like the Cascade Backcountry Alliance: more clear signage, allowing recreationalists to park on the north side of exit 62, and working with private landowners to increase access are all good ideas. There are already a huge number of people who recreate in the backcountry near Snoqualmie pass and some safeguards will help to spread and minimize impact.

As someone who has worked in the ski industry and recreates year-round in the Snoqualmie Pass area, I do not see backcountry skiing and snowboarding becoming less popular- it is in the middle of a boom cycle and more people are getting into backcountry travel than ever before. Season passes for resorts get more expensive every year and backcountry gear gets cheaper/more usable every year. I think that there needs to be some planning for long-term winter recreation outside the scope of this project.

However, as stated above, the needs of the project should come first. Any attempt to account for increased winter recreation or dispersal of winter recreation should be secondary to environmental restoration efforts.