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Comments: The statements in the environmental assessment that "The recreational use in the wildlife closure area is relatively low" and that "the wildlife closure area does not provide a high-quality recreational experience" are not accurate statements of fact. They are wildly inaccurate if the proposed wildlife closure does indeed include the area of the current trails. Those statements would probably surprise any cross-country skier in the Seattle and Ellensburg areas as well as many others from across the Northwest who have skied there over the last fifty years.

The Cabin Creek Trails have been among the best for cross country skiing in the country for the last forty years, since the Kongsberger Ski Club made improvements and the state took over grooming. Even before then, when the trails were maintained by snowmobile, the trails were the favorite ski course of the renowned Wenatchee Racing team, five of whose girls were named to the US Ski Team. Before that, seventy years ago, future UW All American football player Koll Hagen, jumping and skiing there, became a medalist at the junior nationals in Nordic combined skiing. His buddy Randy Garretson became junior national champion in Nordic combined and an All-American collegiate skier. One of the Wenatchee girls, Alison Owen, became the first woman of any nationality to win a World Cup race! Olympian, NCAA champion and skimeister Mack Miller brought his team from McCall, Idaho to ski there. Biathlon Hall of Famer Jay Bowerman of Bend skied at Cabin Creek many times, winning the Pacific Northwest 30k championship in 1972 and the inaugural Gunnar Hagen Memorial 30k in 1980. Sadie and Erik Bjornsen of the Methow, distinguished former members of the US Ski Team, also raced there many times in their junior careers. The Bush School Ski Team, of which I was the coach for thirty-four years, continues to train and race there, five of them becoming medalists at the junior national championships. One of the leading junior teams in the Pacific Northwest, Momentum, skis there. For years the Kongsberger Ski Club put on among the best of junior qualifying races for junior nationals in the Pacific Northwest. The Ellensburg Ski Team, another prominent Northwest junior ski team, trains and races at Cabin Creek. Its coach Jeff Hashimoto, is a team leader for Pacific Northwest and learned to ski on the Cabin Creek trails. Moreover, the Head Coach of Team Canada and now Biathlon Canada grew up learning to ski on those trails!

This itemization does not even include the hundreds of recreational skiers who have been drawn to the Cabin Creek courses each winter weekend for the last forty years! It is the second most popular destination in the state park non motorized groomed trail system. The Sno-Park passes bought for primary use at Cabin Creek go no small way in funding the whole program.

There does not seem to be an incompatibility between maintenance, grooming and use of the Cabin Creek Trail with wildlife. That observation is not, however, rooted in science. As an aside, it might be interesting to check out the Scandinavian literature-there must be some on the subject. But were there research showing such an incompatibility elsewhere, I am sure that our able local wildlife biologists would bring it to our attention. Personal observations include once encountering a herd of elk on the trail system! Elk tracks and bear scat, as well as those of various cats are commonly seen on the trails throughout the year. I do support the concept of a wildlife corridor, but not if its designation precludes adequate maintainance, thoughtful modifications and possible expansion or alteration of the courses.

Possible expansion? An example. When the Nature Conservancy owned in recent years land atop Amabalis Mountain, it encouraged the development of somewhat under two kilometers of trail linked to the established groomed route to the top of Amabalis. Unobtrusive trails, so maintained as to not allow mechanized summer access were made by the Kongsberger Ski Club. When transfer of the land was successfully completed the Forest Service did not recognize them as valid trails. My understanding is that that contravenes common practice in such transfers. Whatever the case, those trails would be an example of judicious expansion of the trails, probably with minimal consequence. One might also note that the placement of a small temporary and seasonal

hut for public use high on Amabalis Mtn has been permitted, and subsequently well received by the Forest Service.

I would urge that the general area of the Cabin Creek trails be recognized for its remarkable historic importance in cross-country skiing in the Pacific Northwest and indeed, in the North America. We have not even delved into the site's relation to the highest level of ski jumping in the world, the Kongsbergers' founder having been first in the world to jump beyond 100 meters. Nor the role of three Kongsberger members as Chief of Jump, Chief of Hill and Chief of Stadium in two winter Olympics! In designating the general area as a wildlife corridor and for any wildlife closure it is culturally responsible to allow for adequate maintenance, judicious revision and possible expansion of the Cabin Creek trails. They are of historic importance and significant current use in cross-country skiing.

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