



File Code: 2350

Date: June 11, 2009

Dear Forest User:

On December 1, 2008, the Wenatchee River Ranger District proposed the Ski Hill and Freund Canyon Trails project, building approximately seven miles of new, non-motorized recreation trails including a trailhead and parking area near the Leavenworth Ski Hill in Leavenworth, WA. A scoping letter was mailed to adjacent property owners and interested parties on December 1, 2008, requesting comments on this proposal. Based upon comments received, the proposal was revised and is ready for your review.

We invite you to an Open House (public meeting), where you may review the revised proposal and meet directly with Interdisciplinary Team Specialists. The meeting will be held outdoors at the Leavenworth Ski Hill, in front of Ski Hill Lodge from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 30th. The Open House will be an informal format, with a short introductory presentation at 6:00 p.m.

Ski Hill and Freund Canyon Trails Project Information:

Project Area

The project area includes the area known as Ski Hill and most of Freund Canyon located north of Ski Hill (T.25N., R.17E., Sections 25, 26, 35 and 36). Please refer to the attached map.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to develop recreation trails near Leavenworth to help meet the demand for local trails. Specifically, the purpose and need of this project is to:

- 1) Develop a hiker-only loop trail on the slopes above Ski Hill;
- 2) Develop a non-motorized multi-user tie trail that would connect the Ski Hill area to trail #704 located in Freund Canyon;
- 3) Develop or improve a trail head that would serve new trail development; and
- 4) Restore disturbed sites where unauthorized trails and jumps have been built, and discourage future unauthorized trail construction.

Proposed Action Summary - (see attached map for locations)

The proposed action comprised of five parts:

- 1) Construct 3.4 miles of hiker-only trail to create a 4.1 mile loop;
- 2) Construct 5.2 miles of multi-user non-motorized trail to create two tie trails between existing Nordic trails at Ski Hill and system trail #1607 in Freund Canyon. (This would create a 6.3-mile loop when using a southern segment of system trail #1607.);
- 3) Construct a new trail head near the Southeast part of section 36; and
- 4) Establish a Forest Order legally restricting wheeled vehicles to designated trails in most of the project area. Rehabilitate user-built trails to reduce erosion and re-establish vegetation;
- 5) Rehabilitate user-built trails to reduce erosion and re-establish vegetation.

Design Details (see attached map for locations)

Trail Construction- Both the hiker-only and the multi-user trail would be constructed on a 10-15% grade. On side slopes a 30-36” bench would be created to support a 18-24” wide tread. Vegetation would be cleared to create an 8’ wide and 10’ high trail corridor.

Hiker Trail Loop - One of the existing Nordic trails would be signed to connect the Southwest end of the hiker-only trail back to the new trailhead.

Trail Intersections – Signs would be posted in the two locations where the hiker-only and multi-user trails intersect.

New Trail Head - The new trailhead would be located in all or part of the area currently used by the USFS for storage. Road barriers (for example, logs on concrete piers) would be placed along the perimeter of the trailhead and along the existing access road to restrict motor vehicle access to the trailhead only. Road barriers would be designed to allow non-motorized access to existing cross-country ski trail west of the road but not east or north of the access road. This design would eliminate 4-way intersections where collisions could occur between road and trail traffic. A new gate would be installed at the junction of the trailhead access road (Forest Service Road #7711-110) and Titus road. During the winter season, the gate would be closed and all barriers across groomed Nordic ski routes would be removed.

Site Restoration – A Special Forest Order would be established to legally restrict wheeled vehicles (primarily motor bikes and mountain bikes) to designated trails in sections 25, 26, 35 and 36 (T25N R17E), outside of the Nordic ski trail area at Ski Hill. Trail #704 in Freund Canyon and the proposed multi-user tie trails would be the only designated trails allowing wheeled vehicles use. This order would represent the first step toward restoring vegetation on sites where illegal trail construction has occurred. Cross-drains, check dams and seeding would be then be used as needed to control erosion and encourage re-vegetation. The Special Forest Order would also serve to discourage future unauthorized trail development and associated resource damage.

Maintenance Funding – Unless some group or entity agrees to fund or maintain trailhead and trail developments, the Wenatchee River Ranger District will request that all trailhead facilities at Ski Hill be added to the Recreation Pass program (Summer use only).

Forest Plan Management Allocations

The Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990) as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (1994) establishes land management directions for lands within the project area. Lands currently developed for winter recreation at Ski Hill are classified as Developed Recreation (RE-1) and are Administratively Withdrawn from any programmed timber harvest. Other parts of the project area, including lands south of the ridge located between Ski Hill and Freund Canyon, are classified as Scenic Travel-Partial Retention (ST-2). All activities on ST-2 lands, including timber management, must be designed to be visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape as viewed from main travel routes. Remaining lands, primarily in Freund Canyon, are a combination of General Forest (GF) and Key Deer

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and Elk Habitat (EW-1) land allocations. Timber growth and production is emphasized on GF lands while quality winter range habitat is the emphasis for EW-1 lands. GF, EW-1 and ST-2 land allocations are also called Matrix lands by the Northwest Forest Plan since timber production is programmed on those allocations.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the public meeting and present this revised proposal. Please direct your comments to the District Ranger, Wenatchee River Ranger District, 600 Sherbourne, Leavenworth, WA 98826 (Fax: 509-548-5817; E-Mail: comments_wenatchee_river@fs.fed.us).

Those submitting electronic copies of their comments should use the e-mail address listed above. Please include the project name (Ski Hill and Freund Canyon Trails) in the e-mail subject line and submit comments either as part of the e-mail message or as an attachment in one of the following three formats: Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf) or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf).

If you have questions regarding this project please contact Don Youkey at (509) 548-2580. Information will also be posted on our Website: www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/planning/planmain.htm under Wenatchee River Ranger District projects.

Sincerely,

VAUGHN D. MARABLE
District Ranger

Enclosure

