



March 2, 2016

Jamie Kingsbury, Forest Supervisor
Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
2930 Wetmore Avenue, Suite 3A
Everett, Washington 98201

RE: 2016 Washington State Federal Lands Access Program Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road Enhancements for Public Access Submitted by Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and Washington State DNR

Dear Forest Supervisor Kingsbury:

As organizations with a vested interest in the natural and recreational resources of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley, we are writing to express our support for the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road Enhancements for Public Access Project Proposal.

American Whitewater, The Mountaineers, Washington Trails Association, Washington Wild, and The Wilderness Society are organizations that seek to preserve and enhance recreational access opportunities on public lands across Washington State. We recognize the important role that primary recreation access roads, such as the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road, serve for recreationists and believe that when people visit wildlands, they become advocates for their continued protection.

Over the last few years, our organization and others have supported the paving of the Middle Fork Road (in progress) and the designation of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions (passed December 2014) which will preserve and enhance recreational access to the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley.

The Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Valley provides exceptional year-round recreational opportunities within a short 45-minute drive of the Seattle Metropolitan Area. Existing trails and developed river access points on National Forest lands are already heavily-used. The proposed projects will create new facilities in locations that we have long believed are ideal for steady public use – provided there is adequate parking, toilets, signage, picnic facilities and trails. We're pleased that the proposal includes the Camp Brown and Pratt Bar projects, which are exclusively on National Forest lands, as well as projects where National Forest lands are intermingled with Washington State lands, such as at the Oxbow Lake. By working across boundaries, you were able to select the most promising sites for public use and for long-term stewardship of the valley.

Visitation to the valley is expected to increase with the completion of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road paving project and the recent designation of the Alpine Lakes Additions. The time is now to improve existing recreational facilities and plan for growing recreation demands in the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Valley. The proposed access enhancements along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road will not only improve recreational amenities, but will also prevent resource damage and maintain the natural and scenic character of the Valley.

Specific Project Comments:

- Camp Brown will be an ideal location for environmental education projects, especially when the transit shuttle is implemented.
- We're excited about the potential for ADA accessible facilities and transit at many of the project sites.
- The CCC trail connector and improvements will set the stage for connecting the King County Regional Trail system to the Middle Fork Valley, an exciting prospect for our community

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of the joint proposal by the U.S. Forest Service and Washington Department of Natural Resources to enhance public access along the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road.

Sincerely,

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