



1/8/2025

Brian McNeil, Acting District Ranger  
Snoqualmie District Office  
Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest  
902 S.E. North Bend Way, Bldg 1  
North Bend, WA 98045

**RE: Support For PCT North Sno-Park Application**

Dear Acting District Ranger McNeil:

The Mountaineers, based in Seattle, Washington and founded in 1906, is a nonprofit outdoor education, conservation, and recreation organization whose mission is “to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.” Our community of over 16,000 recreationists support the Cascade Backcountry Alliance application for the creation of a Sno-Park at the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) North Trailhead at Snoqualmie Pass, one of the most popular winter recreation destinations in the state.

We support this project because it would provide additional parking and improved access to Commonwealth Basin, a high-use winter recreation destination within 1 hour of the Seattle metro area. Commonwealth Basin supports opportunities for a wide variety of recreationalists, including snowshoers, winter climbers, and backcountry skiers. It is a common destination for many first-time winter recreationalists, guided snowshoe tours, avalanche training courses, and other educational winter experiences.

The Mountaineers considers Commonwealth Basin a premier location to teach introductory snowshoeing skills. In 2024, we led 12 snowshoeing education trips for 60 total students in the Basin, teaching students safe winter travel skills, snowshoe techniques, and Leave-No-Trace principles. Demand for these educational programs - and winter recreation opportunities in general - is growing, and meeting that demand requires investing in additional infrastructure to provide access to areas like Commonwealth Basin that have high value for winter recreation.

At Snoqualmie Pass, where parking availability already struggles to meet existing demand, there are limited areas other than the PCT North lot where additional parking is possible due to private land ownership. The Sno-Park program is a sustainable mechanism for leveraging the pre-existing infrastructure of the PCT North lot to meet the increased need for winter recreation access.

The support of this Sno-Park by the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest will demonstrate a commitment to providing safe and adequate access to public lands and will lay the groundwork for a more sustainable winter recreation plan at Snoqualmie Pass. The Mountaineers strongly supports the



**THE  
MOUNTAINEERS**

7700 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

[www.mountaineers.org](http://www.mountaineers.org)

approval of PCT North as a Sno-Park as an effective approach to support growing winter recreation needs in Washington.

Sincerely,

Betsy Robblee  
Conservation & Advocacy Director  
[betsyr@mountaineers.org](mailto:betsyr@mountaineers.org)