

WASHINGTON OUTDOOR ALLIANCE



June 18, 2018

Erin McKay
Chelan County Natural Resource Department
Natural Resource Specialist
411 Washington St. Suite 201 Wenatchee, WA

Re: Comments to the Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan Draft Recommendations

Dear Erin:

The Access Fund, the American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition and Washington Trails Association – all human-powered recreation organizations in Washington State – come together as Washington Outdoor Alliance. As a coalition, we work on issues relating to recreation, access and conservation and represent more than 38,000 members who recreate on public lands.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the planning process and provide comments to the Stemilt-Squilchuck Recreation Plan Draft Recommendations. We appreciate the intentionality, including public meetings, that went into this plan, and your efforts in leading this process to benefit and create new recreation opportunities in the Stemilt-Squilchuck area for outdoor enthusiasts here in Washington State. Below are comments and suggested revisions from Washington Outdoor Alliance – a coalition of outdoor recreation organizations whose 38,000 members recreate all over Washington. Three of our coalition member organizations, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, and Washington Trails Association, have engaged in this planning process, and our other organizations join in support of planning for and delivering a sustainable, equitable, diverse, and rewarding recreation experiences in this area.

Our comments approach the year-round recreational opportunities this area provides, both snow-based recreation and non-winter recreation.

- Our organizations appreciate opportunities for quiet, safe, and quality non-motorized recreation year-round, making this planning process important to our members.
- We appreciate the inclusion of “Consider new trail development within existing open road buffers, to minimize impact of new trail development on wildlife.” Using road corridors could offer a creative solution to minimize impact and limit permit review needs, while still creating a rewarding thru-trail experience for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

- While we understand the need for continued snowmobile access in the Stemilt-Squilchuck basin via the connector trail, we are concerned that it will be very difficult for the public to understand when they can and cannot go with their snowmobiles in the non-motorized area without significant management and enforcement, which will likely cause motorized incursions into the non-motorized area. We are concerned that this will be extremely onerous for Chelan County to manage and enforce and would like a better understanding of how this would occur. Sections 20 and 29 are where three non-motorized access points converge and where Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and winter fat biking, will be concentrated. We believe more conversation is needed about future alignment of the corridor and its impacts, especially in considering winter recreation.
- The summer map doesn't specify whether the "proposed connector" in section 20 would be open to motorized activity. If this corridor is included as is, we recommend labeling it as non-motorized recreation on the summer map.

Thank you for the hard work in creating these recommendations to encourage multi-use recreation while protecting the wildlife and habitat that makes this landscape such a wonderful place to spend time. We appreciate the consideration of our comments.

Best regards,

Gus Bekker, *President*, El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club
Eddie Espinosa, *Northwest Policy Advisor*, American Alpine Club
Katherine Hollis, *Conservation and Advocacy Director*, The Mountaineers
Andrea Imler, *Advocacy Director*, Washington Trails Association
Yvonne Kraus, *Executive Director*, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Thomas O'Keefe, *Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director*, American Whitewater
Matt Perkins, *Board Member*, Washington Climbers Coalition
Joe Sambataro, *Northwest Regional Director*, Access Fund

cc: John McCauley, *Regional Director*, Outdoor Alliance