



May 26, 2021

Winter Recreation Advisory Committee
Washington State Parks

RE: Support for Kongsberger Ski Club's application for grooming at Erling Stordahl/Cabin Creek Sno-Parks

Dear Winter Recreation Advisory Committee members,

On behalf of The Mountaineers, please accept our letter of support for the Kongsberger Ski Club's application for ongoing and additional funding for grooming at the combined Erling Stordahl/Cabin Creek Sno-Parks. The grant requested is for \$28,778 per year in additional grooming funds.

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." The Mountaineers Books publishing division expands the mission internationally through award-winning publications including instructional guides, adventure narratives, and conservation photography. 1,600 skilled volunteers lead 3,200 outdoor education trips and courses annually for 14,000 members. Our youth programs provide over 10,000 opportunities each year for children to get outside. We are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that cares about the outdoors, and protects the outdoor experience for current and future generations.

This funding will benefit The Mountaineers cross country ski programs, trips, and courses, as well as our larger community of outdoor enthusiasts. Our cross country ski leaders primarily use the Cabin Creek and Erling Stordahl trails and they depend on regular grooming to run their programs. The application would allow for 6 days per week of grooming of the Cabin Creek trails, including 4 days per week up Amabilis, and 3 days per week of grooming of the Erling Stordahl trails. A greater regularity of grooming will help ensure that Mountaineers leaders can schedule and run ski trips that are safe and enjoyable, enabling skills improvement to take place with a greater degree of certainty.

In order to schedule our programs, Mountaineers cross country ski leaders need to know well in advance with a good degree of certainty when, snow conditions permitting, trails will be groomed on the date of each scheduled trip. Knowing in advance which days grooming will take place is especially important for trips with new and inexperienced skiers and for almost all skiers when trips are planned up the Amabilis Road from Cabin Creek. Snow conditions can never be fully predicted, but more regular grooming will help ensure a safer and more enjoyable ski experience.

A larger grooming budget will also help to meet the growing demand for cross country skiing. The Puget Sound region has a large and increasing number of cross country skiers and insufficient close-to-home groomed trails available to meet the demand. As you know, the Cabin Creek and Erling Stordahl trails, as



well as the neighboring trails at the Hyak and Crystal Springs Sno-Parks, were very overcrowded this past winter season, especially on the weekends. Also, the budget for grooming was used up before the end of the last season, and grooming for the end of the season was funded by volunteer donations. A larger sno-park grooming budget would hopefully make this less likely in the future.

In summary, more regular and frequent grooming of the Cabin Creek and Erling Stordahl trails will help spread skiers out over the week and enable a more enjoyable and safer experience for Mountaineers members and other skiers. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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