

April 26, 2024

Dear Winter Recreation Advisory Council,

Cascade Backcountry Alliance is writing on behalf of a coalition of outdoor recreation groups in Washington representing 40,000+ avid recreationalists. We express our full support for the development of the Denny Creek Sno-Park along I-90.

Our members and volunteers are a passionate, engaged, and knowledgeable community that care about the outdoors and work to protect the outdoor experience for current and future generations. Increasing accessibility to the outdoors for new users is a core value for our groups and one of the reasons we are excited about the development of a sno-park at Denny Creek.

We understand that the Denny Creek sno-park will replace the current sno-park at Ashael Curtis. While our members have greatly enjoyed access to Ashael Curtis, the community has noted several issues including: proximity to the freeway, limited parking and a long approach to the area's main attraction, Franklin Falls. The current hike is around 6.5 miles round trip, which is a potentially challenging undertaking for families and beginner winter travelers.

Denny Creek is expected to have 170 parking spots, which we believe will significantly help alleviate known crowding and parking scarcity issues at Snoqualmie Pass. The new sno-park location offers better snow play opportunities for families and people interested in having a winter outdoor experience without investing in expensive technical gear or advanced avalanche training. Snow play has the largest, most diverse potential use base at the new sno-park and is an easy entry point to increasing accessibility to the winter outdoors. In addition to snow play opportunities it will provide entry-level snowshoeing and winter hiking opportunities.

We believe this is especially important because 1) The rate of growth of the backcountry ski and snowshoe community continues to skyrocket; [Outdoor Industry Association](#) cited a 20% increase in snowshoeing between 2021 and 2022 winter seasons. And 2) the Gold Creek Valley restoration project is moving forward which will likely lead to a 5-7 year closure of the very popular snowshoe loop at Gold Creek Sno-Park. Denny Creek Sno-Park development will provide a great opportunity to support new winter users and Gold Creek pond users to get outside safely and responsibly.

Per the *Seattle Times* (February 29, 2023), roughly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of sno-park sales come from the City of Seattle with another 10% from other cities along the I-90 corridor (Issaquah, Sammamish, Kirkland, Bellevue, Redmond). Many of our members live along the I-90 corridor and were ecstatic to see the development of the Lake Annette Sno-Park last year. We believe devoting more resources to winter recreation planning efforts along the I-90 corridor is smart and sustainable. Denny Creek Sno-Park is a good example of a project with limited impact on the environment and maximum impact for improving winter frontcountry and backcountry access.

We are thankful for WRAC's continued leadership in the Washington recreation arena. We understand the complex funding and policy associated with the development of new sno-parks and are grateful for your consideration of Denny Creek for a future sno-park location.

Sincerely,



Kyle McCrohan (Apr 28, 2024 20:11 PDT)

Kyle McCrohan  
Cascade Backcountry Alliance



Michael DeCramer (Apr 29, 2024 09:08 PDT)

Michael DeCramer  
Washington Trails Association



Betsy Robblee  
The Mountaineers



Caroline Villanova (Apr 29, 2024 09:52 PDT)

Caroline Villanova  
Mountains to Sound Greenway



Suzanne Corkran (Apr 29, 2024 12:54 PDT)

Suzanne Corkran  
Kongsbergers Ski Club



Tom Jacobi (Apr 26, 2024 22:35 PDT)

Tom Jacobi  
Washington Ski Touring Club











# Denny Creek\_Franklin Falls Sno Park Support Letter


Final Audit Report

2024-04-29


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