



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Umpqua
National
Forest

Diamond Lake Ranger District
2020 Toketee Ranger Station Rd.
Idleld Park, OR 97447
(541) 498-2531
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File Code: 1950
Date: January 17, 2008

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed is the Final Decision Memo (DM) for the Winter Snowpark Project. The Snow-Park Project proposes to move the Three Lakes Snow-park and improve the parking and sanitation at the site, and to enlarge the Cinnamon Butte Snow-park and improve the parking and sanitation at that site as well. The Three Lakes Snow-park is located along the 3703 road at T28S, R5E, Sec. 25/26 and the Cinnamon Butte Snow-park area is located along the 4793 road at T27S, R5½ E, Sec. 8, Willamette Meridian, in Douglas County, Oregon. Additional copies of the DM are available by calling the Supervisor's Office at (541) 957-3466, or by visiting our website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/umpqua.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations 26 CFR 215.11(a). The appeal must meet the requirements specified by 36 CFR 215.14. The Appeal Deciding Officer is the Forest Supervisor of the Umpqua National Forest. The appeal should be addressed to the Appeal Deciding Officer, Clifford J. Dils, Umpqua National Forest, 2900 NW Stewart Parkway, Roseburg, Oregon, 97470. The fax number is (541) 957-3495. Appeals that are hand delivered may be delivered from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Appeals may be e-mailed to appeals-pacificnorthwest-umpqua@fs.fed.us. The appeal, including attachments, must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the date that the legal notice of decision is published in the Roseburg News Review, which is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Implementation may occur on, but not before the 15th business day following the date of appeal disposition. In the event of multiple appeals, the implementation date will be established following the last appeal deposition [36 CFR 215.9(b)]. If no appeal is filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 5th business day following the close of the appeal filing period [36 CFR 215.9(a)].

Additional information and/or copies of the proposal can be obtained from Debbie Anderson, (541)-957-3466, email danderson01@fs.fed.us at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 2900 NW Stewart Parkway, Roseburg, Oregon 97470; the Supervisor's office is open from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

Thank you for your interest in the Winter Snow-Park Project.

Sincerely,

John Ouimet
District Ranger

Enclosure





**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Forest Service

Pacific
Northwest
Region



Winter Snow-Parks

Umpqua National Forest

Diamond Lake Ranger District

January 2008

Final Decision Memo

Introduction and Project Location

Winter recreation opportunities on the Diamond Lake Ranger District are quite diverse and include: Nordic skiing, snow-shoeing, snowmobiling, downhill skiing, snowboarding, inner-tubing, dog-sledding, and snow camping. Over 200,000 acres are available for these recreational activities on the Diamond Lake Ranger District with two destination centers called “hubs” located at Lemolo Lake and Diamond Lake. Historically, people began snowmobiling in the Diamond Lake area around 1964. In 1968 the Diamond Lake Lodge started staying open during the winter. Grooming of snowmobile trails around Diamond Lake started in 1969 and continued to expand into other areas including Mt Bailey and Crater Lake National Park. In 1980, snow-cat skiing started on Mt Bailey in the Diamond Lake area and continues to this day. When the Lemolo Lake Resort started staying open in the winter season, some Nordic ski trails were constructed in the local area. Currently there is an estimated 77 miles of trails for non-motorized use and 148 miles of trails open to motorized use on the Diamond Lake Ranger District.

Recent studies on the Diamond Lake Ranger District indicate that approximately 18,000 to 25,000 people visit the district during the winter season. Of this, 4,000 to 7,000 visitors participate in non-motorized activities with the balance in motorized recreational activities. While there are snow-park areas on Highway 138 and 230, the ability for these snow-parks to handle use is limited by the current size of these parking facilities.

The Three Lakes Snow-park, located along the 3703 road at T28S, R5E, Sec. 25/26 and the Cinnamon Butte Snow-park area, located along the 4793 road at T27S, R5½ E, Sec. 8, were identified in the 2006 “Winter Recreation Assessment and Use Guide” for the Umpqua National Forest as needing improvements. In addition, the Cinnamon Butte area is identified in the capital improvement plan in the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), Appendix A-50.

The current Three Lakes snow-park is currently located in an area that limits expansion, especially for safe vehicle turn-around. Moving the snow-park would allow for vehicle turn-around in a safe manner and would allow for installation of sanitation facilities.

The current area used as the Cinnamon Butte snow-park extends just up the 4793 road. It ends where the snowplow deposits snow each year. The actual use this area can accommodate can range from 2 to 3 vehicles at best, with entrance and exit from the parking area somewhat hazardous, as there isn’t room for safe turn-around of vehicles.

Members of the public expressed an interest in seeing other snow-parks developed or improved; however, funding is not adequate to undertake improvements at additional snow-parks at this time, so I prioritized the existing situation found at the snow-parks and chose to improve Three Lakes and Cinnamon Butte at this time.

PURPOSE AND NEED, PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of this project is to provide for adequate parking facilities at two snow-parks currently being used on the Diamond Lake Ranger District through a modest expansion of their current size in order to accommodate the current use and to improve public safety and sanitation; while at the same time expanding their size slightly to meet anticipated future use needs identified in the “Winter Recreation Assessment and Use Guide”.

Specifically, there is a need for this project to provide for adequate, safe parking at both snow-parks; there is a need to provide adequate restroom facilities for public users at both snow-parks; and there is a need to move forward on this project since the Umpqua National Forest currently has funding from Federal Highways/National Scenic Byways to accomplish a portion of this work next year.

Detailed project components for each of the project locations, includes the following:

Cinnamon Butte Snow-park (non-motorized use): The need for this new snow-park is driven by current use levels by the general public and addresses safety concerns (parking) at this location. Specific activities at Cinnamon Butte include:

- Construct a new snow-park along the east side of the 4793-000 road that is large enough to safely park four (4) vehicles (cars or trucks without trailers) and large enough to store the plowed snow.
- A small segment of the 4793-000 road and the parking area will be paved.
- Small diameter lodgepole pine trees which will need to be cut at this location will be left on-site outside of the cleared area, and slash from these trees will be disposed of.
- Clean out the ditchline on the west side of the 4793 road by removing brush and dirt and endhaul as needed.
- Clean out the culvert inlet and outlet at the 4793/Highway 138 road junction.
- Install a new "nordic trail" ski signboard near the existing signpost.
- Permanent restroom facilities will not be constructed at this location due to its proximity to Highway 138 and the low levels of use that are in existence or for the predicted use levels; however, placing a portable toilet in the area, out of the way of the snow disposal zone will be evaluated and placed if logistically feasible for use during the winter recreation season.

Three Lakes Snow-park (motorized and non-motorized use): The need for moving this snow-park is driven by safety concerns for parking pickups/RV's with snowmobile trailers and for use associated with the Mt. Bailey snowcat. Adequate safe parking is a primary concern at the current Three Lakes Snow-park and the current size of this snow-park is not large enough to handle existing use levels, let alone anticipated use levels. This snow-park receives the most use on the Diamond Lake Ranger District since it is the first to receive snowfall and the last one to have adequate quantities of snow for use. The size of the existing snow-park is so small that frequently, vehicles have to back out onto Highway 230 to turn around which is a serious safety concern.

- Move the Snow-park from its current location just off Highway 230 on system road 3703-000 to a new location in an existing clearing on the right side of the 3703-000 road that is large enough to safely park pickups with large snowmobile trailers, pickups with small snowmobile trailers, cars or trucks without trailers, the vehicles associated with the Mount Bailey Snow-cat Special Use Permit, and to store plowed snow.
- The existing clearing at the new location for this snow-park will need to be slightly expanded and this will result in the clearing of all vegetation including brush, rotten logs, stumps, small trees, and trees (lodgepoles and some shasta red firs 8-18" dbh) that have been flagged with pink ribbon for additional parking and snow disposal. Slash from the cutting of these trees will be disposed of by either

endhauling or burning, and the boles of these trees will be left on site for soil productivity needs in areas adjacent to this snow-park.

- The 3703-000 road to the access road, the access road to the new snow-park and the snow-park itself will be paved.
- A new vault toilet (CXT) will be installed to address sanitation concerns at this location. Its location would be near a clump of large trees that would be retained, so that snow removal can be done away from that building during the winter.
- Fell all hazard trees as needed.
- Replace existing culvert on 3703 road with a larger culvert to accommodate the wider road width.
- Construct about 200 feet of new nordic trail to tie into the existing nordic trail. Some small diameter trees will likely need to be cut for that trail.
- Install a new trail sign board within the new snow-park - site to be determined.
- Survey 100' or so around the perimeter of the existing clearing for a possible future covered pavilion warming hut/building; any future building would require additional analysis.
- All felled trees will be left on site, or placed around the site; firewood opportunities may also occur with some of the material.

Decision and Rationale

I have decided to implement the proposed action for the Three Lakes and Cinnamon Butte Snow-parks. I believe that taking action to correct the deficiencies at these two snow-parks is the responsible course of action that will improve the facilities and help reduce user conflicts at the Three Lakes Snow-Park. Mitigation measures listed above will help reduce the impacts to the sites, which are limited in scope and scale. During the 30-day public comment period, which ran from December 6, 2007 till January 4, 2008, I received 17 timely comment letters or emails and 19 total comment letters or emails from the public. Sixteen comment letters were fully supportive of implementing the project. Two comments expressed concerns over better separation of cross county skiers and snowmobiles, and one of those comments noted that snowmobiles have been using areas designated for non-motorized use only.

To address the concerns of separation of skiers and snowmobiles, I will work with the project designers to make sure that areas designated for parking of snowmobiles is located away from the trailhead that skiers will use.

To address the concern of the areas designated for non-motorized use only, (such as the Hemlock Butte Ski cabin), I will ensure that additional, visible signs are posted and will request increased enforcement patrols in this area. The trail sign board to be installed at the Three Lakes Snow-park will also be used to further educate users to the proper use of the area. I also have a concern regarding the security of vehicles in the area; as funding allows, increased enforcement patrols will help reduce the potential for vandalism.

One comment received expressed concern over the old-growth trees located adjacent to the Three Lakes expansion. I will work with my staff to incorporate project design

features that will help protection of these trees. Additionally, a comment was received expressing concerns over use in the summer. The area will be signed stating the proper uses of the area, and I will also request additional enforcement patrols.

One comment also asked if improving the Cinnamon Butte Snow-Park might lead to unintended motorized use. Based on how the area would be plowed, it would be extremely difficult to unload a motorized vehicle, such as a snowmobile, and manipulate it over the plowed snowbank onto the trail. Adequate signing will also indicate the proper use of the trail.

I've also included a map with this Decision Memo in order to help visualize the area.

In addressing the concerns raised, and considering the extensive support for the project, I believe my decision balances the need for improvement with the need for resource protection.

Findings as Required by Law, Policy and Regulation

Finding of Consistency with Applicable Forest Service Management Direction and the National Forest Management Act

Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis for this project, I find that the project is consistent with the standards, guidelines, and amendments of the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan and is therefore consistent with the National Forest Management Act. This finding includes all of the following determinations documented in the specialists' reports for this project:

This project will not prevent attainment of the goals and objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, as documented by the project hydrologist.

This project is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, as amended and the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended.

Therefore, I find that the Winter Snow-park Project is consistent with all applicable Forest Service management direction.

Finding of Consistency with State Historic Preservation Office Policies

Based on my review of the heritage resource report, I find that the project is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Finding of Non-Jeopardy to Endangered, Threatened or Sensitive Species and No Adverse Effect to Species Covered Under the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act

The District Fisheries Biologist has determined that this project would have no effect on any threatened species or their critical habitat, no effect on Essential Fish Habitat, and no impact on any sensitive species. This project complies with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The District Wildlife Biologist has determined that this project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, and no impact on Management Indicator or rare and/or uncommon species. This project would have no impact on species on the R6 Regional Forester's sensitive species list. Therefore, I find

that the Winter Snow-park Project does not jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species.

The District Botanist has determined that this project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, and 'no impact' for non-fungi species, and "may impact" for fungi species or rare and/or uncommon species. This project would have no impact on species on the R6 Regional Forester's sensitive species list. Prevention measures for noxious weeds shall follow standards 2, 3, 7, and 13¹. In addition, known high-priority noxious weed sites will be avoided during construction activities, and equipment will not be staged where weeds are known to occur (coordinate with District botanist for locations). Revegetation of disturbed sites, where needed, will also be coordinated in advance with the District botanist.

Finding of the Absence of Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances

Scoping to determine the presence or absence of potential effects on extraordinary circumstances occurred starting in the October 2006 Umpqua National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions; eleven statements of interest were received. Several groups and individuals expressed concerns over safety issues associated with parking and some groups expressed an interest in helping the Forest Service implement the project. Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis, I find that this project does not adversely affect any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 1909.15, 30.3(2). Specifically, I find that this project does not adversely affect: (a) endangered or threatened species or their critical habitats, or any Forest Service sensitive species; (b) floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds; (c) Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness or National Recreation Areas; (d) inventoried roadless areas; (e) Research Natural Areas; (f) Native American religious or cultural sites, or archaeological or historic properties and sites.

Finding of Consistency with All Applicable Federal Laws and Regulations

During scoping, concerns were raised over impacts to water quality from snowmobiles. The concern raised was that development of the Three Lakes Snow-park would encourage more snowmobile use; it is understood that the Cinnamon Butte Snow-park would only have non-motorized use. An indirect water quality effect is not expected in response to this project because of the limited expansion of Three Lakes Snow-park. This is because of the snow-park's distance from the aquatic environment with trails not encouraging high motorized activity in the vicinity of the Silent Creek tributary, as well as the overall projected snowmobile use for the Diamond Lake area. Consequently, the potential increase in snowmobile use at the Three Lakes Snow Park would not deliver detectable pollutants to the aquatic environment. The high snowmobile traffic areas of

¹ Standard 2: Actions conducted or authorized by written permit by the Forest Service that will operate outside the limits of the road prism (including public works and service contracts), require the cleaning of all heavy equipment (bulldozers, skidders, graders, backhoes, dump trucks, etc.) prior to entering National Forest System Lands.

Standard 3. Use weed-free straw and mulch for all projects, conducted or authorized by the Forest Service, on National Forest System Lands. If State certified straw and/or mulch is not available, individual Forests should require sources certified to be weed free using the North American Weed Free Forage Program standards or a similar certification process.

Standard 7. Inspect active gravel, fill, sand stockpiles, quarry sites, and borrow material for invasive plants before use and transport. Treat or require treatment of infested sources before any use of pit material. Use only gravel, fill, sand, and rock that is judged to be weed free by District or Forest weed specialists.

Standard 13. Native plant materials are the first choice in revegetation for restoration and rehabilitation where timely natural regeneration of the native plant community is not likely to occur.

Yellowstone National Park where aquatic concern was identified during scoping were experiencing 500 to 1,000 snowmobiles per day, but pollutants in the snowmelt were below concentration levels of concern for the aquatic environment. The Three Lakes Snow-park with the expansion would be in the low use category at 10 to 99 snowmobiles per day. Therefore, snowmobile pollutants would locally disperse with the snowmelt and not impact the aquatic environment as found in the Yellowstone National Park studies; consequently no detectable effects would be expected.

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project and all applicable specialists' reports, I find that the project is consistent with the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. Therefore, I find that the Winter Snow-park Project is consistent with applicable Federal laws and regulations.

Finding of Exclusion from Further National Environmental Policy Act Analysis

Based on my review of (1) the actions associated with this project; (2) the environmental consequences documented in the interdisciplinary analysis; (3) the consistency of this project with applicable laws, regulations, and management direction; (4) the non-jeopardy to endangered or threatened species or heritage resources; and (5) the absence of adverse effects to extraordinary circumstances; I find that this project is not significant in either context or intensity (40 CFR 1508.27) and that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with these projects (FSH 1909.15). I also find that this project will produce no adverse environmental effects, individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or social components of the human environment. Therefore, I find that the Winter Snow-park Project is categorically excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR 1508.4 and FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3, Part 1) and that the category of exclusion is Category 5 as identified in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 31.12.

Appeals

Pursuant to the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of California September 20, 2005 clarification in Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck, this decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) in accordance with 36 CFR 215. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Forest Supervisor, Umpqua National Forest

Attn 1570 Appeals

2900 NW Stewart Parkway, Roseburg, OR 97470.

Business hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays

Phone 541-672-6601; FAX 541-957-3495.

Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to appeals-pacificnorthwest-umpqua@fs.fed.us.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of the legal notice of this decision in the Roseburg News-Review, the official newspaper of record, which is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The notice of appeal must include (36 CFR 215.14):

1. Appellant’s name and address, with a telephone number, if available.
2. Signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for electronic mail may be filed with the appeal).
3. When multiple names are listed on an appeal, identification of the lead appellant upon request.
4. The name of the project or activity for which the decision was made, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the date of the decision.
5. Any specific change(s) in the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement.
6. Any portion(s) of the decision with which the appellant disagrees, and explanation for the disagreement.
7. Why the appellant believes the Responsible Official’s decision failed to consider the comments; and
8. How the appellant believes the decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy.

Implementation

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, the 5th business day from the close of the appeal filing period (36 CFR 215.9(a)). If an appeal is filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of appeal disposition. In the event of multiple appeals, the implementation date will be established following the last appeal deposition (36 CFR 215.9(b)).

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this project, contact Debbie Anderson, Forest Environmental Coordinator, 541-957-3466 or by email at danderson01@fs.fed.us.

Signature and Date

 /s/ John Ouimet

District Ranger

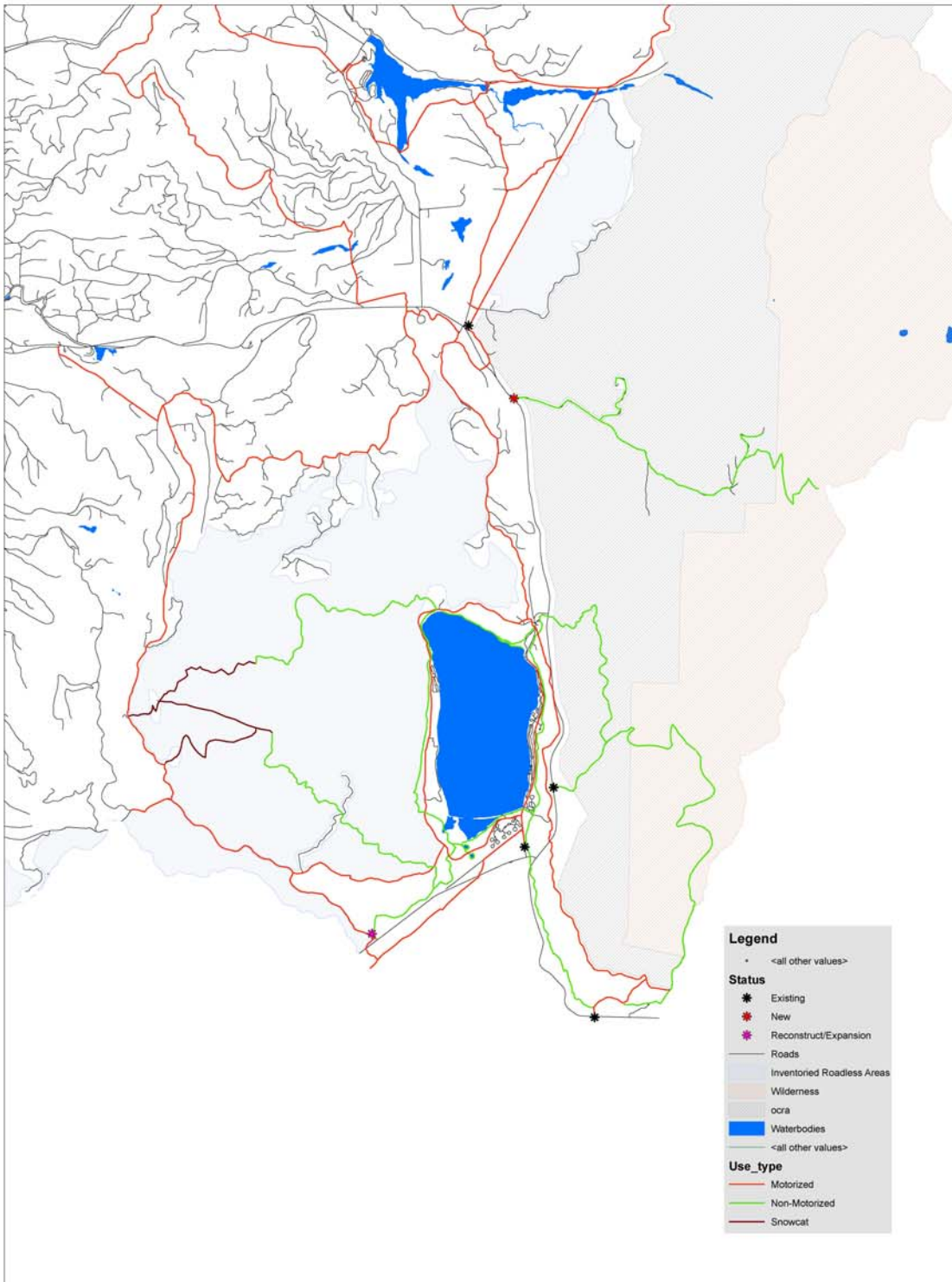
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Date Signed

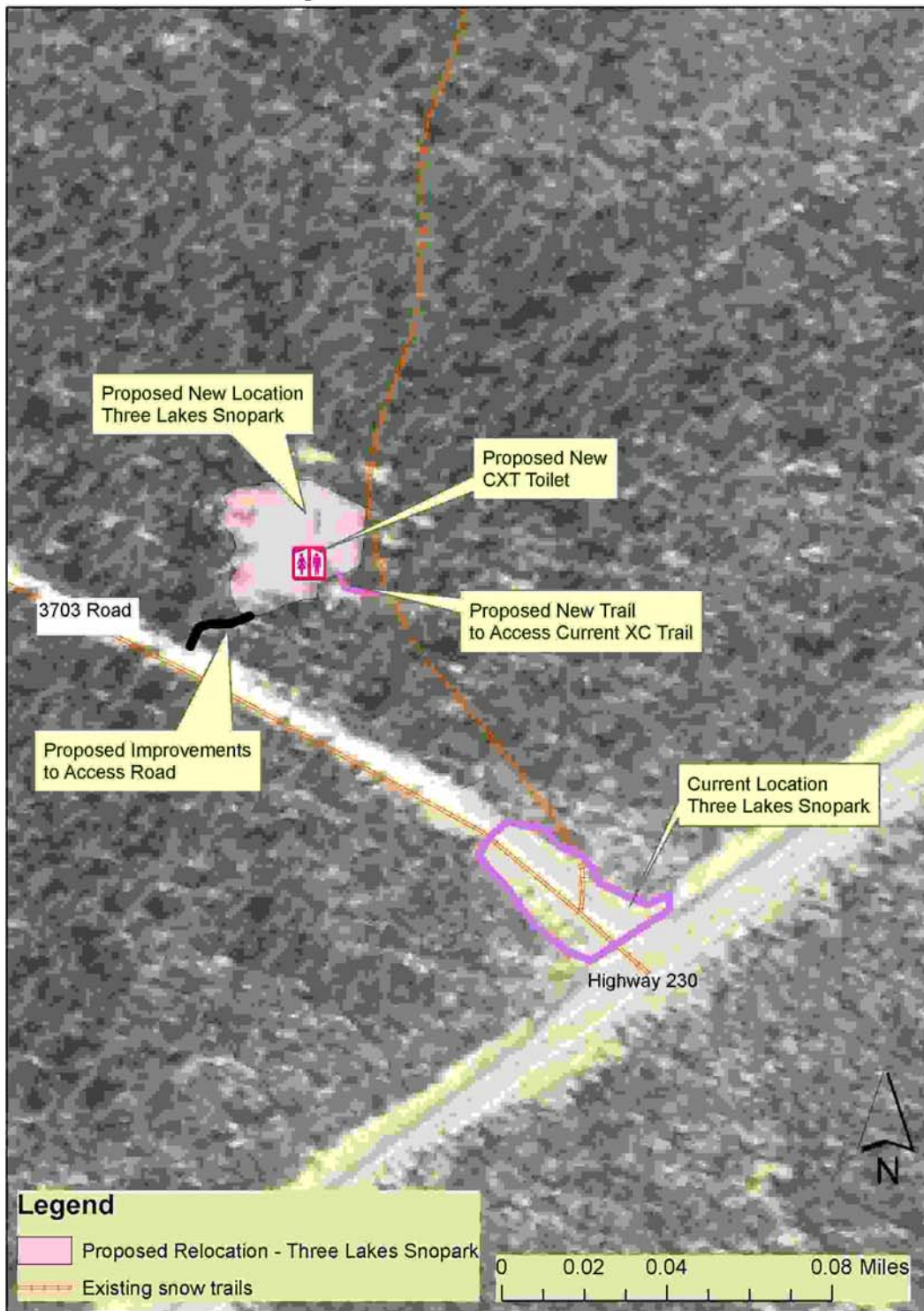
 1/22/08

Date Published

Winter Snowparks



Three Lakes Snopark Proposed Relocation



Cinnamon Butte Snopark Proposed Improvement

