



For immediate release

Contact Info:

Charlie Raines	Dan Brewster	Don Parks	Jen Watkins
Sierra Club	Ski Lifts, Inc	ALPS	Conservation NW
(206) 619-5575	(425) 434-6751	(425) 883-0646	(206) 675-9747 x 203

**Conservationists and The Summit at Snoqualmie Ski Area
Agree on Proposed Expansion**

***Common ground alternative leaves out expansion into key
habitats, while allowing ski area to grow***

Snoqualmie Pass, Wash. *June 11th, 2007*- This week, the Sierra Club, Conservation NW, Alpine Lakes Protection Society, and CNL Income Properties, owner and operator of [The Summit at Snoqualmie](#) and Ski Lifts, Inc., agreed to a development plan for the ski area at Snoqualmie Pass. The groups have urged the Forest Service to adopt the revised package, so that the project can move forward and important wildlife studies can begin. This agreement will avoid challenges that were likely if the earlier plan were approved unchanged.

“After ten years of work, we are pleased to be able to move forward on this major improvement to The Summit at Snoqualmie,” said Dan Brewster, manager of the ski area. He added, “We appreciate the efforts of the conservation groups to work with us to craft a plan that benefits both skiers and wildlife.”

The common ground development plan amends the preferred alternative (#5) which was proposed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement released in December 2006. The environmental groups all filed letters expressing strong concerns with the proposed expansion plans relating to impacts on wildlife and wildlands. All three groups now endorse the new proposed compromise. The largest amendments to the proposed plan are at the east and west ends of the ski area at [Hyak](#) and [Alpental](#).

Key Changes to Preferred Alternative

- **Reduced construction in sensitive areas**
- **Deferring cutting in forest unless scientific studies indicate low impact to wildlife**
- **Increased mitigation**

New Lift and Wildlife Protection at Hyak

Two new chair lifts were proposed in the Hyak Creek area that drew criticism for their impact to quality forests and wildlife connectivity in the area. "The forests of Hyak Creek are critical for wildlife as most of this habitat has been eliminated near the Pass, which is the only upper elevation connection between the north and south Cascades," said Jen Watkins, forest analyst for Conservation NW. This compromise will allow for the construction of the Rampart Ridge chair lift, while deferring the Creek Run chair lift and new ski runs through the forests near Hyak Lake until a decision based on peer reviewed scientific studies can be made. Construction of this lift and other associated activities within Section 16 are dependent on findings that there is no significant impact to wildlife species and connectivity in this corridor, and is at least neutral to late successional forest habitat in the area. The environmental groups had argued that the Forest Service did not have enough information on the needs of wildlife to allow the cutting of swaths of trees through this forest. The agreed upon studies will provide the information and analysis to make that determination. The ski area and conservation groups have agreed to appoint a scientific panel to make that determination and will abide by its recommendation.

Alpental Gondola Deleted, Wilderness Protection Added

On the other end of the ski area, large scale proposals were made in the DEIS at Alpental. These included a gondola to a newly constructed restaurant on Denny Mountain, a new chair lift, and expansion of current lifts. In the new alternative, the ski area agreed to erase plans for the gondola and restaurant, while maintaining the new Internationale chair lift and expanding the chair lift to the top of Denny Mountain from a double to a triple lift. To mitigate for impacts in the Alpental area, the ski area will donate about 130 acres just west of Guye Peak to the National Forest. Part of that will be offered as an addition to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, which can be added to the wilderness without further legislation because it is donated for that purpose.

"A gondola and restaurant on the top of Denny Mountain would have caused significant impacts into the adjacent Alpine Lakes Wilderness," stated Don Parks of Alpine Lakes Wilderness Society. "The deletion of these facilities and adding the wilderness donation provides a much better balance between down hill skiing and protection of our precious wildlands."

New Alternative will boost recreation and protect the environment at the Pass

"Snoqualmie Pass is extremely important to both wildlife and to skiers. We appreciate Ski Lifts' willingness to work with us to find the right balance— one that improves the situation for both," said Charlie Raines, director of the Sierra Club's Cascade Checkerboard Project.

Unique Collaboration

It is unusual for conservationists to support a development expansion of a ski area in the national forest, but in this case the opportunity to protect habitat and dramatically improve the design was well worth the engagement. "We are glad that the ski area has put so much work into reducing their impacts to old growth forests, wildlife habitat, and streams. Their mitigation measures, including donating land to the National Forest, are very helpful. A 'time out' for proposed development in a large area of old growth wildlife habitat between Summit Central and Summit East will allow biologists to thoroughly study the impacts of building new ski lifts and cleared runs there," said Raines.

The agreement between the organizations lasts for 15 years, and maintains involvement of all parties through implementation of development. Next steps for the parties involve finalizing plans for the scientific studies at Hyak, and discussing additional issues of concern

raised relating to transportation, parking lots, Nordic skiing and wetland impacts.

Public Comment

The release of the FEIS is expected later this summer to be available for public comment. A final decision and ROD is expected to be issued by the Forest Service near the end of the year.

The Summit at Snoqualmie is a proud partner with the USFS offering equal opportunity recreation, and is a part of Booth Creek Resorts. Booth Creek consists of six resorts across North America, including [Northstar-at-Tahoe](#) and [Sierra-at-Tahoe](#) in the Lake Tahoe region of California; [Waterville Valley](#), [Cranmore Mountain Resort](#), and [Loon Mountain](#) in New Hampshire; and [The Summit at Snoqualmie](#) near Seattle.

This email was sent by: **The Summit at Snoqualmie**, P.O. Box 1068, Snoqualmie Pass, WA 98068