



United States Department of Agriculture

Camp Brown Day Use Area Project

Decision Memo



Forest Service

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie
National Forest

Snoqualmie
Ranger District

August 2016

Responsible Official:

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1. Decision

I have decided to approve the Camp Brown Day Use Area Project, as described in section 1.3. This decision authorizes development of American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant facility (loop/access trails, picnic sites, and parking/restroom facilities) at a popular dispersed site location known as “Camp Brown” near the Middle Fork Trailhead, as shown on Figure 1 and described in the Proposed Action section below. My decision incorporates the design criteria in section 1.5. The project includes adding/improving additional ADA & WSRA compliant parking/picnic sites/trails and installing restroom facilities at the trailhead. I have decided to authorize the project because it will meet the project purpose and need (described below in section 1.4).

1.1. Project Location

The Camp Brown Day Use Area project is located on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River watershed approximately 11 miles northeast of North Bend, Washington. The project legal description is T24N, R10E, SE ¼ Section 21, King County (Figure 1).

1.2. Background

The Camp Brown Day Use Area is located at approximately MP 11.4 along Forest Service Road (FSR) 5600. It is an entry off point for popular dispersed oriented trails and sites along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River. Existing parking capacity is often exceeded on summer weekends forcing users to park on the edge of Forest Service Road (FSR) 5600 wherever the road is wide enough or they can find turnouts. At times parked cars can extend down the road as far as or beyond the Middle Fork Trailhead.

1.3. Project Description

This project proposes to reconstruct an ADA compliant trailhead facility with about 2,106¹ feet of trail to ADA standards that would provide an interpretive loop around the Camp Brown area and access to picnic sites and a large gravel bar on the south end of the project area. The project also proposes to convert existing campsites to 7-11 picnic sites (two multiple picnic sites and two single sites) (Figure 2). Table 1 describes the design elements for the trailhead, trail, and picnic sites.

Two low spots exist on the existing trail. To reduce the grades through these spots, the trail would be leveled using a combination of cutting the high points, adding puncheon to level, and filling on the low side. The new loop section is on relatively flat ground and would be excavated to mineral soil and then filled to the prevailing grade with mineral soil and imported gravel. All trails would be surfaced with crushed limestone. This trail is intended to be hiker only and ADA compliant. Figure 1 represents the approximate alignment of the proposed trail and associated picnic sites. The proposed trails and picnic sites have been located in the field and are flagged with pink and yellow ribbon.

¹ Lengths are approximate. Detailed surveys have not been completed at this time.

Table 1. Camp Brown Trailhead, Interpretive Trail and picnic site and gravel bar access trails design standards.

Design Element ²	Trailhead	Trail	Picnic
Trail Class (1–most primitive, 5–most developed)		4/5	
Facility Development Level	III		III
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Class	Roaded Natural	Roaded Natural	Roaded Natural
Tread Width		4'-5'	4'-5'
Clearing Width	4'	8'	8'
Clearing Height:	15'	10'	10'
Prevailing Grade:	≤2%	>5%	>5%
Surface Type:	Asphalt w/ Stripping	5/8" crushed	5/8" crushed
Gravel Surfacing (square feet)		10,530	700-1,000
Gravel Surfacing (acres)		0.24	0.02
Proposed New Puncheon (lineal feet)		100'	
Proposed New Turnpike (lineal feet)		200'	
Designed Parking Capacity (Normal Vehicle)	6-7		
Designed Parking Capacity (High Capacity Vehicle - +10 passengers)	2		
Comfort Amenities (Toilet, Tables, Grill & Kiosk)	Yes	Yes	Yes
ADA:	Yes	Yes	Yes

1.4. Purpose and Need

The Middle Fork Snoqualmie River watershed holds great potential as a recreational destination for Seattle metropolitan area. Located only a 35 minute drive on I-90 from downtown Seattle, this valley has been the focus of intense public acquisition, cleanup, and planning for the past 20 years. The Snoqualmie Ranger District has been working under the guidance of the 1997 *Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Public Use Concept Plan* (Concept Plan) to collaboratively restore the valley with other agencies, landowners, and user and environmental groups, and improve safe public access. As Identified in the Concept Plan;

- There is a need for safe access to the Middle Fork River, to very scenic viewpoints, and to the Camp Brown gravel bar.

The Concept Plan also identified the site as opportune for scenic, natural and historic interpretation.

- There is a need for more trailhead parking capacity and sanitation facilities to better match current and expected use demands at the Camp Brown Day Use Area and,

² Trail class matrix and designed use/design parameters can be found at:
http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/rhwr/ibsc/docs/trails/national_trail_class_matrix_2008-10-16.pdf and
<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/rhwr/ibsc/tr-fund.shtml>

- A need to maintain the “*Scenic River*” values associated with recent designation under the Wild & Scenic River Act (WSRA).

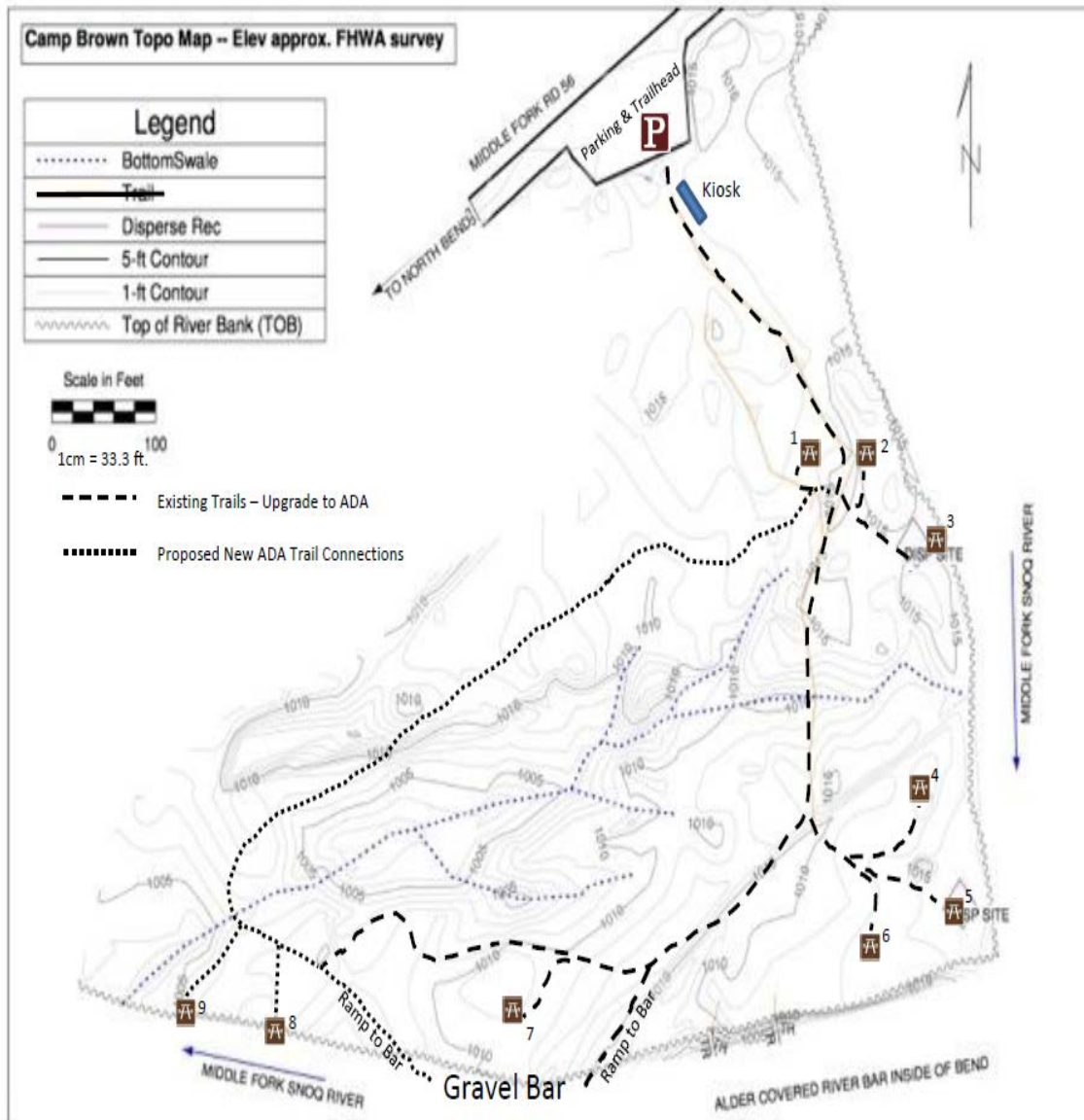


Figure 1. Approximate location of trailhead, trail, and picnic sites.

1.5. Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures

The following design features and mitigation measures are integral components of this decision, and are to be implemented as part of this project. They are designed to minimize potential environmental impacts of project activities and to improve existing conditions.

1.5.1. Recreation, WSR and Visuals

1. Prevent the degradation of existing outstanding river values (i.e. recreation, wildlife & fisheries) that supported the recent WSR designation as a “Scenic River” through proper design and placement of picnic site amenities near and along the riverbank zone.
2. Prevent the scale of development (i.e. recreational facility infra-structure) within the WSR corridor from degrading or distracting use and enjoyment of and along the river zone.

1.5.2. Botany

1. If any previously undiscovered Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) or other rare or uncommon vascular plants, bryophytes, lichens, or fungi are discovered, before or during project implementation, halt work until a USFS botanist is consulted and necessary mitigation measures are enacted.
2. Treat known infestations before ground disturbance begins. To be effective a lag time of two weeks is needed between the time of treatment and the time of ground disturbance.
3. For actions conducted or authorized by written permit by the Forest Service that will operate outside the limits of the road prism, require the cleaning of all heavy equipment prior to entering NFS Lands.
4. Suppliers must provide annual documentation indicating that the following products have been examined by a qualified inspector and deemed free of State listed noxious weeds:
 - Straw or other Mulch³
 - Gravel, Rock, or other fill
 - Seeds (according to AOSA standards)
5. If weeds are present in the project area, all equipment and gear must be cleaned before leaving the project area to avoid spreading the infestation further.
6. If weeds are present in the project area, work from relatively weed-free areas into the infested area rather than vice versa.
7. Revegetate all areas of bare soil exposed by project activities, if there is a risk of noxious weed invasion. Native plant materials are the first choice in revegetation where timely natural regeneration of the native plant community is not likely to occur. If native plant materials are not available, use the appropriate Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie non-native seed mix.

1.5.3. Heritage

1. If any person implementing this action discovers a cultural resource(s) or human remains during project implementation, or if a previously identified /known resource(s) is affected in an unanticipated way, the activity shall be stopped in the area of the find and a reasonable effort made to secure and protect the resource(s). The Heritage Specialist will assist in fulfilling federal agency’s responsibilities in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement and other applicable regulations (Stipulation III.B.(c)). If human remains or cultural items specified in the Native

³ Weed free straw for erosion control must be certified by WA State via the WWHAM program http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/WWHAM/WWHAM_suppliers.htm

American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRA) are located on National Forest System lands, regulations implementing NAGRA shall be followed (43 CFR Part 10).

1.5.4. Fisheries

1. Timing—Work on the ramps and steps to the bar, plus any blasting, shall be done July 16-September 30 to minimize impacts to fishery resources.
2. Erosion-control methods shall be used as needed to minimize the entry of silt-laden water into streams or other water bodies.
3. Disturbed ground where runoff has the potential to drain into stream channels shall be revegetated or protected from surface erosion by seeding, mulching, or other methods.
4. Any excess material shall be disposed of and stabilized so it does not enter stream channels or other water bodies.
5. Prior to starting work each day, all machinery shall be checked for leaks of fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluid, and all necessary repairs made.
6. All machinery maintenance involving potential contaminants such as fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluid shall be done at least 100 feet from stream channels, water bodies, and wetlands.
7. Hazardous spill clean-up materials shall be kept on site pertinent to the equipment being used.
8. Discourage motorized vehicles accessing the gravel bar by adding effective barriers (such as very large boulders) at the entrance to limit the width of access.
9. Trees needing to be felled for the project within 300 feet of the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River shall be felled and left on-site. Leave bucked pieces as few and as long as practical.
10. Attempt other methods for rock or stump removal besides blasting near Middle Fork Snoqualmie River. Use lowest charges necessary, and minimize blasted materials from entering the stream channel.

1.5.5. Soil and Water

1. Comply with Best Management Practice (BMP) guidance presented in the Forest Service National BMP Program Technical Guide Volume 1. (FS-990a) of April 2012 (*available at http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/resources/pubs/watershed/FS_National_Core_BMPs_April2012.pdf*).
2. Minimize erosion and delivery of sediment laden water to streams and wetlands. Reduce sedimentation by use of BMPs and erosion control methods such as silt or filter fabric, silt or filter fencing, straw bales, temporary settling ponds, and rain cover.
3. If wet weather conditions occur during operations that could generate an increase in the potential for erosion and or transportation of sediment to a water body, operations shall cease until the weather and site conditions improve.
4. Disturbance of vegetation shall be limited to the minimum amount necessary to accomplish the project.
5. Thoroughly clean machinery (tracks, wheels, frame, undercarriage, bucket etc) and off highway service vehicles offsite prior to commencement of work. Vehicles may be inspected by Forest Service Representative to ensure the delivery of clean machinery.

6. Prior to commencement of daily work, contractor shall check machinery for fuel, oil, and hydraulic leaks and problems shall be repaired before use. Servicing and repairs to equipment will be made outside of Riparian Reserves or at a location protected from surface water resources as approved by Forest Service Representative.
7. Establish a hazardous spill plan and maintain a spill remediation kit onsite prior to use of the road system and for any temporary fuel stored or transported on NFS lands. Spill prevention kits shall be available on-site during use of heavy machinery and commensurate with the type of equipment present.
8. Fueling and fuel storage shall occur outside of riparian reserves or at a location approved by Forest Service representative.
9. Generators and water pumps shall be maintained in or on a fuel containment system such as an SPCC containment unit with berms or sorbent pad with a minimum capacity of 150% of the fuel volume present.
10. Waste materials associated with the project shall be disposed of outside of the riparian reserve as approved by Forest Service representative and trash removed from site to an appropriate disposal area.

1.5.6. Wildlife

1. Project implementation work shall only be permitted two hours after sunrise and will cease two hours before sunset between March 1 and September 23 to minimize disturbance to nesting marbled murrelets.
2. Any exposed pipe should be capped or screened to prevent wildlife from becoming trapped and incapable of escape from such structures. All other types of structures capable of wildlife entrapment should be properly capped or screened.
3. All ground-based cables, wires, and similar debris should be secured so that wildlife species such as deer, elk, and other smaller bodied mammals do not become entangled which may cause injury or death.
4. Excavations such as holes or other barriers to wildlife movement should be barricaded or eliminated to avoid injury or death to wildlife.

2. Tribal Consultation

On March 25, 2016, the Snoqualmie Ranger District mailed letters inviting government-to-government consultation with the Snoqualmie, Tulalip, and Yakama Tribes. No Tribes requested consultation or commented on the proposed action.

3. Public Involvement

On March 25, 2016, public scoping and comment notices were mailed out to interested citizens, groups, and agencies on the Snoqualmie Ranger District mailing list. Scoping and notice and comment period were combined into one effort, as allowed under 36 CFR 215 appeal regulations. The combined scoping and comment period notice and March 25, 2016 public scoping and comment letter were also posted on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest website. One comment was received which fully supported the proposed action.

4. Extraordinary Circumstances Review

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1090 15, Section 31.2 (36 CFR 220.6) identifies the following resource conditions that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to a proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EIS or EA. An interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed project and analyzed the potential for effects from project activities. Site-specific conditions were reviewed in the field, and office-records were searched to determine if the potential effects on resources would result in any extraordinary circumstances. The mere presence of a “resource condition” does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. Rather, “it is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions, and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist” (36 CFR 220.6 (b) (2)).

a. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.

- i. **Botany:** During the 2016 field season the activities proposed within the Camp Brown Day Use Area project were surveyed for rare plants (defined here as all vascular and non-vascular species on the 2011 Regional Forester’s Sensitive Species List and the 2011 Survey and Manage list), as well as state listed noxious weeds. No known threatened, endangered, or R6 Sensitive plants (TYES) nor Survey and Manage (S&M) vascular plants, fungi, lichens or bryophytes were found in the area (August 8, 2016 Botany Report).
- ii. **Fisheries:** There will be no in water work with activities proposed for this project.

To improve parking, trail locations and picnic site capacity some small trees will be cut and removed. Tree removal will have no effect on Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River water temperature.

With implementation of Fishery and Soil and Water design features and mitigation measures, project-related sediments are expected to be minimal. They will not result in measurable changes to the quality or quantity of habitats or to the health of fish within the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

Project activities will result in approximately 3 acres of new disturbance within Riparian Reserves. This amount will not result in a measurable negative effect to Riparian Reserves, and will not result in measurable effects to fish or aquatic resources.

Blasting has the potential to harm juvenile fish in the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River. Vibrations in and adjacent to water have been documented to cause injury and death to rearing and adult fish.

Effects from vibrations associated with blasting will be minimized by timing restrictions, use of smaller individual charges, and by incorporating time delays to reduce the effect of an overall detonation and create discrete explosions. Effects to fish from blasting root wads or individual boulders on the surface of the ground are expected to be much less than effects associated with blasting through bedrock, as the interface between air and water acts as an effective reflector and very little sound energy generated in air will pass into water (from USDI FWS 2003).

While it is possible for some blasted materials to enter the river, fish will not be spawning in the river when blasting will occur, and the material will not be noticeable to fish or degrade habitat conditions.

The effect determinations for federally listed fish and designated or proposed critical habitats are *No Effect* for Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, to designated Chinook and bull trout critical habitats, or to proposed steelhead critical habitat. For Chinook, coho, and pink salmon Essential Fish Habitats, the effect determinations are *Would Not Adversely Affect*. For Forest Service Region 6 Sensitive Species, proposed project activities would have *No Impact* on coho, Baker River sockeye, or on resident/fluvial coastal cutthroat trout.

The remaining special status fish not previously addressed are chum and resident rainbow trout, which are MBS management indicator species (along with all species previously addressed). There would be no effects to chum because they are not present, and there would be no measurable change in the health of individual rainbow trout, or to the productivity or viability of their populations in the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

- iii. **Wildlife:** The Camp Brown Day Use Area Project will have *No Effect* to northern spotted owl, northern spotted owl critical habitat, marbled murrelet, marbled murrelet critical habitat, grizzly bear, and gray wolf. It will result in *No Impact* to American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, harlequin duck, common loon, California wolverine, Townsend's big-eared bat, Larch Mountain salamander, Van Dyke's salamander, Johnson's hairstreak, valley silverspot, mountain goat, American marten, black-tailed deer, elk, Puget Oregonian, evening fieldslug, warty jumping slug, blue-gray tail-dropper, and keeled jumping slug. (August 9, 2016 Biological Evaluation for Terrestrial Wildlife Species).

Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watershed: The project would have negligible effects on soil and watershed resources. Applicable BPMs will be implemented to mitigate potential effects associated with ground disturbing activities (see Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures section). Ground disturbing activities will be conducted to ensure the proper function, drainage, and eliminate risk of sedimentation in local aquatic systems.

The proposed activities are compliant with the direction set forth in the Executive Orders 11980 and 11990, standards and guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan, Federal and State laws.

No 303(d) listed streams will be affected. No water quality effects are anticipated.

The project will result in no dredging or filling of Jurisdictional Wetlands of the United States. Wetlands near the project sites will be avoided by design.

The project is not located within a Municipal Watershed.

- b. **Congressionally designated area such as wilderness, wilderness study area or National Recreation Area:** While the Project is located within the corridor of a congressionally designated Wild and Scenic River (Middle Fork Snoqualmie was designated in 2015 as a "Scenic River"), nothing in this project's design or scope of development will negatively affect either the current outstanding resource values associated with this section of river or detract from the river zone environment or landscape visual quality. All the facilities and amenities reconstructed will enhance the recreation, wildlife and fisheries experience and address potential water quality concerns associated with heavy dispersed use along the riverbank zone.
- c. **Inventoried Roadless Area or potential Wilderness Area:** Project activities are not located within an inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness area.
- d. **Research Natural Area (RNA):** The project area is not located within or near any RNA.

- e. **American Indians and Alaska native religious or cultural sites:** The project will not affect known American Indian religious or cultural sacred sites. The Forest consulted with potentially affected Tribes (Snoqualmie, Tulalip, and Yakama). No Tribal comments were received.
- f. **Archaeological sites, historic properties or area:** The project will not affect any known historic properties potentially eligible for the National Register of historic Places.

5. Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

National Forest Management Act of 1976: This decision is consistent with the 1990 Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the April 13, 1994 Record of Decision for Management of Habitat for Late Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

Project activities are located on lands allocated by the Forest Plan to Riparian Reserves (RR) (100%), Tier 2 Key Watershed (100%), and Management Area 5B (MA 5B) – Recommended Wild and Scenic River, Scenic River (100%). Project activities will be consistent with management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines of these land allocations, as follows:

Effects of Camp Brown Day Use Area activities to Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives are made at various scales, depending on the objective. While evaluated at both the project and watershed scales, a project must be consistent with the ACS at the (5th field) watershed scale, which for this project is the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River watershed. The project as proposed would not prevent, retard, or contribute significantly to the achievement of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives at the scale the ACS Objectives were described. The project would be consistent with the ACS at the watershed scale (August 1, 2016 Fisheries Report).

There will be no increase in the amount of roads in the Tier 2 Key Watershed.

Trailhead improvements are permitted within MA 5B. Improvements will be unobtrusive as seen from the Middle Fork Snoqualmie River or its banks.

National Historic Preservation Act: My decision complies with this Act: With implementation of project no historic properties are anticipated to be encountered based on appropriate inventories of the area being completed. (August 4, 2016 Cultural Resources Report).

Clean Water Act: My decision complies with this Act: With implementation of project design features and mitigation measures the effects of this project are expected to be negligible to watershed resources.

Endangered Species Act: My decision complies with this Act: For effects findings on Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive species see the finding of No Extraordinary Circumstances section above and Project Botany, Fisheries, and Wildlife Reports in the Project Record.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The process for this analysis followed the regulations and direction outlined in 40 DFR 1500-1508, 36 CFR 220, Forest Service Manual 1950, and Forest Service NEPA handbook 1909.15. There has been opportunity for public involvement during the course of the analysis. This decision memo summarizes and documents the environmental analysis conducted by the Forest Service. Given these factors, I find this decision fully complies with NEPA.

6. Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Action from Additional Documentation

Based on a review of the expected impacts and consultation with District and Forest resource specialists, I have determined that this project is categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA) because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and the action is within a category identified by regulation. 36 CFR 220.6(a).

- There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may result in significant individual or cumulative environmental effects (see section 4). There were no potentially significant effects identified during the scoping and comment period or by Forest Service resource specialists. My determination is based on interdisciplinary team review and analysis, and documents in the Project Record. I took into account the resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist (36 CFR 22.6 (b)(1)). Further details are contained in the Specialist Reports in the Project Record. Based on specialist review of these actions, there will be minimal and no measurable effects of implementing the actions. Therefore, there is no extraordinary circumstances condition that would preclude any of the actions from being categorically excluded.
- The category for this action is “*Construction and reconstruction of trails*” (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 Section 32.2 (1); 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1)).

6.1.1. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal. On February 7, 2014, the President signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law No. 113-79 (i.e., Farm Bill). Section 8006(a) of the 2014 Farm Bill repealed the Appeals Reform Act, Public Law No. 102-381, 106 Stat. 1419 (1992). Section 8006(b) directs that the pre-decisional objection process established in Section 428 of division E of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2012, Public Law No. 112-74, shall not be applicable to categorically excluded projects or activities.

6.1.2. Implementation Date

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately following the date of this Decision Memo. Implementation will occur as funding becomes available.

6.1.3. Contact Person

For additional information contact Public Services Manager Brian McNeil at the Snoqualmie Ranger District Office, 902 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA 98045 or by telephone at (425) 888-8769.

Martie Schramm

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8/25/2016

Date