

Winter 2004

# New Ground

## *News of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest*



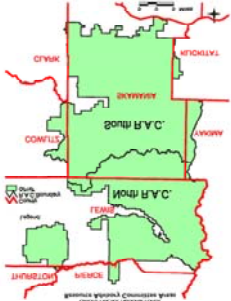
### ***Gotchen Record Of Decision Signed***

Mount Adams District Ranger Nancy Ryke signed the Record of Decision for the [Gotchen Risk Reduction and Restoration Project](#) on January 23. This decision will implement Alternative C, which will reduce fuel from dead and dying trees caused by a spruce budworm epidemic in a large, contiguous block of land.

The Gotchen area is located on the east slopes of the Cascade Range, within the White Salmon Watershed, south of Mt. Adams and east of the White Salmon River. The action is needed because of the risk of losing late-successional reserve (old-growth) attributes and potential from large-scale ecological disturbances (ongoing defoliation caused by insect and disease activity), and the threat of losing

habitat from large, stand-replacing fires. The decision provides for approximately 4.7 million board feet of commercial timber from 519 acres of Matrix land and 112 acres within the Gotchen Late Successional Reserve. The decision is subject to appeal. Substantive comments to the Draft EIS were received from 14 people. For more information visit the Forest web site.

### ***Public Invited to Submit Applications to Improve National Forest lands***



Citizens are invited to submit applications for Title II and III projects designed to improve National Forest lands and the rural economies in and around the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. **Applications must be received by Friday, April 2, 2004.** Individuals, non-profit organizations, and local governments are all candidates to receive funding for projects. In the past, projects have included restoring watersheds, decommissioning roads, removing noxious weeds, purchasing conservation easements, conducting forest related educational programs, and Community/Urban Forestry programs. The funds for these projects will be available in December 2004, and should be expended by October, 2005.

This program is a federally funded partnership between the USDA Forest Service, the State of Washington, and local counties, as directed under Public Law 106-393. Those wishing to propose forest projects under the County Payments program can receive information and assistance during a [workshop](#) scheduled for February 12, 2004 at Rock Creek Community Center in Stevenson, Wash., from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. [For more information visit the Forest web site.](#)

### ***Applications for RAC Positions Being Accepted***

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is seeking applicants for both its North and South Gifford Pinchot Resource Advisory Committees (RACs), which review and fund Forest improvement projects. Forest projects are recommended by the RAC and approved by the Forest Supervisor. Past projects include pre-commercial tree thinning, noxious weed removal, road maintenance, and culvert removal. The two committees each have 15 members divided into three subcommittees. One represents timber, grazing, outdoor recreation, organized labor and energy and mineral development. Another represents national and local environmental groups, archeological and historical interests and dispersed recreation. The third represents elected officials, American Indian tribes, school officials and the public. Members serve three-year terms that must be renewed this fall.

For more [information](#) and [an application form](#), contact Tom Knappenberger at 360.891.5005 or email him at [tknappenberger@fs.fed.us](mailto:tknappenberger@fs.fed.us)

### ***White Pass Ski Area Expansion Draft EIS Due Out in Spring of 2004***



acre ski area.

The White Pass Ski Area on U.S. Hwy. 12 would double in size under an expansion proposal now under study. The ski area, located east of Packwood, Wash., near the crest of the Cascades, would add two ski lifts and a mid-mountain lodge under the current expansion proposal. Public meetings were held recently to gather comments before a contractor prepares alternatives for a decision expected in the spring. The 700-acre expansion is proposed for the Hogback Basin area, located southwest of the existing 710-

This ski area is located on both the Naches Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests and the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and operates under a Special Use Permit. An Environmental Impact Statement is due out later this spring with the Wenatchee-Okanogan Forests taking the lead. For more information visit the [Wenatchee National Forest web site](#).

## How to reach us:

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**Mount St. Helens  
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**FAX:** (360) 274-2101  
**TTY:** (360) 274-2102

**Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center**  
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**FAX:** (360) 274-2129  
**TTY:** (360) 274-2102

**Johnston Ridge Observatory**  
Located at MP 52  
(360) 274-2140  
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[www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/](http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/)



## Forest Information Now Available in Spanish and Russian

In an effort to reach and communicate with more forest visitors, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest has made available some informational handouts in Spanish and Russian. The following have been translated into Spanish: *Getting Around on National Forest Road*; *Be a Better Camper-Respect the River*; a camping reservation information kit, *Gifford Pinchot Forest Facts*; and the [2003 Christmas tree cutting fact sheet](#). At this point the only handout in Russian is the [2003 Christmas tree cutting fact sheet](#). A volunteer is working on translating all the handouts, listed above, into Russian. The selection of these handouts is driven by a goal to provide key information to visitors, such as how to navigate the national forest road system and how to be a good camper. We hope to provide additional handouts regarding forest passes and forest products in the near future.

## Avalanche Awareness Can Save Lives



Use of the backcountry by cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, and snowboarders has soared during the last 20 years. With this increase in use, the annual average avalanche fatality toll in the United States has risen from 11 to approximately 27 deaths/year (5-yr average), with 32 fatalities recorded in 1998-99 and 33 in 2000-01—both setting unfortunate modern-day records (since 1950). This trend toward increased numbers of avalanche fatalities nationwide continued in 2001-02 with 32 fatalities reported through early June 2002.

However, in the Northwest the fatality toll has been declining slightly and now stands at an average of 2 per year (5-yr total of 11 fatalities for Washington and Oregon from 1997/98 through 2001/02). It is believed that avalanche education and forecasts have resulted in a significant reduction in both avalanche accidents and resulting rescue efforts and costs, stabilizing or reducing the number of avalanche fatalities despite major increases in winter back country use. To be prepared before your winter visit to the backcountry, visit the Northwest Avalanche Center Web site at: <http://www.nwac.noaa.gov/> (source NW Avalanche Center)

## New Ranger District Maps



A new color map of the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District is now available for sale at Gifford Pinchot National Forest Service offices and other recreational outlets. This map is the first in a series of new district maps, and combines maps of the former Randle and Packwood ranger districts. The new maps will replace the current 11-year-old ranger district maps. The Forest's ranger districts were reorganized in 1998. The Wind River and Mt. Adams districts were combined at that time, and a new map covering the larger Mt. Adams Ranger District is due out in the spring. New maps of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and several Forest Wildernesses will be available soon as well.

### Featured Web Page-



**Winter Recreation:** The Gifford Pinchot National Forest continues to provide one of the most comprehensive winter recreation pages locally. For current updates of conditions at local Sno-Parks visit: [www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/winter/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/winter/index.shtml)

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