



Date: January 2, 2009

Dear Interested Reader:

You are invited to review and comment on this proposal. For your comments to be most helpful, please respond by February 1, 2009. We would like to hear from you.

Proposed Action. The Forest Service is proposing to build a new sno-park near Kapka Butte to provide more high elevation parking for winter recreationists along an established snowplowing route. The proposed facility would provide for a mix of vehicle parking, including vehicles towing trailers and some slots designed for smaller vehicles. The proposed parking facility would include approximately 70 slots for trailers, and 40 slots for non-trailer vehicles. Trail links to existing snowmobile trail #45 (.2 mile), a Nordic trail to AC/DC shelter (1.8 miles), a snowshoe trail to the top of Kapka Butte (.8 mile), and groomed non-motorized trails for use with dogs off leash (7.4 miles) would be constructed and maintained as part of this proposal.

The new sno-park would be located between Kapka Butte and the junction of Forest Roads 46 (Cascade Lakes Highway) and 45 (Sunriver cutoff). The planning area is located about 19 miles west of Bend, Oregon, in Township 18S, Range 9E, Section 35. The project falls within the M9 - Scenic View management area of the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan.

Refer to the attached map for general locations for the proposed action, including the various trails system proposals.

Purpose and Need. The Deschutes National Forest sees a need to provide high elevation parking that will enhance a variety of winter recreation opportunities near the Cascade Lakes Highway corridor. On most weekend and holiday periods during the wintertime, it is not unusual to see sno-park parking lots full of vehicles, causing over-flow parking in inappropriate locations such as chain-up areas. This has been a progressive condition since the mid-1990s and has reached a point where it has become a public safety concern. More winter uses, such as snowshoeing, backcountry skiing and skijoring, have become more popular in recent years. These newer uses on top of the already high use that the area near Mt. Bachelor receives have created the congestion that occurs at all of the sno-parks. A result of the crowded conditions is inappropriate parking along the Cascade Lake Highway during weekends and holidays, causing traffic problems for the traveling public, emergency vehicles, and snow plowing equipment. This persistent condition demonstrates a need for additional safe parking facilities that provides access to over snow trail systems. It is important that this occurs in a location where regular snowplowing can be accomplished in an economically feasible manner.

Invitation to Comment. We're telling you about this proposal so that you can provide comments to us. Your comments will be considered and used to identify issues associated with the proposal, so please keep them as specific as possible. They will also become a matter of public record. Written or verbal comments are both welcome and should be returned to us by February 1, 2009. Written comments should be addressed to Shane Jeffries, District Ranger,



Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District, 1230 NE 3rd St., Suite A-262, Bend, OR, 97701. We will also accept correspondence at the following email address: comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes-bend-ftrock@fs.fed.us. Please put "Kapka Scoping Comments" in the subject line of your email.

We expect the analysis to be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS). A draft EIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and made available for a 45-day public review and comment period in Spring 2009. The final EIS is scheduled to be available Autumn 2009.

If you have any questions, additional information can be provided by Marv Lang, Project Leader, at 541-383-4793.

Sincerely,

A. SHANE JEFFRIES
District Ranger

DESCHUTES NATIONAL FOREST Proposed Kapka Snopark Project

