

Mission Ridge Expansion Master Planned Resort Draft EIS  
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I oppose the proposed expansion of the Mission Ridge Ski & Board Resort.

In this day of climate change, it does not make sense to create a new expansion at a ski area with limited snowfall. Yes, Mission Ridge does have snowmaking capabilities, but even then the skiing is limited until there is adequate coverage by natural snowfall. This usually does not happen until midwinter.

In this day of climate change, it does not make sense to create an expansion in an area where the urban/rural/forest interface is at risk for forest fire. Our region became the #1 firefighting priority this fall because of the steep, rugged, difficult-to-access terrain in the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest, the most rugged national forest in the United States. This wildfire risk also burdens the firefighting capabilities of our local communities. We watched on the news as California communities burned to the ground. In our local area, we must remember the fire that swept through Pateros. Under the current federal administration's priorities, our firefighting capabilities are already compromised. Who is to say that this will change?

Regarding the risk of fire in the area of expansion, there is currently "one way in" and "one way out". A plan for emergency evacuation includes walking down a dirt road to Stemit Basin—are you kidding me? Already many homeowners in our valley have had homeowners insurance cancelled or have had difficulty obtaining homeowners insurance due to risk of wildfire. Is this not a problem for the proposed area of expansion?

Throughout our valley we have seen orchard properties cleared and developed for housing, reducing wildlife access to previous travel corridors. Wildlife corridors are so critical to genetic diversity and the health of our region's wildlife and birds. What about the wildlife who use this area of the proposed expansion throughout the year? How are their usual migratory patterns going to be affected? How disruptive will this expansion be?

In December 2022, the whitebark pine was designated as a **threatened species** under the Endangered Species Act. This designation provides the whitebark pine with federal protections. Sadly, the white bark pine has undergone severe declines caused by white pine blister rust, mountain pine beetle infestation, altered fire regimes including fire suppression that has allowed competing species to thrive, and climate change. Mission Ridge is an area where white bark pine grows. Mission Ridge Ski & Board Resort has promoted themselves as being a "friend" of the white bark pine. Does this mean they will not expand in areas where white bark pine grows? I doubt that.

The current road to Mission Ridge is inadequate to accommodate the number of units to be developed as specified in the plan. The proposed development will exacerbate the carbon footprint of the ski area, rather than mitigating it. Summer activities are marginal in this area, which do not make it a promising summer destination. Hiking is limited, biking is steep and rocky. The long-term outlook seems bleak for the ski area and proposed expansion in 20 to 30 years with effects of global warming.

Who will benefit from this development? Certainly the Mission Ridge Ski & Board Resort, at least temporarily. Developers and builders might benefit. Insurance companies might benefit. Tourism might benefit, although keeping people in downtown Wenatchee in motels and hotels and having them shop at local businesses and eating out in local restaurants seems to be a greater benefit for tourism in general. The local people in our communities will NOT benefit from this expansion.

I oppose the expansion of the Mission Ridge Ski & Board Resort. Please do not allow this to happen.

Sincerely,

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