

MOUNT SPOKANE STATE PARK  
COMPREHENSIVE TRAIL PLAN  
Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee Final Consensus Version  
10/23/07

PREAMBLE: What Do People Do at Mt. Spokane?

People go to Mt. Spokane State Park for many reasons. The following attempts to be a comprehensive list of recreational activities.

Summer Pedestrian

- Picnicking and walking the summit for the view.
- Hiking for moderate exercise, to enjoy nature, and just to be outside.
- Walking to a quiet place for solitude.
- Hiking to watch for birds and other wildlife; nature study.
- Orienteering with map and compass.
- Harvesting medicinal plants.
- Picking Huckleberries and other edible plants.
- Hiking for fitness, doing the hill climbs, getting in shape for major mountain climbs.
- Trail running for fitness.
- Running up the paved road.
- Walking and running the dog.
- Backpacking to the Quartz Mountain fire lookout to spend the night.
- Car camping in the campground.
- Hunting (illegal).

Stock

- Pleasure rides for a few hours (single track and wide track).
- Group/club rides.
- Practice/training for saddle stock, pack horses and llamas.
- Riding for solitude and enjoyment of nature and wildlife.
- Fitness and conditioning for stock and rider.

Biking

- Mountain bike touring on rolling terrain (single track and wide track).
- Touring for solitude.
- Downhill technical riding.
- High speed touring for fitness (both climbing and descending).
- Road biking the paved road.

Summer Motorized

- Driving to the summit for the view and picnicking.
- Driving to the summit for a wedding, or other event, at the Vista House.
- Driving the Kit Carson Loop Road (special permission needed)

Firewood cutting (permit needed).  
Driving to the condominiums.  
ATV riding (illegal).  
Visiting the Spokane Mountaineer's private chalet.

#### Winter Pedestrian

Snowshoeing gentle ungroomed terrain.  
Snowshoeing to the summit for fitness and the view.  
Snowshoe running for fitness.  
Snowshoeing for solitude and nature study.  
Snowshoeing on groomed snowmobile trails for distance.  
Classic nordic ski touring on groomed trails.  
Classic nordic ski racing on groomed trails for fitness and competition.  
Skate nordic ski touring on groomed trails.  
Skate nordic ski racing on groomed trails for fitness and competition.  
Backcountry nordic skiing for solitude.  
Backcountry nordic skiing (with or without skins) for telemarking on steep slopes.  
Backcountry nordic ski touring for distance and views.  
Alpine skiing and snowboarding on groomed runs.  
Alpine skiing and snowboarding in ungroomed powder.  
Alpine ski and snowboard racing.  
Alpine skiing and snowboarding through treed areas and glades.  
Telemark skiing with lift service.  
Night alpine skiing and snowboarding.  
Night nordic skiing.  
Technical alpine skiing and snowboarding.  
Sledding and tubing.  
Walking on groomed snowmobile trails.  
Trying different equipment at special demo events.  
Participating in ski races and technical events.

#### Mushing

Dog sledding on groomed snowmobile trails.  
Skijoring.

#### Winter Motorized

Snowmobile touring on groomed trails to see wildlife and winter scenery.  
Snowmobile touring on designated ungroomed trails for greater challenge.  
Snowmobile touring to the summit for the view.  
Snowmobile hill climbing in ungroomed areas (illegal).  
Snowmobiling in designated ungroomed meadows.  
Driving to the upper Sno-Parks for the view and to slide on the ice.

Not only is there an impressive list of activities, but there is also an incredibly broad range of difficulty for most of these activities, from beginner to advanced. This is what makes Mt. Spokane such a special place. It is a place where recreationists of all abilities can have a good time in relative safety (compared to the same activities on more extreme terrain and higher elevations).

Most people have multiple interests in Mt. Spokane and sometimes combine different activities in a single trip. For example, to get to Ragged Ridge, mountain bikers might lock their bikes and hike at the NAP boundary, or skiers might switch to snowshoes, carried on their packs. Most often, many different kinds of activities occur in the same area without problems. However, some activities, which involve significant differences in mode, speed, purpose, and values, have a high potential to produce conflict when recreationists are using the same area. For example, hikers and equestrians are often startled and annoyed by cyclists riding at a relatively high rate of speed down the same trail that they are using for completely different purposes. Additionally, conflict occurs not only between user groups, but also within the same user group. For example, nordic skate skiers are often annoyed by slower classic skiers who ski on the skating deck and interrupt their momentum, while the skate skiers annoy the classic skiers by cutting into the set tracks and ruining the smooth surface. Another aspect is that conflict is often asymmetrical in that one group may resent another, when the reverse does not apply. For example, skiers typically resent the noise and air pollution caused by snowmobiles, but snowmobilers are not generally affected by skiers and may not even know they are nearby.

Much recreation conflict can be managed with education, but some requires a separation between recreational activities. Adequate trail opportunities need to be available for all permitted uses. But with ever increasing numbers of people doing an ever increasing variety of recreational activities, this can be quite a challenge when public lands are so limited. Mt. Spokane has historically received heavy winter use because it is the only high elevation public land within an hour's drive of Spokane. Competition for its blanket of winter powder gets intense at times with all user groups wanting more at another's expense. It is therefore the purpose of the trail plan to attempt a balance between what is possible for any single user group or subgroup and what is feasible considering the limited terrain, resources, enforcement capacity, Commission priorities, and the need to protect the natural and cultural resources for the future.

The trail plan establishes rules that are based on sharing the resource. It favors non-motorized, low impact activities over motorized, high impact activities because those are the priorities for Washington State Parks as established in Trail Goals and Policies (2004). It seeks to expand trail opportunities for downhill mountain biking, and for snowshoeing and nordic skiing in order to help prevent interference between these and other user groups. It seeks to separate user groups where conflict is most frequent and where separation is the best option available to minimize such conflicts. It emphasizes involving volunteers and organized user groups wherever possible in both the planning and the implementation in order to help foster ownership and personal responsibility. It also favors light-handed management as a means of minimizing the need for much more expensive law enforcement.

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The first formal trail plan for Mt. Spokane State Park was approved by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (the Agency) in August of 1978. In November 1998, as part of the Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) Project, the Agency initiated a public planning process to develop recommendations for land classification and management of Mt. Spokane State Park (the Park). Agency staff conducted a series of public workshops designed to engage Park users and other stakeholders in identifying important Park issues, exploring alternative land classification and management approaches to address these issues, and developing final recommendations for presentation to the Agency. During this process Agency staff worked closely with the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee (MSSPAC). The MSSPAC is made up of Park stakeholders appointed by the Director to represent various recreational user groups and both environmental preservation and wider community interests in Park planning. On October 29, 1999, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted the recommended land classifications for Mt. Spokane State Park.

Throughout the planning process, public concerns consistently centered on managing the Park's trail system. During both the summer and winter seasons, trail-related activities are the dominant forms of recreation in the park. In addition to over 21 miles of single track trails, there are about 38 miles of primitive roadways, 17 miles of groomed nordic ski trails, and over 50 miles of groomed snowmobile trails in and adjacent to the Park. Public participants and Park staff identified several trails-related issues including:

- Natural and cultural resource impacts caused by trails in poor condition
- Safety of trail users
- Providing for a variety of recreational trail opportunities and experiences
- Trail use conflicts
- Adequacy of visitor information/user education
- Trails crossing onto private lands
- Trail maintenance needs
- New trail development
- Appropriate/effective volunteer participation

Because these issues are complex and in large part inter-related, Agency staff determined that in addition to land classification and general management planning for the Park, a more intensive and comprehensive trails planning effort was necessary. It was also acknowledged that delaying trails planning until a comprehensive plan could be developed did not meet public expectations, nor did it address the immediate needs of the Park. An Interim Trail Plan was developed and approved in July 2000 to guide trail management until a comprehensive Trail Plan could be developed. In May of 2004, the MSSPAC took the initiative to start the trail plan process, knowing that there was no set blueprint to follow, and after two years of meetings, produced a preliminary draft plan. The preliminary plan was made available to the public on the Friends Group website in June 2006. The Parks Commission then decided to use the preliminary plan as the foundation for creating a Master Facilities and Development Plan which would also include a possible alpine ski area expansion and

an overnight accommodations plan. The Commission hired Daniel Farber as the project coordinator. Through the remainder of 2006, the MSSPAC met numerous times with Commission staff and three public meetings were held as various options were developed. A winter recreation subcommittee was also formed to formulate the proposal for an expanded nordic ski trail system. The current draft trail plan is the result of revisions discussed over the last year.

## **PLAN PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This plan provides guidance for trail planners and managers in the development and use of Mt. Spokane State Park Trails for the next 15 to 20 years or until conditions require additional planning.

It makes use of prior research and input from the CAMP project and the Interim Trail Plan, as well as the Park Commission's Trail Goals and Policies document adopted December 2, 2004. Its scope encompasses the protection of natural/cultural resources, monitoring trail use and resource impacts, ensuring visitor safety, preventing and resolving trail user conflicts, major and minor trail renovations, the construction of new trails, trail signs, trail maintenance, trail closures, enhancing the recreational experience, both winter and summer trail use, volunteer participation, trails crossing onto private land, relationships between State Parks, the concessionaire and adjacent landowners, and visitor information/education relative to trail use.

Projects will be prioritized according to the resources available and the needs dictated by resource protection, visitor safety, user conflict, and developing a quality trail experience. The Agency is committed to carrying out this plan. However, it should be recognized that unforeseen circumstances or changes in administrative priorities might affect the Agency's ability to complete implementation. In this event, the Agency will seek Park stakeholder participation in determining necessary revisions.

## **PLAN ORGANIZATION**

This plan starts with general Park trail policies and then is separated into two main sections: Summer Trail Use Management and Winter Trail Use Management. Each section is further divided into policy direction and programmatic activities that in combination address issues related to planning, constructing, maintaining, and managing Park trails for recreation.

*General Park Trail Policies* identify existing state laws and agency-level rules and policies that guide trail management throughout the state park system. It also briefly describes the Park-level Classification and Management Plan (CAMP) that identifies appropriate trail use activities within specific areas of the Park. This is followed by general, year-round Park specific policies.

Under both the Summer and Winter Management Sections, Programmatic Activities outline specific projects or tasks designed to achieve the indicated policy direction. Programmatic activities are separated into five areas and include:

Trail Improvements and Maintenance Projects  
New Trail Development  
User Information/Education  
Monitoring of Trail Use and Resource Impacts  
Relationship with Concessionaire and Adjacent Landowners

## **GENERAL PARK TRAIL POLICIES**

**State Laws and Agency Rules/Policies:** State laws generally applicable to Washington State Parks, including minor references to trails, are contained in Chapter 79A.05 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). Agency rules directly applicable to trail management in state parks are contained in Chapter 352-32 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Applicable sections include WAC 352-32-070: Use of horses, llamas, sled dogs or similar animals for recreation, and WAC 352-32-075: Use of non-motorized cycles or similar devices, and WAC 352-20-020: Motor vehicles on roads and trails. Agency-level policies that guide management of state trails are contained in the Park Commission’s document called Trail Goals and Policies (See Attachment A).

**Mt. Spokane State Park Land Classification:** The majority of existing trails and primitive roadways in the Park are in areas classified as Recreation, Resource Recreation, or Heritage Areas, and permit, or conditionally permit, cycling, equestrian and pedestrian uses. Approximately 58% of Mt. Spokane State Park is classified as Resource Recreation Area. The intent of Resource Recreation classification is to preserve natural and cultural resources while allowing for sustainable, active forms of recreation. Approximately 22% of the Park is classified in the more restrictive Natural Forrest Area (NFA) and Natural Area Preserve (NAP) classifications to provide heightened protection for natural features and systems. Recreational use of these areas is limited to pedestrian activities, and facility construction to trail, directional signs, and interpretive displays. Cycling and equestrian uses are not permitted in NFAs or NAPs. A portion of the Ragged Ridge trail is located within an area classified as Natural Area Preserve (NAP). Pedestrian use of this trail is conditionally permitted by classification, and hiking, backcountry skiing, and snowshoeing are permitted by this plan. However, any such use must also be approved as part of a Natural Area Preserve Management Plan.

**Natural Area Preserve (NAP):** Except as part of NAP management planning, no new trails will be planned through any area of the Park classified as NAP. However, existing trails within NAPs may be modified to support NAP management goals.

**Destination Park:** The Park Commission’s Non-Motorized Trail Goals and Policies (see Attachment A) provides for the designation of suitable parks as “destination or preferred use sites” for specific varieties of trail users. According to “Trail Goals and Policies” shared use trails are encouraged in Resource Recreation classified areas in large parks where they can meet all approved evaluation criteria. Mt. Spokane State Park, as the largest park in the system at approximately 14,000 acres with 58% of the area classified as Resource Recreation, is primarily undeveloped, treed, mountainous land suited to providing the desired equestrian experiences. It has a large trail system of approximately 76 miles of trails and unimproved roads with a low density of use. Because of the park size and rural

atmosphere some areas of the park are a greater distance from the gates and parking areas. This makes them less accessible to the day hikers and more suitable to the equestrian that tends to travel longer distances. Given the fact that only a few parks within the system permit horses; and in accordance with State Parks goals of (1) providing diverse recreational opportunities, (2) providing rustic recreational opportunities and (3) identifying new and expanded equestrian trails, Mt. Spokane State Park is designated a destination and preferred use site for equestrians.

Additionally, Mt. Spokane has an incredible variety of terrain suitable for all levels of mountain bike riders. The Park has been the site for numerous national, regional and local bike races, for both cross-country and downhill riders. Visitors often travel from out of the area to experience and enjoy Mt. Spokane's unique riding opportunities. Local clubs and bicycle shops regularly hold group rides on the Park's trails. Cross-country riders can enjoy easy rides on the gentler grades of the trails in the nordic ski area or all day epic rides to isolated areas of the Park. Downhill riders seek the challenges of trails that are NORBA (National Off-Road Bicycling Association) race caliber. Given that mountain biking is the largest summer trail use activity, Mt. Spokane State Park is designated as a destination and preferred use site for mountain bicycling.

Mt. Spokane State Park also has one of the largest nordic ski areas in the Pacific Northwest, including a wide variety of terrain suitable for all abilities. With over 25 kilometers of groomed trails, and an expansion plan that will soon increase its size to over 40 kilometers, the Park frequently draws visitors from western Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Canada. Because of reliable snow conditions, its close proximity to Spokane, and its high quality grooming, the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation (SNSEF) has been highly successful with its weekly ski school for local youth for the last 30+ years. For the same reasons, Mt. Spokane has played host to the annual Langlauf classic cross-country ski race for many years. SNSEF, local ski shops, Spokane Parks and Recreation, and other organizations regularly arrange adult beginning and advanced lessons, and social outings. Since only a few parks within the system are suitable for track nordic skiing, and nordic skiing is the Park's most popular winter use trail activity, Mt. Spokane State Park is designated as a destination and preferred use site for nordic skiing.

**Shared Use Trails:** With the exception noted above for NFAs and the NAP, trails and primitive roadways throughout the Park are managed for shared pedestrian, cycling and equestrian use, unless specifically designated otherwise.

**Purpose of Park Trails:** The purpose of MSSP trails is to provide high quality outdoor recreational experiences in natural settings for all users. It is recognized that user conflicts are inevitable, but every effort will be made to minimize these conflicts and ensure that ongoing patterns of conflicting behavior do not develop or are mitigated by thoughtful planning. (See Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice by Roger L. Moore, Federal Highway Administration, Report No. FHWA-PD-031, August, 1994).

While not all possible recreational pursuits will be permitted, a balance will be sought between higher impact, higher speed activities such as downhill mountain biking or trail running and lower impact,

lower speed activities, such as hiking or nature study so that all users will enjoy as high a quality of recreational experience as possible.

In an effort to offer more separation between downhill mountain bikers and non-mechanized Park visitors, a special designation has been given to Trail 140. While still considered multi-use, Trail 140 (old 115) from Bear Creek Lodge to the Mt. Spokane summit is designated primarily for downhill mountain biking. Hikers and equestrians wishing to use this trail must be extra alert for the presence of high speed cyclists. The primary summit route for non-mechanized trail users is Trail 110, 100E, 101, and 191. Downhill cyclists on this route must be extra cautious regarding any encounters with non-mechanized visitors. Trail revisions and signs will be incorporated to enhance the experience and safety for all users, at the Park Manager's discretion. Both routes are approximately 5.5 miles. See Map 12.

**Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC):** Indications of visitor impacts on natural and cultural resources, as well as potential risks to the safety of trail users and the quality of the trail experience will be measured and managed using the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) adaptive management system (see Attachments B and D). Should indicators of resource condition, visitor safety, or quality of experience fall below desired standards, one or more of the management options listed in the LAC matrices will be employed. Only in extreme situations, and after public review and comment, when an adequate solution cannot be found, will one or more uses be excluded from selected trail segments.

**Monitoring of Trail Use and Resource Impacts:** Park staff, and volunteers under staff direction, will use the LAC system to monitor the condition of all trails. The number of areas with noticeable trail erosion, rutting, or scouring will be monitored (see Attachment B).

Park staff will coordinate with region Stewardship Program and Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee to use the LAC adaptive management system to monitor visitor safety and user conflicts on all trails within the park and apply prescribed management actions as necessary. Monitored indicators include: 1) the number and location of visitor accidents directly related to trail use, and 2) the number and location of reported trail user conflict incidents. Park staff will develop a system to identify, classify and report safety conflicts (collisions, near-collisions, emergency evasive actions and the like) as opposed to encounters between different types of trail users to which one or both users simply objected to the other being there.

Park staff will coordinate with the Region Stewardship Program and the Mt. Spokane State Park Advisory Committee and institute trail changes or temporary seasonal closures of individual trails or trail segment as necessary to protect threatened, endangered and sensitive wildlife species after consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Temporary closures of this type may be instituted at the discretion of the Park Manager as provided in WAC 352-32-070 and WAC 352-32-075.

**Signing and Other Barriers:** Conspicuous signing and other barriers will be installed and regularly maintained by Park staff with volunteer assistance provided by the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park and other trail user groups. Signage will clearly indicate permitted trail uses and closures. Where

appropriate, signs will educate users as to why they should stay on the trail and how the area is sensitive to external influences. Official trails within the Park will be numbered and named. Trail number signs will be posted at all trailheads and at trail junctions as resources permit.

**Trail Identification System:** The trail identification system (see attached Trail Matrix) used in this plan consists of a historic naming and numbering system for the current primary trails and roads. Trails 100, 110, 140 (old 115 and 135), 120, 130 and the Kit Carson Loop Road are all considered essential, main trails needing continued and regular maintenance. A new identification system will be instituted. (Note: Numbers in parentheses in this document refer to the old trail number.) In addition to a name, most trails will have an alpha-numeric identifier. A three digit number has been assigned to most trails, and all maintained trails have a name. Trail numbers ending in zero indicate primary trails. Trail numbers ending in 1-9 indicate branches from the primary trail. On the trail matrix, a letter after the number indicates an abandoned trail. Existing numbers were preserved wherever possible. Each trail is also pegged geographically according to five defined areas. These additional locators could be coded into trail markers to enhance search and rescue efforts. The five areas are roughly separated by ridge tops and include the following:

- Deadman Creek (DM): bounded by the Park boundary on the south, Hay Ridge and Mt. Kit Carson on the west, Beauty Mountain and the current alpine area concession boundary on the north, Linder Ridge on the northeast, and the Quartz Mountain, Horse Mountain Ridge on the southeast.
- Little Deep Creek (LD): bounded by Hay Ridge on the southeast, the Park boundary on the south and west, and the Day Mountain/Kit Carson/Smith Gap ridge on the east.
- Blanchard Creek (BL): bounded by the Mt. Spokane/Beauty Mountain/Kit Carson ridge on the south, the Kit Carson/ Day Mountain ridge on the southwest, the Park boundary on the west, north and east, and the south line for Section 10 on the southeast.
- Brickel Creek (BR): bounded by the south line for Section 10 on the north, the Park boundary on the east, the summit road on the south, and the Beauty Mountain, Mt. Spokane summit/ top of Chair 4 ridge on the west.
- Thompson Creek (TC): bounded by the Quartz Mountain/Horse Mountain ridge on the north and the Park boundary on the east, south, and west.

**Trail Difficulty Ratings:** Trails are rated separately according to the technical difficulty for hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, backcountry skiers, snowshoers, and snowmobilers. Categories include “U” for universal, “E” for easiest, “I” for intermediate, and “D” for most difficult. The ratings are subjective and correlate only to other trails within Mt. Spokane State Park. In general, universal trails are suitable for wheelchairs. Easy trails include fire roads with relatively gentle ups and downs, however most all Park trails are rated easy for equestrians and snowmobilers. Intermediate trails may

be fire roads or single track but will have longer, steeper grades. Difficult trails are the roughest and steepest with the most elevation gain/loss. Length and relative isolation are not part of the rating system. Length will be specified along with the difficulty rating to give users additional information in deciding which trail to take.

**Trail Use, Maintenance and Construction:** Trails will be used as a tool to move people through sensitive areas. Only official trails (those named on the matrix with a three digit number) will be maintained. Other human made trails will be made impassable and revegetated as resources permit. New Trails will be developed only as needed to protect the environment or produce the desired experience based on demonstrated need. They will be designed, constructed and maintained according to the best available trail construction, maintenance and safety standards for non-motorized multi-use trails to minimize soil erosion, maximize durability, provide a safe environment, and provide the desired recreational experience. However, it is recognized that this plan cannot possibly anticipate every situation or circumstance where new trails may be necessary or desirable. It is the intent of this plan to remain flexible in order to meet the future needs of the public visiting and recreating in the Park.

**Trail Condition Standards:** The Park has adopted the International Mountain Bicycling Association's (IMBA) multi-use trail building and maintenance standards as published in the Trail Solutions handbook of 2004 and subsequent versions.

**Seasonal Opening and Closing of Trails:** The Park Manager will determine when specific trails are seasonally open and closed. Closure notices will be publicized at the Park entrance bulletin board, on the telephone message, and at affected trailheads.

**Criteria for Approving New Recreational Uses:** It is recognized that new types of recreational equipment and activities are constantly being developed. While many activities will have similar impacts to existing permitted activities, some may pose additional challenges for resource management and for conflict with current users. Therefore any new uses, as permitted by the Park Manager, will be subject to the same kind of LAC monitoring as existing uses. Additional indicators, measurements, limits, and management options may be instituted by the Park Manager if necessary.

**Volunteer Participation:** It is essential for this plan's success that volunteers participate in its implementation. It should be acknowledged however that effective use of volunteers requires coordination and supervision by Park staff. Use of volunteers must also be consistent with Commission Policy 82-70-1: Volunteers.

**MSSP Trail Inventory:**  
See attached matrix.

**Trailhead/Access Inventory:**  
Road Access Points

- Main Entrance: Access via paved State Road (SR) 206. This is the only plowed access to Park facilities in the winter. Section 32.
- Day Road Entrance: Access via Day Mt. Spokane Road (gravel). Locked gate with minimal turn around space and minimal road side parking. Used by equestrians, hikers, and cyclists. Section 25.
- Blanchard Creek/Tallman Road Entrance: Access via rough dirt road. Locked gate across Connector Road with minimal turn around space and minimal parking. Section 7.
- Blanchard Creek/Axford Road Entrance: Access via gravel and dirt roads. Locked gate just before Park boundary. Very little parking space. Remote area. Section 3.

### Trailheads

- Main Park Entrance for Trails 110,121 and 122. Section 33.
- Lower Kit Carson (KC) Loop Road Sno-Park for Trails 100 and 110. Section 21.
- Upper KC Loop Road Summer Parking Area for Trails 140 (old 110 and 135) and KC Loop Road. Section 16.
- Snowmobile Parking Lot for Trails 100 East, 120, 131 and the summit road during winter. Section 22.
- Selkirk Lodge Parking Lot for the nordic trails, Quartz Mountain, and Ragged Ridge. Section 27.
- Bald Knob Parking for Trail 130. Section 21.
- Summit Parking for Trail 140 (Old 135). Section 16.
- Bear Creek Lodge (private parking) for Trails 140 (old 115) and 120. Section 32.

### Trails Crossing onto *Non-park* Lands

- Lower Trail 140 (Old 115): Access is via Bear Creek Lodge property. Middle part of trail may stray onto private land. Section 29.
- Trail 120: Lower end crosses into private land and continues to Elliot Road. West fork drops to Bear Creek Lodge. Section 32.
- Trail 127: Drops into Bear Creek Lodge property behind tubing hill. Section 33.

- Trail 130: Connects to gated overgrown logging road in NE corner of Park. Section 3.
- Trail 152: Connects into Snowblaze Condominium road and parking area. Section 15.
- Trail 150: Connects Park with Inland Empire Paper Co. (IEP) snowmobile trails. Sections 10 and 15.
- Trail 171 (Old 155): Connects to logging road leading to Bear Creek Lodge. Section 29.
- Trail 170B: A social ATV trail leading out of Park down to SR 206. Section 29.
- Trail 236: The Twin Lakes nordic ski trail is partially on IEP land. Section 25.
- Trail 234: This nordic ski trail loops onto IEP land. Shadow Mountain trail, Sections 25 and 26 east.
- Kit Carson Loop Road: Crosses private timber company land. Section 8.
- Day Road: Crosses Riley Creek land. Section 30.
- Linder Ridge Road: A maintained dirt road that leads out to IEP land. Section 27.
- Mountaineer's Road: A road leading to Spokane Mountaineer's Chalet. Section 22.
- Ragged Ridge Trail: Old social trails. The southern most end splits into two trails leading to IEP land, and is blocked only with fallen trees. The east fork has several Kelly Humps to prohibit unauthorized use. Sections 7/13.
- Ragged Ridge Pass Trail: An old road. The east end has Kelly Humps and is closed from the IEP boundary road. The west end is brushy into IEP land, but remains open. Sections 36 and 1.
- Round Top Mountain Trail: A fire road leading to IEP land from Quartz Mountain Loop ski trail. Section 34.
- Blanchard Ridge Trail: An ATV trail leading directly to private land and Deer Creek Road. Section 7.
- Three Rocks Trail: A fire road leading to Three Rocks Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land. Section 10.
- Deer Creek Trail: An old road leading to IEP land. Section 8.

- West Boundary Trail: A social trail leading to private land. Section 25.

## **SUMMER TRAIL USE MANAGEMENT**

### **General Policy Direction**

**Motorized use:** Motorized use of Park trails and primitive roadways will only be permitted by special permission of the Park Manager or his/her designee.

### **Programmatic Activities**

Plan items marked with an \* indicate trails-related projects or activities where volunteer participation is highly desirable. Plan items marked with a # indicate projects or activities that require completion by Agency staff. Projects are roughly in order of priority with the highest priority projects listed first.

### **Trail Improvements and Maintenance Projects:**

*See Map 1*

- # Improve numerous stream crossings to meet current standards on Trail 100 East (2 small streams at sites 1 and 2), Trail 100 West (3 major streams, 2 smaller streams, and 1 spring at sites 3,4,5,6 and 7) to prevent unnecessary sedimentation in Park streams and ensure safe summer and winter non-motorized use for this critical trail. Also provide safe sources of drinking water for stock near stream crossings.
- # Restore and maintain the upper portion of Trail 103 and connect to Trail 100 East. This dead end trail will provide hikers with good, streamside solitude. Provide a sitting bench at the end of the trail. Close the lower, unnecessary portion of this trail to prevent further erosion from the side stream.
- \* Reroute Trail 100 East near its junction with the east fork of Burping Brook and the Lower Kit Carson Loop Road trailhead by continuing the trail down the slope and eliminating the current steps. The goal is to make this short section of trail more passable for equestrians and cyclists while preventing erosion.

*See Map 2*

- # Reroute existing Trail 140 (old 115) between Smith Gap and the Mt. Kit Carson meadows, and close existing trail to summer use. The corridor may continue to be used as an

ungroomed snowmobile route. Maintain existing trail configurations as much as possible around and through the Kit Carson Meadows.

- \* Reroute Trail 160 (old 170) from its junction with Trail 140 (old 115) to the Kit Carson Summit to eliminate the erosion problem. This reroute will also separate snowshoers from snowmobilers during the winter. Improve drainage on Trail 160 North (old 170 north).
- \* Reroute portions of Lower Trail 140 (old 115) and improve drainage and water crossings to meet current standards for multiple use, and particularly for downhill mountain biking. Short alternate side routes should be considered for downhill cyclists at appropriate points. Eliminate rogue trails.
- # Improve the switchbacks on Trail 130 West from the summit of Day Mountain to the Upper Kit Carson Loop Road to meet current standards and reopen for biking.
- \* Repair and reroute sections of upper Trail 140 (old 135) to eliminate erosion problems and meet current standards. This will be the upper portion of the designated downhill cycling route. This project needs to be coordinated with the alpine concessionaire.

*See Map 3*

- \* Reroute the upper portion of Trail 101 (old power line) to provide an alternative connector between Trail 100 East and Trail 130 at Bald Knob, and eliminate current erosion problems. This trail will be part of a new summit route for ascent/descent of Mt. Spokane from the Park entrance (See Map 3).
- Designate and mark a summer route, as Trail 193, down the Northwest Passage alpine ski run to the Roulon and B-29 runs and to Lodge 2. This will serve as a third option for ascent and descent of the summit. Use will depend upon management and maintenance needs in the alpine ski area (See Map 8).

*See Map 4*

- \* Re-establish existing system of trails on the upper elevations of Quartz Mountain with an emphasis on loop trails, and reroute Trail 251 (See Map 4).
- # Improve and maintain Horse Mountain Trail 255 to meet current standards. Close and revegetate the existing Horse Mountain 255A trail (See Map 4).

*See Map 5*

- \* Improve and maintain Ragged Ridge Trail from the Quartz Mountain Loop Trail to the 4805' summit to meet current standards. The portion of the trail on Ragged Ridge itself need only meet standards for pedestrian use. Close and revegetate existing trail south of 4805' summit once ATV and equestrian use has been eliminated (See Map 5).

- # Close and revegetate Trail 100B (from Bald Knob to the old power line) and 100F (overgrown short single track). Both are user made fall line trails (See Map 3).
- # Enlarge the parking area at the Day Road Entrance for summer use (See Map 7).

### **New Trail Development:**

- # Trail 141: Connect lower Trail 110 with lower Trail 140 (old 115) just north of the Park office and at the southern boundary of the Deadman Creek NFA. This single track, multi-use trail will create an additional loop option and eliminate the need to walk on the state highway and cross private property to connect Trails 140 and 110 (See Map 6).
- Consider a network of summer trails within the alpine ski concession area, including but not limited to: a 5000' elevation 'Round the Mountain trail, technical downhill mountain biking trails, and use of the road from the bottom of Chair 4 to the top of Chair 4 as a loop connector for the 5000' trail.
- Trail 191: Create a multi-use trail from the summit, down the South Meadows and Teakettle runs to Bald Knob Campground. This trail would provide direct access to the summit for campers and would serve as the primary summit access for hikers and equestrians (See map 3).
- \* Trail 140 Extension: Create a new trailhead for the bottom of Trail 140 (old 115) by continuing the trail south along the ridge to the Park gate. Eliminate rogue trail near the power line (See Map 6).
- # Trail 114: Modify the existing trail from the top of Chair 1 to the Vista House so that it qualifies as an ADA trail. This will be the Park's first ADA trail.
- # Modify the section of Trail 130 between the Bald Knob parking area to the picnic shelter so it qualifies as an ADA trail.
- # Trail 180: Create a ridge top, single track, multi-use trail through the sparse trees atop the ridge just north of the Day Road to create a loop with the Day Road. This will encourage recreational activity in a currently little used area of the Park (See Map 7).
- # Trail 153: Create a new single track, multi-use trail to connect the Lodge 2 parking area with Trail 150. With this 0.2 mile connection, hikers, equestrians, and cyclists could park at Lodge 1, go to the end of the pavement at Lodge 2, continue to Trail 150, head north to the snowmobile connector and get on the Brickel Creek Road to Spirit Lake and eventually, the Brickel Creek Hiking Trail. This trail would accommodate a regional trail plan by improving a connection to a trail system outside the Park (See Maps 8 and 16).

- \* Trail 190: ‘Round the Mountain Trail. Construct a single track, multi-use trail that is approximately 5 miles in length and encircles the Mt. Spokane summit at about the 5000’ level. This trail will utilize existing trail segments wherever possible and connect with new Trail 191 to the summit. This project needs to be coordinated with the alpine ski concessionaire (See Map 9).
- \* Trail 138: Connect Blanchard Creek Road with the Chair 4 Road with a single track, multi-use trail to create a loop along the NFA and Park boundary. This will encourage recreational activity in a currently little used area of the Park (See Map 14).

### **User Information/Education:**

- Park Brochure--A general Park brochure including a detailed trail map, trail descriptions, and Park rules will continue to be readily available to all Park visitors. This brochure will continue to be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park. Park staff will retain the original electronic copy.
- Ragged Ridge Brochure—A brochure describing the unique ecology of the Ragged Ridge Natural Area will also be produced in cooperation with the Friends of Mt. Spokane State Park. This brochure will contain a map and other information about the area.
- Trail User Yield Signs--Yellow, triangular summer trail user yield signs will continue to be posted at main trailheads. The sign indicates that cyclists yield to hikers and equestrians, and hikers yield to equestrians.
- Trail ID Signs--All trails will be clearly marked at junctions and trailheads with the trail number and map section number.
- Trailhead Bulletin Boards--Each major trailhead will have a bulletin board with relevant, updated Park and trail information. A new bulletin board will be added at the Day Road Entrance.
- Recorded Phone Message --The winter snow line will be expanded and used year round to provide regular updates on trail conditions, Park activities, wildfire risk, temporary closures/restrictions, etc.
- Trail Mileage and Elevation Signs --Selected trails will have signs indicating the mileage from the trailhead and the elevation above sea level.
- CCC Area Cultural Resource Protection – To protect the historic rock walls and walkways from damage, a walking only zone will be designated within the CCC Heritage area. Biking and horseback riding will be restricted to the existing roadway between the Kit Carson Loop Road and the CCC cabin. Signs will direct users to Trail 130.

- Interpretation of Historic Sites: Interpretive signage will be installed at the CCC Cabin, the Vista House, the Cook's Cabin area, and at the old lodge foundation to help the public understand the need to protect these areas from damage.
- ORV Access to Ragged Ridge – Park staff will continue to work with representatives of IEP to implement additional measures to close Ragged Ridge to ORV and equestrian access.
- ORV Access to Other Areas – Park staff will work with adjacent landowners to close Hay Ridge and the Kit Carson Loop Road in Section 8 to ORV access.

**Relationship with Concessionaire and Adjacent Landowners:** Park staff will coordinate with Regional Programs and Services staff to seek owner's permission to place and maintain one trail map structure at the Bear Creek Lodge trailhead.

Park staff will coordinate with the Regional Programs and Services, Regional Stewardship Program, Environmental Program, Concessionaire, the MSSP Advisory Committee, and mountain biking user groups to explore, design and assess a downhill, technical mountain biking trails system within the alpine ski concession area.

Park staff will coordinate with the Regional Stewardship Program and the Regional Planner to maintain periodic discussions with adjacent landowners to assess and formalize existing and additional cooperative trail management opportunities.

## WINTER TRAIL USE MANAGEMENT

### General Policy Direction

**Snowmobile Use Area:** Recreational snowmobiling is permitted in designated areas only (see WAC 352-20-020), namely on groomed snowmobile trails, designated ungroomed overland snowmobile trails, and in designated snowmobile play areas. Use of snowmobiles in the nordic ski area is not permitted except for transporting injured skiers or other administrative purposes. Overland use of recreational snowmobiles in the alpine ski area is not permitted except in areas where the Concessionaire has completed a review of potential operational and environmental impacts and a use license has been issued by the Agency under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Impacts of snowmobiles on natural and cultural resources, as well as risks to visitor safety

and the quality of the winter trail experience will be measured and managed using the LAC adaptive management system (See Attachment D). Should indicators of resource condition, visitor safety, and quality of experience fall below desired standards, and alternative management options prove ineffective, selected trails and/or play areas may be closed. Current designated snowmobile use areas are: the groomed snowmobile trail [on Trails 170 (old 155), the KC Loop Road, the Chair 4 Road, Trail 150, the Summit Road, Trail 120, and the Linder Ridge Road] as well as the ungroomed play areas in the Beauty Mountain meadow and CCC area, the Mt. Kit Carson meadow, Day Mountain meadows, and the corridor to the summit (see Figure 1). The Day Road, the Blanchard Creek Road, the Connector Road, Trail 140 (old 115) from the north end of the single track Trail 140 (old 115) to Mt. Kit Carson summit, and Trail 130 to Day Mountain from Saddle Junction are also currently open to snowmobiling (See Map 10).

**Snowmobile Use Seasons:** Groomed snowmobile trails will be seasonally opened to use after initial grooming preparation and compaction operations have been completed. Historically groomed trails may be opened to snowmobile use prior to grooming activities at the discretion of the Park Manager. Grooming activities will generally proceed after grooming equipment operators determine that adequate snow cover has accumulated to protect roadbeds and machinery from damage. Designated snowmobile areas will be seasonally opened to use when adequate snow cover has accumulated to protect Park natural and cultural resources and allow for safe operation. Adequacy of snow cover will be evaluated jointly by Park staff and at least one snowmobile use representative throughout the season via site visits and observations.

A determination of adequate snow cover will be based on the following criteria:

- 1) Snow depth - A minimum snow depth of consolidated snow will be required to open a given snowmobile play area or un-groomed overland trail. Adequate consolidated snow depths will vary, but snow stability and depth for safe operation and protection of underlying resources must be assured. Snow depth will be measured in several locations with varying aspect, elevation, and terrain features to verify that the minimum snow depth requirement has been satisfied. A given snowmobile play area or un-groomed overland trail will generally be closed for the season when snow depth becomes inadequate in any location within the area. During years of unusually low snow accumulations, play areas and un-groomed overland trails will be closed at the discretion of the Park Manager.
- 2) Projected Meteorological Conditions – At the discretion of the Park Manager, play areas and un-groomed overland trails will only be opened if projected meteorological conditions indicate that adequate snow cover is likely to be maintained into the use season. Opening of these areas following large early season snowfalls where the snowpack may potentially melt to below adequate levels should be avoided.

Designated un-groomed overland snowmobile trails and designated play areas may be subject to additional seasonal closures to protect sensitive wildlife species listed as “species of concern” in Washington State. Decisions to institute special seasonal closures will be made with the cooperation and consultation of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and allow for participation by representatives of snowmobile user groups.

Publicizing Snowmobile Closures - Dated closure (and opening) notices will be posted on Park entrance and Sno-Park bulletin boards. The recorded telephone snow line message will include updates on all trail closures. The Park should work toward establishing daily snowmobile and nordic ski conditions updates on a web site bulletin board.

Nordic Track Skiing – Nordic track skiing is available on the designated groomed nordic ski trails. Grooming standards are specified by the nordic grooming committee.

Backcountry Skiing - Backcountry skiing is permitted in all areas of the Park (including snowshoe trails) except for the patrolled part of the alpine ski area. Backcountry skiing in the nordic area in a manner that disturbs track grooming is not permitted. Backcountry skiing is permitted on Ragged Ridge. Backcountry and alpine skiing on groomed snowmobile trails is not encouraged in order to minimize conflict between trail users traveling at differing rates of speed.

Snowshoeing – Approximately 18 miles of designated snowshoe trails are available in the Park. This includes rerouted Trail 140 and 101, and new Trail 141. It also includes about 1.5 miles of shared ungroomed snowmobile trail and about 0.2 mile of shared groomed snowmobile trail, as well as a 0.5 mile winter only route from Bald Knob to the Mt. Spokane summit, and a 0.1 mile off trail route in the Big Spring area (See Map 6). Snowshoeing is also permitted on Ragged Ridge. Except where designated, snowshoeing is not permitted on groomed snowmobile trails or within the alpine ski area. Snowshoeing is also not permitted on groomed nordic ski trails. Parking for snowshoeing is available near the Park entrance at the trailhead for Trail 110, at the Lower Kit Carson Loop Road Sno-Park, and along the road next to the Snowmobile Sno-Park.

Dog Sledding/Skijouring - Dog sledding and skijouring are permitted on the groomed snowmobile trails. Additional groomed nordic ski trails will be considered for skijouring.

### **Programmatic Activities**

#### **Trail Improvement and Maintenance Projects:**

- Trail 137: Create a short, marked winter route connector between Trail 131 and Bald Knob so that snowshoers and backcountry skiers can cross the creek and climb directly to the campground area without traversing the B-29 alpine ski run. See Map 6.
- Designate the straight fall line route between the Bald Knob restrooms and the KXLY TV towers as a snowshoeing and backcountry skiing route to the Mt. Spokane summit. See Figure 2 and Map 6.

### *New Trail Development:*

- Expand alpine skiing opportunities within the Proposed Alpine Ski Expansion Area in accordance with the alpine concessionaire's May 1, 2006 plan to install a new chair lift, runs and glades in Section 16.
- Construct a new trailhead Sno-Park parking area south of the current snowmobile Sno-Park lot. Construct a groomed nordic trail (209) to connect the lower parking area with the Valley View nordic trail.
- Trail 260: Construct a new connecting groomed snowmobile trail, approximately 0.5 mile in length to connect the Linder Ridge Road at the Mountaineer's property line to the Condo Road connector on IEP property. Along with numerous improvements to both the snowmobile and nordic ski trail systems on IEP property, Trail 260 will make it possible to designate the Linder Ridge Road for nordic skiing, thereby providing an important, relatively flat section of new trail for skate skiers and beginners (See Map 11).
- Reopen existing connector road between Linder Ridge Road and Junction 2 and groom for nordic skiing (See Map 11).
- Construct a new groomed nordic trail connection from the back of the Selkirk Lodge (or off the Mt. View Trail) to the bottom of the drainfield area and the Linder Ridge Road. The Linder Ridge Road/M-17 Road would then be groomed for nordic skiing from about 100' east of the Trail 260 junction to the 9.5 junction on IEP property. Additional connecting trails on IEP property will also be opened for groomed nordic skiing. Existing groomed snowmobile trails will be accessed via the Condo Road, a new connector between Road M8A and M8, Road M8B, and a new connector between M8B and the existing snowmobile trail that loops into Idaho ( See Map 11). The expanded nordic trail system will connect with Park property at: 1) the Linder Ridge Road at the Section 27 boundary, 2) the Wild Moose Trail (possibly in two places), and 3) the Twin Lakes trail near the switchback with the Quartz Loop trail.
- State Parks should consider acquiring the IEP property that is primarily in Section 23 and contains the now abandoned Brickel Creek headwaters road. This road is the only route in the state that connects the northern groomed snowmobile trails with the southern groomed trails and was closed in 2004. Park ownership of this road would not only dramatically improve options for snowmobiling, it would enhance search and rescue efforts, reduce snowmobile traffic across the bridge shared with nordic skiers, and reduce the snowmobile traffic going to and from the parking area on Trail 260, which borders the nordic ski trails.

### ***User Information/Education:***

- Nordic Trail Maps: Trail maps produced in cooperation with the Selkirk Nordic Ski Education Foundation will be placed and maintained at each intersection with “You Are Here” indicated appropriately. Printed trail maps will also be stocked and available in the Selkirk Lodge.
- Recorded Message Phone Line: The daily snow line update will continue to be recorded by Park staff. Snow, weather, grooming, and trail conditions for both nordic skiing and snowmobiling will be included. Any closures will also be noted.
- Nordic Trail Signs: Nordic ski trails will be labeled with their respective names and difficulty ratings on a sign at each junction. Colored arrows and old trail numbers will be removed.
- Backcountry Skiing and Snowshoeing Trail Signs: Plastic blue diamond markers will be tacked to trees to mark snowshoeing and backcountry skiing trails and routes.
- Posting of Nordic Skiing Rules: Rules for nordic skiing at MSSP will be posted inside the Selkirk Lodge.
- Snowmobile Trail Map: Snowmobile trail maps will be placed at key intersections and trailheads. Each map will indicate “you are here.” Sign locations will include: Bear Creek Lodge trailhead, the Day Road and Kit Carson Loop Road junction, Kit Carson Loop Road and Chair 4 Road junction, the Chair 4 Road and Axford Road junction, the Park boundary near the Snowblaze property, and the snowmobile parking lot.
- Snowmobile/Nordic Ski Interface Areas: The Linder Ridge Road/Trail 260 junction, the Linder Ridge Road/Condo Road junction, and Junction 9.5 all need special warning signs and enforcement to ensure the safe separation between nordic skiers and snowmobilers. The expanded nordic trail system requires that snowmobilers and skiers share the bridge on the Linder Ridge Road. Snowmobilers will make a very tight corner over the bridge between the Condo Road and the M8A Road and will need to ride slowly. Skiers need to be made aware to yield to snowmobiles as they cross this bridge. There is much greater distance between the snowmobile and ski trails at the other two interface areas, but it is particularly important that snowmobilers stay on their trails in these areas. Parks should explore the possibility of substantially widening the bridge or building an additional bridge in order to completely separate the two user groups.
- Snowmobile Brochure: A snowmobiling brochure, produced in cooperation with the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club, will be available at the parking areas. The brochure will contain a snowmobiling trail map for the Park and surrounding area, a map or photo of the summit corridor, and it will indicate the groomed trail, ungroomed snowmobile trails, and play areas.

It will also contain the rules and other relevant information for safe snowmobiling in the Park and on IEP lands.

- **Snowmobile Trail Signs:** Signs consisting of plastic orange diamonds tacked to trees will mark the groomed snowmobile trail throughout the Park. Larger orange diamond signs will contain a picture of a snowmobile with the words “Stay on trail.” These will be posted in areas where snowmobilers commonly ride out of bounds.
- **Summit Corridor:** Installation and maintenance of any necessary signs, snow fence, and bamboo poles, as well as user education activities related to the Mt. Spokane summit snowmobile corridor are the responsibility of the Concessionaire, with volunteer assistance and coordination provided by the alpine area ski patrol and the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club. An adjustable height sign containing a map/photo of the corridor and concise directions for its use will be installed at the bottom of the corridor. This sign will also contain an open/closed indicator for the corridor.
- **Posting of Snowmobile Rules:** A full listing of the rules for snowmobiling at Mt. Spokane State Park will be posted at the main snowmobile trailheads.
- **Monitoring of Trail Use and Resource Impacts:** Agency staff will coordinate with alpine ski area staff, both nordic and alpine volunteer ski patrols, the Winter Knights Snowmobile Club, the Spokane Nordic Ski Education Foundation, and other designated volunteers to use the LAC adaptive management system to manage potential snowmobile impacts on natural and cultural resources, as well as risks to visitor safety and the quality of the non-motorized, winter trail experience (see Attachment D: Limits of Acceptable Change Winter Trail Management Tables for Mt. Spokane State Park). Monitored indicators for designated snowmobile play areas and un-groomed overland snowmobile trails will include: 1) the number of incidents of snowmobiles operation during seasonal or special management closures, 2) the number of instances of snowmobiles operating within NFA or NAP boundaries, 3) the number of incidents of snowmobiles operating onto or over the roofs of historic and other structures (witnessed or visible signs), 4) the number of incidents of observed unsafe snowmobile operation, 5) the number of incidents of snowmobiles operating outside designated areas or off designated trails, 6) the number of incidents of snowmobiles operating within the alpine and nordic ski areas, and 7) the number and location of reported winter trail user conflict incidents.

Unsafe snowmobile operation as defined by RCW 46.10 will be enforced by Park rangers. Unsafe operation includes excessive speed, excessive noise, soil and vegetation damage, property damage, human and wildlife harassment and endangerment, operation while under the influence of alcohol or narcotics, underage operation, unregistered operation, and the improper use and crossing of public roadways.