



November 20, 2007

Mr. Mike Dunn
Mount Tahoma Trails Association
P.O. Box 206
Ashford, WA 98304

Dear Mr Dunn *MIKE*

Thank you for your letter regarding the work done by the Mount Tahoma Trails Association (MTTA) to secure funding for trail grooming equipment. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and MTTA have had a long history of working well together to create and manage a very significant trail system that includes major portions of the land we manage in the Elbe and Tahoma State Forests. I appreciate your early contact with department staff so that we fully understand your needs and can work together to further strengthen our partnership.

I support your plan to request \$262,000 for the purchase of a snow cat, truck and related equipment. I am well aware that you have been using very old equipment to plow the access roads and groom trails, and that this equipment has reached the end of its useful life, even with the significant maintenance contributed by MTTA members. New equipment will ensure that the public has access to parking areas, that the trails are fully groomed, and that there is improved emergency response in the event of an injured trail user.

I believe it's important to provide a wide range of opportunities for the public to recreate on DNR managed trust lands. While we see extensive recreation use of lower elevation lands, those at higher elevations that hold snow see much more limited use. The winter trail network above the Nisqually valley, especially with fully groomed trails, tremendously expands the use of our state forests and is something I fully support.

As you continue your work to secure funding please keep both Bob Van Schoorl, our Budget Director, and Randy Acker, our SPS Region Manager, informed of your progress. Of course, they are available to assist you in your efforts. Assuming you are successful in securing funding, and that it may come as an appropriation to DNR, it will be important for you to work with them to craft a written agreement on the use and management of the equipment by DNR and MTTA.

I wish you well in your efforts to secure the needed funding. It's an important part of improving the public's access to DNR managed trust lands in the winter.

Sincerely,

Doug
Doug Sutherland
Commissioner of Public Lands