

Ski club wants to install snow gun at Leavenworth Ski Hill

Wenatchee World Website Staff

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Public comments

Public comment on proposed installation of temporary snow-making equipment at the Leavenworth Ski Hill will be accepted until Dec. 18.

Comments can be sent to District Ranger, Wenatchee River Ranger District, 600 Sherbourne, Leavenworth, WA,. 98826.

E-mail can be sent to comments-pacificnorthwest-wenatchee-wrrd@fs.fed.us

LEAVENWORTH — Leavenworth Winter Sports Club members believe snowmaking equipment at the Leavenworth Ski Hill will greatly improve local winter recreation and the club's chances of survival after the last two seasons with little snow.

The snow-making guns would primarily make snow for the club's ski hill tubing runs, but could also be used to freshen up and add snow to the downhill ski area, said Mark Milliette, club manager.

The club has proposed installing temporary snow-making equipment at the ski hill starting the fall of 2016. The equipment will not be available for use this year.

The city of Leavenworth has already approved use of city water needed for the snow machines. Now, it's up to the Forest Service and local resource specialists to analyze the environmental effects of the proposal. The Leavenworth Ski Hill is on land managed by the Wenatchee River Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. The ranger district will conduct an environmental analysis before making a decision.

Milliette said the proposal at this time is only for a temporary system that would be installed above ground using plastic waterline and a single snowmaking fan gun. The system would be assembled annually in October and dismantled in April. It would be used seasonally from November to March.

Water would be provided from a city hydrant near the city's Ski Hill Drive reservoir. The waterline would likely run through a sleeve beneath Ski Hill Drive to the ski hill. The system would be drained after each day's operation into a city overflow reservoir below its water tank.

To open the hill in December the last two years, the club used trucks to haul snow from higher altitudes. December revenue from tubing during the city's Christmas lighting weekends and the holiday school vacation between Christmas and New Year's Day is crucial, Milliette said.

Lack of snow has been a huge problem for the club, which operates the tubing run, downhill ski area and Nordic ski trails at three different locations.

“We’ve had four days of good snow-making weather so far and another four or five days coming up. I wish we had this going now,” he said about the snow-