



Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition

PO Box 100
Mt. Hood, Oregon, 97041

Don't Let Them STEAL Our Mountain

Working to preserve and protect the biological integrity and historic nature of the northeast side of Mt. Hood

Mostly Empty Trophy Homes - Blocked Wildlife Corridors - Degraded Water Quality - More Parking Lots - More Chairlifts - More Clearcuts - More Traffic

The Northeast side of Mt Hood provides the mountain's only accessible, yet high alpine backcountry experience for those who Nordic and telemark ski, snowshoe, hike and alpine climb. It is also home to the 50-acre Cooper Spur Ski Area, a small, family-oriented recreational area. Despite its environmental and historical importance, the public and private lands in the Cooper Spur area face immediate threats resulting from inadequate enforcement of our laws by local and national government and pressure from a real estate developer.

Mt Hood Meadows Development Corporation (Meadows), a Portland-based real estate development company, recently completed a land swap with Hood River County in which Meadows received 680 acres of land adjacent to the Inn at Cooper Spur and nearby federal forestland. The land swap is part of Meadows' recent consolidation of land and business holdings in the area and its larger plans to convert the small family-style ski area into a major destination resort.

In a meeting in August 2001, Meadows revealed extensive and detailed development plans to select members of the public in an effort to get buy-in from key groups. Those plans included the construction of a 450-unit destination resort, amphitheatre, village, and golf course. Meadows has also shared its expansion plans for the Cooper Spur Ski Area – growing from its current size of 50 acres to over 1,400 acres with up to seven high-speed chairlifts. Some of this expansion is proposed for the specially designated and protected Cloud Cap-Tilly Jane Historic District, including the construction of a chair lift up to the historic Cloud Cap Inn and a mid-mountain restaurant in the middle of the historic Tilly Jane trail.

Unfortunately, these expansion plans are only part of the current threats to the natural resources on the Northeastern flanks of Oregon's alpine gem. The Forest Service has planned four timber sales (Clan, Kilt, Tartan, and Clear), which would cut hundreds of acres of native forests and construct many miles of roads near existing recreation sites.

The destination resort also threatens the continued existence of endangered fish species in the East Fork of the Hood River and the existence of key elk migration corridors, according to the Oregon Department of Wildlife.

Perhaps of most concern to the residents of Hood River County is that the proposed destination resort, ski area expansion and large-scale commercial thinning operation is slated for land that forms part of the sensitive and aptly named Crystal Springs Watershed. Crystal Springs provides drinking and irrigation water for over 25% of the residents and farmers of Hood River County.

Additionally, there is strong evidence that the resort will actually harm the County's economy. Hotels and resorts in Hood River County already have very low occupancy rates during the winter. Also, there seems to be little justification for ski area expansion, given the 5 existing ski areas on the mountain. Thus, it is likely that the real estate development will benefit one corporation at the expense of local businesses.