



Salt Creek Summit Multi Purpose Building

After years of planning and fundraising efforts, construction on the Salt Creek Summit Multi-Purpose Building finally began in June 2005. This 2,500 square foot building will provide a focal point for winter recreation, and should help expand the seasonal use of tourism infrastructure (hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, sports shops, other services). In the summer, the facility will cater to hikers, bikers and ATV enthusiasts, and provide a base for forest management and education activities.

The project is a joint activity of the USFS, Wallowa County, Wallowa Resources, Oregon State Snowmobile Association and its local chapter, Eagle Cap Ski Club, Wallowa County Search and Rescue, Wallowa Valley Trail-riders Association, Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, and the National Forest Foundation. The USFS Forest Products Laboratory, with the assistance of a Beaudette Consulting Engineers, Inc, produced the building plans.

The building includes a visitor information and warming room, a base for search and rescue operations, and separate garages to store snowmobile and ski trail grooming equipment. Development of this facility responds to needs identified in the existing County and USFS winter recreation plans, and complements the ongoing promotion of winter recreation opportunities by the USFS, Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

Salt Creek Summit has served as a trailhead since the early 1970's and offers trail access into the Eagle Cap Wilderness and the Wallowa Valley Ranger District. The area has over 100 miles of roads which offer various recreational opportunities including ATV and snowmobile use, skiing, hunting, hiking, dispersed camping, and wildlife viewing.

In 1989, Salt Creek Summit was designated a Sno-Park and is the desired hub for winter recreation in Wallowa County. This Sno-Park provides access to over 175 miles of

designated snowmobile trails, and 20 miles of cross-country ski trails. In addition, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing opportunities abound.

Recent increases in winter recreation activities have elevated the need for a multi-purpose building. Currently, there are no facilities to house equipment, conduct rescue operations or adequately provide visitor information. The facility will house County Search and Rescue equipment and provide a central command location for conducting operational rescues. In addition, the facility will provide much needed space for the storage of equipment and training of individuals associated with rescue operations.

The County views the expansion of tourism throughout the winter as one key element in its economic revival. Promotion of the winter recreation opportunities by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, local service providers and the Oregon's Tourism Authority has generated increased interest. Winter visitor numbers have been steadily rising, and national magazines have responded to this trend with stories on the area and its opportunities (e.g. Outside, Dec 2001; Skiing, Jan 2003; Sno-West, Winter 2002-2003, etc.).

The Salt Creek Summit Sno-Park Multi-Purpose Building will provide the facility and services needed to promote winter tourism. It will assist in concentrating visitors within areas designated for winter use, thereby securing conservation benefits for the larger forest area.

Through the use of small diameter roundwood, and the prominent location in the County and along the All American Road, this Multi-Purpose Building will also promote new construction technology from the USFS Forest Products Lab. This new technology offers important opportunities for the millions of acres of overstocked forest across the West, which are in need of thinning to reduce wildfire risk.

Concerted effort is being made to find new uses for this material in traditional markets (post and pole, firewood, architectural accents, chips, etc.). New markets in construction applications offer the opportunity for higher revenue generation from fuel reduction by-products. They will also generate greater public awareness of forest conditions and innovative new solutions to reduce fire risk while maintain ecological integrity.