



**DATE: February 7, 2023**

**TO: USFS Snoqualmie Ranger District**

**FROM: White River FPA**

**SUBJECT: January 2023 Report & Hours**

**Organizational Issues**

Nothing new.

**Forest Report**

This is a slow time of year as snow covers most of the upper areas where we maintain signs. Sign loss is low this winter, as it usually has been in the last couple of years. After heavy snow, there has been some warming and rain in the lower areas, like the 7013.

Here is what the 7013 looks like right now with the snow melted:



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Here is what it looked like five years ago before being closed – the exact same spot:



Here is another current 7013 photo from today:





Here is that exact same 7013 spot from five years ago at the same time of year:



This shows the staggering difference between what forest resources look like when unmonitored target shooting is allowed and when it is not.

Almost everywhere, target shooting in our national forests looks like the before photos of the 7013. Trash, toxic chemical contamination, fires, forest damage to thousands of trees with bullets, riparian/fish habitat destruction, terrorist training with illegal/military weapons, and unsafe firearm handling are hallmarks of target shooting in the national forests in the greater White River/Greenwater River basin.

Our years of observation and analysis, from thousands of volunteer hours, have allowed us to conclude that fewer than a percent or two of target shooters in this area abide by any of the forest service rules for that activity.

Over the years, our group, in cooperation with the great folks at the USFS, has reclaimed the bottom four miles of the Greenwater River. This used to be a cesspool of toxic trash and forest damage. Today, campers, fishermen, hikers, rockhounds, bird watchers, and other users are returning to this area. Some significant toxic and harmful damage to fish resources remains in the ground, and only time will tell how bad the impact of target shooting will be on salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Beyond the bottom four miles of the Greenwater River, we have reclaimed some other areas, but illegal and unsafe target shooting activities are still destroying many other locations.



Unmonitored target shooting in the national forests is incompatible with all other forest uses and the fundamental charter of the USFS custody of public lands. No different forest use results in the wanton destruction of these resources without any attempts to mitigate or repair those damages by the user group. No other forest user group leaves enormous amounts of toxic wastes, trash, forest fires from illegal exploding targets, or any other of the impacts of unmonitored target shooting. Even in the designated shooting areas, fewer than a percent of users follow USFS rules and guidelines, despite hundreds of warnings that the USFS will close the areas if the harmful activity continues.

We will politely suggest that all target shooting activities in the greater White River/Greenwater River basin be closed and only re-opened when there are appropriately monitored areas where users fully abide by the laws and guidelines of the USFS.

The 7013 demonstrates how the forests could look if this policy is implemented regionwide.

### **70 Pit**

No improvement from the last reports – a total disaster of illegal activity, toxic chemical contamination, and constant dangerous behavior. Here is a typical daily photo of the 70 pit:



## **7013 Area**

See notes above.

## **Illegal Camping**

Excellent compliance on the Greenwater River.

## **Cedar Springs Site Concept**

Pending. Conservation NW has a plan we endorsed and sent a letter of support. We hope they will gain funding and be able to move forward on this significant project in the coming years!

We like the concept of getting all camping away from the river and onto the other side of the 70 road. This would make much sense if it could be done.

## **Volunteer Hours**

Current Month volunteer hours for the WRFPA are: **64**

Total Hours for WRFPA since November 2018: **5,806**

## **Sign Inventory**

Okay, for now, sign loss has been minimal this last month.

## **Issues Moving Forward**

- Discussion on permanent closure of 70 pit (see above).
- Permanent closure of the 7013 and access road remediation – move the gate out to the very edge of the 70 road.