

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

August 21, 2012

INTERNET:
<http://baucus.senate.gov>

Thomas Tidwell, Chief
USDA Forest Service
Mailstop 1144
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, District of Columbia 20250

Dear Chief Tidwell:

I write to encourage the Forest Service to do everything it reasonably can to continue a full partnership with the Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club. This long-standing relationship has been very effective in providing recreation opportunities to the public in the Chief Joseph Ski Area. For years, the Ski Club has offered volunteer staffing of the Gordon Reese Cabin as part of a volunteer agreement with the Forest Service. The Ski Club has shown abundant generosity so the public can better enjoy this beautiful area.

The Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club helped establish the Chief Joseph Ski Trail System and has continued to maintain and groom the trails at no expense to the federal government. The Ski Club built the Gordon Reese Cabin in 2001, raising more than \$100,000 in cash and materials for its construction.

This letter serves to express the frustration of many in the community regarding recent decisions of the Forest Service to shut down a long-standing fundraising arrangement that included awarding a free night at the Gordon Reese Cabin and to charge a fee for use of the Cabin which has previously been free and open to the public. The Ski Club has stated that these decisions violate their agreement with the Forest Service and prevent the Club from operating and maintaining the cabin it originally donated to the U.S. Forest Service.

Given the dedication and sacrifice that Ski Club members have offered for more than a quarter century, it is unfortunate that a beneficial relationship is being jeopardized by what many would see as rigid bureaucracy. I call on the Forest Service to redouble its efforts to engage the Bitterroot Cross-Country Ski Club to work toward solutions that honor the ingenuity and downright hard work that Club members have dedicated to the Gordon Reese Cabin. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus
U.S. Senator